

Metropolis Bombay:

Spatial Representations in Contemporary Indian Fiction in English

*A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy*



Kalpana Bora

Roll No. 06614103

Supervisor

Professor Rohini Mokashi-Punekar

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati

Guwahati 781039

India

February 2013



Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Guwahati – 781039
(Assam) INDIA

STATEMENT

I hereby declare that the matter embodied in this thesis, entitled **Metropolis Bombay: Spatial Representations in Contemporary Indian Fiction in English**, is the result of research carried out by me in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, India, under the supervision of Professor Rohini Mokashi-Punekar in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences.

IIT Guwahati
February 2013

(Kalpana Bora)



Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Guwahati - 781 039

(Assam), INDIA

Phone: +91-361-2582555

Fax: +91-361-2582599

Email: rohini@iitg.ernet.in

rohini mokashipunekar@yahoo.co.uk

Dr. Rohini Mokashi-Punekar

Professor and Head

CERTIFICATE

It is certified that the matter embodied in the thesis entitled **Metropolis Bombay: Spatial Representations in Contemporary Indian Fiction in English**, submitted for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Kalpana Bora, a student of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, India, has been carried out under my supervision. It is also certified that this work has not been submitted anywhere else for the award of a research degree.

IIT Guwahati

February 2013

(Prof. Rohini Mokashi-Punekar)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Like its subject this thesis is the product of the love, good wishes and encouragement of many who I must thank.

Professor Rohini Mokashi-Punekar, my teacher, supervisor and an absolutely wonderful person. Thank you Ma'am.

Ma-Deuta, I owe you everything.

Ma-Pita, for immense love and faith.

The members of my Doctoral Committee—Prof. Saundarjya Borbora, Dr. Liza Das and Dr. Arupjyoti Saikia—for constantly monitoring my progress.

The Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Guwahati, for providing me the necessary infrastructure to complete this work.

The Central Library (IIT Guwahati), the Central Library (IIT Bombay), the Jawaharlal Nehru Library, (University of Mumbai), Sir Dorabji Tata Memorial Library (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai), the Asiatic Society Library (Mumbai) and the Central Library (Goa University) for providing me vital resources for this thesis.

My colleagues in the Department of English, Cotton College, for making work such fun.

Claudia Anderson, for providing me with a copy of her work.

Professor Ravi Mokashi-Punekar, for unstinted encouragement.

Prafulla Moha—for all the lessons learnt and unlearnt.

Santanu Sir, Deetimali Baideo, and Merry Ba, for love, laughter and friendship.

Ashima, Tejasha, Parag, Pallavi, Gopal da, Madhuri, and Jitu—life in the lab was never the same without you.

Abhigyan, for the meticulous reading of the thesis and inputs.

Monalisha, for friendship and much more.

Himangshu and Arup, for making it possible.

Nitu, Manu and Mayna, my 'roots' and 'shadows'.

Kanika, Simanta and Junuka, for the warm welcome into the family.

Prasanta, for love.

And little Kuhee, for the immense happiness you have brought to Mamam and Dita.



Contents

Chapter I	Introduction	1
Chapter II	Writing the City: Theories and Representations	32
Chapter III	Cosmopolitan Bombay: Salman Rushdie's <i>Midnight's Children</i> and Shama Futehally's <i>Tara Lane</i>	67
Chapter IV	The Marginal City: Rohinton Mistry's <i>A Fine Balance</i> and Kiran Nagarkar's <i>Ravan and Eddie</i>	104
Chapter V	Urban Networks, Crime and the "Unintended" City: Vikram Chandra's <i>Sacred Games</i> and Murzbaan Shroff's <i>Breathless In Bombay</i>	141
Chapter VI	Conclusion	175
	Bibliography	184

Chapter 1

Introduction

So this is Bombay, monster muse, part witch, part clown, always absurd, often charming—my rogue ballad; this is Bombay, meri jaan.

—Siddharth Dhanvant Sanghvi

Bombay or Mumbai, as it is presently known, is the most populous city in India and one of the largest metropolitan regions in the world¹. This city has been designated as India's most modern and advanced city in academic scholarship as well as in popular literature. Post independence, as the discourse of the nation gained favor with the public imaginary, Bombay became the primary site for the development of a national modernity with its associated ideas of democracy, secularism and social justice. However, the content of Bombay's modernity is characterized by blatant contrasts which are acutely evident in the city's contemporary urban predicament. The city, which provides a referential map for several works of fiction by Indian writers in English as well as vernacular literature, has frequently been signified as a space of theoretical ambiguity. In such a scenario, negotiation the urban—which in itself is conflicting and implicated in new codes of utopian yearnings and social arrangements—has opened up entirely new debates on urban studies and the significance of the city.

In her Introduction to the cinema of Bombay Ranjani Mazumdar writes that experience of “a new delirium of urban life” in Bombay (as well as in other major Indian cities) is informed by increasing migration, growing urban inequality, violence, fear, and terror together with the spectacle of a good life (xxii). The urban fabric thus provides a powerful metaphor to stage and examine the *mise-en-scène* of city life in the globalized era. The present chapter attempts to locate the city of Bombay as a site for spatial negotiations. Section I of this chapter attempts to trace a brief history of the city of Bombay. Section II examines the notion of the city in India and the relevance of Bombay as a symbol of the nation's modernity. Section III explores the representation of the city in literary and sociological works to situate Bombay as a potential site of theoretical interventions and deliberations. Section IV contains a brief

overview of the structure of the thesis and the methodology used and section V summarizes the main arguments of each chapter.

I

The modern metropolis of Bombay began as a group of seven islands off the mainland of the North Konkan on the west coast of India. Historical sources reveal that in the 3rd century BC these islands formed a part of the Magadha Empire ruled by the Buddhist emperor Ashoka. The Hindu rulers of the Silhara dynasty later governed the islands until 1343 CE when they were annexed to the Islamic sultanate of Gujarat. In 1534 the Portuguese gained control of the islands from Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. In 1661 the territory was ceded to Charles II of England as dowry for his marriage to Catharine de Braganza. In turn the islands were leased to the British East India Company, and this marked the beginning of the urban and commercial development of the city writes Gillian Tindall in *The City of Gold: The Biography of Bombay* (1982). Gerald Aungier—the governor and “founding father” of Bombay—recognized the potential of the islands as a centre of commerce and offered incentives to attract skilled workers and traders to the colony (Tindall 44). The growing commercial opportunities brought immigrants from far and wide to form the basis of the present business community. In 1687 the East India Company transferred their headquarters from Surat to Bombay. With increasing prosperity and growing political power following the 1817 victory over the Marathas, the British embarked on several land reclamation projects and large-scale engineering works. Over a sixty-year period from the completion of the vellard or seawall at Breach Candy in 1784 to the construction of the Mahim causeway in 1845, the seven original islands were merged into a single land mass. The British Crown assumed political control of Bombay when Queen Victoria was proclaimed the Empress of India in 1877. Imperial control of the city lasted for almost a century until India gained independence in 1947. For much of its history, Tindall writes, Bombay was the archetypal British colony in the sub-continent and a leading port-city of the British empire.

The major commercial base of Bombay was the flourishing textile industry in the nineteenth century. While the initial aim was to replace British cotton imports with local products, Bombay manufacturers went beyond this to win former British

markets abroad, thus forcing the British textile industry to focus on finer quality production. The development of new dock facilities by Governor William Hornby, the opening of trade relations between Bombay and China in 1773, and the availability of exportable surplus of cotton in the immediate hinterland of the city ensured further growth of the cotton industry, and also laid the foundation for the industrialization of Bombay. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 facilitated the import of machinery and export of manufactured goods. The outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 cut off export of cotton from American South to Lancashire and forced the British manufacturers to seek alternative supplies from India, almost all of which passed through Bombay. Extra demand pushed up prices and cotton, in its various forms (raw, spun and finished products), “provided the foundation on which most Bombay fortunes rested” (Tindall 103).

The Bombay textile industry enjoyed unprecedented success and dominated the economic base of the city for a long time. However, this dominance was thwarted in the 1940s especially in the inter-war period when unemployment pressed the need for diversification. Profits from cotton were invested in new capital-intensive sectors like food-processing and petrochemicals. The concentration of India’s oil refinery capacity in the area in and around Bombay further accelerated the growth of capital. On the other hand the decline of the textile industry in the decades after independence, hastened by the major restructuring of this industry in the post-war era, culminated in an eighteen-month long strike in 1982-83. Headed by Datta Samant, the founder of the Maharashtra Girmi Kamgar Union (MGKU), the workers of the Bombay textile mills went on strike in January 1982 demanding better wages and working conditions. According to official sources the strike lasted for eighteen and a half months and involved almost 240,000 workers. This was the biggest labour struggle India had ever witnessed which unfortunately resulted in the tragic closure of the mills. Bombay now witnessed the emergence of capital-intensive service sector industries such as finance and producer services, software development, mass media and entertainment, communications and information technologies, and residential and commercial real estate and property development. Simultaneously, there was the growth of labour-intensive production of consumer goods in small-scale workshops scattered in informal settlements across the city².

Needless to say Bombay's prosperous growth was paralleled by the expansion of the city which was evident in the radical demographic changes³. This acceleration was the result of high rates of immigration from nearby states and the shift of population and industries towards the suburbs. Suburbanization contributed to the extension of the administrative boundaries of the city⁴. Immigration also added to the growth of a multicultural cosmopolitan city. Given its colonial background and post-independence socio-economic changes, Bombay developed a culture of manifold practices, languages and expressions organized along caste, class, and ethnic lines. On May 1, 1960 Bombay bifurcated into the two states of Maharashtra and Gujarat. The creation of Maharashtra with Bombay as its capital institutionalized the structural changes taking place within the city. As the city fitted into the folds of the state politics of Maharashtra, chauvinist movements came to structure the city's political and emotional space. The Shiv Sena attempted to realize the goals of the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement to establish a separate state for the Marathi-speaking community⁵. The resultant political fragmentation in the city, the ascendancy of rightist politics in the country under the ideology of religious chauvinism and the move towards the new global economy saw the Sena resurrect itself on the ideology of Hindutva and mobilize a large percentage of the populace of Bombay towards its own localized ethnic interests. The renaming of Bombay as Mumbai in November 1995 was one such step towards the ontological ethnicization of the city. Meanwhile, the expansion of multinational financial networks and service-related industries soon saw Bombay establishing its presence as a significant node in the world of global finance and producer services. On the other hand, the devastating riots that rocked the city in December 1992 and January 1993 and the subsequent renaming of the city shattered and questioned the "celebration of the city's mythical cosmopolitanism" (Hansen 4). The train bombings of 2006 and the more recent terror attacks in November 2008, when eleven coordinated shooting and bombing attacks took place across the many landmarks that dotted Bombay, further established the city as a pivot for organized crime and a site of global criminal networks⁶. As a global city too Bombay is not devoid of contradictions. The global prosperity of the city is acutely contrasted by the population explosion and its related problems of high population density and scarcity of space, deprivation, waste and poor living conditions. Dharavi, one of the largest slums in Asia, is an exemplar of urban decay, deterioration and disadvantage. The symbolic luxuries of the globalization are interspersed by the

sights, sounds and smells of urban chaos. Affluent high-rise buildings, architectural triumphs, new office complexes, consumer-friendly commercial spaces, up-market housing structures juxtaposed by squatter settlements, pavement dwellers, overloaded public toilets, pot-holed streets lined with uncollected garbage, and an overworked public transport system on which passengers travel atop rail carriages during peak hours—these are some of the prevailing images of contemporary Bombay, a city of overwhelming contrasts, at once the richest and the poorest city in India.

II

Given Bombay's multi-faceted history, it becomes important to examine the character of the city in the Indian context. The city has always held an ambiguous place in Indian society. Constructed by colonial rulers, reshaped by national leaders, and pulled in opposing directions by the global economy, India's cities have been viewed as both imperialist impositions and sources of indigenous power. Even as millions migrate to the city to seek fortunes and escape the caste and religious persecution that is prevalent in villages, the village has remained the mythologized idyll against which the city can never be compared. The nationalist discourse, rooted in Gandhian ideology, too has valorized the village, but the economic policy promoted by industrialization has facilitated urban growth in the city. Although the city has traditionally been marginalized in India's image of itself, India is now experiencing what Gyan Prakash calls "the urban turn" by which the opportunity has emerged "to revise the history of Indian modernity, to bring into view spaces of power, and difference suppressed by the historicist discourse of the nation" (*Urban* 6). Much of this revision is concentrated on cities which are increasingly being recognized as legitimate sites of investigation and research in redefining the meanings of citizenship, democracy and modernity in contemporary India. Bombay's position as the urban locus for India's troubled progress into modernity finds itself inextricably linked to its status as the metaphor for modern India. The city's discontinuous history with India's rich past disrupts and contradicts existing categories, histories and narratives of urban analysis. The emergence of Bombay as a subject of research in response to the specific theoretical questions about constructions of the city in general is reflective of its significance in negotiating questions of postcolonial urbanism particularly in the context of South Asia.

During British imperial control, the colonial city was the site for India's subjection, and at the same time, it housed the promise of modernity. In *The Idea of India* (1997) Sunil Khilnani writes of the ways in which cities in India

were not governed by publicly known rules that applied uniformly to all their residents, and that a single authority could enforce: they had no municipal governments, no state power with defined territorial jurisdiction ... the city itself did not appear as a cohesive and single space, an 'anonymous subject' which could be rationally administered, ordered and improved. (116)

The city in India was thus a potential space for British administrative agenda—“it was in the city that its imaginative impress was heaviest” (116). The British Raj lived in the city “in compounds of its own creation” that was exclusive of “the society over which it ruled” (116). The nationalist state located itself in the city, and early nationalist notions of independence meant freedom from the colonial city life. Khilnani further elaborates on how Gandhi propounded the idea of the village to counter the notion of exclusivity of the British-designed colonial city. Gyan Prakash too points out that Gandhi conceptualized the village community as the “real India” (3), and that he located the nationalist idea of India in the villages by constructing a topography of India not connected by railways but by the routes that connect villages as was evident by his many “*padyatras*” (Khilnani 125; italics in original). Yet, Gandhi worked actively in the city: his interactions with his urban audience were fuelled by the recognition that the British Raj operated in cities—“If the cities could be paralysed and brought to a standstill through non-violent *satyagraha*, the Raj itself would be broken” (Khilnani 125-126; italics in original). Gyan Prakash discusses at length Nehru's recognition of the countryside as the “authentic symbol of India” in his book *The Discovery of India* (1946) but post-1947 it was the city that became the site for the expression and enactment of the Nehruvian ambition of modernity and development (*Urban* 3). Nehru distinguished between inauthentic modernity, represented by the colonial city, and a genuine, rationalist, productive, universal modernity that treasured historical continuity and the complex layering of cultures. For him, the city was the indispensable hub for this idea. Nehru recognized the city as “the symbol of a new sovereignty ... an effective engine to drive India into the

modern world” (Khilnani 110). The city was thus the landscape for the dynamics of democracy and modernity. It was the place where “the idea of India was being disputed and defined anew” (Khilnani 109).

The spatial structure of Bombay cannot be separated from the political history of the nation, for no other city exemplified the idea of Nehruvian modernity with finer sophistication than Bombay. Bombay’s genesis as the commercial and cultural capital of India was defined by the city’s historical discontinuity. The layering of cultures and the complex social mixtures that wove the urban fabric gave it a powerful edge over other colonial cities like Calcutta and Madras. Bombay boasted of a native industrial capitalist base and productive and commercial wealth, which established it as the powerhouse of Indian economic modernization. Produced through countless images, Bombay is inextricably linked to cinema; the city was “permanently lodged ... in the popular imagination as a totem of modern India itself” (Khilnani 136)⁷. The cinematic city staged the nationalist vision of India that was, recognizably, Nehru’s own. Khilnani explains, the Nehruvian idea of India sought the incorporation of values associated with modernity, namely “democracy, religious tolerance, economic development and cultural pluralism” (12-13). Thus, the city was portrayed as a place of bewilderment and exploitation, but its impersonality and emancipatory anonymity were also celebrated⁸. Cinema invoked a democratic, forward-looking nationalist sentiment and affirmed the city as the most important place to cultivate the same. Significantly, Bombay’s own discontinuous history belied this picture as the city developed a different kind of politics and an “inflammatory parochialism in conflict with the nationalist ideal” (Khilnani 137).

The 1990s witnessed a major transformation of cities in India as they entered what Khilnani calls a new stage of post-nationalist liberalization that blurred the distinctions between village, and the colonial city or the nationalist city (144-145). As a small-town India surged across the country and proclaimed its cultural and political tastes, the nation experienced new forms of economic capital that was crucial to the formation of a new, mobile and ambitious professional upper class (Khilnani 144-45). In Bombay particularly, the organized industry (textiles in the main) of the earlier times declined, and the balance of employment shifted towards the uncertainties of the service economy. From high profile designations in finance and banking to informal

jobs in workshops, from the arresting skyscrapers to the pavements and slums, Bombay became a city of extremes. With its many contradictions, the city represented wealth and success as well as the disappointments and anger of the urban poor. Urban economic inequalities and social diversities gave rise to politically devised communities of religion and caste which insisted on exclusive privileges and provisions. The resultant fragmented city problematized the sustenance of class associations. Yet there exists two extreme ends of the social spectrum—the globally rich, pan-urban elite and the local poor—whose consumption habits do not allow for the emergence of a nationwide pattern. With the Shiv Sena's mobilization of the populace through carefully orchestrated riots (December 1992-January 1993), ethnic differences became the ground for political contestation and social survival. The consumerist media arrested these images of the city and transmitted them across the country. It was not long before the cosmopolitan, multicultural and hybrid Bombay established itself as the symbol of this newly emergent India. As globalization wrought changes in the city, it re-emerged in the public consciousness as a “new home” of hope and promise for the new post-liberalized Indian. Alex Perry, in the article “India Inc.: Bombay's Boom” rightly advises that to catch a glimpse of “the new India, with its dizzying promise and turbocharged ambition, then head to its biggest, messiest, sexiest city—Bombay”.

In his reading of Bombay noted anthropologist Thomas Blom Hansen points out that the renaming of the city is a crucial point of departure to reconsider Bombay as the paradigm Indian city:

The question of naming revolves, therefore, around the question of which space, and whose, should the name fix and territorialize as its object; which, and whose, history should it refer to and demarcate; and in which language should the name properly be enunciated. (3)

Given this perspective, the renaming of Bombay unleashes a series of questions that are extremely complicated in nature. In his book *Violence in Urban India: Identity Politics, 'Mumbai', and the Postcolonial City* (2001) Blom Hansen argues that while on the one hand the renaming of the city can be viewed as a “straightforward assertion of the nativist agenda” that aimed to claim the city and “its symbols of modernity as the natural property of all Marathi speakers”; the city's renaming also highlighted

issues of power politics that sought to differentiate between native Marathis and the non-Marathis by immediately recognizing the latter as the outsider (3). While the Shiv Sena has been pursuing this agenda ever since its inception, the renaming of the city is the culmination of the linguistic movement of the 1940s and 1950s by which “the name Mumbai would amount to a fixation of the city in the regional space of Maharashtra, as well as in the history, culture, and language of the Marathi-speakers of western India” (Hansen 3)⁹. Blom Hansen argues that in reality this nativist discourse tried to overlook, and perhaps efface, the fact that most Marathi speakers were “as alien to the city as everybody else,” because Bombay is a city of cultural and communal amalgamations (3). The name ‘Bombay’ is a container of the unique experience of colonial and postcolonial modernity that was dynamic, intensely commercial, heterogeneous, chaotic, and yet it was spontaneously tolerant and unprejudiced. This cosmopolitan Bombay of ethnic and religious assimilations, of economic and social opportunities, of success stories and failures, of class unities has been celebrated with much pomp in many literary works and the cinema of the period. It is obvious that there existed many different ideas of Bombay, but the city’s cosmopolitan character ensured that all who arrived at the city were embraced in its fold. Nevertheless, the economic disparities of the inhabitants were reflected in the lived spaces of the city that was soon overflowing with the crowds that migrated from the villages. The division of the city’s physical spaces notwithstanding, Bombay was shaped by the nationalist dreams of India’s new secular modernity that overrode the older sectarian divisions of caste, language, and religion.

In the 1970s and 1980s Bombay experienced a peculiar form of capitalist production that was fragmented and structurally disorganized. Jayant Lele reads this as a “predatory capitalism” that was nurtured by the “license-permit raj” (203). This resulted in the dissolution of the organized working class that, in turn, made way for political and cultural changes in the city. Earlier studies on Bombay have highlighted the ways in which the pattern of migration to the city resulted in the creation of an imbalanced configuration of ethnicity and class that spurred the growth of “regional nativism and ethnic chauvinism” (Hansen 9)¹⁰. The city’s “mythical cosmopolitanism” had already been questioned by the devastating riots that rocked Bombay in December 1992 and January 1993—this was perhaps one of the most definitive examples of urban catastrophe in India post independence (Hansen 4). Not

only this resulted in the demise of the cosmopolitan character of the city, but it paved the way for the surfacing of a simmering violence that was perhaps always in the city's underbelly. The scale of the riots was unprecedented for, as Blom Hansen points out, it signaled the loss of order, morality and community—ideals that were intrinsic to the notion of urban modernity. It may be pointed out here that while the historical narrative of Bombay conceals the class, caste and community divide in the city, the catastrophic events of the last decade of the 20th century exposed these divisions like unhealed wounds. These fragmentations and divisions were not unprecedented in the history of Bombay, shows Rajnarayan Chandravarkar in his book *Imperial Power and Popular Politics: Class, Resistance and the State in India, C. 1850-1950* (1998). The author examines the contingencies of modernity in Bombay to reveal the various forms of state repression, corruption and violence that was implicit in the city's spatiality¹¹.

No city can make a claim for a linear narrative, for the ambiguities of modernity inform all urban experiences. Arjun Appadurai and James Holston read the city as privileged sites for negotiations of the meaning of citizenship and civil rights. Contested meanings of these categories, compound with global processes, have resulted in reactionary movements that generate differences between the main and peripheral centres of the urban. This results in the creation of zones that are intrinsically suspicious, and where exists multiple worlds operating on specific social, economic and legal structures. The multiplicitious nature of the city challenges the ideals of a unitary nation state. Importantly, the existence of such multiplicities contributes to the growth of xenophobic and exclusivist movements that create further divisions in the city. In the light of these observations, the renaming of Bombay raises serious questions about the political, social and spatial growth of the city. The ethnic marking of the city may be viewed as a regressive measure that sought to delineate the Marathi *manus* from the ubiquitous Mumbaikar whose origins may be rooted to any part of the country. The strategy of claiming the proprietorship of Bombay as “our city” and its modernity as “our modernity” is only another step towards ensuring and declaring to all and sundry that the ever-inclusive city is but the sole asset of the Marathi *manus* alone.

The discussion presented above clearly establishes the fact that Bombay has been a misfit in the institutional depictions of the city. Bombay's discontinuous history renders it difficult to situate the city within the ambit of established urban theory and analysis. The present work aims to understand the metaphorical transformation of Bombay into Mumbai through analyses of the literary representation of the multiple spaces of the city. The thesis aims to achieve this objective by analyzing the historical formation of identities, and the conflicts that changed Bombay from being the pre-eminent symbol of India's secular, industrial modernity to become a powerful symbol of the very crisis of this vision.

III

In the Introduction to *Other Cities, Other Worlds: Urban Imaginaries in a Globalizing Age* (2009) Andreas Huyssen states

an urban imaginary marks first and foremost the way city dwellers imagine their own city as the place of everyday life, the site of inspiring traditions and continuities as well as the scene of histories of destruction, crime, and conflicts of all kinds An urban imaginary is the cognitive and somatic image which we carry within us of the places where we live, work, and play. It is the embodied material fact. Urban imaginaries are thus part of any city's reality". (3)

In this context, representations of the city, whether literary or cinematic or otherwise, bear immense significance. In the world of Indian fiction in English, the city, and Bombay in particular, is familiar turf. The importance of the urban is highlighted through an examination of pre-independence literature that was thematically overwhelmed by the anti-colonial struggle. The rapid industrialization in the post-independence period resulted in a complex engagement with urbanization in the fields of literature and cinema as writers and artists were confronted with a wide range of urban themes such as "the dialectic of the country and the city ... alienation and the loss of traditional values" (Mazumdar xxiii). The case of Bombay is perhaps stronger since the complexity of its culture reflects the multiplicity of India as a whole. Roshan G. Shahani's essay, "Polyphonous Voices in the City: Bombay's Indian-English Fiction" (1995) discusses at length the potential of the urban locale and its modalities that bestow the writer with a greater sense of ease and confidence to write about the

city. The plural and amorphous nature of the city also lends desirable anonymity, freedom and sense of privacy that is necessary for innovative creation and, simultaneously, liberates them from “an essentialist view of the nation” (101). At the same time, the city also brings contemporary urban writers closer to the power structures that supply them with the site and necessary focus for their interrogation.

Salman Rushdie’s celebrated novel, *Midnight’s Children* (1980), is perhaps one of the key texts that locate Bombay as the narrative setting, thus opening up the metropolis for literary navigation. Prior to his own narrative, Saleem Sinai’s prophetic proclamation aptly captures Bombay’s potential as a container of stories: “And there are so many stories to tell, too many, such an excess of intertwined lives events miracles places rumours, so dense a commingling of the improbable and the mundane!” (4)¹². Since *Midnight’s Children*, the city of Bombay has served as the loci for a number of literary interventions including Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*, *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, and *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, Rohinton Mistry’s *A Fine Balance*, *Such a Long Journey*, and *Family Matters*, Altaf Tyrewala’s *No God in Sight*, Anita Desai’s *Baumgartner’s Bombay*, Shashi Tharoor’s *Show Business: A Novel*, Kiran Nagarkar’s *Ravan and Eddie* and *The Extras*, Firdaus Kanga’s *Trying to Grow*, and Vikram Chandra’s *Love and Longing in Bombay* and *Sacred Games* to name just a few.

Two recent and most definitive non-fictional works on Bombay are Suketu Mehta’s personal history of the city, *Maximum City*, and Katherine Boo’s *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*. Published in 2004, *Maximum City* is part memoir, part travel writing as well as a socio-political analysis of the history and the people of Bombay. Referring to Victor Hugo’s statement on the schizophrenic nature of cities Mehta declares, “Bombay has multiple personality disorder” (49). Delving deep into the Bombay of the present he unravels a city divided by party ideology based on religious lines, the underworld and the mafia. What emerges is a city that is boundary-less, bearing “multiple aliases, like gangsters and whores”, and therefore unfathomable (15). *Maximum City*, while narrating the tale of an indefinable, hyper-real city, attempts to grasp this in-definability through the stories of the inhabitants of the city who are crucial to understanding urban identities:

A city like Bombay ... does not have a substantial indigenous population, is full of restless people. Those who have come here have not been at ease somewhere else. And unlike others who may have been equally uncomfortable wherever they came from, these people got up and moved. As I have discovered, having once moved, it is difficult to stop moving. (34)

Despite his self-conscious knowledge of his privileged “South Bombay” lifestyle vis-à-vis that of people on the margins of society and morality (such as slum-dwellers) Mehta is amazingly insightful of the separate geographic as well as economic spheres of existence. His clever documentation of the attempts of the rich and poor alike to combat alienation in the city underlines the fact that the story of Bombay is constantly being re-written. For Mehta “the modern metropolis is a collection of transients” (549). The statement echoes the message of Danny Boyle’s Oscar-winning movie *Slumdog Millionaire* that showcases Bombay as the city of the downtrodden and the exploited¹³. Through his numerous interviews with those living in the city’s peripheral spaces—bar-dancers, hitmen, and the quotidian common man—Mehta drives home the point that the city thrives on and survives through illicit violence: “Bombay is all about transaction—dhandha” (15). The evidence can be found in the fascinating world of Bollywood and the numerous potboilers based on the underworld and the mafia, in the daily mechanisms of police operations and in the undertakings of the slum-dwelling mafia.

Like *Slumdog Millionaire* Katherine Boo’s book *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* (2012) is an intimate account of life in Annawadi, a slum near the airport in Bombay. Through the lives of Abdul, the young trader, and Asha, the wanna-be slumlord, Boo captures the slum-dwellers’ desire for upward mobility. This narrative of urban dystopia presents the other side of global economy through the self-propelling economic system of Annawadi. Despite continuous human losses the inhabitants of the slum are knowledgeable of the truth:

Annawadi boys broadly accepted the basic truths: that in a modernizing, increasingly prosperous city, their lives were embarrassments best confined to small spaces, and their deaths would matter not at all. (236)

Boo's book is an eye-opener, mirroring the lives of those at the periphery, who are neither seen nor heard, but whose silent services render the city livable.

Literary representations of the city celebrate the chaotic plurality and multicultural diversity of the city. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* testifies to the mixed heritage of Bombay that derives from the multiplicity of faiths and cultures in the city yet curiously creates a secular ambience. Rohinton Mistry's fictionalization of the Parsi community is not an attempt to retrieve a diminishing community but to retrieve through it his own sense of self. For Shashi Deshpande the city is a seductive trap typifying glitz and glamour in *That Long Silence* (1989). Kiran Nagarkar's *Ravan and Eddie* (1995) and Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* (1997) are two significant texts, amongst several others, that examine the lives of minority communities of Bombay. Both novels are renditions of the lives of citizens who inhabit the minority and often unseen, and therefore unacknowledged, spaces of the city and yet form an important weave of the city's fabric. *A Fine Balance* is set against the even larger canvas of the postcolonial nation-state, its caste tensions and class divisions which have been further distorted by the Emergency. The novel explores the ways in which catastrophic historical events unfold in the personal lives of the characters—"communal violence, caste oppression, patriarchy, agrarian politics, economic exploitation, and urban migration—all make their presence felt through small, but powerful, individual stories of loss, despair, resistance, and the occasional triumph" (Gopal 122). The making and breaking of families, friendships, and small communities—although derived from specific encounters—are inexorably shaped by forces that extend well beyond them.

Ravan and Eddie echoes the story of survival but in an altogether different context. The narrative is an insight into growing up in a Bombay chawl in the 1950s. Like Rushdie's Saleem Sinai and Shiva, the titular twins of fate, Ravan and Eddie, are forever bound to each other, after Eddie's father dies accidentally. As the narrative unfolds, Eddie, the Christian, becomes a budding Hindu extremist, while Ravan aspires to be a Christian, thus turning both into lifelong rivals. The novel is set in a chawl in Mazagaon—the quintessential institution in Bombay—that is home to a huge section of the lower middle-class. The novel opens with the death of Eddie's father, but the narrative progresses to map the city's vast contradictions against the backdrop

of the chawl. While in *A Fine Balance* the city acted as the metaphor for the nation, in *Ravan and Eddie* it is the chawl which becomes representative of a nation aspiring for secularism. Set in the early years of the post-independence period, the novel presents the story of people of various classes, castes and communities who live in close proximity, and are united by their common struggle for survival. The existence of multiple lives in a single homogenizing space reflects the heterogeneous contours of the city. Although communal chauvinism makes its presence felt in the narrative, it does not transcend the sense of belongingness that characterizes the lives of this community in Bombay.

In *The Satanic Verses* Salman Rushdie uses his earlier metaphor of the invisible city to destabilize the powerful discourse of the migrant as the other. The narrative is pivoted on the migrant who reclaims his status only to use it against hegemonic stereotypes. Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta's negotiation of the passage from Bombay to London transforms them into two alternate and opposed versions of post-colonial identities. In *The Moor's Last Sigh*, Salman Rushdie once again returns to the themes of heterogeneity and cosmopolitanism—which he had earlier dealt with in *Midnight's Children*—and the city of Bombay is designated as the central site of this return. Set in postcolonial India *The Moor's Last Sigh* is a story of religious and ethnic minorities and blends together the stories of individuals and the nation. While *Midnight's Children* attempts to capture the promise of freedom for the newly-independent nation, *The Moor's Last Sigh* laments a city that was once-upon-a-time cosmopolitan and tolerant. In the wake of the bomb blasts and the ensuing riots of the 1990s, the enemies of Bombay's heterogeneity are chauvinists of various affiliations, particularly those who sought to reclaim the city from outsiders. The novel makes explicit references to actual events and people—the destruction of the Babri mosque, which unleashes sectarianism, the ensuing riots, and the depiction of a thinly-disguised Balasaheb Thackeray as the underworld boss and sectarian Hindu leader. Bombay has now become Mumbai, the “inexhaustible city of excess” (Rushdie, *Moor* 193). It has gained a new identity that rests on religious fundamentalism and nationalistic fanaticism. In creating a Bombay of Moorish and Spanish descendents, Rushdie creates a space through which to negotiate the dismantling of a secular and multicultural India envisioned by Jawaharlal Nehru. The

city's destiny is invariably linked with and mapped through the lives and times of the Gama-Zogoiby family.

Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games* is a history of Bombay immersed in the world of crime, corruption and the politics of the underworld. Dickensian in scope, *Sacred Games* follows the story of a world-weary cop, Sartaj Singh, and a larger-than-life gangster, Ganesh Gaitonde, against the backdrop of Bollywood, and the ever present tension between India and Pakistan. The story is set in modern-day Mumbai—here the city is not just a backdrop but also a character in the book. In the article “*Sacred Games: An Epic of Mumbai’s Underworld*” Chandra asserts:

There’s an energy about the place that is unmistakable and very, very seductive. The citizens of Bombay love to complain about the city endlessly, but [they] also will defend it fearlessly against outsiders making the same complaints.

As Katekar puts it at the very end of the book, “When you’re away from it, you can miss it, physically you can ache for it—even for the stink of it” (Games 946).

As discussed earlier, Sunil Khilnani has argued that the debate about the idea of India is pivoted on the Indian city. In this light, Chandra’s representation of Bombay provides fertile ground to explore the various ramifications of the city vis-à-vis its position as a symbol of India’s modernity and secularism. In her reading of the city in *Sacred Games* Caroline Herbert suggests that in its reincarnation as Mumbai, Bombay becomes an exclusionary space in which the vision of Nehruvian secularism is constantly challenged. The overlapping of Bombay and Mumbai as inclusive and exclusive spaces problematize the city’s secular character. The Bombay of *Sacred Games* is a representation of the seething side of Bombay that found expression in Chandra’s earlier collection of short stories, *Love and Longing in Bombay*. In both these texts Bombay is represented as a glamorous city that attracts millions from the villages enticing them to migrate to this city of dreams and test their fortunes. The city has transformed rapidly in the past decade and a half—from Bombay it became Mumbai— and, as Pankaj Mishra observes in his review of the novel, the religious and political conflicts have finally altered the social cartography of the city and the once cosmopolitan city no longer exists as the 1992-93 riots affected the city

greatly¹⁴. Moreover, the liberalization of the nation's economy heralded various forms of capitalism which found home in Bombay. As money flowed in, the city was caught in a spate of scams and scandals that involved Bollywood stars, the mafia dons, politicians, business tycoons and civil servants. The city had changed.

Sacred Games takes off from where *The Moor's Last Sigh* leaves, and produces the idea of a residual space. In an untitled essay Jay Shuffield defines residual space in the following words:¹⁵

The theory of residual space holds that all cultural practices include an element of destruction. The creation of any social space requires the destruction of preexisting spaces, as well as potentially destructive competition with alternative spaces ... Such destruction, however, leaves traces of the original space, portions of which may remain where it was too robust or too peripheral. Residual spaces, these spaces that are left over after a process of social transformation

The narrative maps Bombay in a moment of crisis when the city becomes home to terror. Post the infamous blasts and riots, the bosses of the Bombay underworld are divided in the machinations of the city. The divided loyalties of the mafia and the subsequent proxy war form the theme of many cinematic narratives, with Ram Gopal Verma's *Satya* (1998) and *Company* (2002) being fitting examples. Exhaustive research lends Chandra's narrative a gripping hold on the murkiness of the city. His depiction of the police and crime nexus functions as the alternative narrative of the city caught in the throes of terror. The grey areas of the corrupt police and rival gangs expose the networked city marked by violence, terror, claustrophobia, and the uncanny. Bombay becomes a gangland, a disenchanted city haunted by death, darkness, and ruin. The dark side of Bombay's underworld is a powerful parallel to the global narratives of the city that obtain currency in popular media. The world of cops and gangsters in *Sacred Games* provides a counter narrative to the narrative of globalization that unfolds in the city. Chandra negotiates the urban labyrinth to expose the city of ruin, fear, catastrophe, and crisis. For Ganesh Gaitonde—the leader of the G-Company—the city becomes his site for the exercise of power, although this power stems from below. His journey to the city is symbolic of the lives of men who come to

Bombay to find their fortunes but are, sooner or later, lured into its dark and grim world of the gangsters.

Bombay's fertile territory symbolizes, for writers of Indian English fiction, a city of promise, nostalgia, hope, as well as disappointment and fear. In contrast, Dalit writings about the underprivileged stem from a very different Bombay. The flagrant contrasts between the rich and the poor in Bombay are a central theme of these works. The lines between the city and the countryside are not sharply drawn so that there is a continuous interplay of the rural and the urban in these narratives. In his autobiographical novel, *Balute* (1982), Daya Pawar describes the inhuman living conditions of the ever-elusive city:

As I seek a place to merely rest my heat at the end of a hard day, all I have to come back to is a wretched hell that this city can offer The life I see from a distance, the life of indulgence that I can see from afar is different. She appears as a temptress (Mahanagari), an illusion ... like a ruby in a ring. It dazzles me, beckons me. But I can never escape the realization that this dazzling ruby has always eluded me. (182; qtd. in Bhagwat 114)

For Anna Bhau Sathe Bombay is "a land of dead machines, deadening techniques, and of the walking dead ... a factory endlessly producing thieves, parasites, cheats, knaves and capitalists" (Bhagwat 118). Narayan Surve's poems on the city explore the relationship of the Dalits to the city and he asserts that "the dalits and workers alone ... are truly entitled to call themselves architects of the metropolis" (Bhagwat 119).

Besides literary endeavours Bombay has encouraged much academic scholarship. Sujata Patel and Alice Thorner's *Bombay: Metaphor for Modern India* (1995) is a broad inter-disciplinary approach to the conditions in Bombay in the last decade of the 20th century. The book not only investigates the notions of modernity in Bombay but also locates the city as part of the newly-liberalized global economy. The essays explore the issues of labour, land-use, housing, slums, municipal politics, the Shiv Sena, and the 1992-1993 riots. For Patel and Thorner the urban crisis of Bombay is reflective of "the contradictions inherent in the choices of the earlier economic and political elites as well as the challenges of new power brokers" (xxxii). In *Bombay: Mosaic of Modern Culture* (1995), again by Patel and Thorner, the essays map the

demographic and cultural transformation of the city. The focus ranges from the famine migrants of the nineteenth century Bombay to the emergence of educational institutions in the city and their impact. The book also examines the strong Gujarati influence on the intellectual life of Bombay as is evident in the city's representative images in literature, theatre and cinema. *Bombay and Mumbai: The City in Transition* (2003)—the third volume in this series—locates the renaming of the city as a point of departure to deliberate on the lasting themes that concern Bombay. As the city transforms into the 21st century megapolis of Mumbai, the transition is marked by the city's growth in terms of expansion in size, diversity, population and function. As such, the “vernacularization” of Bombay through change in nomenclature and its implications become much more pronounced in the diverse facets of city life such as housing and rent control, the participation of Dalits and minorities in the city's activities, life in the slums and shanties, the inextricable link of crime, communalism and cinema. Prashant Kidambi's *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890-1920* (2007) is a social history of colonial Bombay in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras—eras that were crucial to the city's emergence as a modern metropolis. Kidambi documents the changes ushered in by European modernity and their impact on the colonized in terms of negotiation, appropriation and resistance. For Kidambi the notion of modernity is

a contested and contingent set of outcomes that flowed from the contradictory currents generated by the market, state and politics against a background of rapid technological change demographic growth, urbanization and mass migration. (2)

The subsequent emergence of a new ethic of ‘social service’ that sought to improve and uplift the urban poor is an example of the historical predecessors of the developmental politics in postcolonial Bombay. Sandip Hazareesingh's *The Colonial City and The Challenge Of Modernity: Urban Hegemonies And Civic Contestations In Bombay City (1900–1925)* (2007) shows how the notion of ‘modernity’ held complex and contradictory meanings within the local urban setting of colonial Bombay. The author contends that modernity in Bombay was not

an autonomous, inexorable social agent expanding from its metropolitan origins into the urban form and life of the colonial city of its own volition. Nor does it appear as an undifferentiated agent of coloniality whose designs it effectively promotes and secures. Rather,

the different manifestations of modernity and their translation and mode of inscription into the form and social life of the city derive from the dialectical relationship between the class-based exercise of power in colonial Bombay (with its own internal contradictions) and its increasing contestation 'from below', from radical nationalists and workers. 'Modernity' was made up of varied strands, and contending social classes were attracted to, repelled by and had access to different components. Modernity thus posed fresh challenges and offered new opportunities to colonial rulers and Indian subjects alike, including, with the rise of Gandhian nationalism, the possibility of reinvention of (Hindu) 'Indian tradition' itself. (5)

The colonial version of modernity aided the British to strengthen their hold on the city and thereby extend it to the nation. On the other hand, the rejection of this form of modernity by Gandhi led to the establishment of a counter-modern ideal of nationalism that was premised on the age-old traditions of the country. However, Hazareesingh argues, Bombay was home to localized and radical forms of modernity that contributed to the emergence of an alternate civic nationalism. Significantly, the emergence of some of the most significant forms of modernity such as newspapers, cinema fuelled the demands for civil rights and equality. This in turn revealed the contradictions of colonial hegemony and underlined the class-bound nature of the urban social order.

IV

The present study hopes to make a fresh intervention in the literary representations of Bombay by examining the ways in which the city finds expression in the spatial structures that hold the city together. Contemporary Bombay is experiencing a contradictory process of growth that is at once global and local. On the one hand, the globalizing impulse of the new world economy has subjected the city to new strategies of urban development and regulations; while on the other hand, this very process of globalizing promotes exclusivity and marginalizes most of the population. How then is the city imagined and what are the spatial arrangements that inform this imagination? The present study aims to explore the literary representation

of the city by examining the many spaces that are produced, appropriated, internalized and contested in the city.

With the visible transformation of the Indian metropolis, it becomes imperative to consider the city in modern Indian imagination. The city of Bombay offers an interesting point of departure to examine the nuances of the Indian city, especially when its history does not fit into the institutional depictions of the city. Rather, as Thomas Blom Hansen points out, this nonconformist status prompts a series of questions about the ways in which dominant discourses of the city were made possible, and how and why they began to crumble later. The renaming of Bombay as Mumbai triggers the ideas of urban modernity, the governance of the city, and the use of its spaces. The question that bears significantly on contemporary discourses on Bombay is whether the newly renamed city has replaced the Bombay of the British, or has the city been domesticated through its re-naming? What happens to this city in the context of literary imaginations? Does literature complement what is now seemingly a distorted history of the city? The thesis argues that while social, economic and cultural spaces of the city contribute to the creation of the fabric of the city, these spatial structures are constantly challenged, dismantled and rebuilt. It proposes that while representations of the city by different writers vary, the narratives are complementary in understanding the complicated urban fabric of Bombay. The representation of the many spaces of the city result in the creation of many Bombays and this further re-affirms the ungraspable nature of the city. The objective of the present study is to investigate the process of social spatial creation that lead to the creation of the larger spatial structure of the city.

Methodology/ Theoretical Perspective

For the purposes of the present study, the spatial reading of Bombay will be premised on postcolonial theory, urban studies, cultural theory, as well as the sociological readings of cities in general and Bombay in particular. These readings will be informed by Henri Lefebvre's exposition of the production of space.

Choice of Texts

This study will examine the representation of Bombay in the post-1980s Indian English fiction. While the urban fabric of Bombay had had been the chosen

subject of many Indian poets in English, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, published in 1980, established the city as a potential site for the fictional navigation of identities and histories in post-independence India. Moreover, the images of the nation's development were being expressed through Bollywood cinema, so Bombay became inextricably linked with the notions of progress and modernity in the Indian imagination, a fact much reiterated by Rushdie through his work. The primary texts chosen for the present study are Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), Shama Futehally's *Tara Lane* (1993), Kiran Nagarkar's *Ravan and Eddie* (1995), Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* (1995), Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games* (2006) and Murzbaan Shroff's *Breathless in Bombay* (2008), the last being a collection of urban tales.

The thesis does not aim to trace a chronological or linear narrative of Bombay nor make a case for it. However, it may not altogether be impossible to map the socio-political changes in Bombay through the selected texts primarily because the texts selected narrate the story of Bombay at particularly important moments in the city's history. Rushdie and Futehally write of a Bombay that was at the centre of much developmental agenda post independence. Although their novels were published in 1980 and 1993 respectively—the latter being a period of extreme political and communal turmoil—the narratives are far removed from these troubled realities and instead focus on the philosophy and ideology that shaped the nascent nation. Similarly, Mistry and Nagarkar's narratives, both published in 1995, concentrate on the ethno-politics that gripped the city with the rise of the Shiv Sena in the 1960s and the 70s. Chandra and Shroff contemplate a contemporary city that is struggling with the maneuverings of post-modern globalization. It is interesting to note that barring Chandra and Shroff, the other four novelists write about the city by looking back at certain key events that shaped the city. It may also be pointed out that of all the six writers selected for analysis, four of them, namely Rushdie, Futehally, Mistry and Shroff are minority writers by virtue of the religion and community to which they belong. Rushdie and Futehally are of Muslim origin, while Mistry and Shroff are Parsis. Also, the thesis does not focus particularly on gendered urban realities and the inclusion of Shama Futehally, the sole woman writer, is guided by her intricate detailing of public and private lives which her novel traversing the Bombay of the 1950s and 60s attempts. In *Midnight's Children* Rushdie claims, “despite my Muslim

background, I'm enough of a Bombayite"—this is justification enough to cement his right as a commentator on Bombay (206). The selection of four minority writers may seem incidental. However their position as writers and commentators is also a comment on the multicultural nature of the city that enables a plurality of voices, even as this space stands threatened in contemporary times¹⁶. Their novels are intricate narratives of the city exposing the rich and complex web of urban life and living at different periods in the history of the city. Barring Mistry, whose novel *A Fine Balance* narrates the plight of the minority communities in Bombay during the Emergency, Rushdie, Futehally and Shroff engage with minority lives in a plural society, representing a multicultural Bombay, inclusive of its realities. Rushdie seeks to re-locate the city of his boyhood which boasted of cosmopolitan secularity and security. Futehally's *Tara Lane* is premised on a family industrial enterprise caught in the coils of labour issues which the younger generation seeks to deal through corrupt means, but the narrative steers clear of any comment on the larger political implications of this and chooses to focus on the domestic tribulations instead. Murzbaan Shroff's urban collective offers a peek into the lives of the 21st century Mumbaikars whose lives continue to be affected by postmodern contingencies. Each of these writers is a member of the upper echelons of society and though there could be criticism regarding their class status (in the context of representations of the city by Dalit writers), the accuracy of their representation of Bombay is undeniable and the contribution to the imaginative representation of Bombay invites appreciation.

The choice of texts is guided primarily by the aim of the thesis to examine spatial representations of Bombay that in turn engage with notions of the nation and modernity. The selected texts happen to map Bombay from post-independence decades to its present global avatar: though chronology was not the avowed purpose of this thesis, it has become in a way a useful way of organizing the representations. Bombay has been a conflicted place of economic and social upheaval, affecting class and gender divisions, thereby producing contested public and private domains within its boundaries. Additionally, the city has been the destination of migrants from rural areas with complex consequences. This thesis examines these complexities of an ever-changing, ever-developing and, in many ways, constantly-deteriorating city through the narratives of novelists and short story writers who have charted the lived spaces in the city from a variety of historical, cultural, geographical perspectives. The narratives

of the texts chosen are located at key moments in the history of Bombay and India—the post-independence period, the transitional period of the 1970s, which saw the imposition of the Emergency along with the rise of the Shiv Sena, and the 1990s when the nation’s economy was liberalized, and finally the present century when Bombay gained the reputation of being a global city. Through an examination of the selected texts the thesis hopes to highlight the transition of Bombay from a colonial to post-colonial to global city.

Structure of the thesis

The present work is structured as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter II: Writing the City: Theories and Representations

Chapter III: Cosmopolitan Bombay: Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and Shama Futehally’s *Tara Lane*

Chapter IV: The Marginal City: Rohinton Mistry’s *A Fine Balance* and Kiran Nagarkar’s *Ravan and Eddie*

Chapter V: Urban Networks, Crime and the “Unintended” City: Vikram Chandra’s *Sacred Games* and Murzbaan Shroff’s *Breathless in Bombay*

Chapter VI: Conclusion

Bibliography

V

This section contains brief summaries of the chapters of the thesis.

Chapter I is the introductory chapter which sets off the discussion on Bombay and tries to locate it within the ambit of contemporary debates on the city. It attempts to problematize the representations of the city at large to make way for deliberations on Bombay.

Chapter II titled “Writing the City: Theories and Representations” attempts a historical and philosophical mapping of the discourse of the city while taking into consideration the various theoretical interventions that have informed it. It traces the socio-political and economic history of Bombay and examines the various ways in which this city has affected imaginations, both literary and cinematic. The sheer change and shift in the nature of the city found expression in the fertile scholarship that sought to delineate the city and explore its rich legacy of concepts. Disciplines as diverse as film studies, literature, cultural studies, philosophy, economics and queer theory among others, have turned their attention to the city and produced new ways of thinking about it. This chapter aims to negotiate a theoretical framework by mapping a trajectory of the city from the perspective of urban theory. Beginning with the work of Lewis Mumford to the contemporary readings of the city in the works of Edward Soja, David Harvey and Manuel Castells, the chapter is also supported by sociological studies on the city. Moreover, the overwhelming repositories of literary and cinematic narratives have contributed tremendously in understanding the ramifications and representations of the city. Beginning with Marx and Engels’ comments on the city of class struggles, the chapter moves on to discuss the anonymity and decline of social relations in urban centres and the impact of the city on social psychology. The ensuing ‘behavioural turn’ found explanation in Kevin Lynch’s notion of the cognitive map of the city which aided in the design of legible cities. The impacts of human spatial behaviour on the urban landscape lead to the theory of *urban managerialism* which explained the distribution of urban resources and the resultant discrimination in the forms of social inequality. Theories of Marxian spatial capitalism further contributed to these ideas as David Harvey and Manuel Castells explored the dual role of the city both as a unit of production and a locus of social reproduction. The uneven urban landscape not only encouraged suburbanization but also marked the city as a gendered space of power relations. Postcolonial urban studies critiqued and questioned the normative assumptions and ideological forces shaping urban space. Postcolonial urbanism reveals the power dynamics that inform the representations of urban space. The deconstructive maneuvers of postcolonial theories uphold the idea of a ‘de-centered’ city, thus ushering in the concept of postmodern urbanism and the commodification of spatial relations. As social interaction takes a backseat, the city becomes a repressive and violent space. Henri Lefebvre’s theory of spatial production is concerned with the examination of space as

a product and space as a determinant of social relations and actions. Space is “perceived,” “conceived,” and “lived” through the representations of space, representational space, and spatial practices. As the spaces of the city are dynamic, the Lefebvrian theory of space is crucial to comprehend the ever-changing spaces of the city. This chapter also locates the city as an imagined space in the form of the writerly city and the cinematic city. Besides being a concrete physical space, the city is also “imagined environment,” that is central to the construction and experience of everyday life and cultures. Cities are shaped through representation and discursive practices such as literary and cinematic narratives which are informed by the notions of myth, nostalgia and memory. The chapter locates Bombay as a literary and cinematic artifact in order to contextualize the analyses of spatial relations within the metropolis.

“Cosmopolitan Bombay: Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and Shama Futehally’s *Tara Lane*” is the third chapter of the thesis which examines Bombay in the post-independence period. In the early 1990s Bombay experienced a tremendous upheaval in its position as a city of dreams. The city’s reputation as a cosmopolitan and secular city was not only shaken but also questions were raised about its much-touted Nehruvian ideal of progressive modernity. Critical interventions on the city focused on the formation of urban identity in the context of a liberalized India, thereby leading to fresh interventions in cultural production and literary representation of urban spaces. The conflicts and contradictions of this vibrant city are symbolic of the promise, potential, possibilities and failures of a postcolonial nation. This chapter concentrates on the literary mapping of Bombay in two novels—Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1981) and Shama Futehally’s *Tara Lane* (1993), two texts that look back at a cosmopolitan and secular city prior to the catastrophic events of the 1990s that altered the city forever. *Midnight’s Children* is set in post-independence India, a critical period when the newly-independent nation was struggling to find its feet in the map of the world. Set in the same period, *Tara Lane* navigates a small circumference of the history of post-independence India through the eyes of Tahera Mushtaq of the Muslim community in Bombay. Rushdie’s narrative is not merely a nostalgic re-creation of the city of his boyhood; through the protagonist, Saleem Sinai, the author strategically locates Bombay as the stage for a number of national events that lead to the building of the nation. Symbolically, Bombay becomes the metaphor

of a newly-independent India as public events are played out in the private lives of the characters. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's thesis on the production of space and its representation and supported by sociological studies, this chapter aims to map the imagined city of Bombay through the urban spaces as depicted in the selected novels.

Chapter IV is titled "The Marginal City: Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* and Kiran Nagarkar's *Ravan and Eddie*". At the centre of postcolonial urban narratives has been the relationship between the city and the individual who arrives from someplace else—"a temporary visitor to the city, who had a home to return to" (Mistry *Balance*, 66)—and locates himself or herself outside the perceived dominant culture. In this context Bombay is of particular significance as an embodiment of the migrant's desire to enter the city and be a part of its urban modernity. Postcolonial narratives reflect on Bombay's status as a space of conflict that has continued in the form of institutionalized differentiation and discrimination. In this sense Bombay challenges the migrant's triumphant entrance into the city, for the city transforms into an overwhelming space that controls, orders, and monitors its inhabitants. Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* presents with a sense of inevitability the destruction of the protagonists' home and lives. The book captures the essence of the minority communities of India's most populated city as they struggle to overcome the repercussions of the national crisis. The home, as a symbolic space of security and stability, is juxtaposed by a destabilized nation. By presenting the instability of home during the Emergency, the author shows that Nehru's universal paradigm of progress does not hold true for all. When crisis erupts, differences are buried by a shared antagonism towards the repressive state machinery as Bombay transforms into a wider space of political differences. Kiran Nagarkar's *Ravan and Eddie* shares with Mistry's novel a sense of the urban confusion and the presence of manipulative state politics that indicate a radically polarized city. The text suggests a complexity of urban interactions that belies any simplistic reading of Bombay. This chapter examines the ways in which the appropriation of urban space destabilizes the discourses of home and family through narratives that are introspective and inward-looking. Both novels attend to the conflicts faced by the protagonists in dealing with difficulties and problems in their respective lives. The chapter also focuses on the production of localized personal spaces within the home in opposition to nationalist discourses

about the city. The private space of the home is represented as flawed and imperfect in contrast to the alternate construction of nationalist space within the city.

The fifth chapter of the thesis is titled “Urban Networks, Crime and the “Unintended” City: Vikram Chandra’s *Sacred Games* and Murzbaan Shroff’s *Breathless in Bombay*”. As the fragmented postmodern city of spectacle continues to shift and change constantly, it is described in terms of ‘flux’ and ‘chaos.’ The experiences of the modern city are not exclusive of the perplexing and disturbing realities that lie beneath the celebrations of the city’s modernity. The metropolis thus emerges as a wild and barbarous space, offering a narrative that counters the discipline of the ordered city. The idea of the modern city as a distinct and bounded entity lies shattered as literary, cinematic, and sociological representations present a dark, insurgent, dysfunctional, crises-ridden city. Such urban imaginations and imaginaries transport the reader/audience into a terrifying world where the city is rendered incomprehensible. The present chapter examines urban space in contemporary Bombay and the representation of the networked city of crime and urban poverty in Vikram Chandra’s *Sacred Games* and Murzbaan Shroff’s collection of urban tales titled *Breathless in Bombay*. Both texts are layered accounts of this vivacious yet visceral city, narrated through a comprehensive selection of characters and incidents that exemplify the diversities inherent in this multi-ethnic, hybrid city. While Bombay has been frequently positioned as the symbol of India’s modernity and secular inclusivity, Chandra and Shroff suggest that the city has now reincarnated as a violently exclusionary space in which the cosmopolitan vision may be severely contested. The selection of a novel and a short-story collection is guided by the aim of this chapter in particular, and the thesis as a whole, to examine the diverse range of experiences of a city veered on the edge of a new millennium. While Chandra’s novel offers a grand narrative to unravel the picture of crime-city Bombay, Shroff’s short stories act as the perfect foil to the Chandra’s epic of crime. The urban tales offer sharp insights into contemporary life in the city by portraying the lives of those who are affected by the conflicts and ideologies of the powers that be.

The concluding chapter sums up the thesis and its main arguments. In *The Satanic Verses* (1988) Salman Rushdie reminds his readers that the “modern city is the locus classicus of impossible realities. Lives that have no business mingling with

one another sit side by side upon the omnibus” (331). This insight only underscores the difficulty of organizing and ordering the narrative’s treatment of the city within the constraints of the excessive and illimitable nature of urban space, which means that no narrative strategy can ever claim to encompass it. It is the ungraspable nature of the city which ultimately brings Bombay’s narratives into close proximity with the concepts signifying the city as an indefinite, unmappable, unidentifiable and fragmented disjuncture. For the writers considered in this work the understanding of urban space constitutes a challenge to the modes of its representation and interpretation. They seek to disrupt the idea of the city as a unitary object and, instead, highlight those spatial practices that illuminate a category of space which is at once rigid and irrevocably multiple. Literary narratives, thus, encompass the immensity of city life, because diversity is the founding premise of urban space, not just in its population, but in its form, meaning and practices.

The next chapter attempts a theoretical overview of the many deliberations on the city and the urban in order to negotiate a framework for the analysis of Bombay. At the same time, it also dwells upon the literary and cinematic representations of the city at large and Bombay in particular to situate the analyses of the texts selected in the thesis.

Notes

¹ For the purpose of continuity, the thesis uses ‘Bombay’ instead of ‘Mumbai’ for discussion.

² The growth and expansion of the financial and real estate sectors in the 1970s and the 1980s stimulated the ancillary growth of Bombay’s Stock Exchange, and the film and music industries. Tourism, printing and publishing were other important tertiary sector activities that emerged.

³ In 1872—the year of the first official census—the population of Bombay was 644, 405. Post Independence, the population accelerated at a rate of more than 5%. Between 1951 and 1981 the growth rate of Greater Bombay averaged at 3.5% (Gillian Tindall, *The City of Gold: The Biography of Bombay*, 1982).

⁴ The original colonial island of Bombay covered an area of only 68 sq. km. With the creation of Greater Bombay (1950) this area had increased to 188 sq. km. By 1957 the area of Greater Bombay was 430 sq. km. in 1965 the Gadgil Committee embarked on a project to demarcate the Bombay metropolitan region and envisaged a new metropolitan region that was pivoted on the de-centralization of Bombay and the creation of a new town in the mainland. This resulted in the creation of Navi Mumbai or New Mumbai which, sources claim, is the largest planned city in the world. Navi Mumbai covers an area of 344 sq. km.

⁵ The Shiv Sena was launched in 1966 under the leadership of Balasaheb Thackeray. The initial programme of the Sena was to ensure reservation of jobs and new economic opportunities for Maharashtrians. However, its active role in the political events of Bombay soon elevated the organization to governmental status.

⁶ Highly politicized as an attack on India itself, the attacks began on Wednesday, the 26th of November and lasted until Saturday, the 29th of November 2008. A total of 164 people were killed and at least 308 wounded. The attacks took place at different landmarks in Bombay—the Chattrapati Shivaji Terminus, the Oberoi Trident, the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower, Leopold Café, Cama Hospital, the Nariman House, Metro Cinema and St. Xavier's College.

⁷ The cinema of the period, especially in the 1950s, was replete with images of the physical landscape of the city. Films such as *Awara*, *Shri 420*, *Guest House*, and *CID*, among others, captured the essence of the post-independence city.

⁸ Raj Kapoor's portrayal of the Charlie-Chaplinesque 'common man' gained popularity as a representative character who struggled against the authority of tradition and the corruption of wealth. Kapoor's characters represented the middle-class sensibility as he sought his fortune amidst the traps and bewitchments of Bombay. Torn between two women—Vidya (Nargis) and Maya (Nadira)—the protagonist's choice signifies his rite of passage which he must cross to emerge a wiser person. Years later in *Raju Ban Gaya Gentleman* (1992) Shah Rukh Khan's character, Raju, faces a similar dilemma when he has to choose between the woman he loves (Juhi Chawla) and the woman who holds the ticket to upward mobility (Amrita Singh).

⁹ The Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti was founded on February 6, 1956 under the leadership of Keshavrao Jedhe. The organization included prominent activists like Acharya Atre, Prabodhankar Thackeray and Senapati Bapat who spearheaded the demand for the creation of a separate Marathi-speaking state out of the (then bilingual) State of Bombay. The Indian National Congress, which had pledged to introduce linguistic states prior to Independence, opposed the idea. They argued that post independence separate linguistic states may be a potential threat to the integrity of India. The Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti achieved its goal on May 1, 1960 when the state of Bombay was partitioned into the Marathi-speaking state of Maharashtra and the Gujarati-speaking state of Gujarat.

¹⁰ Sudipta Kaviraj and Mary F. Katzenstein's *Equality and Ethnicity—Shiv Sena Party and Preferential Politics in Bombay* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981) and Dipankar Gupta's *Nativism in a Metropolis* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1982) discuss in detail the politics of the Sena and their control on the city.

¹¹ Salman Rushdie *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995) represents a Bombay that is Janus-faced. The city's elite and middle-class are dependent on the city's underbelly, but this truth does not find mention in the historical narratives of the city.

¹² Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*. 1980. (London: Vintage, 2006). Henceforth, all citations are from this edition of the novel.

¹³ Directed by Danny Boyle *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) is an adaptation of the novel *Q & A* by Indian author and diplomat Vikas Swarup. The film tells the story of Jamal Mallik who appears and eventually wins the Indian version of the game show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* The film won eight Academy Awards and seven BAFTA awards, but generated controversy in its representation of 21st century Bombay. Critics in India panned the film for reinforcing the stereotype of the country as being a land of the poor and the desperate.

¹⁴ This review is available in < <http://www.sikhchic.com/article-detail.php?id=60&cat=11>>

¹⁵ The theory of residual space is available in
<http://www.urbanresidue.com/theory/residual_space.html>

¹⁶ Salman Rushdie is perhaps the most apt example of such threat. Following the publication of *The Satanic Verses* (1988), a fatwa was proclaimed against the writer by Ayatollah Khomeini on 14th February 1989, forcing Rushdie to go into hiding. More recently, Rushdie cancelled his tour of India during the Jaipur Literature Festival in January 2012 citing possible threat to his life. Later, he addressed a conference in New Delhi in March 2012. On the other hand Rohinton Mistry's book *Such A Long Journey* (1991) was struck off the syllabus of University of Mumbai following allegations by Aditya Thackeray that the book contained derogatory remarks on Maharshtrians. For example, a passage in the book reads: "What to do with such low-class people? No manners, no sense, nothing. And you know who is responsible for this attitude—that bastard Shiv Sena leader who worships Hitler and Mussolini. He and his 'Maharashtra for Maharshtrians' nonsense. They won't stop till they have complete Maratha Raj Wait till the Marathas take over, then we will have real Gandoo Raj." Replying to the allegations in a letter, Mistry draws attention to the individual's freedom of expression and choice and quotes a few lines from Rabindranath Tagore *Gitanjali*—"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high; Where knowledge is free; Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls ..."—to underscore his point.

Chapter II

Writing the City: Theories and Representations

What gives a city its special character is not just its topography or its buildings, but rather the sum total of every chance encounter, every memory, letter, color, and image jostling in its inhabitants' crowded memories after they have been living, like me, on the same streets for fifty years.

—Orhan Pamuk

“If Modernity is a Faustian bargain to unleash human potential and subdue nature to culture, then modern cities are its most powerful and forceful expressions” (Prakash *Spaces*, 1). Drawing from Marshall Berman’s text *All That Is Solid Melts into Air* (1988), Gyan Prakash’s introductory statement in *The Spaces of the Modern City: Imaginaries, Politics, and Everyday Life* (2008) recognizes the city as central to the negotiation of contemporary socio-political, economic and cultural phenomena. The city is the site of and witness to “dynamic encounters and experiences” (Prakash *Spaces*, 1); it is the crucible where the local and the global converge to produce multiplicitious spaces of the urban landscape, thus rendering impossible the existence of a master narrative of the city.

The debate on the origins of the city notwithstanding, the city has been, according to Lewis Mumford, characteristic of most civilizations and is often their fullest expression. At this point, however, it will suffice to say that cities have been in existence for a long time. Yet, it took a long time for a distinctive body of urban theory to emerge. Phil Hubbard points out that it was not until the nineteenth century that the city began to be seriously considered as a distinctive and important subject of study. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution and its attendant transformations, economic hierarchies of power determined the social structure as capital-based economy gained prominence as the centripetal force of urban life. The sheer change and shift in the nature of the city finds expression in the recent spate of fertile scholarship that sought to delineate the city and explore its rich legacy of concepts¹. At present the contemporary city necessitates the engagement of a variety of perspectives to recognize its many ambiguities and differences. Urban geographers

and sociologists now sought solutions to the contingencies of the urban: some developed ecological models of the city to predict urban growth and decline, some analyzed demographic patterns, and yet others evaluated the economic potential of the city. Some read the city as speculative site of land use and distribution and there are others who investigated questions of race, ethnicity and language as pivots to the understanding of the city. Empirical analyses of the city have been informed by different ideological viewpoints; contemporary dialogues on cities are now interfused with new intellectual spaces that pertain to poststructuralist, feminist, Marxist and neo-economist thought. More importantly, the city is, besides being a premise for theoretical intervention, a space of the imagination and a space of representation (Bridge and Watson 7). In *More Die of Heartbreak* (1987) Saul Bellow hails the city “the expression of the human experience it embodies, and this includes all personal history” (124). For the editors of *City Worlds* (1999) cities are “the intersections of multiple narratives’, a nexus of distinctive and co-existing stories” (Massey et. al 167). The fabric of the city is infused with images and metaphors that map the hopes and disappointments, dreams and aspirations of those living in it. Beyond the economic and demographic statistics of the city is a world of emotions and experiences that find expression in the literary and cinematic imaginings of the city.

How, then, can the city be identified and defined? Is it merely the analysis of form and function in relation to the way a population is organized around a place? How is urbanization linked to cities, especially in the present time when a significant majority of the world’s population resides in cities? What is the relationship between modernity and the urban experience? Does the urban fable hold true for all cities, or is it subject to demographic, temporal and spatial differences? More importantly, how has the city found expression in literature and cinema? How have representations of the city informed the individual’s notion of the city and vice-versa? These and a significant number of related questions confront the discussion of cities, urbanization and its various manifestations. The emergence of the concept of urban space further challenges the debate on the city, urban life, experience, culture and responses to the urban.

The present chapter attempts to answer some of the above questions by tracing the complex contours of the city informed as it is by the various institutions of

modernity and the inter-disciplinary gaze of academia. At the same time it looks at ways in which the city has been represented in literature and cinema. Section I undertakes a theoretical tour of the city, while section II focuses on Henri Lefebvre and his idea of ‘space’ as a key factor for the analysis of the urban. Section III concentrates on the literary and cinematic representations of the city and section IV looks at the postcolonial city and section V locates the city of Bombay in its representative forms.

I: Towards a Theory of the City

The unprecedented urbanization of the nineteenth century (also termed as the Second ‘urban revolution’) triggered a rapid shift in settlement from the country to the city. It ushered in a world of capitalist endeavours where manufacture and production playing a major role in formulating the social structure. Unlike rural settlements of the country, the industrial city was marked by social mobility and economic disparity. The spectacular residences of the bourgeoisie contrasted sharply with the humble living conditions of the street-dwellers who relied on their wits to make a livelihood in the city. The city was thus characterized by perpetual transformation—new ideas, technologies and practices constantly transformed the social structure within a rapidly changing urban environment:

To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world—and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know everything we are. (Berman 1)

The modern city was thus marked by spatial and temporal ambivalence, in sharp contrast to the socially secure rural life.

The inevitable conflation of modernization, urbanization and industrialization resulted in the emergence of key ideas that establish urbanism as a way of life. An important idea here was the size of cities that have now become larger and therefore more crowded. The social structure of cities was emancipatory, unlike rural settlements, more diverse, so that it was more individualized. Irrespective of its socially-emancipating nature, cities were viewed as essentially cold and calculating². Friedrich Engels’ work in particular documented the inhuman living conditions

experienced by workers in the industrializing metropolis.³ The anonymity that the city made possible was posited as its defining characteristic. Max Weber argued that the city needed to be defined as “a settlement of closely spaced dwellings which form a colony so extensive that the reciprocal personal acquaintance of the inhabitants, elsewhere characteristic of the neighbourhood, is lacking” (Swedberg and Agevall 36). This lack of reciprocity bequeathed the city a space of liberty and autonomy, and allowed the possibility of forging new identities unburdened by personal histories. This was a powerful motif in urban theory that aided in the examination of the innovative and civilized nature of cities vis-à-vis what Karl Mar calls the “idiocy” of the rural⁴. Yet, as Ferdinand Tonnies’ reminded us, the flipside of anonymity and freedom can result in feelings of insecurity and a profound sense of loneliness despite being in a crowd⁵. Louis Wirth too highlighted the decline of social relations in urban centres, so that the urban transformed into a space of anonymity⁶.

The work of these early urban sociologists concentrated on the nuances of the psycho-social life of cities. Interestingly, the identification of particular pathological conditions of the city legitimized a series of theoretical interventions in the urban environment. These included projects on planned cities⁷. In this context the establishment of the first Department of Sociology at Chicago in 1913 was an effective measure that established urban studies as “a legitimate and important field of study” (Hubbard 24)⁸. Drawing on the Darwinian theory of survival the co-founders, Robert E. Park and Ernest Burgess, proposed the concept of *human ecology* by which cities were viewed as “the outward manifestation of processes of spatial competition and adaptation by social groups which correspond to the ecological struggle for environmental adaptation found in nature” (Cooke 133). Such ideas are representative of the early attempts to comprehend the differences inherent in the urban landscape and counter the same with built models of urban habitation. The impact of the city on social psychology is further explored by Georg Simmel. In his essay “The metropolis and mental life” (1950) Simmel suggested that the city’s size and complexity results in the “intensification of nervous stimuli with which city dweller must cope” (28). Thus, the urban experience is dealt through a transformation of the individual consciousness that involves “a filtering out of the detail and minutiae of city existence” (Hubbard 18)⁹.

The constant preoccupation with modeling patterns of urban land use through planned city projects resulted in the emergence of the spatial science that sought to explore the complexities of the urban as a spatial structure. David Harvey develops this argument in *Explanation in Geography* (1969) where he underlines the problems of land use patterns in the city. Despite the being aware of the variations in land markets people lived in “suboptimal locations because they lack perfect knowledge or ability to act on that knowledge” (Hubbard 30). While this meant that the logic of the market does not hold, it exposed the problems associated with planned models of the city. As a result studies of the urban now concentrated on the actions of the urban residents who interpret and use the city based on their limited knowledge of their surroundings. It was during this period that Kevin Lynch introduced the notion of the mental map of the city. His book, *The Image of the City* (1973), expands on the mental picture of the city that we have in our minds to show planners and architects how to design legible cities. Although full of contradictions and inconsistencies, Lynch’s theory inspired a legion of studies which attempted to examine the ways in which people interpreted and acted in cities.

Urban geographers began fleshing out the internal dynamics of the city through the examination of human spatial behaviour and its impact on the urban landscape. New challenges soon emerged as urban patterns began to alter: deindustrialization recast the relationship between the city and its suburbs, and economic globalization brought about fundamental changes in inter-city relations. Land and other social goods became the stronghold of a few key individuals. The control and distribution of these assets lead to the development of the theory of urban managerialism. This theory explored how planners, real estate agents, mortgage lenders, financiers and architects managed and controlled urban assets and their distribution and circulation. They could deny certain social groups access to particular property which translates into the denial of certain spaces of the city. This discrimination highlighted the social inequality that marked the urban landscape. The influential role of these key actors in the distribution of urban resources resulted in the emergence of a ‘new urban sociology’ that examined issues of conflict, injustice and poverty. Commenting on the uneven social pattern and its causes David Harvey emphasized on the existence of

a clear disparity between the sophisticated theoretical and methodological frameworks which we are using and our ability to say anything really meaningful about events as they unfold around us ... There is an ecological problem, an urban problem, a debt problem, yet we seem incapable of saying anything in depth or profundity about any of them. (*Social Justice* 128-229)

In this light, the change in the theoretical orientation of urban studies was premised on a sense of disappointment among urban scholars regarding the inability of urban theory to satisfactorily explain the inconsistencies and contingencies of the urban.

The sense of disillusionment paved the way for the emergence of a Marxist approach to the urban that was concerned with the interrogation of distinctive forms of social conflict. Marxist urbanism rested on the idea that the social structure is informed by transformations in the political economy, and is thus organized to replicate and reproduce specific modes of production. The commodification of labour was the most significant development for it advanced the capitalist mode of production. Marx said little about cities, but he did acknowledge the spatial-temporal aspect as elementary for the exploitation of new markets and populations. The growth of cities was a key aspect in this area. Cities not only became concentrated sites of labour but also provided a ready market for new commodities. While the expanding city contained innumerable possibilities for the capitalist classes, it also resulted in the impoverishment of the proletariat. Marx comments:

The more rapidly capital accumulates in an industrial town ... the more miserable and impoverished are the dwellings of the workers ... improvements of towns, such as the demolition of badly built districts, the widening of city streets, the erections of palaces to house banks or warehouses obviously drive the poor into even worse and more crowded corners. (*Capital* 65, qtd. in Hubbard 37)

In modern, capitalist societies, Marx argued, new forms of socio-spatial relations were constantly being evolved resulting in the reproduction of capitalism. In the 1970s, the 'Marxist' canon, inspired urban scholars to embark on a fresh investigation of the urban—here the city was recognized as the pivot for the growth of class conflict and ideological control. This approach paved established the important of the role of space which David Harvey recognized as the spatial fix. Accordingly, spatial difference was

seen implicate capitalist relations and the city was now both a unit of production and a locus of social reproduction. In his book *The Urban Question* (1977), Manuel Castells argued that the organization of cities made possible for the state to provide the necessary facilities required to reproduce and maintain a flexible, educated and healthy workforce at the least cost¹⁰. Castells emphasized that the spatial form of the city was implicated in a number of significant ways in the reproduction of capitalism. This reinforced the idea that spatial transformation must be understood within the broader context of social transformation because social space is a fundamental dimension of society. Developing this point, Castells emphasized the need for a structural reading of the city

beyond the description of mechanisms of interactions between activities and locations, in order to discover the structural laws of the production and functioning of the spatial forms studied . . . There is no specific theory of space, but quite simply a deployment and specification of the theory of social structure, in order to account for the characteristics of the particular social form, space, and its articulation with other historically given, forms and processes. (*Urban Question* 124)

This structural solution to the 'urban question' was a valuable corrective especially where urban spaces were seen to be produced by the knowledge and action of those who inhabited them. Castells' defined the city as "a residential unit of labour power, a unit of collective consumption corresponding 'more or less' to the daily organization of a section of labour power" (*Urban Question* 148). This definition reduces the concept of space to simply signify the social processes; Castells recognized space to be a physical quantity that offered no knowledge of social relations. Despite this narrow take, Castells exposition of the urban question is significant for it located social processes as a direct result of the production processes in the city. David Harvey and other urbanists elaborated this argument later¹¹.

Harvey identified urban space as an active moment containing processes of capital accumulation and class struggle. He propounded that surplus profits could be invested usefully to generate processes of urban renewal especially in times of economic slump. This idea stressed on the role of the built environment as a source of profit and loss:

Under capitalism there is a perpetual struggle in which capital builds a physical landscape appropriate to its own condition at a particular moment in time, only to have to destroy it, usually in the course of a crisis, at a subsequent point in time. The temporal and geographical ebb and flow of investment in the built environment can be understood only in the terms of such a process. The effects of the internal contradictions of capitalism, when projected into the specific context of fixed and immobile investment in the built environment, are thus writ large in the historical geography of the landscape that results. (*Social Justice* 124)

Harvey read the urban landscape as subject to contradictory impulses of investment and disinvestment. At the same time there was an imperative to segregate upper-class and working-class residential areas that would suppress any form of working-class agitation. This form of segregation created an uneven urban landscape which, in turn, encouraged suburbanization¹². Significantly, the role of the state was crucial to deliberate on the contradictions of capitalism. The process of suburbanization created problems, especially in the provision of housing and transport infrastructure. Urban planners now worked to resolve the conflicts between capital and labour by creating cities that functioned as spaces of capital accumulation.

It is impossible to do justice to the rich diversity of Marxist urban theory in the context of the present chapter. It is probably suffice to suggest that all urban theory inspired by Marx rests on the idea that urban development can be understood only in relation to capitalism. Capitalism is the root of all urban problems and provides answers to the 'urban question'. The Marxist perspectives on the city were never subscribed to by all, many urbanists prioritized agency over structure to explain the differences and diversity characteristic of city life. For example, Marxist urbanism encouraged a productive dialogue between feminist and Marxist scholars in the context of the urban landscape. Feminist theories draw attention to the ways in which knowledge about the city is created by discourses that reflect gendered power relations¹³. The representation of the city as a site of capitalist reproduction has been criticized by many feminist scholars who argue that the experiences of women in the city, their mobility and visibility are connected to their place in the capitalist economy¹⁴. The issue of safety has been a major preoccupation of feminist scholars¹⁵.

Dora Epstein's essay "Abject terror: a story of fear, sex, and architecture" (1997) is a compelling account of the ways women negotiate their fear when traversing through the city. According to Epstein women break up the city into places that are safe and unsafe by identifying areas and streets that can be walked alone and those that must be traversed with others. The strategies they adopt is reflective of their negotiation of the city. Feminist-oriented urban studies argue that the position of women within society and the city is perhaps best explained with reference to both the capitalist mode of production and the structures of patriarchy. The fact that women experienced the urban differently from men resulted in a shift in focus, and women's studies began acknowledging this difference. However the alternate to this argument has been presented by feminists like Liz Bondi and Hazel Christie who argue that cities actually render visible the spatial location of women and their subsequent exploitation in the employment structures of the city. Thus, as a site of complex power-play the city graphically records the logistics and consequences of the intricacies of negotiation of gender, subjectivity and identity (Bridge and Watson 293).

Postcolonial studies have had a profound influence upon contemporary urban studies, prompting a critical interrogation of many of the field's earlier theoretical assumptions. The relationship between the colonial and postcolonial is a complex one especially in the context of the ideological forces that shape urban space. Postcolonial perspectives on the urban question the normative assumptions inherent within the analysis of the political economy. It also critiques the essentialized concepts of class, race, gender, and sexuality¹⁶. In *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City* (1996) Jane Jacobs states, "Imperialist operations and ideologies also shaped urban spaces of deprivation" (73). Postcolonial urbanism thus concentrates on revealing the power dynamics that inform the representations of urban space. Cities are seen as sites for the manifestation of practices that are not simply political and economic but also cultural. Similarly, spatial forms, designs of the built environment and socio-cultural ideologies have considerable influence upon the constitution of social identities and subjectivities. An important implication here is that the language and concepts used to describe certain Western cities (such as Paris and Chicago) cannot be regarded as appropriate for describing those cities beyond the West, as is the case with Bombay. By implication, this means that these concepts may be not be adequate to account for the diversity of cities in the West, especially in the context of their varied roles in

geographies of imperialism and the Empire. The concept of postcolonial urbanism is dealt with at length in the third section of the chapter.

Postcolonial theories have become increasingly significant in human geography in their emphasis on the questions of difference as they are played out in the politics of city life. This idea of other forces, colluding with capitalism, being at play, is also a defining characteristic of post-structural thinking. The post-structuralist emphasis on language, representation and power underlines a different way of thinking about the production of space that involves entwined of immaterial and material forces. The proponents of post-structural thought—Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Luce Irigaray and Jean Baudrillard—sought to develop alternatives more flexible in the re-thinking of the disorderliness of life. Chief here has been the concern to move beyond totalizing theories and incorporate the richness of the local and the particular. By the late 1970s the industrial city had mutated into a very different species. The ‘de-centering’ of cities resulted in the emergence of a peripheral urban development that concentrated on new urban centres or cores which effectively become what Joel Garreau called *edge cities*¹⁷. For such reasons, the post-industrial city has often been described as a *centreless* urban form¹⁸.

In the essay “Urban lifestyles: diversity and standardization in spaces of Consumption” (1998) Sharon Zukin points out that the most significant feature of post-industrial cities is their organization around consumption rather than production. This is manifest in a plethora of urban spaces that include malls, multiplexes, cafes, marketplaces, nightclubs, parks and museums (Hubbard 44). This implies that the post-industrial city is premised on new ideas of social control where individuals are recognized as consumers and non-consumers, instead of workers and the unemployed. This is explicated in David B. Clarke’s *The Consumer Society and the Postmodern City* (2003) where he argues that the consumers’ need for commodities has been replaced by desire. This desire cannot be sated, only fuelled by the spectacle of goods available. In the essay “Consuming life” (2001) Zygmunt Bauman extends the argument further to show that the *wants* of the consumer have been replaced by *needs*, so that it is difficult to discern between the two. The seductive quality of present-day capitalism tempts the consumer into impulsive and conspicuous consumption. This is

a contradictory process—in an era of employment insecurity and risk, consumption promises security, but fuels that very insecurity:

Seeking security through consumer choices is itself a prolific and inexhaustible source of insecurity. Finding one's way amidst the deafening cacophony of peddlers' voices and the blinding medley of wares that confuse and defy sober reflection is a mind-boggling and nerve-wracking task. (Bauman, qtd. in Rojek 303)

Such seduction allows the consumer to buy security and freedom despite the fact that the market is proliferated with new brands and products. The design and ambience of consumer spaces is an important factor that fuels consumer desire. The consumer spaces are designed to seduce, to encourage the consumer to buy more products, but contradictorily, this desire is never sated. The exclusion of the urban poor from such spaces however creates a space of disenchantment and segregation. Michael Davis's *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (1990) explores this city of spatial disenchantment where the city appears as a repressive and violent space as segregation offers fewer spaces of democratic social interaction¹⁹.

The post-industrial city is thus a complex and divided city. The ordered system of production of the industrial era was replaced by a more consumer-oriented mode of social control. The result is a patchwork of cultural change, explicates David Harvey. Harvey asserts that the contemporary city contains a plethora of cultural signs and images, thus forming a *mélange* that is devoid of order. This is largely an outcome of what Harvey calls "flexible capitalism"—an idea he elaborated in *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (1989). Apparently, the postmodern city is a product of cultural capitalism that operates on the logic of manipulation of the urban landscapes²⁰. The postmodern theming of places and the celebration of spectacle lure the consumer into consumption. This is a significant idea that is suggestive of the ways in which consumers are manipulated. Edward Soja extends Harvey's interpretation of the postmodern city to indicate the emergence of new urban spaces that was inextricably linked to the operative logic of capitalism.

The question that arises here is whether the contemporary city can be usefully explained with reference to the theories evolved in the context of the modern city as Harvey and Soja's work implies (Hubbard 49). Cities have undergone remarkable

transformations in their physical appearance, economy, social composition, governance and topography. In this context the need has emerged for new theories that suitably explain contemporary urbanism. This theoretical journey in thinking about the city has revealed that urban theories have been tailored to answer particular questions about cities and the urban. Yet, as Phil Hubbard points out, it is difficult to discern any “progression” of urban theory (*City* 56). Commenting on this lack of progress in urban studies, Nigel Thrift points out in his essay “An urban impasse” (1993) that urban studies “recycled critiques, endlessly circulating the same messages about modernity and postmodernity” (228). Nevertheless, despite the criticism, the contribution of such postmodern readings of the city cannot be overlooked, especially in the context of contemporary urbanism when cities elude comprehension.

Recent approaches in reading the ‘city’ as a distinctive and important spatial formation have ushered in a “representational turn” in urban studies. The focus is now on recognition, negotiation and appropriation of urban spaces leading to the formation of a networked society. Such approaches provide interesting insights on the city’s distinctiveness and may provide the basis for a distinctive urban geography.

II: Space: ‘A Lefebvrian Reconciliation’

The modern metropolis, said Charles Baudelaire, was the site of modernity, and the associated ideas of the transitory and the fleeting. The features of modernity within the metropolis necessitate interpretation and representation to enable a comprehension of the same. In *Imagining the Modern City* (1999) James Donald reads the notion of the city, its streets, architecture and populace as a text that is to be found in various forms in the work of many writers since at least the nineteenth century. The social world of relations and interactions within the urban framework is increasingly being represented, expressed and understood as a network of social-economic and political linkages. The integration of space and time is a fundamental feature of this discourse. The “spatial turn” in social sciences accords a great deal of attention to the issues of space and spatial relations. The combined processes of urbanization and globalization result in the development of new geographies so that the process continues. The new space–time configurations call for new concepts of space that correspond to contemporary social environment. Knowledge of the social production

of space is therefore increasingly fundamental to understand the diversity of social relations of contemporary existence; at the same time it is necessary to ascertain the reasons behind their given forms of existence. The last quarter of the twentieth century witnessed a spurge of texts and studies that concentrate on the re-imagining of human cultural geography. These studies acknowledge the notion of space as a fundamental area for social enquiry and analysis. Such a development is premised on the recognition of the advance and applicability of spatial theories. This is the “spatial turn” in human sciences that was heralded by cultural geographers such as Derek Gregory with *Geographical Imaginations* (1993), John Urry with *Consuming Places* (1995), and Edward Soja, with *Postmodern Geographies* (1989) and *Thirdspace* (1996). More recently, Doreen Massey’s *For Space* (2005), which clearly echoes Althusser’s *For Marx* (1969), has summarized the developments of the past decade.

Space is shaped by human relations; conversely human relations are also shaped by space. The ways in which space is perceived, conceived, represented, imagined and used has been crucial to comprehending the contemporary world. Noted spatial theorist Henri Lefebvre argues that knowledge of the history of space is crucial for understanding the spatial realities of the present. Earlier, Karl Marx pointed out that without the knowledge of space one cannot fully comprehend the context and factors that shape the world. It is, therefore, important to address the meanings of the social construction of space. For Marx the ownership and control of space greatly influences the organization and perpetuation of urban capitalism. Marx’s insisted on the importance of the separation of town and country as the maximum division of material and mental labour—this introduces the urban as a form of produced space. Gerog Simmel’s essay “The metropolis and mental life” (1903) is crucial to appreciate the form and content of social interaction. Simmel’s spatial theory rests on the identification of various ‘aspects’ of space, such as exclusivity, fixity, mobility, proximity and distance, provides deep insights on social relations. David Harvey’s explication of spatial forms and structures is indicative of the growth and prioritization of urban capitalism as the locus for production, consumption and circulation. This analysis is vital to comprehend processes of capital accumulation. Michel Foucault did not produce a theory of space; however his interventions on dominant representations of the urban are a significant contribution for understanding the intricacies of spatial categories.

Foucault, in *Of Other Spaces* (1967), had famously declared the present epoch to be “the epoch of space”²¹. In this light, Henri Lefebvre’s analysis of the social constructions and contradictions in the production of space becomes a valuable tool for understanding the contemporary moment. In *The Production of Space* (1991) Lefebvre sought to understand the role of space, the nature of the urban and the importance of everyday life within the framework of the capitalist mode of production. Lefebvre’s aim was to demonstrate that space was political. He asserted that knowledge of space must address the question of its production. His fundamental concern was the importance of social relations in historically specific epochs and the societies therein. For Lefebvre the notions of “space” and “time” are inextricably linked in all processes subsumed under modes of production:

Space is nothing but the inscription of time in the world; spaces are the realisations, inscriptions in the simultaneity of the external world of a series of times, the rhythms of the city, the rhythms of the urban population. (Kofman and Lebas 17)

Lefebvre’s spatial theory is premised on the production of space based on two principles: (i) the need to consider space as a product or a thing (ii) to recognize space as a determinant or a process of social relations and actions. Space is at the centre of a continuing socio-historical process and is not exclusive of the conflict and struggle over meanings and values. Lefebvre’s “history of space” may be understood as a process, in which different modes of production produce their own space:

the *long history of space* ... is to be distinguished from an inventory of things in *space* ... as also from ideas and discourses *about space*. It must account for both representational spaces and representations of space, but above all for their interrelationships and their links with social practice. The history of space thus has its place between anthropology and political economy. (*Production* 116, italics in original)

According to Lefebvre, the city is the site of modernity; it is here that the fullest effects of urbanization and industrialization are realized. Cities have been in existence much before industrialization and modern capitalism, and as such they involuntarily become the pivot for capitalist production, social relations and for the “production and reproduction of human beings by human beings, rather than a production of objects” (*Writings* 101). The city is not only the site of political power but also the centre for

all economic activity. It is the site of industrial production and consumption, and simultaneously the centre for the manufacture and circulation of ideas and knowledge. Lefebvre read the city as the site for the development and perpetuation of social relations of production and their reproduction. Rob Shields explains the Lefebvrian notion of the urban as a “social centrality, where the many elements and aspects of capitalism intersect in space, despite often merely being part of the place for a short time” (*Lefebvre* 145).

The city contains monuments and edifices that represent the production and consumption of materiality. It is also inclusive of spaces for entertainment, play, spectacle, leisure and festivals. Thus Lefebvre asserts that the urban “does not simply represent the transformation of space into a commodity by capitalism, but it is also the potential arena of play (festival)” (*Writings* 27). In relation to the production of space Lefebvre’s perceives the city as a work of nature or art.

The importance of Lefebvre’s conceptualization of the production of space lies in its critique of the significance of space in modern capitalist society that it is not to be separated from social relations. Lefebvre’s spatial dialectic states that space is a material thing. It is a process that involves social relations between people and, in turn, between people and things in space. This space is produced; it is a process which makes possible the occurrence of social relations. Space then

is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity—their (relative) order and /or (relative) disorder Itself the outcome of past actions, social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, whilst suggesting others and prohibiting yet others. (Lefebvre *Production*, 73)

Lefebvre’s chief concern in his analysis of space is the reconciliation of what he identified as two distinct and competing conceptions of space. The first is the mental or ideological space and the second is the physical or natural space. The Lefebvrian concept of social space is

revealed in its particularity to the extent that it ceases to be indistinguishable from mental space (as defined by the philosophers and mathematicians) on the one hand, and physical space (as defined

by practico-sensory activity and the perception of ‘nature’) on the other. (*Production* 27)

The emphasis on the unique qualities of space holds potential not only for a radical spatial re-conceptualization of modernity, but also has practical and political significance in contesting dominant representations of space.

How is social space produced? Lefebvre’s theory posits that the production of space can be divided into three dialectically interconnected processes, also called *formants* or *moments* of the production of space. On the one hand, the *moments* refer to the triad of “spatial practice,” “representations of space,” and “representational spaces.” On the other, they refer to “perceived,” “conceived,” and “lived” space. These concepts are not exclusive of the other, and points to a twofold approach to space—one subjective and the other linguistic. Lefebvre thus sought a “unity theory” of space. He coined the term “spatiology” to signify the *rapprochement* between physical space, mental space and social space. This includes the space occupied by “sensory phenomena, including products of the imagination such as projects and projections, symbols and utopias” (Lefebvre *Production*, 404). The realms of perception, symbolism and imagination are not separate from physical and social space. Bringing these different modalities of space together within a single theory would *expose* space, *decode* space and *read* space (Lefebvre *Production*, 142-44). For Lefebvre the *process* of producing space and the *product*—that is, the produced space itself—are two inseparable aspects. Space is produced, but it is not separate from this process of production. He explains this complex interplay by using a conceptual triad, which incorporates three *moments* identified by him: representations of space, representational space, and spatial practices (*Production* 33).

Spatial practices refer to the physical and material flows (of individuals, groups or commodities), circulations, transfers and interactions that occur in and across space. In other words, social life is produced and reproduced. This includes the use of particular types of buildings, the form and structure of the urban landscape and areas that have been set-aside for specific purposes or functions such as sites for housing, industry, commerce, shopping or leisure and recreation. Spatial practice

embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation. Spatial practice

ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society's relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of *competence* and a specific level of *performance*. (*Production 33*, italics in original)

Further,

The spatial practice of a society secretes that society's space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it. From the analytical standpoint, the spatial practice of a society is revealed in the deciphering of its space. (*Production 38*)

Also,

It embodies a close association, within perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, 'private' life and leisure) ...spatial practice must have a certain cohesiveness (*Production 38*)

Spatial practices are the experiences of the circulation of goods, people, money, labour power, information, among others, which associate the ownership, use and designation of land within a hierarchy of administrative and organizational division of space. Forms of social control by means of policing and surveillance are an intrinsic element of spatial practice.

Representations of space refer to the conceptualized space, the discursively constructed space of professionals such as architects and planners. *Representations of space* are "tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations" (*Production 33*). It is the

conceptualised space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic sub-dividers and social engineers, and of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent—all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived This is the dominant space of any society (or mode of production). (*Production 38–9*)

Representations of space thus comprise of the objectified representations used and produced by these agents. This is always a conceived and abstract space since it

subsumes ideology and knowledge within its practice. It is, therefore, the dominant space in any given society. Because it is effectively the space of capital, conceived space has a substantial influence in the production of space and finds expression in monuments, towers, factories, as well as in the repressive space of administrative authoritarianism. Thus *representations of space* refer to the ideological, linguistic, symbolic relations that inform the lived space and its conceptual framework.

Representational space is the space experienced through complex symbols and images of its inhabitant and users. David Harvey reads *representational spaces* as mental inventions (codes, signs, ‘spatial discourses’, utopian plans, imaginary landscapes, and even material constructs such as symbolic spaces, particular built environments, paintings, museums, and the like) that imagine new meanings or possibilities for spatial practices” (*Social Justice* 218–19).

Representational space is lived space, the space of everyday life in contrast to the domination of the conceived, ordered, regulated space of hegemonic forces. Spaces of representation then are subject to rationalization, codification, intervention, and usurpation. For Lefebvre, *representational spaces* embody

Complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground of social life, as also to art (which may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational spaces). (*Production* 33)

It is

space as directly *lived* through its associations and images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’, but also some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do no more than describe. This is the dominated—and hence passively experienced—space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects. Thus representational spaces may be said, though again with certain exceptions, to tend towards more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs. (*Production* 38)

Representational spaces, then, are the spaces of everyday life where complex factors interact. These are spaces of the imaginary produced from cultural and social forces.

The dynamic relationship between all three elements was the means by which historically specific spatializations were socially produced. Lefebvre's conceptual triad is thus a pointer to the need to think about a history of space(s). The production of space is intimately connected with modes of production, and by extension with social arrangements of space:

spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces contributes in different ways to the production of space according to their qualities and attributes, according to the society and mode of production in question, and according to the historical period.
(*Production* 46)

Changes in culture and modes of production reveal the consequent changes in the production of space and vice versa. For Lefebvre, multiple spaces can always exist, and as such, history does not seem to be linear. The concept of "produced space" also provides a useful rubric for understanding the modalities of capitalism within the framework of Western modernity. To apply Lefebvre to contemporary social space (and to the notion of 'postmodern space) would necessitate an examination of the points of encounter, assembly, and continuity relations as apparent in shopping malls, multiplexes, suburban homes and public transport systems. Further, it would be imperative to assess the spaces of resistance enmeshed within these relations and determine if resistance is possible at all.

Similar relations may be seen to permeate the Asian city, for instance the urban space of Bombay. One might think, for example, of the slums of Dharavi, or the crowded and dilapidated *chawls* and squatter settlements in Mahim Creek, Parel, Dadar and Matunga. These resident subjects and spaces are produced as part of the larger capitalist space, but at the same time, they highlight a resistance to that spatial arrangement by producing an alternate spatiality complete with separate modes of production and consumption.

Social power and social relations are symbolized in the appropriation of space. The significance of such spatialization is highlighted through an analysis of these

relations as they reveal the ways in which the imaginary and the symbolic character of the spatial is inscribed in social contexts. The real spaces of the city are essentially dynamic, informed as they are by social relations of power. As they change over time, they represent transformations in the distribution of spaces and in access to resources, and are most reflected in the postcolonial present.

III: Writing the City: Literary and Cinematic Representations

By now it has been established that cities are products. Bounded by territorial borders cities are a complex web of social, economic, and cultural exchange that operate on the categories of class, gender, ethnicity and race. These interactions shape the ways in which cities are imagined, perceived and experienced. The city is also subject to the discourse of the everyday, and is often mediated through images, discourses, and media representations²². The notion of the *cognitive map* of the city that Kevin Lynch had explained earlier is useful here. This map is demonstrative of the ways in which urban dwellers construct a city of the mind and orient themselves accordingly. This means that the imagined cityscape is a crucial component of the urban experience. The city is thus continually reproduced through acts of the imagination, acts that are grounded in material space and social practice. Drawing from Benedict Anderson's idea of the imagination as constitutive of national communities James Donald suggests that just as nations are imagined communities; it is possible to conceive of cities as imagined places or as an "imagined environment," (*Imagining* 427).

Anthony King too elaborates that it is impossible to experience the city in its totality. This experience is always fragmented as it remains limited to subjective experiences. In *Spaces of Global Cultures* (2004) King declares that the city "exists only in our heads" (9). "To imagine is to make present to my mind's eye what is absent", says James Donald in his essay "This, Here, Now: Imagining the Modern City" (1997). It is widely acknowledged that cities are central to the experience of everyday life and cultures. Within the spaces of the city identities are formed, and collective meanings are made and individual experiences occur. This suggests that cities are never absent; they are "hardly *not there*" (Donald 121, italics in original). The urban is mediated through a powerful set of political, sociological, and cultural

associations. Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson hail the recent cultural turn in urban studies that examine cities as cosmopolitan and multicultural spaces. In this context the overwhelming presence of urban artifacts notwithstanding, as James Donald argues, “you too operate with the city as a category of thought and experience” (121). This is the *immaterial* city which, Ihab Hassan argues, has “in-formed history from the start, moulding human space and time ever since time and space moulded themselves to the wagging tongue” (Westwood and Williams 179, italics in original). The modern metropolis comprises of dynamic and kaleidoscopic environments that are constantly made new by the shifting signs of discontinuity. James Donald argues that ways of comprehending the city inevitably inform ways of

acting on the space of the city, with consequences which then in turn produce a modified city which is again seen, understood and acted on.

It is not just that the boundaries between reality and imagination are fuzzy and porous. In the development of cities can be discerned a traffic between the two, an economy of symbolic constructs which have material consequences that are manifested in an enduring reality.

(*Imagining* 22)

The porous boundaries between reality and imagination are accompanied by the porosity between the symbolic city and its material constructs that manifest reality in turn. Spatial practices create a myriad of narrative maps which are central to the process of transforming cartographic space into places of meaning and memory. Thus it becomes important to examine the dominant images and metaphors through which the modern city has been mediated. Importantly, it is necessary to understand the ways in which these images and metaphors have informed and shaped both the fabric and the experience of the modern city.

The publication of Jonathan Raban’s *Soft City* (1974)—a celebration of life in ‘his’ city of London—was indicative of a radical shift in urban theory and analysis. Raban’s work highlighted that city imaginations not only inform urban design and planning, but also form an integral part of everyday negotiations of the urban:

Cities, unlike villages and small towns, are plastic by nature. We mould them in our images: they, in turn, shape us by the resistance they offer when we try and impose a personal form on them The city as we might imagine it, the soft city of illusion, myth, aspiration,

nightmare, is as real, maybe more real, than the hard city one can locate in maps and statistics, in monographs on urban sociology and demography and architecture. (10)

The intensity of the imagination is tremendous, and Raban's elaboration is a pointer to the real consequences of imaginative representation. The effect of the city on the imagination exists in a constant state of tension: on the one hand, it stimulates the imagination and enables creativity, on the other it also constraints creativity by virtue of an already present referential frame. Cities enable the realization of the self, or conversely cities separate the self from creativity and imagination in spaces of alienation and estrangement (Bridge and Watson 9). Literature, and more recently cinema, plays a crucial part in forming dominant representations of the city. Victor Burgin explains,

the city in our actual experience is *at the same time* an actually existing physical environment, *and* a city in a novel, a film, a photograph, a city seen on television, a city in a comic strip, a city in a pie chart, and so on. (28, italics in original)

Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson, the editors of *A Companion to the City* (2000), argue that the flows between "fabric, representation and imagination blur the epistemological and ontological distinctions, and produces the city between, the imagined city where we actually live" (47). Roland Barthes's ideas about signification provides the theoretical and methodological starting point from which to read the city: "The city is a discourse and this discourse is truly a language: the city speaks to its inhabitants, we speak our city, the city where we are, simply by living in it, by wandering through it, by looking at it" (Leach 168).

The city of the imagination finds expression in representation through literature, various arts and media²³. In their Introduction to *Imagining Cities: Scripts, Signs, Memory* (1997) editors Sallie Westwood and John Williams suggest that the notion of imaginaries include

literary productions, notions of urban myth, memory and nostalgia in the city and its environment, or to the sociological imagination re-cast within the changing realm of new technologies and forms of communication. (1)

The cultural production of the city and urban space, particularly with regard to literature and cinema, relies on Benedict Anderson's study of nation as an "imagined community"²⁴. The role of print capitalism—the engine of Anderson's interpretation of the emergence of nationalism—may be even clearer in respect to modern cities. Anderson argues that with the advancement of print, the novel offered a narrative form that allowed people of a particular nation to imagine themselves as belonging to the same nation despite geographical distance and lack of connection to other individuals of the same nation. Cities take shape through representation:

Literature, film, architecture, painting, tourist guides, postcards, photography, city plans—all provide selective representations of the city and shape the metaphors, narratives and syntax which are widely used to describe the experience of urban living. (Liam and Kennedy 4)

Cities also take shape through discursive practices which results in the blurring of the boundary between the real and the imagined cities. According James Donald, the urban is mediated through a powerful set of political, sociological, and cultural symbols, which are condensed in the emblematical space of the city:

There is no such *thing* as a city. Rather *the city* designates the space produced by the interaction of historically and geographically specific institutions, social relations of production and reproduction, practices of government, forms and media of communication, and so forth. By calling this diversity "the city," we ascribe to it a coherence or integrity. *The city*, then, is above all a representation. But what sort of representation? By analogy with the now familiar idea that the nation provides us with an "imagined community," I would argue that the city constitutes an *imagined environment*. (*Imagining* 180, italics in original)

Further he states that the development of modern transportation technology has facilitated constant movement and reduced distances to a great extent, so that individuals experience several cities—the "*living* space of the city exists as representation and projection and experience as much as it exists as bricks and mortar or concrete and steel" (181, italics in original). The "lived experience" of the urban has been enhanced by the proliferation of information and visual imagery of the city. Collective imaginaries of the city, therefore, are highly complex and point to the fact cities are always in process, always changing, never static. It is important, therefore,

to interrogate the ways in which cities have been conceptualized, collectively imagined and individually represented.

In foregrounding the ideas of the city as a physical space that operates as a backdrop to the development of social relationships, the narrative temporality of the novel has been crucially important. In his book *Signs Taken for Wonders* (1983) author J. Moretti explains:

The novel reveals that the meaning of the city is not to be found in any particular place, but manifests itself only through temporal trajectory. Whereas the great aspiration of the mythic narration exacts the metamorphosis of time into space, the urban novel turns the axiom on its head and seeks to resolve the spatial in terms of the sequential. (qtd. in Bridge and Watson 7)

The structure and sequence of the novel disseminated certain ways of viewing the urban landscape. For example, the earlier dichotomy between rural utopia and urban nightmare was soon replaced by the *Bildungsroman* narrative that was, in turn, displaced by narratives of social opacity. Thus, the relation between literature and the metropolis is defined by the ability of the latter to act as a canvas for the former. The city has been the crucible for some of the greatest works in literature, and the urban experience is deeply informed by and integrally embedded in the literary readings of the city. The city and literature are intertwined so that our experience of each is mutually constitutive. It might even be argued that there is no understanding of the city that is not mediated by literary imaginations. The possibilities that the city offers and the daily urban imaginings are influenced as much by the literature encountered as well as the lived experiences that has gone before. Ann Chalmers Watts and Michael C. Jaye, editors of *Literature and the Urban Experience* (1981) state:

the literature of the city yields experiences that become integral part of our lives through time; we seek to revisit, discover, locate and avoid, or create those imaginative impressions and journeys anew” (ix).

In *The City in Literature* (1998) Richard Lehan too agrees that literature gives imaginative reality to the city and urban changes in turn help transform the literary text²⁵.

The ways in which a culture writes about its cities is a means by which that particular culture and its ideology can be understood. *The New Jerusalem of the Book of Revelation* or *St. Augustine's City of God* depicts the ideal city whose perfections only serve to highlight the shortcomings of all earthly cities. Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) and Thomas Campanella's *The City of the Sun* (1623) represent the ideal Renaissance city-state; both texts look back to Plato's ideal republic. The diaries of Samuel Pepys details London during the plague years and the Great Fire of 1666. Such images of the city are rooted in the real politics of earlier centuries. Negative literary images of the city also often have their roots in its political nature. In a wide variety of texts from the classical period to the present day the urban and the rural have been placed in diametric opposition, to the advantage of the latter. Here the city is seen as the site of guile, corruption, intrigue and false values, as against the positive and straightforward values of the countryside, elaborates Raymond Williams in *The Country and the City* (1973). The city comedies of Shakespeare and his contemporaries attack the vanity, greed, malice and deceit of city-dwellers, particularly those who represent a decaying courtier class and trader class. Ben Jonson's work presents the experiences of city life in a variety of character and language. The resourcefulness of the characters in finding new ways of exploiting their neighbours provides force for drama, as did Samuel Johnson's sharp satire of the human vanity in eighteenth-century London. The English Romantic movement began a literary tradition of disparaging the city²⁶. Poets such as William Blake wrote about the increased industrialization of the cities that served to degrade its inhabitants. Thomas De Quincey's drug-induced fantasies were a radical departure from Wordsworth's romanticized landscape. Charles Dickens' treatment of the city transposed the materiality, sensuality and texture of London to the text. The Dickensian narrative is premised on the search for the subterranean networks of community beneath the surface of the class-divided society. It is impossible to read Dickens without being immersed in the dirty streets of East London, or smelling the fog rising off the Thames. The themes of his novels resonate with salient urban themes of today: crime, law, streets, shops, transports, popular pastimes, and the notion of urban alienation or anomie. Dickens wrote about the underbelly of London life and concentrated on the dereliction of the city in juxtaposition to its wealth and riches in works such as *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Bleak House*. T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* (1922) describes how the city has been completely absorbed in the mental

landscape of the observer. The fog, the river, and anonymous crowds of London still exist in the city, but now the city has become unreal:

Unreal City,
 Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
 A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
 I had not thought death had undone so many.
 Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
 And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.²⁷

Eliot's London reads as the antithesis of William Wordsworth's celebration of the beauty of the city in the poem "Upon Westminster Bridge" (1802):

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
 Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
 A sight so touching in its majesty:
 This City now doth like a garment wear
 The beauty of the morning:²⁸

The cultural and spiritual topos of London—the “unreal city” of modernity—in *The Waste Land* replicates the idea of the city in modern consciousness. Eliot's London represents the fact that by the twentieth century the realities of the city had changed. The city could no longer be represented in a single image nor could it be reduced to an all-encompassing narrative. Raymond Williams observes that “in a way there is no longer a city, there is only a man walking through it” (Bridge and Watson 49). James Joyce and Virginia Woolf are two modernist writers who wrote about the effect of the overwhelming metropolis on individuals. Joyce's Dublin is internalized as the consciousness and conveyed the modern city-dwellers' ability to live both here and elsewhere. For Joyce “the city speaks through everyone and everything, in a multitude of voices” (Bridge and Watson 243). In Woolf, the subjectivities of the characters are constituted in the very spaces of the city of London. Woolf's city is mediated through the subjective thoughts and responses of the protagonists so that the experience of the city is rendered in a psychic space (Donald *Imagining* 130). Baudelaire's Paris is the subject and site of his journey into the heart of modernity, and was responsible for the usurpation of Romanticism's elevation of the country as the cultural and spiritual locale of civilization. The works of W. H. Auden and Samuel Beckett contain expressions of high modernism while the works of H. G. Wells, Philip K. Dick, and Samuel Delany were seen as expressions of the post-apocalyptic futurist scenarios.

Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* is a treatise on the effects of urban living and its effects. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw writers such as Theodore Dreiser and Stephen Crane writing about the city as a malevolent force. The modernist and existentialist writers of the twentieth century continued to depict the city as a destroyer of humanity's essence²⁹. However early feminist writers viewed the city as a source of self-realization away from the constraints of the gendered space of the home and patriarchal relationships.

Like literature, the city has been central to cinema. Walter Benjamin recognized the affinity between the city and cinema in "The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction" (1969). Here Benjamin expanded upon the cultural transformations that result in shifts in sense perception:

The film corresponds to profound changes in the perceptive apparatus—changes that are experienced on an individual scale by the man in the street in big-city traffic. (250).

Steven Shapiro in *The Cinematic Body* (1993) explicates that cinema is "at once a form of perception and a material perceived, a new way of encountering reality and a part of reality thereby perceived for the first time" (41). In *America* (1988) Baudrillard discussed cinema's complex relation with the real; he maintained that cinematic representations leaked into the experience of the urban by "invest[ing] the streets and the entire town with a mythical atmosphere" (56).

The urbanization that accompanied the expansion of industrial capitalism was both a direct manifestation of, and served to shape, the historical transition towards a specifically modern mode of social living. While documenting and commenting on these developments of the urban spectacle, cinema both drew upon and contributed to the increased pace of modern city life. Importantly, cinema reflected the forms of social relations that developed in the crowded yet anonymous spaces of the city. In this context one of the most significant cinematic prototypes is the figure of the *flâneur*, the celebrated nineteenth-century 'city stroller' who captures the transformations of the cityscape as he traverses the city on foot³⁰. In *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (1993) Anne Friedberg suggested that the *flânerie* directly but gradually dismantled the monolithic structure of modernity. Significantly, this dystopian figure

of the narrative of modernity was framed powerfully in cinematic representations of the city.

IV: From Colonial to the Post Colonial City

The terms ‘postcolonial,’ ‘postcolonialism’ and ‘postcoloniality’ have enjoyed considerable critical attention in recent years. Interrogating the ‘postcolonial’ involves the question of agency and, more importantly, the capacity for transformation of the peoples that were once-colonize. For Bill Ashcroft it includes the strategies employed by the powerless to contest acts of imperial control, and thus make possible acts of transformation (*Post-Colonial* 17). To speak of the postcolonial city is to attempt to make visible a number of contexts resulting from colonialism and its legacy, which have in turn contributed to the social and cultural fortunes of the city. The spaces of the city are representative of social relations of power. The lived space of the city is dynamic for it is the site for the constant transformation of social relations. In his analysis of the Manichean colonial city in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Frantz Fanon represents the ‘colonial world’ as being epitomized by the racial and spatial segregation:

The colonial world is a world divided into compartments of native quarters and European quarters, of schools for natives and schools for Europeans; The colonial world is a world cut in two. The dividing line, the frontiers, are shown by barracks and police stations. In the colonies it is the policeman and the soldier who are the official, instituted go-betweens, the spokesman of the settler and his rule of oppression The settler’s town is a strongly built town, all made of stone and steel. (37–39).

For most postcolonial theorists Fanon’s statement provides a clear benchmark from which to examine the extent of divide in colonial cities. Tropes of place and space have been at the core of postcolonial analysis. Given the hegemony of Western discourses, it is important to examine the dynamics of the city that has experienced both colonial domination and postcolonial conflict. In the context of spatial theory and spatial relations cities have been recognized as crucibles of power where city dwellers are constantly negotiating with factors that regulate and police their lives. The critical analysis of interrelationships between colonialism, geography and the cultural politics of space is well illustrated by Jane M. Jacobs *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and*

the City (1996) which traces ways in which “the cultural politics of colonialism and postcolonialism continue to be articulated in the present” (10). Using the city of London as her model, Jacobs highlights the continuity between colonial and postcolonial situations in the form of labour arrangements that continue to be produced by postcolonial migrations.

The colonial city is a complex one as it carries the double burden of being a colonial artifact and a postcolonial space of conflicts and inconsistencies. Ania Loomba has highlighted the role of postcolonial studies in showing how “both the ‘metropolis’ and the ‘colony’ were deeply altered by the colonial process. *Both* of them are, accordingly, also restructured by decolonization” (19, italics in original). Postcolonial analyses of urban spaces critique the representation of urban spaces by examining the gaps in the spatial, social, economic and infrastructural inequities, as well as religious, cultural and lifestyle differences. In the context of India, the urban is still trying to define itself, as the country continues to grapple with its colonial legacy from its present postcolonial state. In the years after independence the nation was preoccupied with demographic changes, economic and cultural transformations while the ghost of colonialism continued to haunt the postcolonial nation. In this context, to examine the postcolonial city would involve an articulation of the postcolonial in relation to a significant Western metropolis, which would lead to the danger of reinforcing the colonial legacy of the latter. While it would be absolutely wrong to deny the impact of the western metropolis on the postcolonial city, it would be further dangerous to regard the postcolonial city with exclusive regard to the western metropolis. In the case of a city like Bombay the western metropolis and its associated modernity did play a major role in shaping the city, but Bombay experienced its own kind of modernity as it became the site for nationalist politics and postcolonial power-play. More than a site of subjugation and exploitation, Bombay was a site of national assertiveness as the city made its presence felt in the international scene.

Anthony King argues that the postcolonial city “privileges a representation of the city which foregrounds its colonial past, rather than the city’s present or future” (*Global Cities* 56). While recent studies of the colonial city have challenged the hegemony of the western discourse, the spatial divide between the indigenous city and the European colonial settlement is much more complex as local history gets

enmeshed with colonial discourse. The spaces of the colonial as well as the postcolonial city are both ambiguous and contested. The postcolonial city is a space of inter-connectedness where social and spatial realities offer opportunities to negotiate between cultures and spaces. As such, any attempt at comprehending the city should be based on a variety of local archives.

V: Bombay: Literary and Cinematic Representations

Any attempt to represent the South Asian city must inevitably encounter the peculiar differences posed by the different forms of historical colonialism in the region. The pluralism of forms that colonialism assumes is further complicated by the micro-politics of culture that is practiced in the different South Asian nations. Terry McGee's *The Southeast Asian City* (1967)—considered a seminal work on Southeast Asian urbanism—details the evolution of Southeast Asian cities from 'colonial imposition' to 'Western replication'. The relationship between colonial influence and local cultural particularities deeply inform these cities, and signal the need for different theoretical endeavours to comprehend contemporary Southeast Asian urbanisms.

The postcolonial dismantling of the grand narrative of a privileged center is part of a larger project—the recognition of how given truths have been produced historically and how categories of social difference and identity have been accorded the appearance of stability and permanence. Recent studies of the colonial city draw on a variety of local archives to question the established binaries and show that social and spatial divisions in the city were not so neatly divided. In the case of the Indian city the binaries were easily transcended by the inhabitants of the new colonial settlements leading to the creation of indigenous modernities. Swati Chattopadhyay's study of Calcutta documents the local Bengali accounts of the city which are far removed from the European perceptions of the city. The postcolonial city thus generates multiple temporalities but also multiple spatialities.

In his book *Topographics* (1995) J. Hillis Miller states that "the effort of mapping is interrupted by an encounter with the unmappable" (Williams and Westwood 181). In the context of Mumbai, a city of extremes and contradictions, the problematic of mapping is clearly manifest. The fragmented city problematizes the

sustenance of class associations, yet there exists two extreme ends of the social spectrum. In India, cinema has always testified to institutions of modernity that the nation experienced. The city in India has remained crucially absent in much of the history of Indian nationalism because the nationalists located the village as the secure site of citizenship. As stated earlier the city has always held an ambiguous place in Indian society. Cinema, however has commented on the country's sprawling metropolitan life as the urban experience continued to dominate the screen. The expansion and transformation of the urban landscape was faithfully captured by the cinematic lens. Increasing migration, growing urban inequality, and the attendant violence, fear, and terror in the metropolis—all these found expression in cinema. The city in cinema is, thus, the matrix of mental, physical, and social space for in the imagined city, Baudelaire points out, “the fleeting, the ephemeral, and the transient” meet to shape the contemporary city life (qtd. in Mazumdar xviii)³¹.

Cinema is crucial to understanding the imagined city of Bombay. The cultural imagination of Bombay is crucially pivoted in the representation of the city in cinema. Bombay boasts of the largest film industry in the world, and the city itself has been a recurring subject in contemporary cinema. The representative value of the city arises primarily from the films that Bollywood produces. Noted critic Amrit Gangar writes:

Bombay, which exists in a simultaneous state of renaissance and degradation, was perhaps fated to express itself through the medium of film, and to acquire the sobriquet of Bollywood. (210-11)

Popular Bombay cinema is a legitimate and powerful archive that provides access to a range of urban subjectivities. The power of cinema rests in the medium's spectacular visual excess and performance, which spill out of the narrative to speak a unique language to the audience. In this age of technological finesse, the city can hardly be understood without taking cognizance of the cinematic world. Bombay cinema's mediation on everyday life and experience contributes to the constant and collective effort to understand the complex texture of modernity.

The city of Bombay has also been the stage, setting and context for a number of literary narratives within Indian Writing in English. In these works Bombay is the site on which the narratives are played out. Familiar landmarks and sights of the city lend the narratives a local habitation with which the reader identifies almost

immediately. The reader could relate to the bustle of the city and the celebration of the vitality of the metropolis. Rushdie, who identifies himself as a ‘Bombaywallah’ says that the city

[is] full of fakery and gaudiness and superficiality and failed imaginations ...[yet] also a culture of high vitality, linguistic verve, and a kind of metropolitan excitement that European cities have for the most part forgotten. (*Homelands* 110)

While many readers have critiqued Rushdie’s mapping of the routes of Bombay in *Midnight’s Children* as faulty, Amrit Gangar points out that in doing so Rushdie (and other writers) is creating a Bombay of the imagination. Bombay’s infinite variety defies any easy definition. Roshan G. Shahani maintains that Rushdie’s misrepresentation of places in Bombay serves as an analogue to the several readings and representations to which the city lends itself. Watching the city spread below his gaze from the Colaba Causeway, the protagonist of Firdaus Kanga’s *Trying to Grow* realizes, “You can look at a scene from a thousand different windows and you’ll see something new each time” (49). This line aptly sums up the multifaceted nature of the city of Bombay.

According to Lefebvre, social space is a social product. The spaces of the city are representative of social change over time, and thus represent the transformations in the social distribution of power. If social power is symbolized in the appropriation of space, the significance of such spatialization is revealed only through an analysis of the practices that give meaning to these spaces. As social processes are naturalized, they conceal the process by which social reality is discursively constituted. The examination of both the existing theories of the world city as well as the localized narrative of the contemporary postcolonial city can reveal the theoretical gaps in urban studies. It is in this light that the negotiation of the urban space of the postcolonial city is necessary.

The next chapter of the thesis forays into the literary narratives of postcolonial Bombay in the works of Salman Rushdie and Shama Futehally in an attempt to comprehend this locus of Indian modernity in its post-independence avatar. Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and Futehally’s *Tara Lane* reflect the urban content of Bombay in the aftermath of the newly-gained independence, and the chapter examines the

chosen texts as representative of a city mirroring the hopes, dilemmas and frustrations of a nascent nation.

Notes

¹ Academics from diverse disciplines such as film studies, literature, cultural studies, philosophy and economics have interrogated the city to produce new ways of thinking about it. This recent “urban turn” (Prakash 2008:5) in academic scholarship is the result of the unprecedented acceleration of urbanization in the twentieth century.

² In *Community and Society* (1887) Ferdinand Tonnies describes two basic organizing principles of human association: the *gemeinschaft* community (characterized by community coherence) and the *gesellschaft* societies (characterized by individualism and a lack of community cohesion). Yet, cohesion and a sense of community is less evident in a city than the country, so that sociologists continued to explore the nature of modern urban living.

³ Friedrich Engels’ *The Condition of the Working-Class in England* (1844) is a definitive statement of the politics of industrial capitalism and life in the industrial/capitalist city.

⁴ “Rural idiocy” is a phrase coined by Karl Marx to describe the attitude of 19th century peasants—conservatism, xenophobia, ignorance, distrust, and the inability to cooperate with others—that prevented them from acting as a revolutionary class. The text is available in <<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm>>

⁵ Tonnies developed the concept of *anomie* that describes a person’s inability to either care for or identify with the people who inhabit the city. This expresses the dissolution of the moral and social certainties.

⁶ For Wirth, the city was a permanent settlement of heterogeneous individuals. Any alteration in this composition resulted in the transformation of social structure of the city.

⁷ Most twentieth-century plans for urban redevelopment aimed to counter the inhuman dimensions of the late nineteenth-century city such as overcrowded areas and unhygienic living conditions. The need to reinvent the ‘community’ in the form of planned neighbourhoods was deemed urgent. Le Corbusier reimagined the city in glass and concrete while Frank Lloyd Wright envisioned it as spread across the fertile prairie where each citizen given a plot of land in a garden city. These urban planners were united by a shared awareness of the ills of urban living. They desired to develop a form of urban living that was more suited to human needs.

⁸ Chicago was regarded as an ‘urban laboratory’ where Park and Burgess explored the ways in which humans adapt to the city. The chief idea of the Chicago School was the simplified representation of the city in diagrammatic form. Robert Burgess’s concentric zone model, for example, was based on patterns of land use.

⁹ Simmel highlights the development of a *blasé* attitude in the city by which urban dwellers adopt an attitude of indifference as they go about their daily business.

¹⁰ Castells proposed that consumption was the means by which reproduction was realized. This included the individual consumption of the bare essentials of life as well as the collective consumption of lifestyle facilities such housing, hospitals, schools, leisure facilities and so on.

¹¹ Marxist perspectives on urban land use and segregation resulted in a way of thinking through the evolution of the urban system. The importance of the state in the regulation of capital/labour conflicts was also considered.

¹² Suburbanization was the result of uneven urban development. The distribution of land was another factor. Land use patterns by the elite and the 'underclass' resulted in huge gaps between the actual ground rent and the potential rent of a site. David Harvey elaborated these ideas in *Paris: Capital of Modernity* (2003).

¹³ Given the diversity of feminist theoretical positions, feminist scholars felt gendered inequalities could be adequately explained within the geography of capitalism. Others were critical of the merits of a Marxist approach. Sylvia Walby's *Gender Transformation* (1997) elaborates on this.

¹⁴ Rosalyn Deutsche's essay "Boys' town" (1991) argues for democratic spatial critique that takes account of the conflicts that produce all forms of spaces.

¹⁵ Feminist critiques challenge the exclusive focus on the class relations in urban restructuring, and argue that it renders silent (and therefore insignificant) the powerful gender dimension inherent in the production and consumption of the city. For example, the issue of women's safety in and fear of public space is connected with the control of the urban landscape.

¹⁶ The spatial implication of the gender division of labour posited suburbs to be the 'natural' space for women and children. The city was recognized as a place for working men.

¹⁷ The attention to the multiple subjectivities challenges conventional analytical processes of urban enclaves. Instead, the focus has shifted to the connections between social difference and spatial practices.

¹⁸ In *Spaces of Global Cultures* (2004) Anthony King points out that the postcolonial critique of the urban is relevant even in spaces which were never subject to colonial control, for they continue to be shaped by the ideologies of the Empire in one way or another.

¹⁹ New office complexes, parks and malls now dot the urban landscape that calls for a new thinking in the interrogation of the urban. Similarly, the concept of gated communities provides a foci to negotiate the spatial politics in the residential areas of the city.

²⁰ This decentring is connected to important changes in the economy of cities. As businesses sought to retain their profitability, they outsourced certain stages of production through contracting. In practice this meant that firms and businesses moved out of older industrial districts to more specialized areas that allowed the proximity to subcontractors and firms. As a result the urban core dissolved as businesses relocated to areas that were closer to where the workforce resided.

²¹ This essay, based on a lecture given in 1967, contests the traditional notion of linear time. Foucault asserts that concepts of the temporal have changed over time, so that it becomes imperative to examine it under varying historical circumstances.

The text is available in <foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>

²² In *Cities of the Mind: Images and Themes of the City in the Social Sciences* (1984), Lloyd Rodwin and Robert M. Hollister examine the ways in which ‘images and themes’ of the city—rather than imaginaries—had been developed in the social sciences, and thus showed how the “city of the mind” determined the nature of research and influenced urban policy.

²³ Comic and romantic realism are responses to the pre-industrial commercial city, naturalism and modernism to the industrial city, and postmodernism to the postindustrial city. Various subgenres—the utopian novel, the gothic novel, the detective story, and the novel of imperial adventure, science fiction, and dystopian narratives—not only inform the historical moment but depict the rise and transformation of the city.

²⁴ The concept of the “imagined community” laid stress on the role of cinema in the development of national identities. In the case of Bombay, the cinematic representations of the city coupled with its recognition as the ideal city of Nehruvian modernity, has firmly entrenched the city in the nation’s imagination as the “metaphor for modern India” (Patel and Thorner 1995).

²⁵ Other writers who choose to focus on city narratives include Italo Calvino, Daniel Defoe, Charles Dickens, Victor Hugo, Honore Balzac and Emile Zola.

²⁶ Comic and romantic realism are essentially responses to the pre-industrial commercial city. Naturalism and modernism are reactions to the industrial city while postmodernism comments on the postindustrial city. The many subgenres of narrative also depict the rise and transformation of the city.

²⁷ The poem can be found in <<http://www.bartleby.com/201/1.htm>>

²⁸ The poem can be found in <<http://www.bartleby.com/106/245.html>>

²⁹ The *flâneur* embraced the uneasy, fleeting life world of the modern city. He is enthralled by the potential pleasures of a world that is not regulated by the stringent codes and restraint of tradition.

³⁰ This is further elaborated in Walter Benjamin’s *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (1973) and Keith Tester’s *The Flâneur* (1994).

Chapter III:
Cosmopolitan Bombay: *Midnight's Children* and *Tara Lane*

The city that I remember, that I grew up in, was knocked down and replaced by high rise buildings, like concrete tombstones. So even the people who still lived in the city lost that city, because it disappeared. And I had very much the desire of wanting to reclaim it.

—Salman Rushdie

Literary narratives on the city provide the foci to contend with the dynamics of representation, offering as they do narratives that examine alternative spatial orders and representational positions. This in a way is a reciprocal process: the city offers itself as a model of multiple and indeterminate textualities, which both contribute to and challenge the ambivalence that has been at the heart of literary representations of the urban. Literary representations establish that the city can no longer be understood as a unified or monolithic entity. As a model for imaginative articulation the city converges as a site of real and imagined spaces, and holds the possibility of new and dynamic ways of understanding urban space.

In this context the city of Bombay, especially in the post-independence period, has been represented as a city of dreams, hopes, promises, cosmopolitanism, multicultural ethnicity and hybridity, failure, disappointment, decay, violence, crime and anonymity. The year 1993 was a turning point in the history of Bombay, both as a territorial space and a representative artifact. In that year the city experienced a tremendous upheaval in its position as the most developed city of India. The blasts and riots of 1992-93 brought into focus the city of Bombay as the subject of interdisciplinary examination and intervention in the academia. In the context of Indian Writing in English, the city appears in many guises and shapes, some familiarly drawing from the literary history of the city and some newly generated as responses to specific changes and challenges of the contemporary city. The spaces of the city contain multiple 'stories' and competing narratives which are produced in the imaginative mappings of the city, and Bombay teems with such tales.

The cosmopolitan city of Bombay, the cradle of the Nehruvian idea of modernity, evokes certain powerful images, all of which contribute to the multiplicity of the city. The affiliations of modernity that Bombay promises, at once aspirational and elusive to large numbers of its inhabitants, makes it a key site for literary and cinematic representation in recent times. Such representations have contributed greatly towards the negotiation of the spaces of the city and the mapping of new cultural geographies, besides adding to the myth of Bombay. In the context of literature, beginning with Salman Rushdie's highly-acclaimed novel *Midnight's Children* (1981) to the more recent *Days of Gold and Sepia* (2012) by Yasmeen Premji and *Narcopolis* (2012) by Jeet Thayil, Bombay has been the veritable site for those desirous of exploring the realities of contemporary urban life in India. *Midnight's Children* has often been credited with introducing and establishing Bombay, "as multitudinously shapeless as ever" (173), as a central theme and narrative location in postcolonial Indian English fiction. The city serves as a metaphor for the nature of changes taking place in contemporary Indian society. Sujata Patel rightly points out that Bombay "serves as a paradigm for the achievements of a post-independence India" (*Metaphor* xiii). The conflicts and contradictions of this vibrant city are symbolic of the promise, potential, possibilities and failures of a postcolonial nation.

As opposed to the unitary theories of representation the city is in a constant state of change and shift, and Bombay is no exception to this. The spaces of the city, according to Maria Balshaw and Liam Kennedy, are important metaphorical tools in contemporary cultural theorizing so that "we can no more think outside metaphorisations of space than we can live outside its representations" (2). Any understanding of urban space therefore entails "a demystifying of space as natural and transparent so that it is understood as a social entity with particular, localised meanings" (2). The overwhelming material reality of a city results in the familiar image of the restless, changing, unknowable city, and brings with it challenges of *writing* it. Writing, as a process of representing urban space, is different from merely writing about a city. This chapter concentrates on the literary mapping of Bombay in two novels about the city—Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1980) and Shama Futehally's *Tara Lane* (1993). *Midnight's Children* reflects the hopes and promises of the Nehruvian vision of a cosmopolitan, secular and pluralist ideal which are

dangerously threatened by the Emergency of 1975. *Tara Lane* is also located in the same time frame as *Midnight's Children* but the novel chooses to concentrate on the effects of developmental politics and its intrusion on the private and domestic spaces of the household. The many spaces of the Bombay of the 1950s and 60s are a repository for representing a particular sensibility which can be traced and identified in the above novels.

This chapter examines how novelists such as Rushdie and Futehally see in the city and in their remembered representations of the urban space of Bombay a parallel to the emerging aspirations of a people and the making of a young nation. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's thesis on the production of space and its representation, this chapter proposes that the represented city of Bombay is structured by and infused with spaces that juxtapose and fragment the experience of the urban. Section I examines Rushdie's depiction of Bombay as a cosmopolitan city containing the possibility of coherent, ordered and meaningful space that is almost utopian. Section II concentrates on Futehally's novel which, in contrast to Rushdie's, exposes the cracks in the colossus by highlighting the discontinuous and disruptive forms of urban spatiality. This section further examines the gendered spaces of the city that inform subject positions and their responses to the contingencies of the urban. Section III argues that both Rushdie and Futehally locate Bombay as a complex structure informed by multiple discursive practices, thereby re-establishing a fundamental truth that the city contains different meanings for its inhabitants as they interpret it in their respective contexts. As mentioned earlier, both novels are accounts by writers of the minority origins. Rushdie and Futehally choose Saleem and Tahera—protagonists belonging to the upper class minority group—to narrate the stories. By vesting in them the narrative power, both Rushdie and Futehally seem to subvert the notion of the telling/narrating of history through mainstream characters and underscore the plurality which once prevailed in the Bombay of the 1950s and 60s.

I

“I was born an Indian, and not only an Indian, but a Bombayite—Bombay, most cosmopolitan, most hybrid, most hotchpotch of Indian cities” says Salman Rushdie (*Homelands* 404). Rushdie's experiences as a ‘Bombaywallah’ began during

a particularly seminal period of India's postcolonial development. Born in 1947 to Muslim parents, his birth was jokingly referred to as a catalytic event which ushered in a new era for India. Rushdie later fictionalized this moment in *Midnight's Children* (1980), where Saleem Sinai's birth coincides with the midnight moment of India's freedom from colonial rule. Rushdie's narrative however seeks a nostalgic reconciliation with the city of his birth by positing his own experiences of Bombay as inextricably linked to the notions of urban modernity.

Written around three decades after independence *Midnight's Children* has been hailed as the paradigmatic postcolonial text for redrawing the map of Indian English fiction in the late twentieth century. The book won the prestigious Booker Prize in the very year of its publication (and subsequently the prize for the best of 25 years of Bookers), and almost immediately became a benchmark for the assessment of new novels. Set primarily between 1947 and 1977 (and about thirty-two years of Saleem's parents and grandparents life before that) the narrative maps postcolonial India and its history through the lives of the Sinai family. The story starts with Aadam Aziz and Naseem Ghani whose second daughter, Mumtaz (also called Amina) marries Ahmed Sinai. She gives birth to Saleem at the very second when India becomes an independent nation—the baby thus becomes representative of the nation's progress. The author weaves into the narrative important historical moments of Indian history such as the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre, the inauguration of the “sovereign, socialist, and democratic republic” of India with Jawaharlal Nehru as its first Prime Minister, the language riots of the 1950s, the Indo-China war of 1962, the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971 and, finally, the long dark period of Indira Gandhi's Emergency imposed in 1975 (Gopal 94)¹. Despite its fairy-tale beginning—“I was born in the city of Bombay ... once upon a time” (3)—the actual dates and events mentioned in the novel discard any notions of fantasy and establish the strong historical connections between the narrator and the nation of his birth. In doing so, noted critic Meenakshi Mukherjee points out, the author celebrates the plentitude of India. Thus, Rushdie subverts the notions of received historiography through the novel that celebrates the postmodern de-centering of the realistic mode of narration with its demonstration of the ways in which

epic, fable, national events, family saga, advertisements, films, popular songs, newspaper clippings, parody, pastiche and gossip could all be

gathered up in one comprehensive sweep that is comic, mythic and historic at the same time (Mukherjee, *Midnights*10).

Within such thematic concerns the urban space of postcolonial Bombay in particular emerges as a rich site for the contention of the novel's concerns. Rushdie's relationship with the city of his birth is not merely one of nostalgia but the city forms a vital element of his imagination. Rushdie proclaims that Bombay as a "reality and as a metaphor is at the heart of all my work" and *Midnight's Children* has been read as Rushdie's literary tribute to the city of his boyhood (*Homelands* 404). The literary representation is effectively dealt with through the selected characters and incidents which exemplify the diversities inherent in this multi-ethnic, hybrid city. Rushdie acknowledges and celebrates this plurality with pomp. In writing about the city of his boyhood Rushdie not only makes a nostalgic attempt to reclaim the city but, in the process, imaginatively recreates the city. In doing so he pre-empts what Suketu Mehta was to pronounce almost twenty-five years later about his experience of rediscovering the lost city—"There are many Bombays; through the writing of a book, I wanted to find mine" (13). In this sense, the novel is apparently autobiographical in its celebration of the tensions between personal and national identity, even as its protagonist, Saleem Sinai, is "mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country" so that the individual and the nation are lastingly intertwined (3). *Midnight's Children* celebrates the resulting chaos, even if it crushes the protagonist "into six hundred and thirty million particles of anonymous, and necessarily oblivious dust" (43).

In the novel, Bombay is a pivotal space marked by diverse sensibilities which mirrors postcolonial modernity in India through its multicultural and cosmopolitan temperament. As discussed in Chapter 1 these realities provide a counter-perspective to the imagined fragmented narrative of the nation. *Midnight's Children* produces a narrative where a particular form of spatiality—that of Bombay—informs all urban spaces. The novel foregrounds a homogenizing urban space in following Saleem's story as he comes of age within the spaces of the city, the nation, and its history. The forbearers of his colonial legacy—grandfather Adam Aziz and father Ahmed Sinai—traverse through history and the Indian freedom movement via Kashmir, Agra, Delhi, and finally Bombay. Although Bombay is introduced in the opening lines of the novel, the city takes centre-stage only in the seventh chapter of Book One titled

‘Methwold’. This name originates in William Methwold who owns an estate by the same name, and into which Saleem’s parents move in after they shift to Bombay in 1947, the year significantly coinciding with that of the nation’s independence. The pre-independence colonial landscape culminates into the post-colonial and post-independence space of Bombay as Ahmed and Amina struggle to grapple with the realities of a nation on the verge of freedom from colonial rule. Ahmed and Amina’s move to Bombay sets the stage for the novel’s key events—Saleem is “handcuffed to history” as well as the city of his birth, the public spectacle of his private life, his growth into adolescence and maturity, his accidental gift of telepathy, and his double life through his alter-ego Shiva. Later Saleem has to leave Bombay for Pakistan, but he loses his telepathic powers, perhaps an indication of loss of home.

The urban landscape of *Midnight’s Children* is central to the novel’s concerns. The spatial landmarks of Bombay, the roads, lanes and architectural splendours—all contribute to what Meenakshi Mukherjee calls the “cartographic imagination” of the city that locates the protagonist within the landscape of the nation. Saleem Sinai’s life is reflective of India’s political history, and while the main plot is pivoted on Independence, war with Pakistan, and the Emergency, the city of Bombay becomes the space for the exploration and examination of the ideals of cosmopolitanism and secularism. Interestingly, while the novel celebrates the progressive sensibility and multiplicity of a public space (the nation), the impact of these new developments of public life bears most on the domestic space. Saleem’s life is reflective of the nascent nation, but the incomplete (and unsuccessful) segregation of the public sphere and the private is registered more on the spaces of the postcolonial city. In his book *The Nation and Its Fragments* (1993) Partha Chatterjee argues that nationalist discourse in India has divided the world into an outer, material domain and an inner, spiritual domain². In the outer, world, the nationalist élite strove for equality with the colonizers and adopted their discourses and concepts of “the modern liberal democratic state” (10). In the inner or cultural domain, the educated élite tried to create a cultural identity that was specific to India:

here nationalism launches its most powerful, creative, and historically significant project: to fashion a “modern” national culture that is nevertheless not Western. If the nation is an imagined community, then this is where it is brought into being. (6).

This division of the world into inner and outer spaces results in two separate narratives of nationalism which, though complementary, are incompatible: the liberal discourse of nationalism and of the modern nation-state of the outer sphere is crucially juxtaposed with the traditionally-oriented discourse of the inner sphere. Within this contextual framework, the present chapter attempts to explore the postcolonial city of Bombay in its dual role as the model for the new nation state and as the site for the articulation of this image. In *Midnight's Children* Bombay is represented as a microcosm of India, and the growth of the protagonist is paralleled with the growth of the city. The novel chronicles historical details of the city beginning with the languages marches of 1957 followed by the bifurcation of Bombay into two separate states, the decisive role of the communist vote, the various land reclamation projects in the city, the different neighbourhoods that comprised the city, and the arrival of the different migrant communities in the city.

The relationship between colonial cities and the utopian ideal city presents opportunities to explore the ways in which the postcolonial novelists engage with urban space. It also provides a framework to investigate the replication of the relationship between the colonial nation and postcolonial state on the urban. History has a crucial role here. The past is often constructed through present circumstances, with the need to “revise and revise, improve and improve” (644). Salman Rushdie’s representation of the urban seems to directly confront the privileging of the city as a space of unrealized possibilities. The Bombay of *Midnight's Children* may initially resonate with utopian idealism but this is ultimately interrogated by the author himself. Bombay is constructed entirely as nostalgic remembrance, where

[m]ost of what matters in our lives takes place in our absence. but I seem to have found from somewhere the trick of filling in the gaps in my knowledge, so that everything is in my head, down to the last detail, such as the way the mist seemed to slant across the early morning air. (17)

This paradoxically creates a space of denial: the narrative denies its own longing for the past, but while creating a space for future possibilities, looks backwards. In this context, Saleem’s idealization of Bombay is representative not of a tangible possibility, but instead of the unrealizable dreams of the postcolonial citizen, whose past is haunted permanently by the impositions of colonial rule.

The narrative about Bombay begins with an introduction to the important sights and sounds that define the city's visage. Ahmed Sinai decides to move to Bombay, the city of miracle, although his choice is influenced by materialistic concerns: "Property is dirt cheap" (108). For Ahmed Sinai Bombay is a city of possibilities, of money. For Saleem, Bombay—"Our Bombay, Padma!" (122)—is both a metaphor of possibilities for India, and the site for the memories of a lost childhood and home. Before focusing on his parents' move to Methwold Estate in Bombay Saleem, and Rushdie, briefly detail the history of the city:

The fishermen were here first. ... The Portuguese were the first invaders, using the harbour to shelter the merchant ships and their men-of-war; but then, one day in 1633, an East Indian Company Officer named Methwold saw a vision. This vision—a dream of a British Bombay, fortified, defending India's West against all corners—was a notion of such force that it set time in motion. Methwold died; and in 1660, Charles II of England was betrothed to Catherine of the Portuguese House of Braganza ... [i]t was her marriage dowry which brought Bombay into British hands ... it wasn't long until September 21st, 1668, when the Compnay at last got its hands on the island ... and then off they went, with their Fort and land-reclamation, and before you could blink there was a city here. (121)

These historical details not only introduce the subject city but also underline its centrality to the narrative. The cosmopolitan city finds further description through its cultural signifiers that mark Bombay as a site of multiple practices and narratives:

August in Bombay: a month of festivals, the month of Krishna's birthday and Coconut Day; and this year—fourteen hours to go, thirteen, twelve—there was an extra festival on the calendar, a new myth to celebrate, because a nation which had never previously existed was about to win its freedom, catapulting us into a world which although it had five thousand years of history, although it had invented the game of chess and traded with Middle Kingdom Egypt, was nevertheless quite imaginary; into a mythical land, a country which would never exist except by the efforts of a phenomenal collective will—except in a dream we all agreed to dream; it was a mass fantasy shared in varying degrees by Bengali and Punjabi, Madrasi and Jat, and

would periodically need the sanctification and renewal which can only be provided by rituals of blood. India, the new myth—a collective fiction in which anything was possible, a fable rivaled only by the two other mighty fantasies: money and God. (150)

The city is thus symbolic of the nation as the text emphasizes the collective element in the concept of the Indian nation. The masses are, however, an ambivalent part of the nation as they are repeatedly referred to as “the many-headed monster”, echoing the description of the slum-dwellers with whom middle-class Amina comes in contact on her way to the seer Ramram Seth:

Children tugging at the pallu of her sari, heads everywhere staring at my mother, who thinks, it’s like being surrounded by some terrible monster, a creature with heads and heads and heads; but she corrects herself, no, of course not a monster, these poor poor people—what then? A power of some sort, a force which does not know its strength, which has perhaps decayed into impotence through never having been used. (106)

This view of the people as a many-headed monster significantly seems to question the nationalist discourse of the inclusive, unified nation—represented in Nehru’s ‘Tryst with Destiny’ speech—that finds its symbolic expression in the city of Bombay.

Central to Rushdie’s representation of Bombay (and the nation) is the idea of the home. Within the explicitly political framework, the novel may be read as a reconstruction of home by Saleem. His urgency of telling his story reveals his doubt about and desire for a narrative structure that will confer meaning to his and the nation’s story (Srivastava 93). Saleem’s attempts to create fixed meanings are reflective of the colonial need to order domestic spaces and their histories. The challenges he faces during this impossible task foreground the ways in which the colonial discourse of the home is overwritten in the postcolonial domestic spaces—corners are filled with cobwebs, ledges covered with layers of dust, and “violent disorder” marks the “gloomy spidery corridors” (21-22). The recognition of these otherwise insignificant and invisible spaces within the spatial territory of the home can, by extension, be located in the urban fabric of Bombay where the miniscule spaces of life are most securely held. Thus, the city invades the space of the home like water rushing in so that

the cracks in the long-parched earth began to close; there were towels wedged against the doors and windows of the house on Cornwallis Road, and they had to be wrung out and replaced constantly. (75)

Saleem muses, “Things—even people—have a way of leaking into each other” (44). The acknowledgment of the social function of housing extends to the differentiation between dwellings in the case of Tai who lives in “the insanitary bowels of the old wooden-house quarter” (10). Saleem is acutely aware of his class privileges:

the brutalizing effect of servant status, of a servants’ room behind a blackstoved kitchen, in which Musa was obliged to sleep along with gardener, odd-job boy, and hamal—while Mary slept in style on a rush mat beside a new-born child? (198)

His grandfather’s “large old stone house”

stood in the darkness, set back a dignified distance from the road. There was a walled-in garden at the rear and by the garden door was the low outhouse rented cheaply to the family of old Hamdard and his son Rashid the rickshaw boy. In front of the outhouse was the well with its cow-driven waterwheel, from which irrigation channels ran down to the small cornfield which lined the house all way to the gate in the perimeter wall along Cornwallis Road. (60)

The home is also a spatial signifier of class-status as is evident in Saleem’s description of the “squat, ugly concrete blocks” which were “oddly segregated” to house Evelyn Lilith Burns and her widower father:

Americans and other foreigners lived (like Evie) in Noor Ville; Indian success-stories ended up in Laxmi Vilas. From the heights of Methwold’s Estate, we looked down on them all, on white and brown alike; but nobody ever looked down on Evie Burns—except once. (250)

The domestic space of the home as a whole structure is deconstructed to reflect its status as a contested site of social realities. This extremely private space becomes the most contested sites: the most private containers, wardrobes, chests, and boxes and individual rooms (which are more secretive) are more obscured than the house itself. The spaces of the domestic interior paradoxically magnify the meaning and power of the ‘home’ symbolized by the city. It brings into focus the notion of safety, security and stability associated with the ‘home’. Sara Upstone, in *Spatial Politics in the*

Postcolonial Novel (2009), argues that “the postcolonial novel’s strategic *disordering* of this space” is not only reflective of “*status quo*” but also offers “pathways towards new experience” (120; italics in original). The representation of the interior of the home signifies the re-visioning of domestic space and inverts the otherwise conventional images of domesticity.

The replacement of colonial writings (official history) with a postcolonial narration of personal stories marks the home as a politicized space of resistance. The unobserved spaces of the home act as sites of subversion, and contain the power to both reflect and subvert colonial discourse. At the centre of this is an important reversal of not the domestic space, but of its interior. The domestic pandemonium opens a window of possibilities to examine the workings of this space and its significance. Enacting a reversal of roles, the author removes the female from the centre of the home so that Aadam Aziz’s mother

who had spent her life housebound, in purdah, had suddenly found enormous strength and gone out to run the small gemstone business (turquoises, rubies, diamonds) which had put Aadam through medical college, with the help of a scholarship; so he returned to find the seemingly immutable order of his family turned upside down, his mother going out to work while his father sat hidden behind the veil which the stroke had dropped over his brain. (7)

The effective deterritorialisation of the domestic space is achieved by the complex interweaving of everyday domestic practices with the secret spaces that undermine the otherwise projected simplicity of architectural construction. This serves to establish important ideas as is evident in Nadir Khan’s acts of concealment from the Indian establishment because “things seemed permissible underground that would seem absurd or even wrong in the clear light of day” (70). Similarly, Methwold’s Estate symbolizes the colonial ideal in 1947 and post this date, but its description highlights the strong native resistance to imperialism. The Brass Monkey’s assertive acts of burning shoes and breaking items—which she does “accidentally-on-purpose”—obliterates the last remnants of the mirage of colonial domesticity (208).

However, before discussing the representation of the cosmopolitan city and the relevance of Methwold estate as a space of colonial and postcolonial negotiations, it is

important to locate yet another space that is crucially significant in Saleem's narrative as well as the city of Bombay—Dr. Narlikar's nursing home where Saleem is born. Dr. Narlikar's nursing home is perhaps, in a sense, the pivot on which the narrative of the protagonist and the city rests. This is where Saleem is born on the night of 15th August 1947—the precise moment of India's birth as an independent nation—and is, by a quirk of fate, forever 'handcuffed to history':

The monster in the streets has begun to roar, while in Delhi a wiry man is saying "... At the stroke of the midnight hour, while the world sleeps, India awakens to life and freedom..." And beneath the roar of the monster there are two more yells, cries, bellows, the howls of children arriving in the world, their unavailing protests mingling with the din of independence which hangs saffron-and-green in the night sky—"A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new; when an age ends; and when the soul of a nation long suppressed finds utterance ..."—while in a room with saffron-and-green carpet Ahmed Sinai is still clutching a chair when Dr Narlikar enters to inform him: "On the stroke of midnight, Sinai brother, your Begum Sahiba gave birth to a large, healthy child: a son!" (156)

The nursing home is also the space where the two babies, Saleem and Shiva, are switched at birth in true Bollywood style, so that their destinies are interchanged, and at the same time tied to each other forever.

And when she was alone—two babies in her hands—two lives in her power—she did it for Joseph, her own private revolutionary act, thinking he will certainly love me for this, as she changed name-tags on the two huge infants, giving the poor baby a life of privilege and condemning the rich-born child to accordions and poverty On the ankle of a ten-chip whopper she placed this name: Sinai. Saffron swaddled me as, thanks to the crime of Mary Pereira, I became the chosen child of midnight, whose parents were not his parents, whose son would not be his own...Mary took the child of my mother's womb, who was not to be her son, another ten-chip pomfret wrapped it in green, and brought it to Wee Willie Winkie—who was staring at her

blind-eyed, who hardly saw his new son, who never knew about centre-partings. (157)

Although it is not described in great detail, Dr. Narlikar's nursing home becomes the metaphorical space for the formation of identity, an idea that is central to the structure of the novel and its subject city. The birth of Saleem is an important occasion in the history of not only the nation but also the nursing home:

Suddenly everything is saffron and green. Amina Sinai in a room with saffron walls and green woodwork. In a neighbouring room, Wee Willie Winkie's Vanita, green-skinned, the whites of her eyes shot with saffron, the baby finally beginning its descent through inner passages that are also, no doubt, similarly colourful. Saffron minutes and green seconds tick away on the clocks on the walls. Outside Dr Narlikar's Nursing Home, there are fireworks and crowds, also conforming to the colours of the night-saffron rockets, green sparkling rain; the men in shirts of zafaran hue, the women in saris of lime. On a saffron-and-green carpet, Dr Narlikar talks to Ahmed Sinai. "I shall see to your Begum personally," he says, in gentle tones the colour of the evening, "Nothing to worry about. You wait here; plenty of room to pace." (153)

Henri Lefebvre states that representational spaces are inclusive of spaces that are lived and experienced through complex symbols and images by inhabitants and users. In this context, the nursing home may be read as the Lefebvrian representational space where the birth of the Saleem is celebrated in a riot of colours, a celebration that coincides with the birth of an independent India.

To come back to Methwold's estate—"we are entering my kingdom now, coming into the heart of my childhood; a little lump has appeared in my throat"—this landscape is symbolic of India's colonial legacy as well as her independence (124). The estate consists of four identical houses, each named after European palaces: Versailles, Buckingham, Escorial Villa and Sans Souci. William Methwold, the former British owner of the estate moves out on 15th August 1947 when India gains independence and Saleem is born. The new owners of these houses are Indian, including Saleem's parents. Despite losing the ownership of the house, Methwold lays down conditions that ensure that nothing in the house remains unchanged. For

instance, previous customs must be adhered to ensure, according to Methwold, the continuity of the colonial legacy. The cocktail hour, for example, is a ritual that must be followed daily. Besides this, Methwold forbids the discarding of his material possessions in the houses so that the new owners are compelled to live amongst the colonial furniture as well as their own belongings. Although the Sinais initially complain about the unwanted and forbidden-to-use possessions in the house, they soon settle down:

the sharp edges of things are getting blurred, so they have all failed to notice what was happening: the Estate, Methwold's Estate is changing them. Every evening at six they are out in their gardens, celebrating the cocktail hour, and when William Methwold comes to call they slip effortlessly into their imitation Oxford drawls. (131)

This practice turns them into brown-sahibs, prompting Methwold to comment, "Sabkuch ticktock hai" (131). In spatial terms, Methwold's estate is an important space for the negotiation of the postcolonial identity and subjectivity both for the colonizer and the colonized. William Methwold is representative not only of the colonizers, but more importantly he represents the colonial shadow that looms large and continues to hold the native Indians and inform their subjective negotiations of the space of the self, the family, the home, the city and the nation.

The Sinai home then becomes the metaphorical space for postcolonial space. Ahmed and Amina Siani's house is the site for Lefebvrian spatial practices where the relations between the inhabitants of the house and their material realities determine and inform the idea of the postcolonial subject. To argue in Lefebvrian terms, this space is a product of the colonial and postcolonial dialectic:

Methwold's Estate was sold on two conditions: that the houses be bought complete with every last thing in them, that the entire contents be retained by thye new owners; and that the actual transfer should not take place until midnight on August 15th. (126)

Methwold's unwillingness to discard his belongings signals the colonizer's reluctance to exit from a space that they had claimed, appropriated and used it as their own:

"Everything?" Amina Sinai asked. "I can't even throw away a spoon? Allah, that lampshade ... I can't get rid of one comb?"

“Lock, stock and barrel,” Methwold said, “Those are my terms. A whim, Mr Sinai ... you’ll permit a departing colonial his little game? We don’t have much left to do, we British, except to play our games.”
(126)

Methwold’s insistence and Amina’s hesitance symbolize that the colonial legacy is deeply embedded in the nascent nation and in the life of its people. Such deep-rooted ideologies are not easily disturbed, and the Sinais’ negotiation of this colonial inheritance is indicative of the nation’s struggle with its post-colonial position. By forbidding the disposal of his belongings, Methwold, the symbolic colonizer, is actually retaining his hold over his estate while simultaneously ensuring the cohesive continuity of colonial inheritance. This continuity is achieved when the inmates of the house gradually, and perhaps unconsciously, embrace the rituals established by Methwold. In the process, they replicate the colonial ideologies within the sphere of their home and hearth.

The spatial territory of the home is an important point of departure to debate on the production, appropriation and internalization of space. Sara Upstone elaborates on the significance of ‘home’ in the following words:

dwellings seem to reflect traditional nostalgic construction, seem to act as simple metaphors for the nation, but they are quickly imbued with a fantastic life which complicates such connections, full of open doors, rushing water and unlocked chests that suggest a refusal to be hemmed in by reductive meanings. In all its forms, such shift in representation—away from the service of colonial discourse—means that chaos and hierarchies in the home are no longer overwritten with either harmony or order. (123)

In the context of its colonial owner, Methwold’s estate is the space of the colonizer. In the context of the history of the physical geography of Bombay, this space originally belonged to the fishermen (the natives) and was later inhabited by the colonizers (Portuguese and English). Simultaneously, this space was also peopled by the natives who occupied the same geographical space as the colonizers. Thus, the resultant space is informed by both colonial and native practices. Over time, this space is powerfully informed by the practices of the ruling group, so that its ideology dominates this space. To extend this argument further, it follows that on the exit of the colonizer, the

space that is once again re-occupied by the native is a space deeply informed by colonial ideology. Thus, while the space remains the same in terms of physicality, the symbolisms, ideologies and cultural practices associated with that space undergo a sea change. Methwold's estate is located in a similar context. Both as an architectural construction and as home the structure symbolizes the city of Bombay that once belonged to the natives, was taken over by the colonial forces, and is once again handed back to the natives, albeit in a highly transformed state. Bombay experienced welcome demographic changes under colonial rule (and here it is important to recognize the significant contribution of the native workers who made possible such physical transformation of the city). However, it is the cultural ethos of the city that has been most impacted. The Sinais' home within Methwold's estate is a spatial representation of this transformed space. Lefebvre argues that the three elements of the spatial triad are mutually inclusive of the other. Thus, the Sinais' home is a Lefebvrian representation of space in terms of its architectural construct and a representational space in terms of its symbolic status of Bombay, where the spatial practices of the colonial inheritance are continued by the new occupants of this space. It may be reiterated here that the space of the Methwold estate symbolizes the blurring of the private and the public. The very private space of the home is greatly informed by public cultural images associated with colonial rule. The private space of the home becomes the space for the enactment of public realities.

Methwold's estate is also representative of the cosmopolitan ideal of Bombay. The city of Bombay has long been tied with the ideals of cosmopolitanism as Arjun Appadurai and Gyan Prakash point out. Gyan Prakash writes of the city's "captivating imaginations, its representation as a place of desire and dreams" (*Said* 499). In the years following Independence, the undermining of the cosmopolitan city was closely linked to the growing disillusionment of the modernizing state and prospects of urban opportunity, along with a related history of communalism and violence. The changes in the city's social structure found reflection in the emergent middle-class suburbs and neighbourhoods, which were increasingly linked more by class than by ethnicity, economic divides in the population of the city became sharper, resulting in the creation of middle-class neighbourhoods. The increased amalgamation among the city's communities fostered tremendous cultural activity in the 1950s and 1960s.

It is this hybrid of cultural mixtures—between colonizers and colonized—which Rushdie draws on for *Midnight's Children*; Saleem's multiple ancestries are an embodiment of the cultural phenomena at work during his childhood. Cultural mixtures seem to have belonged mostly to the middle classes, however. Cosmopolitanism and modernity are closely interlinked. Modernity in Bombay has often been thought of in cosmopolitan terms, given the city's historically huge and multicultural migrant population. Modernity thus becomes the site for the deployment of particular imaginaries and practices of the city.

In writing about the city Rushdie is also attempting to reclaim it, as is evident in the episode of the Dr. Narlikar and the project of tetrapods:

“Land and sea; sea and land; the eternal struggle, not so?” Ahmed, puzzled, remains silent. ‘Once there were seven islands,’ Narlikar reminds him, “Worli, Mahim, Salsette, Matunga, Colaba, Mazagaon, Bombay. The British joined them up. Sea, brother Ahmed, became land. Land arose, and did not sink beneath the tides!” (183)

Bombay is a city created by reclaiming land from the sea and Rushdie does not fail to refer to this very important historical fact. In fact, while the tetrapods episode promises commercial gains for Narlikar and Ahmed Sinai, for Rushdie it allows the space to legitimize his desire of wanting to reclaim the city of his childhood:

the dream of reclaiming land from the sea with the aid of thousands upon thousands of large concrete tetrapods—that same dream which had been the cause of the freeze-and which was now, for my father, a sort of surrogate for the sexual activity which the aftermath of the freeze denied him-actually seemed to be coming close to fruition. (243)

It is significant how this money-minting project changes the façade of the city. The achievement of the tetrapods is evident in the “vast monsters soared upwards to the sky, bearing strange alien names: Oberoi-Sheraton screamed at me from afar. And where was the neon Jeep sign? ... the city has been changed” and how (632).

The contested social and political spatialities of the city find expression in the washing chest. The chest is foregrounded early in *Midnight's Children* by Nadir Khan's use of it as a space of refuge—“the depths of the large old laundry-chest standing in the corner of the room, sanctuary, ... muffled by linen, dirty underwear, old shirts (65)”. The aggressive territorial changes in the city and individual

responses to it are highlighted when Saleem hides amidst the soiled and dirty linen in his mother's washing chest:

There are no mirrors in a washing-chest; rude jokes do not enter it, nor pointing fingers. The rage of fathers is muffled by used sheets and discarded brassieres. A washing-chest is a hole in the world, a place which civilization has put outside itself, beyond the pale; this makes it the finest of hiding-places. In the washing-chest, I was like Nadir Khan in his underworld, safe from all pressures, concealed from the demands of parents and history. (215)

The chest becomes his cocoon where the comforting presence of the soiled linen lulled the anxious creature in him to sleep (210). The chest thus transforms into a space of dissolution, and underlining partial and subjective responses to the experiences of the urban. Rushdie extends this particular space to suggest the creation of new, and perhaps alternative, identities to counter the constant arrangement and rearrangement of particular spatial orders within the larger frame of Bombay—"you can be anything you want; you just have to want it enough! ... And Mary Pereira, echoing him in her little rhyme: 'Anything you want to be, you can be; You can be just what-all you want!'"(215). These spaces are individual perceptions and representations of a mappable 'real' city. They respond to the specific spatial order through various narrative strategies in the face of the city's pluralism. Thus for Saleem the chest becomes an alternative space, a substitution for the real spaces of the city, wherein lies the possibility of negotiating identity independent of the spatial ideologies of the city. The soiled linen allows him to connect with his self that is otherwise made constant fun of because of the unusual nose. The bundle of unwashed clothes acts as the spatial cocoon and provides Saleem the freedom to accept his glaring imperfection with pride. Moreover, the washing chest also allows him the spatial territory to watch over the going-ons at home with a clear sense of purpose:

I became Aladdin, voyaging in a fabulous cave; watching servants dusting vases with a dedication as majestic as it as obscure, I imagined Alibaba's forty thieves hiding in the dusted urns; in the garden, staring at Purushottam the sadhu being eroded by water, *I turned into the genie of the lamp, and thus avoided, for the most part, the terrible notion that I, alone in the universe, had no idea what I should be, or how I should behave.* (211; my emphasis).

Clearly, the washing chest is Saleem's magic lamp which allows him to escape into a fantasy world where there were no servants or school-buses (211). This shift in the representation of a sense of place/space foregrounds the author's effort to use these otherwise obscure spaces to narrate the city. It also reflects the idea that the city is 'placeful' in some way or another—it can be mapped, and therefore understood. The struggle against the controlling and homogenizing forces of the urban environment and the dominant culture can only take place within the very terms of that culture. The urban spaces of Bombay ordain the kinds of journeys which characters will undertake, the spaces they will internalize to organize their experiences. Like Methwold's estate, the washing chest, within the domestic space of the house, allows the possibility to negotiate the private self away from the public spectacle of the city. More importantly, the washing chest becomes the textual space of the narrative from where Saleem gains access to the minds and thought-processes of the other characters in the novel.

The space of the washing chest demands none of the usual regard to domestic cleanliness or purity. Rather, it creates a space of exclusion in the bathroom of Buckingham Villa where "servants are excluded from the washing chest, school buses, too, are absent" (211), leading Saleem to proclaim his banishment—"Banned from washing-chests" (239). In the chest he was safe from the memory and jibes of the kindergarten teacher, Miss Kapadia;

Concealed in my hiding-place, I was safe from the memory of Miss Kapadia, the teacher at Breach Candy Kindergarten, who had, on my first day at school, turned from her blackboard to greet me, seen my nose, and dropped her duster in alarm, smashing the nail on her big toe, in a screechy but minor echo of my father's famous mishap; buried amongst soiled hankies and crumpled pajamas, I could forget, for a time, my ugliness. (213)

The power of such a secure space does not simply remove personal anxiety but also public danger by providing a site of resistance in which identity can be safely asserted, and secret plans made. This is a space outside the hubbub of society; as the basket takes on a more homely significance than the actual dwelling, its status as a breach in the normal spatial order endowing it with a capacity far beyond its dimensions. This is a double deterritorialisation where the space of the home is

doubly inverted. The house becomes the outside, the “basket of invisibility” that is liberating (482).

The cultural construction of Bombay finds expression in the scene of the Pioneer café that becomes the space for the blossoming of love. It is here, for the first time, that the reader is offered a description of the geographical stretches of Bombay. En route home Saleem follows Amina Sinai,

past Breach Candy Hospital and Mahalaxmi Temple, north along Hornby Vellard past Vallabhbhai Patel Stadium and Haji Ali’s island tomb, north of what had once been ... the island of Bombay. We were heading towards the anonymous mass of tenements and fishing villages and textile plants and film-studios that the city became in these northern zones (297-98)

Bombay is described as bearing all the hallmarks of a postcolonial landscape produced by colonial modernity and capitalism. At the centre of all of these representations are the inequalities that define the city and the multiplicity of urban space, expressions of the fracturing flows of late capitalism. The representation of the contemporary cityscape in a literary text is more than a vehicle for a mimetic representation of the city. In Rushdie’s novel the problem of the difficulty of capturing the spirit of Bombay is partially solved by its textual representation. The novel approaches the writing of city through multiple images to map the different temporalities of the city, not just in terms of history, but in terms of everyday urban spatialities. One way of imaging this is through urban structures where architecture has been associated with permanence and the preservation of tradition so that the city becomes legible. Rushdie’s Bombay is a negotiation of the city of collective memory, where official and unofficial narratives that seek to explain, represent or draw out the meanings latent in urban space. The re-creation and reconstruction of the city rests heavily on recognised tropes, metaphors and images of the city. Rushdie’s methods of exploring Bombay foreground his own methods of constructing spatial meanings.

Perhaps the most arresting of these images result from Rushdie’s preoccupation with cinema. Rushdie’s Bombay is also a playful rendition of a city already imagined through cinema in countless reproductions. He states emphatically in *Midnight’s Children* that “nobody from Bombay should be without a basic film

vocabulary” (37). Saleem dramatizes his own life when he says, “Melodrama piling upon melodrama; life acquiring the colouring of a Bombay talkie” (203). Rushdie’s continuous engagement with cinema, in particular Bollywood/Bombay cinema is representative of why Bollywood is to so many a signifier of the cultural logic of Indian modernity that is more often than not housed in Bombay. For Rushdie Bombay cinema is both film and a particular logic of culture. Cinema functions as the aesthetic and the dominant cultural form of India, a sentiment aptly echoed in Saleem Sinai’s confession, “I accept my life has taken on, yet again, the tone of a Bombay talkie” (488) because like many Bollywood films, he too has a double in Shiva. In the novel direct connections are made between film and novel. In typical Rushdie style the narrative informs the reader that it was in Homi Catrack’s film *The Lovers of Kashmir* that the famous ‘indirect kiss’ was introduced to Indian cinema³. The link between Rushdie’s narrative discourse and the Bollywood film becomes clearer when the reference to the indirect kiss is playfully rendered:

In those days it was not permitted for lover-boys and their leading ladies to touch one another on screen, for fear that their osculations might corrupt the nation’s youth . . . but thirty-three minutes after the beginning of *The Lovers*, the premiere audience began to give off a low buzz of shock, because Pia and Nayyar had begun to kiss—not one another—but things. Pia kissed an apple, sensuously, with all the rich fullness of her painted lips; then passed it to Nayyar; who planted, upon its opposite face, a virilely passionate mouth. This was the birth of what came to be known as the indirect kiss. (195-96)

Early in the novel, the narrative describes the exchange of the two babies—a strong Bollywood motif that framed the cinema of the 1960s and 70s. In the chapter titled ‘Mercurochrome’ the technique of filmmaking is described to highlight the importance of cinema in the structural design of the realist text. In the chapters titled ‘Hit-the-spittoon’ cinema is both the dominant art form of Bombay that gives the proletariat access to cultural capital of India. The scene in the Pioneer Café too resonates with a Bollywood-inspired moment when Saleem, after following his mother through the many roads and streets of Bombay, finally watches her, through the glass, engrossed in a deep conversation with Nadir Khan. This is yet another cinematic moment in the narrative. For young Saleem the glass acts as a cinema screen, leading him to fantasize about the world on the other side of the glass. It is

difficult for him to imagine his mother with someone else, and therefore, the glass screen transforms into the cinematic screen transporting Saleem into the world of make-believe. This spatial moment underscores the significance of cinema as both a presence and an empowering mode of self-representation, and its status as one of the most important cultural markers of India.

The multiplicity and plurality of Bombay, and India, is a dominant theme within *Midnight's Children* as is evident when Saleem says “[t]here are as many versions of India as Indians” (373)⁴. This multiplicity is mirrored in Saleem’s life as his story becomes the story of a nascent nation. Saleem, like Bombay, must sort through his own multiple identities to recognize his true self. The references to his multiple parentages relate to the feelings of fragmented identity and memory that plague Saleem throughout the novel. The ubiquitous perforated sheet is another continuous reminder of the thematic concerns of the novel. The sheet represents the fragmented identities that the novel’s characters attempt to piece together. Saleem refers to it as a “ghostly essence” of the perforated sheet “which doomed my mother to learn to love a man in segments, and which condemned me to see my own life—its meanings, its structures—in fragments also; so that by the time I understood it, it was far too late” (143). Just as the perforated sheet symbolizes the fragmented identities of Aadam and Naseem, Amina trains herself to love her husband in segments, piece by piece:

she divided him mentally, into every single one of his component parts, physical as well as behavioural, compartmentalizing him into lips and verbal tics and prejudices and likes ... in short, she fell under the spell of the perforated sheet of her own parents, because she resolved to fall in love with her husband bit by bit. (87)

Her husband’s identity is therefore a fragmented amalgamation of his various parts. By extension, the representation of the city of Bombay is also an amalgamation of various spaces of the city which are coalesced to create a larger whole. Because Rushdie’s childhood memories were fragmented, he realized that it was impossible to capture Bombay in precision. Instead, he pieces together his recollections to describe his version of the city, a version which is often subjective but which attempts to depict the experiences of a nation and people struggling to define themselves during a turbulent era. The postcolonial identity is fragmented through its collision with other

cultures, and thus the narrative of Saleem, and the city, is not a homogenous interpretation of history.

The spatial imaginations of Bombay highlight Saleem's (and Rushdie's) struggle to inhabit and experience the city as a cosmopolitan home/nation. As stated earlier Bombay is more than the setting of the narrative; the spaces of the city not only form the backdrop for the events, but actively constrain and enable them as well. The diversity and plurality of the postcolonial city (the traces of the older, colonial models layered with new divides) allow the narrative to unfold in certain directions thus transforming Bombay into a microcosm for the relationship between urban geography and the postcolonial experience. Such methodology allows for the mapping of the different locations of the city, their inequalities allow the probing of certain actions that fundamentally link the mapping of the urban space with the growth of the protagonist and that of the nation. The significant changes wrought in the configuration of public space of the city expand the possibilities of the novel. Rushdie's beloved Bombay was still a tolerant, cosmopolitan city, years away from the bombings of 1993 and the pogroms of the Shiv Sena. His Bombay was not a space of corrupt and manipulative forces. The Bombay of *Midnight's Children* was more secure and, perhaps also a more confined one.

II

Nearly thirteen years after Rushdie's tribute to his beloved city comes Shama Futehally's first novel, *Tara Lane*, a nuanced portrayal of the lives, trials and tribulations of the Mushtaqs in post-Independence Bombay. Set against the backdrop of the labour movement in Bombay in the 1950s and 60s, the narrative traces the lives of the Mushtaqs, the upper-class factory owners and the ways in which corruption, and the subsequent labour strikes, in the factory impact their lives. The novel depicts the decline and eventual destruction of the family business and the loss of the extended family's houses, moving from a privileged cocooned life in the family's private compound to ordinary apartments in a municipal block. The loss of the space of home and the decline of the family business metaphorically depicts the decline of 'old' middle class values in modern India and a period of social, cultural and economic transition. *Tara Lane* stresses on class as a more significant marker of the

Mushtaqs' identity, a status conferred by the family business. Tara's childhood is a period of stability and continuity, but her marriage to Rizwan threatens to change it. Rizwan's illegal dealings with the factory workers bring about the eventual bankruptcy of the Mushtaqs and results in the closure of the factory. Adapting to this change is difficult for the Mushtaqs. In terms of articulating that change the narrative leaves the plot open to the reader to imagine what happens next when they leave the family compound in Tara Lane. The novel ends looking not to the future, but back to Tara's childhood, taking the reader into a nostalgic reminiscence of her former home. The narrative incorporates this spatial shift; it oscillates between, and yet intertwines, personal events with public proceedings that is almost Austenian. The author quietly dismantles a world of insulated domesticity by juxtaposing it against events taking place on a public scale. Simultaneously, she demonstrates how class relations are governed by a system of interdependency that involves more than the mere exchange of services. The representation of these private and public spaces mark the city of Bombay as a cosmopolitan space, but more importantly they bring to the fore the fact that cosmopolitan Bombay is bursting at the seams under the relentless pressure of commercialization.

The opening chapters are almost idyllic. Here the protagonist Tara moves, both literally and conceptually, out of the dusty but comfortable pathways of Tara Lane and into a troubled and restless urban scenario. The story of a Muslim industrialist family's swing in fortunes in the years immediately following independence, the novel's power and poignancy derives from the clever juxtaposition of the enduring personal life and the unpredictable urban landscape. The city is not at the centre of the narrative. Rather it veers on the periphery of the narrative, so that the author creates a space between the factory and the home to place the events. The urban has a hint of menace so that any chaos in the urban set-up is reflected in the disturbances in private life. The novel interestingly captures Bombay when it was undergoing tremendous transformation. It pre-empted the factory strikes of the 1960s and 70s in Bombay that eventually led to the closure of factories and the subsequent unemployment and disenfranchisement of a large number of migrant workers.

In this context, the issues facing the Indian middle class in the last decade of the twentieth century were very different to those in the past. Economic changes,

notably the shift from a nationalized to a liberalized global-orientated economy, had vital effects on the composition of the urban middle class. The resultant social mobility meant that the middle class began to comprise of a more diverse membership. The group included entrepreneurs, small business owners, and professionals working in the private sectors. Given the expansion of the middle classes, it is not surprising that there emerged differences within this class. Drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Rachel Dwyer classifies the middle class population of Bombay into three sub groups—the “old middle class,” the “new middle class,” and the “emerging petite bourgeoisie”. She observes that a distinctive feature of the old middle classes is their bourgeois mentality, which emphasizes on and takes pride in democratic, secularist and nationalist values. Echoing Dwyer’s observations, economist and novelist Gurcharan Das observes that rising standards of living have contributed to the growth as well as social mobility of the middle classes. In his book *India Unbound: From Independence to the Global Information* (2002) Das identifies the emergence of a new type of middle class values and attitudes:

Thus we start off the twenty-first century with a dynamic and rapidly growing middle class which is pushing the politicians to liberalise and globalise. Its primary preoccupation is with a rising standard of living, with social mobility and it is enthusiastically embracing consumerist values and lifestyles. Many in the new middle class also embrace ethnicity and religious revival, a few even fundamentalism. (287)

Das argues that social mobility into the middle class was possible because it was a “class based on free entry, education and capability”. Needless to say, the changes taking place is reflected in the ways the middle class adapt and deal with the transition.

The realization of the differences in class position and privileges is established very early in the novel. The child Tahera, or Tara as she is fondly called by her family, is vaguely aware of her social privileges that rest on the backdrop of some uncomfortable reality. Futehally begins the novel by describing Tara’s privileged childhood through which these middle class values are transmitted in practices and ways of living. This is evident in Tara’s description of her domestic landscape, thus:

You went up stone steps edged with ferns, and a teak door opened to the drawing-room. A cool stone floor reflected its blues and browns;

the french windows reflected the garden. The garden, when we came home in the evening light, tipped with pink from the water-lilies in the pond. The sky itself looked more beautiful from my mother's house and garden. (9)⁵

Although there is little about the decoration or furnishing of her home, but Tara's description suggest a colonial influence on the design, naming and use of rooms in the house. Tara does not appear to regard her home as unusual or out of the ordinary, particularly when the reader is told of her grandmother's house:

an enormous mansion at the other end of the lane, beyond the factory. The mansion was a wondrous concoction in cream and faded green, with little bits of sloping roof jutting out at odd angles, balconies edged with strips of wooden railing, an exciting forbidden staircase going up from outside, with a narrow strip of roof on which the rain drummed furiously in the monsoon. It looked like a cardboard cut-out of a castle in a story-book. (13)

The importance of the grandmother as the matriarchal head of the family is symbolized by the size and design of her house. She is not involved in the day-to-day running of the factory and lives slightly further away than Tara or her parents—distance also connoting her higher status. Thus, the design of house, size and the way it is used denotes the class and status of the inhabitants. For those outside the family—neighbours, friends, factory workers—both houses symbolize wealth and the cultural and class hegemony of the family.

The home is becomes a field for the performance of the domestic, and in the case of *Tara Lane*, the domestic is performed as nostalgia for the past. Tara's grandfather, who established the family business back in the 19th century, is now dead. His wife maintains a shrine in his honour where his portrait is draped in marigold garlands: "We knew that my grandfather had been a great man, and that he had started the Factory" (15). Tara's grandmother also kept albums and yellowed newspaper cuttings about her husband and the business, as well as certificates presented to him by once eminent people such as the Governor of Bombay and institutions such as the Rotary Club. These artifacts are more than just family mementos: they are documents demonstrating the grandfather's revered status and authority that his wife tries to maintain even after his death. For Tara living in post-

independence India, these artifacts no longer engender the same feelings of respect that they once did, and she pokes fun at her grandmother behind her back for keeping them. Further, the sense of tradition and continuity in the family is sustained through the traditional roles of men and women in the family who occupy public and private spaces: the sons (Tara's father and uncle) maintain the family business, serving as directors of the company, and the women (Tara's grandmother and mother, and Tara herself) take pride in their homemaking.

While the spaces of the house and her mother's garden signify class and gender roles, the lane itself reveals the jarred edges of urban reality. Tara claims possession of the lane and calls it "*my lane*" (9; italics in original). Seen through the perspective of a child the lane is almost romanticized in its description:

The way home was through the 'main' part of Tara Lane, the part which was inseparably ours but which, as we grew up, we began to feel secretly ashamed, as of an embarrassing relative. Because it was crowded, squalid and so shamefully the truth; here was no pleasant disguise of front lawns and chowkidars, as in the homes of our friends in town. On either side of the small road there were narrow gutters of dark water carrying bits of paper and sometimes worse; a few rough flat stones made a bridge over the gutter to a halwai shop with wooden benches and yellow jalebis frying in huge dark karhais (10-11).

This description of the lane offers a spatial reading of the physical realities of Bombay. Even as the newly-independent nation was struggling to find its identity, Bombay enjoyed the status of being the most advanced, developed, and modern city of India. The city's 'modernity' however contained many contrasts and contradictions. More than half of the city's populations lived in slums, or were altogether homeless—this is a truth that has continued to gain momentum over the years. Many reside in the pavements and any available empty space, however tiny it may be. The struggle to find and then retain the unoccupied space under bridges, along railway tracks, and even rooftops is a daily feature of the lives of these people. The sense of multiplicity is increasingly visible in the proposals by the city authorities for a better built environment. For example, solutions aimed at the city's beautification through the removal of the homeless and the poor to the peripheries are not only inhuman (in the manner in which they are executed) but also not economically feasible because the

poor mostly reside within the proximity of their workplaces. In *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (2004) Partha Chatterjee has explicated on the attempts (by the administration) to reclaim public spaces for the use of the city's legitimate citizens. Such processes not only strip the poor of their citizenship rights but create a fragmented society where space of public pleasure and leisure are not available to all. The process of suburbanization is paralleled by a growing concern for the need to preserve the architectural splendour of the historical, pre-colonial or colonial city. Finally, even as public spaces are reclaimed for general use, there is also the proliferation of segregated and protected places for the consumption of the elite. This is a clear reversal of the idea of the post-independence Indian city. The demand of electoral mobilization further causes fragmentation of the city and affects the twin processes of democracy and development. The intensification of efforts by political parties to garner electoral support in Bombay is challenged by the huge increase in the populations (caused by migration), the creation of explosive social conditions through political unrest, crime, disease, squalor, and deprivation. There is, in turn, the concern for providing basic civic amenities to the urban poor. These are but examples, but herein lies the multiplicity of the "city of gold". The fortune making mechanism of Bombay has been transformed as a physical entity that is far removed from what its creators and patrons had striven for. All these are evident in the novel when Rizwan fails to sympathise with his workers and instead views them as profit-making machines. The strike in the factory does affect his professional commitments, but blinds him to the conditions of his workers. In fact, Rizwan's professionalism can be gauged from the fact that he refuses to let the problems in the factory invade his personal space at home, and insists that Tahera should continue to manage the household in the same manner as she had done before the strikes. Further, his decision to bribe the officers (which shocks Tahera immensely) immediately dislocates him from the ideology of the Mushtaqs who have not only always been upright in their professional dealings but also sympathetic towards the factory workers. This spatio-ideological dislocation within the home not only divides the family but also creates a situation of domestic split in which young Tahera is eventually and unwillingly caught.

The Bombay of *Tara Lane* is an assimilation of fragments, narratives and competing meanings of the urban space. Tara's class awareness becomes evident

when she refuses to belong to the city—“we were not really a part of this incorrigible city with its unspeakable trucks and indescribable taxis” (40). The city is negotiated through various routes: to the house, the school, the park and the factory. The description of Bombay through the perspectives of Tara, her mother and Grandmother, Rizwan and her ayah does not aim to create a homogenizing picture of the city but rather seeks to reveal its disparities. A significant and crucial feature in the representation of the city is the shift of locale. Unlike *Midnight's Children* where the action moves simultaneously at both public and private levels, in Futehally's novel the action is more concentrated in the private sphere and impacted upon by the events in the larger public sphere. The quiet, ordered and disciplined world of the Mushtaqs is disturbed and disrupted when the union workers call for a strike in their factory, thus triggering a chain of events that reflects in their own personal life so that “at home the strike wore a very different look” (73). The realities of the outer world dangerously pervade the inner sanctuary Tara realizes that life “was a like a piece of cloth which was stretched too thin, so that at any moment you could discover a large hole underneath you”—a statement that is reminiscent of Ahmed Sinai's perforated sheet (12). Interestingly, it is not only the sheet but also the washing chest that figures in *Tara Lane*, only that the washing chest is replicated by Tara's grandfather's ancient rosewood desk. While it is hard to discern if the use of such well-known metaphors is a deliberate move by Futehally, it nevertheless allows the possibility of connecting the two narratives on common ground. The spatial relevance of these metaphors is foregrounded in the ways in which they are used. Rushdie's perforated sheet was symbolic of the fragmented realities of the life of the protagonist, the city and the nation, in *Tara Lane* it serves as a reminder of segregated worlds resulting from socio-economic conditions. Similarly, the rosewood desk occupying “a place of honour in Dadi's room” (14) is a symbol of tradition, aristocracy and familial legacy that must be upheld at all costs.

In this context *Tara Lane* represents the collapse of the illusion of national unity portrayed by Nehru and shows how the Mushtaqs have benefited from their privileged position in society:

As the novel proceeds and the daughter moves out of the cosseted world of the extended family into the city of Bombay, the paternalistic view of society which represents her father's factory as a treasure

house which provides both for the family and the workers is revealed as a deception operating in the interests of the middle classes. (Mee 130)

However, the Mushtaqs' privileged life is threatened when the narrative presents a tussle between tradition and modernity. This comes in the form of a crisis within the family business, which forces the closure of the business and the loss of the family home. The ideological differences between family members coupled with economic difficulties culminate in this crisis. The source of employment for Tara's father and uncle is the family business, and later they are joined by Tara's husband Rizwan. Rizwan becomes embroiled in a labour dispute and is accused of bribing factory employees. Halfway through the novel, the factory goes into liquidation as the family does not have the resources to continue production at the factory. They are also unable to raise loans while allegations against Rizwan's strike payments are being investigated by the authorities, and the family is faced with the possibility of losing both the factory and the family homes. Tara tries to justify Rizwan's misconduct by thinking of the other important men who had told lies—first her father, then Rizwan, and then Nehru:

Rizwan had—he had offered misinformation. Well—so did all businessmen, I told myself unhappily, so did all government officers, so did all policemen, all railway-clerks-all-ticket-inspectors-all-tax-officers; it was said on one occasion that Pandit Nehru had himself omitted the truth; my father too had once confessed that he (125)

Tara's moral and ethical values are called into question and dismissed as unrealistic by Rizwan:

You and your eternal standards! That only means that you want to know something about the real world. You want to sit there smelling beautiful and have the money floating down from the sky ... Oh, let it go to hell. Only five hundred people without jobs. (124)

Driven to despair by the family crisis, Tara considers getting a teaching job. The teacher apologises to Tara for not being able to help, telling her that the department gets so many applications, that Tara's only hope is if her family has 'influence' with the board. This is ironic when contrasted with Tara's righteous attitude towards her husband's corrupt practices and the bribery of the factory employees, when it is bribery that would help her to obtain a teaching job in the college.

Unlike the grand scale of *Midnight's Children* where questions of national identity, myth, and historicity take centre stage against the background of the metropolis, *Tara Lane* identifies the city's imagined space in its microscopic world of economic realities. Futehally does not take on the grand landscape of the city and the larger events connected to it; rather, she specifically addresses the urban space created by the development projects of 1950s and 60s. The range and diversity of Futehally's interventions in constructing alternative cartographies provide clues as to how the multifarious possibilities of urban space are negotiated. For example, Tara's fairy-tale world is shaken by bitter-sweet realities of the everyday. Her sense of shame at being taken to school in a chauffeur-driven car highlights her discomfort of privileged living. Her awareness of the disparities between her and other children (of the factory-workers) results in a sense of inadequacy that is further heightened when Snehlata, of the two plaits and wearing a big dot on her forehead, asks Tara "What caste you'll are?" (16). Baring this one question the novel cleverly steers clear of any caste-related or communal complications and focuses, instead, on the spatial realities arising from economic disparities. Indeed, given the temporal setting of the novel, it is important to note that Futehally is recalling a Nehruvian Bombay that was cosmopolitan and multicultural in nature. Despite the date of its publication coinciding with the city's communal turmoil, the novel consciously does not dwell on any communal controversy. It is this concentrated representation that marks the novel rather than an overriding concern with the city itself. The author does not represent urban space through the usual categories which manifest the city; unlike the postcolonial city of 'incompatible realities' which concerns Salman Rushdie, the entirety of the urban space is mediated through negotiations of the owner-worker relationship, and Tara's individual comprehension of this relationship.

Contemporary Bombay is witness to the global phenomenon of gated residential enclaves. However, the city has a long history of residential segregation along religious, economic and ethno-linguistic lines; the new developments are more inward-looking, however, in that they seek to create private, self-sufficient living and leisure spaces. While this shift is presently located within the local dynamics of a perceived rise in crime, Bombay's increasing communalism, and the politics of exclusion in the city, within the context of *Tara Lane* the idea is to ensure segregation of the private and public world. Thus, Tara's marital home is surrounded by thick and

tall hedges made to keep away the noise and grime of the factory. But this attempt at separating the two worlds is foiled within the domestic space of the house where the previous routine of order and discipline is threatened by the young servant boy:

We arrived at the table to find that the boy had served the salad in a plastic washing-bowl. In the middle of the Chinese lace, behind the arrangement of ferns and white gardenias, there it was, unmistakably, the discoloured plastic bowl which was normally kept behind the kitchen sink for washing vegetables. (95)

Her mother's efforts to "erase the sight from the air" are thwarted by the boy who "left his mark on everything":

He had wrapped the chapattis in a duster instead of a napkin, he had set a kitchen spoon instead of a silver one by the pickle, he had laid odd glasses. At the end of the meal we found that we had sat through the whole of it, we had sipped and passed and demurred and thanked, on a table-cloth laid the wrong side up. (95)

This disruption in their otherwise ordered lives reveal the fragility of the private world that is intrinsically connected and greatly influenced by events occurring at a public scale.

In *Tara Lane* the home is depicted as a bubble, separate from the outside world surrounding it. Tara is aware that the factory provides her family with wealth and status; however she finds it difficult to reconcile her pride in the source of her family's wealth and the reality of it as a dirty, smelly and noisy factory, with its disagreeable, striking workers. *Tara Lane* is unusual in this respect for it actually provides a glimpse of the 'dirty' side of the industrial metropolis. Tara develops an instant dislike for this modern monolith. She "hated the Factory; its incessant clanging, its heaps of rusty iron lying in the scrap yard; the incomprehensible machinery it produced; its untidy canteen in front" (25). The only pleasant feature of the factory was her father's air-conditioned office at the top floor where, once the door closed, the "heat and smells and noise" were substituted by "an audible *civilized* hush" (25, emphasis mine). Tara's distinction between the two spaces and her sense of awe brought about by the 'civilized hush' is a clear demarcation of her sense of space. For Tara the "smelly factory with its rusty scrap-iron had nothing to do with my mother's elegant, beautiful garden" (74). The noise and messiness of the factory is

contrasted by the familiarity of father's office. Even as Tara distances herself from the factory, the factory is ever present in her life. When she is making arrangements for her marital home, the problems in the factory intrudes into her personal happiness. Although she expresses delight at making the arrangements, she is concerned about the factory intruding into her view from the house:

Such joyful tasks awaited me! There was for instance the question of getting a house ready. We were to move into the factory guest-house And immediately my mother and I were delightfully worried about the guest-house. The hedge around it would have to be raised to shut out the view of the factory yard. (71)

The factory, as a symbol of development, is a necessary but unwanted presence that she tries to block out and disguise its view by growing a tall hedge. Despite Tara's attempts to privatize her home, the spaces of home and work cannot be made exclusive because these spaces are also frequented by servants and other employees. With regard to the domestic spaces of their home, the Mushtaqs have servants who are largely invisible in terms of numbers and names. As befits their middle class status, the Mushtaq family treat their servants in a benevolent and paternalistic way. Servants are frequently given gifts of money or clothing. For those employed in the factory, a Sports Day is held annually at which games and races take place, prizes are awarded to the winners, and speeches are made by members of the Mushtaq family. Thus, it is class rather than caste divisions that are paramount within the compound: the space of the compound is divided into servants' quarters, and the family's houses, with the factory and its employees, are situated in another part⁶.

Two of the servants who feature prominently in Tara's memories are her Ayah and Samuel. The class divide across the compound is noticeable with regard to the servants' quarters that are described as more simple and basic. In contrast to the way Tara's home is described as being accessible through a series of doors, the interior and functioning of the servant kholi is visible from some distance away:

Behind the chickoo leaves was the kholi in which Samuel and Ayah lived. You could see the edge of a string bed, the beautifully shaped crack in the floor, the battered aluminium bowl. (9)

The contrast in the relatively public spaces of the servants' home with that of Tara's family's privacy—in particular the ability to shut off rooms and to close off space—is

associated with power. The servants' lack of power is revealed by not only the sparseness of the house and possessions, but the visibility of this to Tara's (and other family members) gaze. Tara romanticizes their poverty: the crack in the floor is beautifully shaped; the string bed slept in by the servants is in contrast to Tara's description of their divan full of cushions and white fabric, a space for the narration of bedtime stories. In these and other differences, Futehally sets up the contrast between wealth and power, and between riches and poverty and basic possessions. She employs language as yet another important marker to establish the spatial politics of class privileges. Thus, in the novel, Tara and her husband Rizwan use English to speak in public to other members of the family, or to servants; but speak to each other in Hindi as a sign of intimacy between themselves.

Sandeep Pendse's study on the 'toilers of the city' (1995) elaborates that the existence of the city is dependent on the invisible actors and their labour. Urban life is desperately dependent on the sweat and toil of the otherwise unrecognized and unacknowledged population. Like Om and Ishvar's perception of the city in Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* Bombay is structured by vicious contrasts, a space of both temptation and betrayal, the lives of the factory-workers narrate a different existence, one that is distinctly marked by its own class-bound forms of struggle on the fringes of urban life. The city makes possible encounters and relationships among those struggling to survive, but this is not easily achieved: the new centres of power, which obliterate the invisibility of certain social groups so that the urban narrative is not about the toilers even though the city is rendered livable by them. It is no wonder then that Tara feels that "things can't be totally...*real*...our lovely house and garden. When they are surrounded by such slums and such squalor...they can't be *real*...I feel that they can't really exist, or shouldn't exist..." (81-82; italics in original).

The narrative of *Tara Lane* offers a spatial reading of the Nehruvian model of the 'mixed' national economy, and socialism combined with capitalism. Within this framework, the workers are apparently looked after by the industrialist as benevolent patriarch, and trouble is started by those "ungrateful good-for-nothings" who are unwilling to conform to this form of paternalism. Though Tara distinguishes between her father's brand of 'honest' Nehruvian industrialism and the seedy managerial attitude of her husband, the questions that she confronts are far more wide-ranging.

She is aware that “our world was an erratic one; in this world things did not happen as they should”; despite this knowledge the novel provides her no moral victory (120). As an upper-class woman, Tara finds comfort and shelter in marital bliss and motherhood while her husband deals with the crisis pervading at the factory. The novel thus presents alternative cartographies of urban spaces, the responses to which is reflective of and correspond to the gendered positions of the key actors. The city of Bombay as a tangible reality is blocked out from Tara’s world but it continues to haunt the narrative:

In a daze I raised my eyes and gazed at the dark dash of buildings as they thundered past. What did it matter that they were grimy and mildewed, with clothes hanging anyhow? ... I walked on the street feeling that nothing could touch me. Like a film of gossamer, another world had descended from the air to cover the world I knew. (53)

When surrounded by such slums and squalor Tara tells herself that “they can’t be *real*” (81; italics in original). Her full realization and confrontation of the uncomfortable tensions of her childhood and adolescence happens only after her marriage, but wifhood and domestic bliss blunts the sharp sting of such realities.

The title of the novel invites much discussion in the context of spatial metaphors. *Tara Lane* is set in a lane of the same name, and it serves as a metaphor for all the fictive happenings in the novel and the urban realities of Bombay. By choosing to name her novel *Tara Lane* (the stress being on the second word), Futehally immediately draws the boundaries for her narrative which concentrates on the domestic realities but allows the public eventualities to seep into the private lives of the characters. The lane acts as a spatial metaphor for not only the novelist’s literary intentions, but also for the protagonist Tahera (who is also called Tara). The lane is Tara’s lane and the account of Tara lane and its on-goings—the use of the same name for the lane and the protagonist is a crucial device to converge the tales of these two entities into one narrative. The lane becomes the spatial site on which the twin saga of the protagonist and the lane as a geographical feature is played out. As Tara’s narrative and that of the lane’s merge into one, the lane becomes an all-encompassing space of diverse yet distinctly inter-connected lives. According to Lefebvre, urban space emerges as a quality that arises from quantities and an assemblage of differences. Bombay’s provision for assemblages of this kind results in

the creation of spaces that are capable of articulating the multiple spaces of the city without actually discussing about them.

III

The imagined city of Bombay rests at the intersection of mental, physical, and social space. The exchange between the real city and the represented city is a complicated movement driven by the author's subjective projection. The physical space of the city is comprehended through codes, symbols, metaphors and signs that interact between the physical spaces of the city and literary production. Literature is a legitimate and powerful archive that provides us access to a range of urban representations. The political and historical transformations of India's most modern city in the past few decades witnessed a deepening crisis of the urban moment. Negotiations, therefore, are necessary. Both Salman Rushdie and Shama Futehally offer accounts of the city that understands urban space as a complex structure that expresses and is constructed by multiple discursive practices. The representational problems which the city has always presented continue to be explored in ways which place the undecidability and incomprehensibility of the urban at the heart of the debate. The literary work can reveal the construction of meaning in the city and, in varying degrees; the novelists considered above owe a part of their sense of urban space to such a philosophy of the city. However, the difficulty of organizing the treatment of the city within the luminal space of the novel means that no narrative strategy can ever claim to encompass it.

This chapter has explored themes of change and transition in relation to the family, the nation and the socio-political changes affecting the urban life. In *Midnight's Children* Rushdie portrays the transformation of India in the immediate period of post-independence. Bombay is explicitly made the symbolic centre of the rise of a new India, which is informed by the Nehruvian secular concept of the Indian nation. *Tara Lane* depicts the threats to the middle class lifestyle in a nostalgic time-warp. The novels raise issues about how certain sections of Indian society are coping with this transition from old to new. The next chapter builds on a recurring motif in the current chapter: the urban space of Bombay as the site for further transformations of the city and its society, especially in the context of minority cultures.

Notes

¹ The Jallianwala Bagh massacre was named after the place Jallianwala Bagh (in Amritsar). On April 13, 1919, British and Gurkha soldiers opened fire on an unarmed gathering of people at Jallianwala Bagh, killing hundreds of civilians. On that day thousands of Indians had gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh in the heart of Amritsar in defiance of the prohibitory orders banning a gathering of five or more persons in the city. The Bagh (park) was bounded on all sides by brick walls and buildings and had a single narrow entrance. The British and Gurkha troops marched to the park accompanied by an armoured car on which a machine gun was mounted. Due to the narrow entrance the vehicle was unable to enter the park compound. Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer, the commander of the troops, ordered his men to open fire which lasted for about six minutes. The only exit was already manned by the troops and people desperately tried to climb the walls of the park in order to escape. Some even jumped into a well inside the compound to escape the bullets. Although official reports maintain that 379 people were killed (337 men and, 41 boys) and 1200 injured, the actual figure was much higher.

² Partha Chatterjee argues that the nationalist historiography is premised on Western nationalist discourse, so that it inevitably duplicates the same story for the nation. He reads this as an imaginative failure—“nationalism’s autobiography is fundamentally flawed” (1993: 5–6). To remedy this Chatterjee proposes to split the examination of Indian nationalism to bring out the complexities of the nation’s history.

³ The indirect kiss is achieved by a special use of montage where a cinematic shot of flowers or birds or a half-eaten apple appear, just before the lovers’ lips meet. This is meant to indicate the actual kiss that has taken place but which the spectator is forbidden to see.

⁴ *Midnight’s Children* is at once eulogy and elegy for the nation-state that had failed to deliver the promises of the freedom movement. At the same time the novel heralded a new literary model that opened up possibilities for re-imagining and representing the relationships between individual and nation.

⁵ Shama Futehally, *Tara Lane*. 1993. (Penguin/Ravi Dayal: New Delhi, 2006). Henceforth, all citations are from this edition of the novel.

⁶ This way of living, with the servants’ quarters existing within the gated compound of house, is gradually declining in Indian homes. The recent rise in apartment-living has made it difficult to have live-in servants/helps primarily due to lack of space. This has resulted in the brisk business of part-time servants/helps who work on an hourly basis. Their wages are paid in accordance with the number of hours worked and type of work carried out.

Chapter IV

The Marginal City:

Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* and Kiran Nagarkar's *Ravan and Eddie*

And the quilt is grown so big and confusing, the pattern is impossible to see, the squares and diamonds and triangles don't fit well together anymore, it's all become meaningless.

So He has abandoned it

—Rohinton Mistry

Global processes resulting in contemporary urbanization and a plethora of representations have destroyed the notion of modern cities as unified formations that are securely located within their national borders and circumscribed within particular political and social structures. Urban representations often underscore the uneven development of urban areas and express disaffection with the modern metropolis in terms of a resistance to an overwhelming grand narrative. Postcolonial writers like Salman Rushdie bring to the fore cities that emblemize distinctive conditions of contemporary life. In this context, the writer's potential of representing, contesting and inverting dominant socio-cultural modes plays a pivotal role in shaping the urban scenario. The latent possibilities that the city offers has been instrumental in conceptualizing and categorizing the urban spaces into the mainstream and the periphery.

The city of Bombay has often been marked as the facilitator of humble dreams of a better life. Millions of people who migrate to the city in search of a better life and livelihood view the city as one of promise and potentialities. This aspect of the city is not unlike the counter-cultural world that exists in the city—it runs a parallel economy, has a parallel class structure with its own stringent laws¹. This counter-city—of poverty, of slivers of hope, of solidarities, of insurmountable difficulties of the urban poor—finds expression in two significant texts, namely Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* (1995) and Kiran Nagarkar's *Ravan and Eddie* (1995). The former is set in India during the period of the Emergency imposed by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, and plays out the

crisis of the nation through the lived experience of its characters. Widely hailed as monumental work of genius, Mistry's book succinctly and successfully captures the lives of minority communities of India's most populated city as they struggle to overcome the repercussions of the national crisis. On the other hand, *Ravan and Eddie* is Kiran Nagarkar's funny and insightful paean to life in a Bombay chawl. The narrative concentrates on the dialectic of repression and resistance represented through the tumult of class, caste and gender relations in the bustling throng of the chawl.

This chapter examines the ways in which the city's social space is produced by, reflected and represented in the mindsets of the minority population of Bombay. As stated earlier, Mistry is a writer belonging to the minority community of the Parsis. In the case of Rushdie and Futehally, though belonging to the minority community, are united by their class location. This enables them to underplay the religious factor, so that the focus in their novels is not so much on minority politics as on economic and class agenda, which fits well within the politics that the novels espouse. The present chapter attempts a discussion on multiple minority locations represented by Mistry and Nagarkar. Mistry's own spatial position enables him to comment on the lives of those on the periphery but he does not limit his focus to the members of the Parsi community alone. In the novel *Dina Shroff* is a Parsi who sets up shop with two lower caste Hindu migrants, Om and Ishvar, in order to eke out a living. She is joined by a young Parsi student, Maneck Kohlah, who arrives in the city to pursue higher studies. Mistry's position as a Parsi empowers him to examine the lives of these characters at the fringes as they are victimized by repressive state machinery. Nagarkar's novel is centered on life in a chawl, and the spatial politics therein. The narrative follows Ravan and Eddie through their intertwined lives from infancy into young adults. Their lives become a part of the representation of lower middle-class/ working populations of the chawl during the Bombay of the 1960s even as the two boys grow into young adulthood.

This chapter attempts to examine the ways in which appropriation of urban space destabilizes the discourses of home and family through narratives that are introspective and inward-looking. Both novels attend to the conflicts faced by the protagonists in

dealing with difficulties and problems in their respective lives. The selected novels are accounts of the city from the minority point of view, and it would be interesting to note the sentiments of both writers as they describe the metropolis—the centre of all action—from the periphery. As this chapter is concerned with examining the marginal spaces of the city, the first section outlines the framework against which the narratives will be examined. Sections II and III analyze the novels, the focal point being the production of spaces in opposition to nationalist discourses about the city. The concluding section discusses how the stories presented in these novels subvert given notions of home by revealing the private spaces of the home as flawed and imperfect as exemplified in the alternate construction of this space.

I

Michel de Certeau points out that the city is a contested spatial category that serves

as a totalizing and almost mythical landmark for socioeconomic and political strategies, urban life increasingly permits the re-emergence of the element that the urbanistic project excluded. The language of power is in itself “urbanizing,” but the city is left prey to contradictory movements that counter-balance and combine themselves outside the reach of panoptic power. The city becomes the dominant theme in political legends, but it is no longer a field of programmed and regulated operations. Beneath the discourses that ideologize the city, the ruses and combinations of powers that have no readable identity proliferate; without points where one can take hold of them, without rational transparency, they are impossible to administer. (*Practice* 95)

Certeau further argues that the city is not only defined by the production of its own space but also by “the creation of a universal and anonymous subject which is the city itself” (*Practice* 94). Within its geographical, civic and democratic framework, the city negotiates oppositional tendencies and “thus provides a way of conceiving and constructing space on the basis of a finite number of stable, isolatable, and interconnected

properties” (94). In this context Gyan Prakash highlights the works of Paul Virilio—who had “predicted the dissolution of the city by media and communication”—and Rem Koolhaas who celebrated the death of the modernist city by emphasizing “a shift from the center to the periphery, of fragmentation, and of spontaneous processes and described the contemporary city as “a retro-active manifesto for the yet to be recognized beauty of the twentieth-century urban landscape” (Prakash, *Mumbai* 21). These concepts are significant to comprehend the urban scenario. Koolhaas celebrates the culture of congestion of the present time and writes of the “Generic City”. Generic cities are urban spaces that are indistinguishable from one another, primarily because the same spatial assemblages (in the form of shopping malls) result in lack of distinctiveness. Although this suggests architectural uniformity, the lack of uniqueness means that the generic city will be constantly destroyed and rebuilt.

Suburbanization also encapsulates the transformation in the urban landscape. The unprecedented rise in slums and squatter settlements is a pointer to the increasing urbanization of poverty. The world has transformed into what Mike Davis calls a ‘planet of slums’, where it is no longer possible to speak of distinctive divide between urban centres and the periphery. In this context cities are thus no longer internally coherent; rather they form parts of a vast urban network that is simultaneously regional and global. As discussed in Chapter 2 cities are inscribed with social relations that inform the subjectivities of the inhabitants of the city. Michel de Certeau reminds us that the city does not simply belong to proper citizens alone, but is inclusive of the “ordinary practitioners of the city” who “live ‘down below;’ below the thresholds at which visibility begins” (*Practice* 93). The city is permeated by power relations that operate on the legitimate citizens as well as the de-centered subjects who form a part of the urban existence but are repressed into oblivion. The politics of exclusion and repression spell out the power relations that operate within the many urban spaces, thus marking the city as a mutually conflicting site of overlapping structures. The city produces its own spaces, and located within these spaces are sites for subversion and contradiction. Within the dichotomy of the mainstream and the marginal, the visible co-exists with the invisible to form a wider space for social-cultural transactions.

Contemporary fictional representations of the city appropriate and modify the urban themes to suit the postcolonial experiences of the people. Globalization produces different kinds of legal regimes and citizens, so that the new hierarchies in cities pose a challenge to the normative assumptions of citizenship, identity, and politics. Partha Chatterjee, in his book *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (2004), reminds us that the existence of slums and squatter settlements in the global south mocks the classic ideal of the city as the space of civil society and rational discourse. Postcolonial urban fiction conceptualizes the city as an anxious space, where the tussle between the discourses of tradition and modernity are negotiated. Bombay symbolizes all this and more. It is a city of ethnic and religious assimilations, of opportunities as well as false hopes, of rags-to-riches success stories and unfathomable poverty. The hand-to-mouth existence, the fragile and temporal relationships, the emotional energies and self-preserving hypocrisies of the inhabitants are reflective of the anxious and self-segregating layers of the working class in Bombay. As the city becomes a site for control and repression, the inhabitants negotiate their subjectivity and claims to the city within the framework of this controlled space. Besides citizens, urban space constitutes dwellers that transgress administrative boundaries and thus dissolve the lines demarcating the city-space. In this manner the city is continuously defined anew but, at the same time, the city also escapes definition as its spaces are continuously contested and appropriated. Such continuous negotiations within the territorial and administrative structure of the city bring to the fore the various hidden spaces and fractured subjects which are the invisible and indefinable foundations of the society but are always made to remain in the margins.

The space of the city is marked by class differences which is further complicated when the minority communities claim a space of their own within this shared space of conflict. Class relations meet with a severe challenge when held up against the minority issue for the latter is a much more complex force defining spatial relations and the distribution of the city's spaces. People belonging to the minority communities are twice-removed from the politics of governance and yet these are the very people who are sought by the powers that be when elections beckon. The fictional imagination of the city of

Bombay is not exclusive of the cultural space of the minority communities as they struggle to make meaning of their existence. Postcolonial Bombay contains transformative powers created by the constant contact of different languages and people that result in the generation of new meanings through hybrid combinations. Bombay serves as a place where different cultures mix and the divided nation becomes defined by heterogeneity and cosmopolitanism.

II

The imposition of the Emergency by Indira Gandhi in 1975 was a turning point in Indian politics². The motto—“The Need of the Hour is Discipline”—was recognized as the defining idea that was essential for the achievement of national unity (Mistry *Balance*, 74). This period was witness major upheavals that included inflation, economic recession, unemployment and scarcity of goods. The resultant unrest and an unprecedented wave of strikes challenged governmental autocracy. The consequential curb on civil rights and liberties resulted in the repressive terrorization of large numbers of the population, of which the working classes and the rural poor were severely affected. The Emergency procedures included the imposition of mass sterilization and the demolition of slums. Although the slogan of *Garibi Hatao* (Abolish Poverty) was used aggressively to justify the measures adopted, it was but another attempt to secure the regime’s legitimacy.

Rohinton Mistry’s *A Fine Balance* is set in this period of autocratic government power, and the action is located in Bombay. Winner of the Giller Prize and shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1996, *A Fine Balance*, after being featured on Oprah Winfrey’s Book of the Month Club (2001), found a ready readership outside the academia. The novel foregrounds questions of class and social injustice in its mapping of the subterranean, labyrinthine bowels of Bombay’s peripheral spaces and its depiction of urban penury. Taking the themes of displacement and marginality, the narrative of *A Fine Balance* comments on the political events and the subsequent effects that shaped India. The narrative captures the cruelty and corruption prevalent in India by highlighting the plight

of citizens caught in the administrative construction and systemization of urban space during the Emergency years. In doing so the narrative destabilizes the discourses of caste, gender and religion. The depiction of the marginal and displaced protagonists alienated by hegemonic narratives of the nation represents an alternate tale of urban existence. The sense of 'homelessness' that the novel represents is emblematic of the displacement of the protagonists from the institutionalized narratives of the city. Narrated almost entirely from the perspective of subaltern characters, the novel captures the despair of the urban poor during this period of desolation and the breakdown of Nehru's promise of a better India: "We have to build the noble mansion of free India, where all her children may dwell" (Rushdie *Children*, 158). The victimization of the protagonists by repressive state machinery and the loss of order in the city highlight the failure of this promise.

In *The Idea of India* Sunil Khilnani points out that by the time of his death, Nehru's promises of the ideal state had "etched itself into the imagination of Indians in a way that no previous political agency had ever done"(41). This was achieved chiefly by the promises of "jobs, ration cards, educational places, security and cultural recognition" which every Indian desired (41). In this context, *A Fine Balance* captures the fraught social relationships as the promises of independence begin to show clear signs of failure under Indira Gandhi's authoritarian regime. The spaces of the city act as counter-sites that reflect the elements of chaos and pandemonium inherent in the otherwise planned space of the city.

A Fine Balance has been read as the quintessential subaltern novel centered on some of the most downtrodden, oppressed and exploited people in Indian society. The framework of the Emergency makes possible the contextualization of the migrant politics and the fraught relationship between the migrant and nation. The politics of space is played out in the marginality, displacement and homelessness of the protagonists³. The two tailors, Omprakash and Ishvar Darji, are Dalits of the *chamaar* (tanner) caste. They flee to Bombay in order to escape the restrictive caste oppression of their village, but are soon engulfed in the anarchy of the Emergency which, to them, is "one more government tamasha" (5)⁴. Although they have already lived in the city for some months, the

Prologue (which is dated to the year of the Emergency, 1975) locates their arrival in Bombay as coterminous with the declaration of the Emergency itself. Dina Shroff is from an erstwhile wealthy family who struggle to maintain her self-respect by living in the flat of her deceased husband. She is Ishvar and Omprakash's employer, but she is struggling to preserve her "fragile independence" fuelled by the hopes of climbing the ranks of the middle class (11). Dina distances herself from the political ferment of the period, "Government problems—games played by people in power," she tells Ishvar. "It doesn't affect ordinary people like us" (75). However, in the end it does affect all of them, drastically.

Laura Moss points out, that "the primary function of the 'ordinary' characters in *A Fine Balance* is not to be synecdochic of the 'Indian citizen' in the Emergency but rather to represent possible examples of what might happen in such a state" (159). The novel is held together by the thematic search for 'home'. This becomes a unifying force as the four central characters from varied backgrounds—Dina Shroff, Ishvar Darji, his nephew Omprakash, and the young Maneck Kohlah who finds the city "huge and confusing" (7)—are thrust together and forced to share not only a single cramped apartment but also an uncertain future. They develop a bond in crisis which significantly underlines the rejection of the celebrated cosmopolitanism that characterizes the city of Bombay. Forced by circumstance and necessity the foursome manage—for a brief period—to create a space of sustenance and hope against the violent combination of economic, social, and political forces of the world outside. The narrative poignantly traces their struggles to survive and also captures those agonizingly brief moments when they are united by a sense of community. The eventual destruction of this shared sense of community is ushered by larger socio-political forces at work. Within the framework of the urban spaces of Bombay *A Fine Balance* focuses on the dynamics of dislocations of class, gender, caste, and locality.

Drawing on the familiar narrative of the postcolonial metropolis of Bombay (the narrator of the novel refuses to name it, preferring to call it the "city by the sea") *A Fine Balance* foregrounds the city in the way the characters interpret and appropriate it. Henri

Lefebvre writes that planners, urbanists, and social engineers operate with what he calls *representations of space* that conceptualize space according to self-referential understandings and ideologies linked to production relations. The city of Bombay is a constellation of systems of production, consumption, communication, and circulation. This picture however contains a multitude of urban problems such as disorganized growth, traffic congestion, narrow lanes; insufficient, sanitary facilities and overcrowded housing. The city is congested by people who lack adequate infrastructure for survival. These problems of the city are fundamentally spatial for they all entail the sharing of urban space. Slums and tenements are not alien to Bombay; even in their present form they hold up a mirror to elite spaces of the city to reflect the grotesque flip side of capitalism. Undoubtedly, the difference in spatial patterns becomes evident as one moves from the space of the urban elite to that occupied by the huge populations of the urban poor. One of the earliest reactions to the city is offered by Omprakash who looks through the window to determine where their train had stopped. The benign picture of the city with promise is challenged right at the beginning when dead bodies appear on the railway tracks. Through the ordered network of rail communication he gets a glimpse of

Rough shacks stood beyond the railroad fence, alongside a ditch running with raw sewage. Children were playing a game with sticks and stones. An excited puppy danced around them, trying to join in. Nearby, a shirtless man was milking a cow. They could have been anywhere. (4)

Maneck on the other hand, almost immediately upon his arrival, rejects the city, saying that “he hated it here and could not wait to return to his home in the mountains, next year, when he finished college” (7). Ishvar shares his sentiments when he reveals that they had come to the city “for a short time only ... To earn some money, then go back to our village. What is the use of such a big city? Noise and crowds, no place to live, water scarce, garbage everywhere. Terrible”. (7). Such reactions to the city immediately set the stage for the exclusion of these characters from not only the physical space of the city but also its body politic. Bombay is a place bristling with paradoxes; it is a city of dreams but nightmares lurk everywhere. It is cold-hearted and impersonal, luxurious and gritty, full of promise and betrayal, all wrapped in the blanket of human warmth. The Bombay represented *A Fine Balance* is an unpredictable and dangerously precarious place bereft

of any centre. Mistry's city is a claustrophobic succession of shops, street corners and cramped rooms; anything can happen to anyone here. However, Bombay is also a "city of promise" that makes possible encounters, solidarities, and even relationships across class boundaries in the crucible of the struggle for survival and assertion of human needs. This however is not easily achieved. The relationship between Dina and her employees is marked by mutual distrust and even hostility in the early days. It is only through the shared experience of a shared vulnerability that a bond is established, albeit one that is never totally trustful. The characters are acutely self-conscious of being part of a politico-economic turmoil, and therefore suspicious of each other. Ishwar does not want any more adventures in the city because he realizes that stories of suffering are not amusing especially when those at the margins (like them) are made protagonists. As each character struggles to make sense of the political events responsible for their pitiable condition, the narrative reminds the reader that what the maneuverings of the powerful do is beyond the imagination of the common man. The combination of a brutally repressive state, crushing poverty, and class oppression overwhelm any individual act of resistance or subversion. Resistance does occur at a personal and individual level, but is short-lived and doomed to failure sooner or later.

In the light of struggle and resistance, Bombay is also depicted as layered structure of fierce contrasts, a space of both temptation and betrayal. In this context, the Emergency was an exercise of sinister proportions; its effects were revealed through the eyes of the dispossessed. Thus Om and Ishvar arrive in the big city only to discover that in the eyes of the state and its welfare laws they have no visible existence. They have been reduced to absurd anonymity by the powers that be. In keeping with their precarious existence, they are forbidden from inhabiting any fixed space in the city. Thus they, like the many other homeless people, occupy makeshift dwellings available in railways stations, slums, verandas of rented flats, chemists' shops, footpaths and pavements. These in-between spaces of the city are very much intrinsic to the larger canvass of the city. Claiming these spaces is representative of the helplessness of the homeless as well as their desire to find, appropriate and occupy a miniscule space of the city. They thus form

an alternate city that counters the legitimate spaces of Bombay by threatening to transform the urban space.

Urban existence is, thus, indisputably marked by the existence of forbidden spaces both within the city and on its margins. Such distribution of space offsets attempts by the authority to consciously recognize and organize the city as a space of capitalism. In Bombay this necessitated a strict control of land use because land (as a spatial commodity) was what the city lacked. This in turn required the proper planning of the city through various projects. The attempts to create an ordered city however were challenged by persistent problems such as the occupation of the city's spaces by people who were officially unrecognized as citizens.

In the novel the Ration's Officer voices the fear and anxiety contained in the administration when he encounters an inadmissible mass of population within the regulated space of the city. Ishvar's determined assertion of his residential address on paper, "the place where we live" is unsuccessful as he fails to furnish his "building name, flat number, and street number"; this is met with the mock question of the Officer:

"And where exactly is your house?"

...

"Your house is in a jhopadpatti, right?"

"It's a roof—for the time being."

"A jhopadpatti is not an address. The law says ration cards can only be issued to people with real addresses."

"Our house is real," pleaded Ishvar. "You can come and see it."

"My seeing it is irrelevant. The law is what matters. And in the eyes of the law, your jhopdi doesn't count."(176-77)

Jhopadpattis or shacks are ordinary dwellings that do not meet legal recognition. This implies that the administration (here the Bombay Municipal Corporation) is under no obligation to provide the owners and residents of these tenements any facilities. "Invisibility and poverty are twinned with inexorable force" that informs these invisible

lives (Gopal 123). The lack of recognition and visibility results in the lack of home that is otherwise recognized through proper addresses.

In his discussion of labouring communities in Bombay Sandeep Pendse argues that it is the “toilers of the city” who are “relegated to the periphery of existence in the city, both literally and figuratively; actually and ideologically” (“Toil” 9). Ironically, he argues, the city itself depends on their labour for its existence—‘proper addresses’ are constructed by them, machines and trains operated by them and factories and shops that support the urban economy of Bombay depend on their toil. Urban space in Bombay becomes a site of contestation for these toilers to negotiate and make legitimate their claim to the city. Commenting on the distinctions between civil and political society in India, Partha Chatterjee finds that this division rests on a difference between citizens and population within the postcolonial framework of governance. Dogged by the legacy of the colonial state, the postcolonial nation sought to improve the social, economic and cultural conditions of its people. Yet, there are those who exist outside formal power structures and are governed by an altogether different kind of administrative politics. Beyond the defining structures of democratic politics are people who form alliances with those in power and thus become part of the city’s functions. Residing at the margins of society and law, this section of the population form a part of the larger hierarchy of power and become the ‘unofficial’ authority that mediates between the powers that be and the larger section of the urban poor.

The twin forces of oppression and geographical-cultural displacement reveal the social position of the characters. Maneck and Dina are essentially city people. Both have been exposed to education and other privileges. Om, Ishvar, the beggars and the slum-dwellers represent the other half of the population that serves the city with its labour. Their story is a story of dispossession and deterritorialization. Om and Ishvar represent the thousands of internally displaced people who arrive in the city in search of a better life, only to live out their lives in the wretchedness of urban slums. On their arrival in the big city, Ishvar and Omprakash are amazed by the number of people expectantly thronging the station platform in wait for their train: “Passengers poured out into the sea

of waiting friends and families. There were shrieks of recognition, tears of happiness. The platform became a rolling swirl of humanity” (153). With the passage of time they begin to appreciate the various forms of assimilation such places offer, particularly in contrast to the strictly enforced caste/communal segregation of their native village. Maneck, on the other hand, is symbolic of the rural/urban dichotomy. In the novel this is represented through the relationship between the small businesses of the hill stations and the corporate capitalism of the big cities. Dina Shroff’s life and circumstances are distinctly more privileged than that of the two tailors; yet it is marked by its own gendered forms of penury and struggle. Amidst these migrant and dislocated characters, the one steady presence is that of Dina Shroff’s home, which functions as a point of reference or a center, but is constantly in danger of falling apart. As calamitous national events unfold in the personal lives of the characters, communal violence, caste oppression, patriarchy, economic exploitation and urban migration all make their presence felt through their individual stories mirroring loss, pain, as well as small victories, resistance, and the occasional triumph. The making and breaking of families, friendships, and communities result from specific encounters, but they are inevitably shaped by forces and histories beyond them. Mistry’s novel brings to the fore one of the most potent social facts—the marginalization of the oppressed classes is literally and metaphorically made visible by the lack of any ‘place’ where they can live.

The narrative describes the city of Bombay as a “story factory” and a “story spinning mill” and characters establish connection with others by sharing their stories. At the centre of this process are the occupants of Dina Shroff’s cramped and crumbling flat which is home to Dina and Maneck, and alternately serves as a workplace for Ishvar and Om. Here the idea of ‘home’ becomes the most challenging concept for the marginalized in the city. The Emergency forces the slum dwellers to leave their ‘home’ each time a new law is enforced. This destabilizes their sense of belonging to the city which, in turn, resists the intrusion of these outsiders into its spaces. This is because any identification with them will endanger their own stable and secure existence. Paradoxically, the marginalized always find a new space to relocate to each time from their temporary displacement outside the city limits. Thus they thwart the inexorable efforts of the

authorities to discard them as unwanted elements of the city. Ishvar's innocent query regarding the owner of the land they live in, and Nawaz's ambivalent reply reveal the secret workings of the administration in matters of geographical space:

“But then, whose land is this?”

“No one's. The city owns it. These fellows bribe the municipality, police, water inspector, electricity officer. And they rent to people like you. No harm in it. Empty land sitting useless—if homeless people can live there, what's wrong?” (163).

The suggestion that the city is the owner of the land destabilizes the idea of ‘home’ as noted anthropologist Arjun Appadurai elaborates in his essay “Spectral Housing and Urban Cleansing: Notes on Millennial Mumbai (2000)”:

“homes” are often unstable products—a bricolage of shoddy materials, insecure social relations, poor sanitation, and near-total lack of privacy. As they move into their places of work, this vast army of the middle and working classes usually moves into more secure spaces of recognition, comfort, and predictability than the “homes” they return to at night, even when their jobs are harsh, poorly paid, or dangerous. (636)

Homelessness, in *A Fine Balance*, becomes a symptom of the protagonists' real and perceived marginality through discourses that construct them as homeless literally and figuratively. The four protagonists are persistently made to lose their home, thus underlining the impossibility of creating a home and domestic life within the controlled spaces of the city. However, for a brief moment in the novel the notion of homeliness does emerge when the foursome lives together in Dina's apartment. Sometime later Dina wants to tell her friend Zenobia of her successful household, and how she feels that for once that she was part of a ‘family’ that loved and respected her, but was afraid that her friend would mock her:

It was impossible to explain. Zenobia would say she was being silly and imagining fancy things, turning a financial necessity into something sentimental. Or she would accuse the tailors of manipulating her through fawning and flattery. (541)

Om, Ishvar and Dina's relationship is premised on the obligations of necessity. At first the employer and the employee remain confined in their respective social positions, living and eating separately. Dina and her lodger Maneck, the middle class Parsis, live and cook separately from Ishvar and Om, the tailors. Gradually however, the differences, particularly those of caste between the two groups, are blurred and finally erased when Dina no longer insists on the use of separate crockery for Ishvar and Om. The four settle into a happy and comfortable existence, secure in the knowledge that they are safe from external interference of the repressive state machinery.

The sense of a happy, homely feeling emerges strongly in the shared activities of the protagonists: Dina sews, Om massages Ishvar's feet, and they share the food. However, the continual threat to the home does not efface but continues to underline the narrative:

... And do you recall this lovely voile, Om?"

He coloured and pretended he didn't. "Come on, think," she encouraged. "How can you forget? It's the one on which you spilled your blood, when you cut your thumb with the scissors."

"I don't remember that," said Maneck.

"It was in the month before you came. And the chiffon was fun, it made Om lose his temper. The pattern was difficult to match, so slippery."

Ishvar leaned over to indicate a cambric square. "See this? Our house was destroyed by the government, the day we started on this cloth. Makes me feel sad whenever I look at it." (480)

The act of stitching pieces of cloth together is symbolic of the protagonists' attempts at home-making. This act of sharing—be it lives or homes—is made possible by the flexibility of the urban in Bombay. In his later novel *Family Matters* (2002) Mistry writes:

You see how we two are sitting here, sharing? That's how people have lived in Bombay. That's why Bombay has survived floods, disease, plaque, water shortage, bursting drains and sewers, all the population

pressures. In her heart there is room for everyone who wants to make a home here. (158-59)

In this context Dina's apartment becomes a private domestic space that allows the recreating the homes that have been either lost or taken away from the protagonists. Ishvar's reaction to the destruction of their former home by government-ordered slum clearance projects is a testimony to this. Slum clearances were part of the Emergency's beautification program that aimed to rid the city of the unsightly dwellings of the poor. It is interesting to note that the Emergency features so prominently in both *Midnight's Children* and *A Fine Balance*. In both novels, the Emergency acts as a disastrous event that infringes on human rights and freedom. Rushdie and Mistry are united in their endeavor to portray this national crisis, but each locate the calamity in different spaces altogether. For Ishvar and Om the Emergency is a means to obliterate the likes of them from the city. They are able to find a home with Dina because her middle class status provides protection and refuge. Soon, however, the homely atmosphere in the apartment evaporates as manifestations of the national crisis are felt within the security of its four walls. Maneck, for example, likens the now un-homely feeling to a kind of "fungus on unrefrigerated food":

Did life treat everyone so wantonly, ripping the good things to pieces while letting bad things fester and grow like fungus on unrefrigerated food? Vasantia Valmik the proofreader would say it was all part of living, that the secret of survival was to balance hope and despair, to embrace change. But embrace misery and destruction? No. If there were a large enough refrigerator, he would be able to preserve the happy times in this flat, keep them from ever spoiling. (432)

Maneck uses the interesting metaphor of refrigeration to illustrate his feelings about the destruction of their home; rather than symbolizing the coldness and remote attitude of the State, the refrigerator is seen as a preserver and protector of society against the machinations of the authoritative government. However, Maneck's wish is rendered futile as the marginalization of the protagonists continue: Dina unhappily moves back to her brother's house, the tailors becoming beggars and finally Maneck commits suicide. Their

powerlessness in the social structure affects their lives drastically, and this is triggered by the loss of home.

Caught in this continuous shift between owning a 'home' and being 'homeless,' the vicious cycle of visibility and invisibility continues for the larger section of Bombay's population. For example, the pavement-dwellers are not visible during the day as they venture into their respective places of work, but they resurface at night. They reside in the porous spaces of Bombay, and their survival depends on their ability to transform alien spaces into temporary homes. In this sense the novel's realistic portrayal of the brutalities of marginalized lives is achieved by the narrative distancing of organized resistance on the part of the lower classes. Elements of subaltern activity and political agency are not entertained but only hinted at in the various anti-government protests and the occasional newspaper articles about troublemakers and strikers. Any attempt at appropriating urban space by the marginalized is immediately threatened and disrupted by the powers that be. The experience of disillusionment in the city is marked by geographical and cultural displacement culminating in the emotional and physical estrangement of the homeless.

In his discussion of Bombay, architect Rahul Mehrotra elaborates on a new form of urbanism which he calls the "kinetic city." The 'kinetic city' is different from the static city of architectural achievements built with permanent materials. The kinetic city is the city of motion, "the *kutcha* city, built of temporary material" so that it is temporal and in a state of "constant flux" (2003). The chaos of the crowded spaces of the *kutcha* city reflects the dynamics of urbanism. This city shares urban space with the static city, colliding with it and provoking it (Prakash, *Mumbai* 399). The slum rehabilitation projects are attempts to displace this kinetic city, to obliterate its existence in order to discipline it into the static city of delight. The desire to promote a concept of urban space in which citizenship rights reigned supreme is symbolic of the exclusion of the poor and the dispossessed. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Controller of Slums instructs his workers to flatten unwanted structures: "Levelled smooth—that's how I want this field. Empty and clean, the way it was before all these illegal structures were built" (293). Such

control of the spaces of the city is symbolic of the wider territorial control by the government; this is highlighted by the workings of the administration in the porous borders within and outside the city. The intensification of social polarization results in a reign of chaos where the rich and the marginalized coexist in the same urban space so that it becomes impossible to understand which urban experience is more representative of the city.

In this context, *A Fine Balance* seems to foreground exclusion in terms of access to the city's spaces. In the novel, spaces and localities are marked and the characters are denied equal spatial access. The physical landscape of the city exposes the uncanny relationship that exists between social beings and the urban space which often results in a de-centered subjectivity for the former. Michel de Certeau argues that these "ordinary practitioners of the city"

follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it. These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; [...] The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other. (*Practice* 93)

The reconstruction of space through various official projects like slum demolition and slum clearance programs heightens with the declaration of Emergency. This regime is marked by the relentless efforts of the authority to curb feelings of paranoia and violence that lurk in the in-between spaces of the city. Spatial structures are reduced to mere instruments of suppression, and subjectivities are contested within this suspect space. The lack of a place or the recognition thereof results in the loss of the individuality of the character as the sense of the self is invariably linked with the sense of place. In the novel, characters are often quantified and dehumanized in the official records. The city thus becomes a space that legitimizes anonymity in support of the various projects of urban space control that alternately reveal a picture of nameless laborers silhouetted against the autocratic mechanism of the city. Such mechanism generates segregation and oppression under the clever guise of rule of the state.

This complexity and diversity embodied in the city pushes these characters to the margins where they form and deform the cultural landscape, although their participation in the city-politics is never guaranteed. They are conveniently excluded from the important spaces of the city and are relegated to those spaces beyond the conventional boundaries of the city. Metropolitan cities have witnessed a growing political conflict over public space. The local state governments, middle class organizations, and the urban poor have been battling over scarce urban space and models of urban development. A significant example of local spatial practices is the case of “beautification” projects undertaken by middle class civic organizations and local state officials. In these projects, the state and middle class unite in a shared conception of the city as a central socio-spatial site that can manifest an idealized vision of the global city which, of course, is exclusive of that invisible population residing on the city’s fringes. Thus, the narrative of *A Fine Balance* is interspersed with all possible measures taken by the city’s administration “to haul and carry and lift and build, to strain their sinew for the city that was desperately seeking beautification,” (436), and thus demarcate spaces to resist intruders into this sanctified space. City beautification projects necessitate the elimination of poverty. Officials step in to legally allow the elimination of poverty by giving the representatives of the law the power to arrest the beggars who intrude upon the sacred space of the city. However, the existence of these so-called intruders cannot be erased nor resisted as they form an integral part of urban web that holds the city together. In this struggle over space, the city that emerges is an imagined city that aims to capture the aesthetics of the civic culture by cleansing the city of any sign of the poor or poverty. The drive to “clean up” the city is centrally constructed around such class-based discourses so that processes of spatial purification are not simply an expression of the private desires of middle class individuals, but they represent a political project that involves the exercise of state power.

The physical layering of the cultural landscape into privileged and under-privileged groups leads to the eruption of physical violence and multiple displacements among the marginal characters. In the novel, the Emergency laws actually sanction the merciless exploitation of the urban poor and unleash violence over people having no

legitimate claim over urban space. Ishvar and Omprakash face humiliation in the labor camp and are frequently asked to get adapted to the ever-changing political topography of the city. Like them are the many homeless people whose sleeping bodies cover the pavements like corpses, this being the result of the authority's demarcation of space, as well as physical and psychological estrangement. Rajaram, the hair collector, points out that "sometimes people have no choice. Sometimes the city grabs you, sinks its claws into you, and refuses to let go" (197). Truer words were never spoken for the urban poor who are submerged in the anonymous spaces of the city which they struggle to transform. The narrative serves to emphasize a loss of 'agency' rather than any kind of restoration in the city. The neutral viewpoint of the narrator suggests that nobody is in control of the city. *A Fine Balance* is replete with examples of encounters: Ishvar and Omprakash are threatened by the police for bribing the watchman near the chemist's shop for a place to spend the night; their Advanced Tailoring House lacks a proper space; the empty space on the pavement is reserved by the beggars. The "big place" that promises more scope (138) changes people drastically for worse. Regulating space is a way of exercising authority and coercive force is employed to evacuate hutments. The slum dwellers are threatened with arrest for trespassing on the municipal property if they did not participate in the election campaign. Violence, theft, bribery, and mutual suspicion become a way of living for the slum dwellers as they are the first targets of the beautification project. The repressive mechanisms of the state operate on homeless and the beggars as they are relocated in large numbers to the wasteland outside the city, because the city refuses to offer any space for unnatural and unwanted growth. "People are scared of the homeless" (349) says Ishvar, referring to the fact that the legitimate citizens of the city live in the constant fear of encroachment on their legal and rightful spaces. In the name of the official mission of beautifying the city, illegal encroachments are dislodged by the heavy machines that destroy the homes of the urban poor into dust:

The machines had transformed the familiar field with its carefully ordered community into an alien place. There was much confusion amid the people rooting for their belongings. Which piece of ground had supported whose shelter? And which pile of scantlings and metal was theirs to comb through? Others were turning the turmoil to advantage, grabbing what they

could, and fights broke out over pieces of splintered plywood, torn rexine sheets, clear plastic. (343)

The demolition of hutment colonies, vendor's stalls and *jhopadpattis* is a part of the slum prevention and clearance program under the Emergency. Threats of imprisonment are part of the official rhetoric that desires to leave no trace of the illegal settlements. Characters like the Beggarmaster know how to escape the law. He reduces the government policy to a mere plaything:

“Look,” said Om. “People are sleeping peacefully—no police to bother them. Maybe the Emergency law has been cancelled.”

“No, it hasn't,” said Beggarmaster. “But it's become a game, like all other laws. Easy to play, once you know the rules.” (436)

The latter's matter-of-fact statement offers an interesting insight into the world of the social outcasts and their interpretation of a disciplined society marked by a regulated space. The omnipresent authority wants to thwart any illegal and unlawful claim to the disciplined society, little realizing the porosity of such boundaries. These synchronized spaces of civil society are subverted to operate as counter-sites with the potential of representing, contesting and inverting the dominant socio-cultural practices. Characters like Ishvar, Omprakash, Nosey and Rajaram constantly threaten the regulated society with the potential of erasing and replacing the familiar codes of living even as civil society resists any sense of identification with them. These characters follow a pattern of appearance and disappearance in the structure of the novel; they are simultaneously present and absent in the peripheral spaces of the city and, in doing so, transform the spaces they inhabit. This transformed city appears frightening to the common citizens as Dina's fear and anxiety reveals while she undertakes a journey into the subterranean level of the city in search of the tailors:

So Dina was convinced, and set out to look for two tailors, scouring the warren of laneways in the sordid belly of the city. Day after day, she entered dilapidated buildings and shops, each one standing precariously like a house of battered cards. Tailors she saw in plenty—perched in constricted lofts, crouched inside *kholis* that looked like subterranean burrows, bent over in smelly cubicles, or cross-legged on street corners—

all engaged in a variety of tasks ranging from mattress covers to wedding outfits. (74-75)

These sites located within and outside the society personify the fear of the 'other' at various levels. The slums and the ad-hoc dwellings, its inhabitants and the atmosphere of vice, disorder, injustice is reflective of the lives of the social outcasts to which Dina and her kind turn a blind eye. Her failure to locate the tailors is coupled with a more terrifying experience of visiting "parts of the city she had never seen in all her forty-two years" (76). As she traverses through the unfamiliar lanes of the city's innards she experiences and transgresses the forbidden space of the social outcasts, so that the city becomes unknowable and, as de Certeau points out, she is witness to "an immense social experience of lacking a place" (103). This also underlines Mehrotra's 'kinetic city' that is layered with multiple historical slices of Bombay coexisting in the same time and space. Lefebvre had argued that the structure of urban space is more like that of 'flaky pastry' rather than like the homogeneous space. This is true of the circumscribed places of the cities especially of the new commercial constellations and the displaced poor.

At the centre of the discourse of the city and its representations resides the utopian promise of the power of urban space that is prevented from being realized by the inherent inequalities. Cities have always been informed by a desire for sophistication, beauty and order, but have been subjected to corruption or prejudices. Thus whilst emphasizing the elements of utopian cities, postcolonial representations ultimately reject the utopian label and illuminate the fundamental and intensely subjective nature of urbanity: that one person's utopia is another's dystopia. This does not necessarily suggest a rejection of the city, but rather invokes a radical re-visioning of the premise that it is possible to construct an ideal, objectified space capable of serving a disparate population. In *A Fine Balance* the displaced characters dream of an ideal city of the utopian urban order despite being aware of the underlying chaos of the city:

They sat up past midnight, making plans, imagining the new future in the city by the sea, the city that was filled with big buildings, wide, wonderful roads, beautiful gardens, and millions and millions of people working hard and accumulating wealth. (174)

The political repression of the time resulting on an extensive assault on the working-class had a highly uneven impact on urban structure and social inclusion. The chaotic journey of the migrant citizen suggests more than simply a hopeless situation as a victim. Within the world of grounded possibilities personal acts of resistance occur that draw attention to the city as an un-bordered space open to interpretation.

In *A Fine Balance* the narrative shift occurs from the national space towards the smaller location of the city, a space that is often seen to be a reflection of national tensions, but containing and governed by its own specific geopolitics. In this context, the novel traces the complexities of the relationship between the postcolonial dreams of the citizen/inhabitant and the city's material reality. Ishvar, Omprakash and Dina's stories are pointers to the city's potential for spatial resistance. Central to Mistry's novel is the concern for alternative mappings of the city. These alternate spaces become central to the narratives of Om, Ishvar, Dina and Maneck. The alternative city thus relocates the postcolonial experience from the center to the margins within which the spatial configuration of the city can be re-imagined and re-configured.

III

Questions of surface, landscape and design have become central for the social sciences, especially in the wake of the speed at which the built environment is being transformed through construction or conservation projects. The resultant effects are, nevertheless, the same—every alteration in the landscape is formalized by social transformation. Walter Benjamin and Le Corbusier have demonstrated how architectural symbols and urban design signify signs of social change. Arjun Appadurai also discusses at length the ways in which present-day urban designs are based on a speculative market and scarcity of urban resources. Such interventions result in the reconstruction of territories. In cities like Bombay these processes are challenged by the compact urban territory and the attendant problems of urban density. While Bombay struggles to acquire 'world-class' status, iconic images of the city have almost always been associated with density, squalor and crowding. Representations of the city have inadvertently

concentrated on the urban space not as a lived, material reality, but as a dream that is beyond fulfillment. The contingencies of the industrialized city notwithstanding, the city have also been, simultaneously, projected as a space of personal desires and hopes. This multiplicity presents opportunities to explore how postcolonial novelists engage with an urban space of idealized desire.

Kiran Nagarkar's literary career began with his first Marathi novel, *Saat Sakkam Trechalis* (1974), that enjoyed great critical acclaim and was subsequently published in translation as *Seven Sixes are Forty-Three*. His distinctive second novel, *Ravan and Eddie*, deliciously captures the essence of Bombay through the lens of the *chawl*. Nagarkar originally began the novel as a screenplay for a Hindi film and over the course of thirteen years, the script changed into a 4-hour English film, finally culminating into *Ravan and Eddie*, a carnivalesque Bombay novel. The novel is about Ravan and Eddie growing up to adolescence on different floors of a Central Works Department *chawl* in Bombay. The novel is a highly entertaining postcolonial interrogation of the diversity of India, premising on the issues of nationalism, secularism, and making of the nation. Although begun long before the publication of *Midnight's Children*, the novel shares identical moments with Rushdie's classic: twin protagonists who are not twins in real life but whose lives run parallel; monologues; satirical rips of mythologies and religious epics; and dream sequences. The narrative, centered on the two protagonists of the title, is set in a Central Works Department (CWD) *chawl*—that quintessential Bombay institution and a defining emblem of the working class—that earlier housed the city's vast labouring underclass fortunate enough to have more than makeshift accommodation⁵. In the manner of the 19th century realistic novels, Nagarkar's narrative depicts the spatial politics inherent in the Bombay *chawl*, filmdom, the underworld, the growth of the Hindu right wing in Maharashtra, the lives of Goan Catholics and Anglo-Indians in the metropolis, and popular culture from the 1950s to the 1970s. These teeming details are rendered organic to the world of the novel; they never intrude into the story as information.

The Bombay presented in Nagarkar's novel is one of lived complexities as it follows the growth of the two boys whose relationship symbolizes the tensions and

divisions of India. Ravan is a Marathi-speaking Hindu while Eddie is a Goan Catholic. The story starts when Eddie is not yet born and Ram, barely a year old, leaps out of his mother's arms and flies straight from the balcony of the fourth floor of Chawl No. 17 and into the arms of aircraft mechanic Victor Coutinho down below. Victor manages to catch and save Ram but dies on the spot. The sudden death of her husband changes the life of Violet, the new widow, who is pregnant with Eddie at that time. Parvati promptly renames her son Ravan so as to thwart the evil eye. Violet spends the rest of her life in mourning, and Victor's children, Eddie and Pieta, grow up fatherless and poor. Ravan and Eddie are thus fated to be enemies as their lives become inextricably linked with one another. Ravan and Eddie are kept apart by a multitude of barriers—chief here being Ravan (accidental) murder of Eddie's father, a fact that Violet never fails to remind anyone who cares to listen. There are other issues that crop up from belonging to different religions, living on different floors, speaking different languages, and attending different schools. Their differences and subsequent rivalry further intensifies when Ravan intends to take Eddie to the Sabha on the sly (the meeting place of the RSS) so that he could win the prize of a Wilson pen and a calendar meant to be given to a boy who will bring a non-Hindu boy to the Sabha. Although Eddie joins the Sabha, he does not go there on Ravan's invitation. Thus Ravan fails to win the much coveted prize. Unaware of the rivalry between them, the lives of the protagonists continue to run parallel throughout the novel. Eddie goes to an English medium school and Ravan attends a vernacular school. The Goan Catholic Eddie speaks Marathi like a native and becomes a prized child member of the conservative Mai Boli Sabha as well as an ace *pehelwan*. Ravan, too, turns to the martial arts, in his case the upper-class pastime of taekwondo and embraces Catholicism. Eddie steals money from the church and sells cinema tickets in black, while Ravan receives contracts to kill. Their lives through the course of the novel run on parallel tracks, "Let alone blood brothers, they were not even step-brothers. Eddie's and Ravan's lives ran parallel, that's all" (195)⁶.

Like that of the protagonists, the lives of the two communities in the *chawl* run parallel, but the assertion of difference is constantly thwarted. The novel suggests that the world is connected by shared stories. The *chawl*, with its different floors given to

different communities, becomes a container of stories and is thus emblematic of Bombay. *Chawls* came to be a feature of Bombay's urban tapestry in the nineteenth and early twentieth century when they were built on a massive scale by both the colonial government and private landlords. Standing at the centre of the city's social history are the *chawl* neighbourhoods of Girgaon, Girangaon, Kalbadevi, Worli and Byculla which, Neera Adarkar writes, are gifted with its own distinct history and religious and class composition. In her Introduction to *The Chawls of Mumbai: Galleries of Life* (2011), Adarkar discusses the difficulty of viewing the chawl in isolation because a chawl cannot be stripped bare of its occupants. The existence of a chawl in the cityscape is almost theatrical, where the inhabitants are performers on a stage. Chawls are symbolic of the urban space that is claimed by Bombay's working-class; Patrick Geddes remarks that chawls were not meant for housing people, rather they were meant to warehouse the huge section of labourers that work in the city. The workers, who came to Bombay from different parts of Maharashtra and neighboring states, lived in these chawls irrespective of their cultural and religious differences. Those who were not lucky enough to be sheltered in chawls found roofs in makeshift dwellings fabricated with corrugated iron, flattened tins and wooden planks. Others found refuge on sidewalks or pavements. This was the common lot of labourers, hawkers, peddlers, cobblers, tailors, and domestic servants who are scattered across the city. The chawls cut across class, community and religion, and nurture multiple cultures. On the other hand the densely packed chawls were distorted reflections of the apartment buildings. If the working-class tenements were a form of industrial housing, a way of massing one living space atop another, so were the apartments. However, the secret of the polished surface of the metropolis could be found in the dimly lit and densely packed chawls. Capitalism had forced architecture and town planning to design beautiful buildings and objects for the elite to cover over the ugly reality of workers "warehoused" in oppressive tenements. Chawls held great numbers of people together so that they tended to be socially homogenous. Yet, the fractious nature of chawls, the squabbles over space, water, access to communal toilets and murderous communal disharmony cannot be denied. Alternately criticized and celebrated, chawls were either seen as horrifyingly crowded or romanticized as havens of community life in books and cinema¹.

The closure of the cotton mills in the 1980s as an aftermath of the textile strikes fatally affected the chawl culture and the post-industrial Bombay of the 1990s witnessed the emergence of the land-mafia, malls, clubs and discotheques, at the cost of the demolition of these chawls. Defenceless against the new economy of the post-liberalization period, chawls became sites of the despair of joblessness, and then objects of the profit-seeking developers. At present Bombay boasts of a handful of dilapidated chawls that are creaky with decay and disrepair, but they still comprise a large fraction of the available housing stock in the island city. The shrinking of the political space as a result of the reduction of public spaces is one of the debates central to the chawls of Bombay. In her book *One Hundred Years, One Hundred Voices* (2004) author Neera Adarkar comments on how “these mundane typologies consisting of army barrack-like structures were transformed into active political, social and cultural spaces,” (12). Adarkar further asserts that chawls have been agents of social networks, class struggles, as well as reform movements. This built structure has exercised its agency in the construction of subjectivity, as it nurture, constrains, and transforms those who inhabit it. As agents of social reproduction chawls act as a stage for politics, survival and mobility. Chawl committees often took care of the welfare of the residents, settled disputes, represented the tenants before landlords and municipal authorities, and organized religious festivals¹. Chawls also symbolize the blurring of private and public spaces and serve as a microcosm for the cultural interactions of the city which, interestingly, varied greatly in different localities. As the decrepit chawls of Bombay are demolished to make way for matchbox apartments, it must be recognized that this uniquely Indian form of architecture has been essential to the social fabric and political development of this city.

Read against this background Nagarkar’s depiction of the *chawl* in *Ravan and Eddie* is a critical revisiting of a culture that not only projects a heterogeneous world, but also exposes the undercurrents in the chawl culture. Ravan and Eddie, the protagonists of the novel, live in a CWD chawl, No. 17, in Mazagaon, Bombay. The location of the chawl is Nagarkar’s entry-point to understanding the psyche of its denizens. Describing the floor-plan of a chawl he writes:

Each room was twelve feet wide and twenty-four feet deep with a wooden partition separating the drawing-room-cum-bedroom-cum-study, library, playpen or whatever from the kitchen which doubled as dining-room, bedroom, dressing room, and bathroom [...] each room was home to one family, nuclear or extended. It is uncommon to have only two people staying in the one long but partitioned room. The average is between six to eight. Patriarch and wife, sons and daughters-in-law, and grandchildren. (67)

Such dense proximities, where “it’s almost impossible to pick the lice out of your own hair without picking a few out of somebody else’s” (54) engender whatever little space is available to the chawl-dwellers, resulting in confusion, chaos and conflict. There is no privacy whatsoever in the chawls and Shankar, Ravan’s father, says humorously that people have given up trying to hide things and keep the doors open while they have private discussions because everyone will find out anyway. The chawls embody the contradictions and complexities of Bombay, as a majority of the minorities live in close proximity without necessarily understanding one another. They, like the Hindu and Goan communities in the novel, live parallel lives:

And there is no greater distance on earth than that which separates parallel lines, even if they almost touch each other. One city, one *chawl*, two floors, two cultures, two languages, two religions [...] How could their paths possibly meet? (195)

The spatial structure of the *chawl* is an important platform for the examination of spatial relations, identities and histories. As a classic site of urban negotiations and an exemplar of crowding and lack of privacy, the tiny *chawl* accommodates the ever expanding, multi-generational families. The sharing of common facilities coupled with the need to keep doors open so as not to stifle from the sheer numbers of people within the all-purpose single-room tenements turns the *chawl* into a social world that allows intimate relations to develop between people not otherwise related to one another. The *chawl* often serves as a premise for the formation of community that is not based on kinship attachments while at the same time being intimate and trustworthy. The anonymity of the metropolis fosters such relationships but, at the same time, the very same features could turn the *chawl* into

a site of conflict and mutual contempt, bred by closeness and familiarity. Needless to say, as a built structure the *chawl* is an important actor of the urban landscape. As an agent of mass-housing it became the convenient site for shaping the urban environment of those living in the fringes of society. It nurtured class mobility and became an important landmark of the city's suburbanization.

The chawl culture depicted in *Ravan and Eddie* is reflective of the power-politics operating in such structures. The CWD *chawl* of the novel becomes another character in the book and this is where Nagarkar brings Bombay alive. These multi-storey structures divided into two worlds, where the upper floor was exclusively meant for Christians and the lower one for the outcastes. Even the amenities like water taps and toilets were segregated on the basis of religion. The third person narrator humorously presents the blind beliefs, rituals, and customs of both cultures which are deep-rooted in their respective religions. Thus, the solemnity of the funeral procession of Victor Coutinho is met with curiosity and wonder. When Violet discovers Eddie reading stories from Mahabharata, she beats him for his 'blasphemous' act. Ravan and Eddie's rivalry begins in the collective consciousness of the two communities. In one of the most common approaches to urban culture space is treated as a product of rather than the producer of social effects. Cities exist because diverse groups with differing levels of social power compete with each other for the control of strategic resources. In this contest boundaries are more than often blurred, leading to the emergence of scrambled spatial patterns. Within the spatial structure of the chawl social and spatial borders were regularly transgressed by the inhabitants. The world of workers in chawls and slums lay far away from the cosmopolitan glitter of the elites. With social and cultural ingenuity, the working class forges survival strategies and fashions an alternate urban life in Bombay. The city transforms into an immense and exciting mix of the multilayered, the contradictory and the restless lives while openly embracing the gritty, conflict-ridden, and urban milieu of Bombay.

The shared spaces of the chawl give rise to a strong sense of community, thereby transforming the mundane typologies into active political, social and cultural spaces, says

Neera Adarkar. Chawls have an open sense of community and nurture a variety of cultures. This interface between the public and the private is almost lost in the present day. Nestled in the midst of Bombay's chaotic urbanity, the chawl symbolizes the density of the crowd with reference to various sites and spatial formats that facilitates articulation of the social structure of the city. In the context of Bombay, the urban crowd mystifies the image of the city and the social manifestation of urban density. Everyday experience of space in the city through specific events that produce proximity and juxtaposition of disparate elements is critical in the development of a socially and culturally dense urban fabric. In an early description of the city in the novel, Nagarkar writes:

[Ravan] had reached the Byculla bridge. A local train swept past without stopping at the station. Like a sponge being squeezed, the people on the platform shrank back. There were commuters hanging from the bars of the carriage windows. Some stood precariously on god alone knows what between compartments. Every once in a while a trousered leg or an arm swung wildly but hurriedly got back to its owner when a signal pole of the support of a bridge rushed past. The sides of the train were bulging with the pressure of the people packed into it. (How many passengers does a Bombay 'local' hold anyway? Twenty-five thousand? Thirty? Forty?) Any moment now that speeding solid iron shell thousands of bodies were going to be flung all over Bombay, all the way to Borivali and Virar, some falling into the Thane creek, others into the Arabian Sea. (27)

For Ravan this, i.e. the city of Bombay, was "one of the most exciting places in the universe" (27) and the sense of headiness and perverse excitement conveyed in this passage is part of the hyper-reality of Bombay, an important part of its self-image. The local train is a universal and neutral container of bodies that would disperse all over Bombay. This is an image of an amorphous mass, of bodies without identity, united by the mere sharing of a common destiny through a common journey mutates into an everyday reality in Bombay.

In yet another episode on "the great water wars" the author deals with another fundamental reality of life in Bombay for a majority of her citizens, namely water, or

more accurately, the shortage of it. For the residents of the chawls who must share basic facilities, the communal tap forms the basis of friendships as well as bitter hostilities:

They should have killed for water, the men and women of CWD chawls. People have been known to kill for less: religion; language; the flag; the colour of a person's skin or his caste; breaking the queue at a petrol pump [...] There have been words, nasty, bitter, venomous, corrosive words; genealogies have been traced, incestuous acts involving mothers, brothers and sisters invoked in swear-words; hostilities have been declared, words have led to physical fights. Frictions have festered, attitudes hardened and prejudices led to Pavlovian reflexes of bellicosity and at times it's been touch and go. (69)

[...] the prime mover is water. You snapped out of anesthesia, interrupted coitus, stopped your prayers, postponed your son's engagement, developed incontinence, took casual leave to go down and stand at the common tap, cancelled going to church because water, present and absent, is more powerful than the Almighty. (70)

The municipal water tap becomes a public space for the negotiation of the everyday realities of the lives of the chawl-dwellers. This space becomes a site for communication, sharing, contestation and assertion of their positions as legal members living in the chawl, thereby underlining their claim to the city. The coming together of people in such spaces and their social negotiations re-shape the urban topography of the city, for here the urban public is being re-imagined in a different context. As the urban landscape is administered and regulated, public spaces are being appropriated to cater to certain sections of the population. Through the transformation of public spaces of gathering there emerge new arenas of community building. Such transformations go to show that the notion of public spaces for community sharing is increasingly being contested within the peripheral spaces of the city.

In yet another section titled "A Meditation on Neighbours" Nagarkar highlights the dichotomy of the Hindu-Christian world through mundane routines such as like bathing, eating habits to wearing clothes and following religious practices (172-182).

Episodes such as these not only serve to establish the distinction between the two cultures but also pinpoint the undercurrents that inform this multi-cultural society:

The Hindus and Catholics in Bombay's CWD chawls [...] may as well have lived on different planets. They saw each other daily and greeted each other occasionally, but their paths rarely crossed. [...] It was not just a question of different religion and cultures, they share neither a common colonial heritage nor a common language (15).

Using the tropes of 'place' and 'displacement' Nagarkar demonstrates how the level of subjugation is related to spatial politics. The otherwise sworn enemies of the CWD chawls, the Hindus and Catholics, unite in oppressing the 'people from the ground floors of chawl numbers 7, 11, 22, 23, 29' or the 'untouchables' as they are variously called. This power play of different kinds of spatial politics and practices render the city incomprehensible and impenetrable.

The novel highlights a very important reality about life in a chawl: the people of a chawl lived together in one built structure and shared the amenities available to them like the public toilet and water. Yet, this sense of sharing is contradicted when they are governed by strong local and communal politics that create deep divisions within the families residing in the chawl so that the everyday camaraderie is replaced by conflict and tension. Nagarkar exemplifies this in his novel where he traces the lives of the chawldwellers bonded by a sense of communal brotherhood, but who are divided when basic civic amenities like water threaten to become a scarcity. This only means the life in the chawl is governed by the policy of survival of the fittest, and sentiments of friendship and brotherhood become a thing of the past when the inhabitants are exposed to the harsh realities of life in the metropolis. As lives threaten to spill into the other's guarded space, the chawl becomes a site of spatial conflict.

Bombay has often been metaphorically compared to an industry: city planners were consciously planning the city as a space of industrial capitalism which required the organization of space to control land use. Such control over land use permitted the planners to outline the projected city as orderly and efficient. Besides the location of the

heavy and light industries and provision for green spaces, the problem of housing received prominent attention. The open spaces of Bombay were expected to accommodate the growing population, with an efficient transportation system linking the suburbs to the city¹. In the clean and orderly urbanism proposed for the nation, there was no place for the heterogeneous and conflict-ridden urban life as spaces of community. However, in contrast to these plans, disorganization and disorder haunted the dreamscape. Images of chaos and dysfunction permeated the daily social practices and symbolic experiences of work and life in Bombay. The experience of the city as a place of encounter, difference, struggle, enjoyment, and aspiration disappeared behind the ghostly image of Bombay's unplanned sprawl and congestion. The city's spatial organization found expression in class inequality, conflicts and elite-subaltern divides. In this context, the juxtaposition of different cultures in chawls creates nodes of density that in turn give shape to the idea of the availability of urban space. In the case of Bombay the 'culture of congestion', to use Koolhaas's phrase, renders visible not wealth but poverty, conflict and chaos. The urban poor symbolize the failure of the current development process. Rights to proper shelter and housing in the city are not stretched to mean rights to propertied citizenship. Rather, these rights reduce residents to a mass of mobile population. The deployment of density as an image with which to decipher the city thus yields a rich ethnographic layer of the ways in which the city makes itself felt through the forms of the crowd and its infrastructure. The city's capacity to juxtapose worlds and allow for such crossovers that makes Bombay a compelling subject and setting for Nagarkar as the city both enables and complicates the pluralism through which the postcolonial nation-state articulated itself.

The sequel to *Ravan and Eddie* appeared in 2012. Titled *The Extras*, the book follows the two mortal enemies Ravan Pawar and Eddie Coutinho in Bollywood where they work as extras, and hence the title. The two have finally broken free of the dreariness of the Central Works Department *chawl* in Mazagaon—Ravan is a taxi-driver and Eddie is a bouncer-cum-bartender at an illegal bar. Set in the Bombay of the 80s, the novel is a tale of love, hope and self-realization as both protagonists share the dream of becoming a 'superstar' one day. Bombay comes alive in the pages of the novel as the

writer writes about the city in the same frenzied manner in which the city's taxis are driven—fast and furious. Bombay is represented as the city of hopes, dreams and deprivations, and yet, the city is magical for it fuels the desire for transcending the quotidian of urban chaos. While the present thesis would have, no doubt, benefited immensely from a discussion of the novel, it has not been included here primarily because the novel appeared when the thesis was drawing to a close. Nevertheless, this does leave scope for the exploration of the represented city of Bombay in the future.

IV

Postcolonial representations of negotiations of power in the city question the scales of political agency. Statements of resistance reveal the flawed nature of the city planning that, otherwise, always appears monolithic. Thus, postcolonial representations of the city do not take the urban scenario for granted and offer alternative narratives of the same. In this context, literary negotiations of the overshadowed other spaces, as in the case of *A Fine Balance* and *Ravan and Eddie*, shatter the image of the just and cosmopolitan city, depriving it of its aura of spatial promise and security. While Bombay's diverse composition of different classes, religious communities, and neighborhoods cannot be denied, it is also true that the city has no foundational structure, no ties of kin, caste, or religion. The city is a delicate mix, but there exists no 'fine balance' between Hindus and Muslims, the rich and the poor, state power and ordinary citizens (both legal and unrecognized). Although the everyday practice of human interactions threads together Bombay's disparate social, cultural, and political fabric, the city teeters under the pressure of expectations. At the same time, the city is subject to new strategies of urban development and regulations; the very process caters to key economic sectors and elites thereby marginalizing most of the population. As unrestrained urbanization transmutes cities, urban landscapes, whether real or imagined, are being ruptured continuously. The built environment is not only an object of historical and cultural interest, but an essential ingredient to the intangible social fabric of the city. In this context, the *chawls* of Bombay offer a unique window into the culture, society and history of a metropolis in the midst of molding itself in the image of a 'world class city'.

The cityscape of Bombay becomes the space for the continuous production of a discourse on urban claustrophobia and chaos. The context of this discourse is the existence of multiple worlds in the city, which includes the juxtaposition of lifestyles and habits. The proximity of these worlds makes it virtually impossible to transform the public representation of the city as a thriving, global metropolis. The density and chaotic nature of the city has produced for some of its residents a desire for transcendence from the specificity of space. What then are the stories of the people who occupy this space that is being constantly transformed by the logic of capital? The novels discussed in this chapter reveal that the process of spatial reorganization in Bombay needs to be understood in its unique historical, social, cultural, and institutional context. Mike Davis opines that the tracks of colonialism and global capitalism contain processes of segregation, inequality and exploitation. Meaningful interaction with urban space is marked by indecipherable codes and unfamiliar routes. As a site of history, culture, and memory, the city in fiction bears witness to its past. Furthermore, as a network of connections the city remains a compelling metaphor to interrogate the intersection (and the complex hierarchies) of class, caste, religion and gender in contemporary constructed spaces. In these ways, the relationship between the city and its citizens often provides a model for larger national and transnational identities and affiliations.

Changes in the urban scenario are inevitable, but the narratives of these changes are deeply informed by the many transformations that the city experiences almost at all times. This only means that any narrative of the city is flawed because of its sheer impossibility to contain all the stories pertaining to its space. Nevertheless, despite the flaws, it is again impossible to ignore the narratives of the city. Rather, it strongly necessitates the need to enquire what lies behind the very powerful fable about the city; to examine what factors permitted the telling of certain stories and not others. The goal of literary narratives of the city is premised on the telling of these untold stories and to reveal the historical circumstances that resulted in the concealment and more often, negligence, of these stories. These untold stories reveal the gaps in the history of a city as in the case of Bombay. The significance of the city for people belonging to different castes, religions and regions, speaking different languages, and working and living

together as a society, requires serious examination. The novels discussed in the present chapter seek to fill these silent gaps in the historical and urban narrative of Bombay. Both Mistry and Nagarkar attempt to interrogate the image of the cosmopolitan city as a representative patchwork of ethnic and cultural multiplicity. They seek to unravel the social fantasies and imaginations of the urban poor the city had repressed in the course of its history, and reveal the reality in the fable called Bombay. The narratives reveal how the urban spaces of the city were historically constructed and the ways in which spatial practices inform the lives of its inhabitants. This makes it possible to engage in a fresh look at the history of the city and at the monumental structures of colonialism, and also understand the between-the-lines transcript of official and unofficial practices. The spatial structures, over-run by repressive forces of state power, invite a fresh scrutiny of the entrapments of industrial progress that once exuded the now-stifled aspirations and desires. The narratives of both novels cross-examine their promise to disclose what remain hidden under the weight of the myths of Bombay and uncover the history behind the modern collective of the India's most happening city.

Notes

¹ Raj Kapoor's *Boot Polish* (1954) and *Shree 420* (1955) are iconic representations of the conflicts and contradictions of Bombay.

² The Emergency was one of the most controversial times in the history of independent India. President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, upon advice by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, declared a state of emergency under Article 352 of the Constitution of India from 25th June 1975 to 21st March 1977. The Emergency effectively bestowed on Gandhi the power to rule by decree, suspending elections and civil liberties.

³ The notion of home is contested in the novel. Mistry locates the idea of 'home' in relation to the self, in relation to the nation, and in relation to the slum clearances that renders homeless the migrants to the city.

⁴ Rohinton Mistry. *A Fine Balance*. 1995. (London: Vintage, 1997). Henceforth, all citations are from this edition of the novel.

⁵ Chawls are residential units that were created in the early 1900s to provide housing for the working-class of Bombay. As the city transformed into an industrial hub, the mill owners built *chawls* to house their

workforce. Comprising of multi-storey buildings, chawls consist of a row of single rooms arranged in a linear fashion. The presence of a common open veranda is juxtaposed by the lack of private toilet facilities. Girangaon was a specific locality in Bombay where these chawls were started initially, since most of the mills were located here. Present-day chawls are residences to a increasing number of middle-class urbanites.

⁶ Kiran Nagarkar, *Ravan and Eddie*. 1995. (New Delhi: Penguin, 1996). Henceforth all citations are from this edition of the novel.



Chapter V

Urban Networks, Crime and the “Unintended” City:

Vikram Chandra’s *Sacred Games* and Murzbaan Shroff’s *Breathless in Bombay*

if you want to live in the city you have to think ahead three turns, and look behind a lie to see the truth and then behind the truth to see the lie

—Vikram Chandra

Urban life, experience and culture have always been irreducibly multiple. Contemporary theories on postmodern geography have continued to contest the established models of the city to ascertain the multiplicitous nature of urban space¹. This critical trajectory has proven to be of prime importance in comprehending responses to the urban as in the case of feminist and post-colonial responses—this has been discussed in Chapter 2. The eminence of the city in literary discourse is reflective of the incredible possibilities that the urban framework offers for exploration and interrogation. M. Christine Boyer, in her book *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (1996), argues that the constant change and evolution of urban space (particularly in the twentieth century) result in the emergence and recognition of new architectural models and metaphors. The city becomes knowable through such artifacts so that as a represented space the discourse of the city sets up

a spatial order, a frozen image that captures the manner in which the transitory present is perceived. Momentarily arresting disruptive and energetic forces, representational forms become succinct records of what we consider to be the present reality. These aesthetic models transform our sense of the real, for the image of the city is an abstracted concept, an imaginary, constructed form. (32)

Boyer’s argument underscores the fact that the city requires deciphering especially when it appears in so many forms. To extend her argument to the city of Bombay—the *locus classicus* of modernity in India—would necessitate an examination of the

spatial and temporal ambivalence, multiplicities and visible disparities both in the social and economic sphere. Such fragmentation of the city is further heightened by the recent surge of identity politics, communal riots and urban economic inequalities. The metropolis thus emerges as a wild and barbarous space, offering multiple narratives that counter the discipline of the ordered city.

The present chapter is concerned with the understanding of urban space in contemporary Bombay and the representation of the networked city of crime and urban poverty in Vikram Chandra's colossal saga of crime, *Sacred Games* (2006), and Murzbaan Shroff's collection of urban tales titled *Breathless in Bombay* (2008)—two texts that locate Bombay in its contemporary moment of globalized realities. Both texts are layered accounts of this energetic city, narrated through a comprehensive selection of characters and incidents that exemplify the diversities inherent in this multi-ethnic, hybrid city. While Bombay has been frequently celebrated as a symbol of India's secular modernity, the city has now reincarnated as what Caroline Herbert calls a violently exclusionary space in which the vision of Independence may be severely contested. Premising on the Lefebvrian theory of 'space' the chapter will attempt to understand Chandra and Shroff's narration of the city as alternatives to the overwhelming narratives of Bombay. Section I attempts to negotiate a referential framework of analysis by highlighting the underground terrain of crime in the city, its conflicts with and connections to the over-ground network of commerce and culture. Section II looks at *Sacred Games* as a novel of the Bombay underworld, networked by crime and the mafia. Section III examines the stories in *Breathless in Bombay* by reading Bombay as a modern city experiencing postmodern global forces and the ways in which the lives are affected by them. Section IV sums up the chapter and its arguments.

I

Urban space can be comprehended and contested by different forms of its representation as Henri Lefebvre has demonstrated in his analysis of space. As discussed in chapter 2 spatial imaginary is made up of hybrid spatialities, i.e. spaces emerging from different orders of experience and representation. This space is both material and imagined. It is signifying and non-signifying, perceived and directly

experienced, practical and theoretical. Social space is a social reality that corresponds to different social and productive arrangements. Spatial practices that occur within this social space structure daily life and a broader urban reality and, in doing so, ensure social cohesion, continuity and spatial competence. Bombay's spatial structures and practices make available an interpretive grid through which to examine the spatial imaginaries of the city to reveal the various cities that exist within it.

The multiplicitous temperament of Bombay offers an interesting point of departure to read the city in Asia. In their book *Theorizing the South Asian City: Urban Landscapes, Cultural documents and Interpretive Experiences* (2003) Robbie Goh and Brenda Yeoh argue that any examination of the "rich terrain of complexities" in the South Asian city invites an inevitable encounter with the postcolonial and the contested cultural differences inherent in it, "These micropolitical and historical factors ... create urbanisms that are finely inflected and nuanced ... where culture and history intersect with power, politics and policy in myriad and often dialectical ways" (3). While Partha Chatterjee, in the essay "Are Indian Cities Becoming Bourgeois at Last?," asserts that the modern Indian city was bereft of normative specificities primarily because of the "perceived lack of agency by the Indian elite in thinking about the city" (182), Sunil Khilnani pushes the argument further in *The Idea of India* by declaring that post independence Indian cities have become "the bloated receptacles for every hope and frustration reared by half a century of free politics and exceedingly constrained and unequal economic progress" (109). Objectified as the edifice of modernity via television and cinema Bombay exemplified this universal desire for modernity (136).

The spatial crisis of Bombay is not a new phenomenon. The acceleration of criminal activity, too, is not very recent. Academics such as Gyan Prakash and Ranjani Mazumdar have traced the rise in criminal activity to the decline of Bombay's textile mills, which had once provided employment to almost two-thirds of the city's industrial workers. Mazumdar reads the textile strike and its aftermath as a turning point for the transformation of the city by elaborating on the transformation of Bombay from industrial city to Bombay becoming a global city offering global services. The spatial order of the city was subject to "the pressures of local time, global imaginaries ... and spatial claustrophobia" that resulted in the creation of a new urban

landscape (Prakash *Spaces*, 418). Thomas Blom Hansen exploration of Bombay in *Wages of Violence: Naming and Identity in Postcolonial Bombay* reveals the spatial workings of central Bombay as a territory marked by crime and prostitution². While the physical spaces of the city reveal severe architectural disparities, this inherent contrast coupled with the overwhelming spatial congestion creates a socio-political space that is extremely sensitive in nature. Spatial disenchantment informs the intricacies of spatial relations between people who “sought to derive their own legitimacy from an ideal, but impossible, separation of culture and politics” (Hansen 172). The increasing presence of the Hindu nationalist party, the Shiv Sena, is an example of such a desire for ideological legitimacy and dominance. The Sena’s xenophobic agenda of ethnic exclusivity and its project of cleansing the city of the outsiders which accelerated the decline of the city’s reputation of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism:

Things had indeed changed. The Rakshaks were the new government in the state. What had once been a muscular right-wing organization, proud of its disciplined and looming cadres, was now trying to become a party of statesmen. As state ministers and cabinet secretaries, they had toned down their ranting nationalism, but they would not give up their battle against cultural degeneration and western corruption. ‘They promised to reform the city.’ (Chandra *Games*, 17)

Post the textile strikes, the city came to be structured on communal lines as migrant labourers from both the Hindu and Muslim communities sought alternative compensatory activities to continue their livelihood in the city. While the events of 1992–93 brought into sharp focus the workings of the emotional space of Bombay and resulted in the polarization of the Hindu and Muslim communities. This subsequently led to mutual mistrust that spurred the rise of gang wars and the fragmentation of the spaces of the city. The rise of gangsters needs to be located, among others, against this spatial backdrop. Most studies on modern urban cultures read the city as home to crime and Bombay is no exception to this trend of thought. Recent literature and cinema on Bombay position the city as an important node of global and organized crime. Besides organized crime the city witnessed the emergence of smuggling, prostitution, extortion, contract killing or *supari* killing, the tentacles of which soon

spread to numerous commercial enterprises and the film industry. The antagonistic communal atmosphere of the city aided the successful operation of the underworld which was dominated by the Muslims³. The rise of Dawood Ibrahim in the 1980s was a key development in this direction. Dawood's activities made possible the expansion of the base of the underworld even as it intensified its operations in and around Bombay. Dawood Ibrahim soon came to be seen as a protector of the city's Muslims:

Over the years [Ibrahim's] mythological status has grown into an enormous self-perpetuating narrative of a mystical hero that incarnates much of the stigmas, stereotypes, and fears associated with Muslims within the Hindu middle classes, the press, and the police. Dawood is feared and respected because of his courage and power. He has become a hero, whose status as the radical evil of all Hindu dreams makes him an icon among young toughs ... To have a "reputation" for being affiliated with "Dawood's men" is an ephemeral, cherished, yet deeply ambivalent mark of importance and identity.... (Hansen 180)

Post the rise of Dawood, the 1990s was a key period in the history of the city's criminal growth⁴. The liberalization of the economy proved to be a blessing in disguise activities such as smuggling gained a boost and, more importantly, resulted in the establishment of closer associations between crime and the legitimate corporate world and its global additives. As discussed earlier the underworld became a dreaded presence after the catastrophe of 1992-93. The close proximity between organized crime and the political scene also highlighted the shift in power games that was now concentrated on the nexus between criminals and the police force and a legal system that is permeable. Blom Hansen emphasizes that the knowledge which structures the narrative of Bombay's underworld is based on rumour, allegations and stereotypes rather than on evidence⁵. The role of the police and the media in perpetuating this narrative is crucial:

Exactly when the term *gang* became the dominant model through which the police, officials, and the press tried to understand the hidden side of the city is unclear. However, in the 1970s, a complete terminology and set of narrative frames derived from the American gangster mythology became ever more popular in descriptions of Bombay's underworld. The gang world was divided into four distinct mafia syndicates, each defined by a specific territory and headed by a

don whose life story, lifestyle, and personal qualities, spread both by rumor and intensive press coverage, became the “talk of the town.”
(Hansen 188; italics in original)

The new social environment thus recognized violence as an important medium for the construction of new urban identities and communities. This concept is crucial to the understanding of the events in contemporary Bombay. The social contours of the city underwent a major transformation post the textile strike. This period witnessed the rapid rise of the informal sector as ex-workers struggled to battle shrinking living space, accelerated work time, and the constant presence of a crowd:

Periods of work and of respite are determined in an industrial urban environment basically on the necessities of production, specifically by work schedules. Round-the-clock economic activity leaves no space for any natural cycles; shift work obliterates the distinction between night and day. Human relationships to light and temperature change completely; sleep and wakefulness are re-ordered. The rotation of the same toiler among two or three shifts may preclude the establishment of any steady or permanent, even if ‘unnatural’, cycle to set in.
(Pendse 19)

The overcrowded spaces of the city, the gradual obliteration of privacy, and the density of constructions resulted in the proliferation of artificially enclosed spaces in the city that created “a constant, though at most times well hidden and perhaps even unrealized fear that the ‘closed-up’ space may conceal a danger or a death trap” (Pendse 14). This is counterface to the dream of the big city of hopes and possibilities. The revelation of the spatial disenchantment of the city’s spaces renders the city as “only a notion, an abstraction, not something really known or grasped” (Pendse 14). The rise criminal activity needs to be located within this complex spatial map.

Bombay has been prominently imagined in literature and cinema as the city of dreams and wish-fulfillment, but it has also been known as the “cosmopolitan city,” and “the city of slums” in recognition of its profligate role in shaping economic and social relations. The significance of the above labels lies in their emphasis on the generative aspects of urban life. This is evident in the socio-political practices that animate the city’s built environment resulting in new interventions in the ways in which Bombay’s urban patterns are mediated. Bombay’s world has always been

cosmopolitan, but it is also contains predators and unscrupulous characters who entice, coerce, and terrorize the vulnerable. Gillian Tindall says, “Bombay contains not just many different social worlds but whole solar systems of different societies moving separately and intricately over the same territory” (1). Thus, the criminal machinations are part of the city’s fabric. Bernd-Peter Lange’s paper “Crime and the megacity” (2009) reiterates the significance of crime as an important element of Bombay’s urban tapestry, perhaps most represented in the many cinematic portrayals of the city. Lange states that Bollywood thrives on the representation of various mafia networks that often elicit ambivalent responses of fascination and repulsion. Fiction too reverberates with violence and criminal energy as the underworld of the city finds expression, among others, in Salman Rushdie’s *The Moor’s Last Sigh* and Anita Desai’s *Baumgartner’s Bombay*. The crime capital of India the city also finds exposition in Suketu Mehta’s treatise on the “maximum city” and Australian ex-convict-turned-writer Gregory David Roberts’ autobiographical book *Shantaram* (2003). These texts remind us that the busy streets and *gullies* of Bombay conceal various kinds of criminal activity that is enmeshed and connected invisibly to the known and visible city.

II

Vikram Chandra rose to fame as one of the most acclaimed and critically lauded writers of the new generation of practitioners of Indian Writing in English with the publication of his epic first novel *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* in 1991. The book won him the Commonwealth Writers Prize for the Best First Published Book. He followed it up in 1997 with *Love and Longing in Bombay*, a collection of interlinked short stories which also secured him an award, this time the Commonwealth Writers Prize for the Best Book, Eurasia Region. His second novel, *Sacred Games* documents, with all the ramifications of a Bollywood potboiler, the history of Bombay as the seat of crime, corruption and the politics of the underworld. The book won the Hutch Crossword Award for English Fiction in 2006 and the Salon Book Award in 2007.

Vir Sanghvi, of *The Hindustan Times*, hails *Sacred Games* as “the single best book I have ever read about my city.” In his review Sanghvi writes that the novel

captures Bombay in a way that no other book has ever managed. And judged purely as a novel, it is an astonishing triumph of the imagination ... This is a book about Bombay written by a person who understands the city. It is meant for those of us who know Bombay ... There are no black and whites in Bombay. There is no simple right and wrong. If you want moral certitude, find yourself another city⁶.

Chandra presents Bombay's amazingly intricate tapestry from which the image of a metropolis emerges that is, on the one hand, brittle and full of anxiety and, on the other, full of longing for the ideals and glamour of the past. Dickensian in scope, *Sacred Games* originates in Chandra's earlier *Love and Longing in Bombay* which mirrors the many conflicts and contradictions of post-liberalization Bombay. In one heady episode titled "Kama," Sartaj Singh, a world-weary cop who investigates a murder and soon find himself drawn into the vortex of corruption and deceit. In *Sacred Games*, Sartaj returns to pursue the charming, ruthless and larger-than-life gangster, Ganesh Gaitonde, the "boss of the G-Company and wily and eternal survivor" who

dallied with bejewelled starlets, bankrolled politicians and bought them and sold them—his daily skim from Bombay's various criminal dhandas was said to be greater than annual corporate incomes, and his name was used to frighten the recalcitrant. Gaitonde Bhai said so, you said, and the stubborn saw reason, and all roads were smoothed, and there was peace. (30)⁷

The narrative begins when Sartaj is called to mediate an upper-middle-class couple's dispute where the wife wields a knife at her husband after the latter has thrown her prized dog out of the window. The novel's texture soon grows darker as a dead body of a teenager is found in a *basti*, full of poor Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh. As people are roughed up in the police station, a late night tip-off—"Do you want Ganesh Gaitonde?" (28)—triggers the action of the novel. Gaitonde, long rumored to have been in exile, is the head of one of Bombay's most formidable "companies," a common euphemism for the city's crime families. He was "connected to certain very important people, to events at a national level. Whatever brought him back here, that could have an effect on future events" (293). Even before details of this 'future event' are revealed, the reader is shocked into the death of Gaitonde who kills himself rather than face the ignominy of being caught by the police. The death of Gaitonde and his

moll in a nuclear bunker stacked with loads of newly counterfeited rupees in a swampy area of Kailashpada set off a chain of events. The investigation leads Sartaj Singh to the sinister Guruji who, in Bollywood style, is plotting a nuclear holocaust in Bombay. According to this plot Pakistan and Indian Muslims are to be named as the villains in the conspired act, from which will flow inevitable consequences. The narrative alternates between Sartaj's investigation into Gaitonde's background and of Gaitonde's first-person narration of that background, his rise to and fall from power. The focal point of the narrative is the individual's negotiation of his role, space and place in an often-hostile urban environment. Chandra explores these at all levels of society—from the slum-dweller to the movie starlet, the businessmen, the corrupt politician, the gang lord, the spiritual guru, the hairdresser and the policeman. Bombay is represented as fragmented, dark and morbid. The characters are framed within the alleys and closed spaces and ubiquitous streets. The city is dark, crowded and ruthless. Gaitonde is the center of the city; his social grid connects him to the police, other underworld rivals as well as politicians. He is representative of the city's lawlessness and decay.

Sacred Games mirrors the depthless postmodern city of the twenty-first century—violent, fascinating, gritty, beautiful and vile⁸. The narrative is set in the newly-renamed city of Mumbai, where the city is not just a background but also a major character in the novel. In the novel police constable Katekar echoes this sentiment, “Once the air of this place touches you, you are useless for anywhere else” (900). In Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters*, Mr. Kapur tells Yezad:

What I feel for Bombay you will never know. It's like the pure love for a beautiful woman, gratitude for her existence, and devotion to her living presence. If Bombay were a creature of flesh and blood, with my blood type, Rh negative- and very often I think she is—then I would give her a transfusion down to my last drop, to save her life. (152)

The overwhelming presence of the city notwithstanding, contemporary Bombay is now what Dileep Padgaonkar calls a “permanently altered city,” “a deeply divided city,” and a “city at war with itself,” (qtd. in Guha 643). Gyan Prakash argues that terror and crime offer a perceptive lens to comprehend the workings of the city (*Mumbai* 303). Imaginative narratives return time and again to scenes of lawlessness and disorder produced by crime to represent the networked space of the underbelly of

the city. Such imaginations identify and assemble the city's dysfunctions, especially in the urban space where "modernity finds its most concentrated expression" (Prakash *Mumbai*, 303). The lords of the Bombay underworld are divided in the machinations of the city, and the city is the inevitable victim of the intrigues of the gangland. The divided loyalties of the mafia and the subsequent proxy wars expose the grim murkiness of "this messy, impossible city" (89). The police and crime nexus function as the alternative network of the city that is marked by an alternative topography, an alternative community, and an alternative urban consciousness. Corrupt police practices, gang rivalry and their areas of operation expose the city that is linked by violence, terror, claustrophobia, the uncanny and the mysterious. Bombay thus becomes a disenchanted city haunted by darkness, death and ruin. The control of the spaces of the city by the mafia is an expression of masculinity, as "gangsters transgress spatial boundaries and social hierarchies" (Prakash *Spaces*, 415). In this context, the world of cops and gangsters in *Sacred Games* exposes the city's innards. The urban labyrinth is a haunted space of ruin, fear and crisis. This space provides access to a world that is often felt and seen, but whose inner workings are never explained nor understood. In the city the politics of urban space finds expression in the street primarily because it symbolizes freedom from boundaries. It enables movement and signifies liberation from the claustrophobic restriction and control of urban space. The street is the space where strangers encounter each other, and where events (especially those violent in nature) can suddenly magnify into something else altogether. The anonymous character of the street evokes a sense of power for the individual but also reveals the contradictions of urban life by bringing to light an urban existence that otherwise remains hidden from the middle-class urban dweller's notion of ordered space.

The underbelly of the city has been central to discussions of urban violence, crime, and the culture of suspicion as it shapes identity and notions of otherness within the spatial order of the city. In this context the ganglord is a central figure of this 'other' space whose position is interesting primarily because he does not belong to any spatial boundary. He transgresses the legitimate boundaries of the city and thus belongs to the "unintended city,"—a fuzzy space between insider and outsider. Ashis Nandy, in his Introduction to *The Secret Politics of Our Desires: Innocence, Culpability and Indian Popular Cinema* (1998), defines the "unintended city" as "the

city that was never part of the formal ‘master plan’ but always implicit in it” (12). The unintended city consists of the urban poor housed in slums and other peripheral spaces. They are the victims of exploitation and disenfranchisement and are thus obliterated from the official spaces of the city. However, the official city cannot survive without the services of those residing in the “unintended city”. This dubious space renders difficult the possibility of a single narrative that can explain the exact nature of the contemporary crisis of the city. More importantly, the underworld provides ample possibilities of violent depictions of city life as is evident in the crime films of Bollywood. In this context the Bombay underworld (and by extension the underbellies of all major cities of the world) provides the city with an urban myth that posits the culture of the underworld as a ubiquitous and all-encompassing narrative of the city. The grim and edgy quality of the underworld, depicted in countless representations, combined with Bombay’s spatial crisis creates a realm of disorder and chaos which is, paradoxically, governed by strict underworld codes of discipline and order that permeate the spaces of the city.

In *Critique of Everyday Life* (1991) Henri Lefebvre has stressed that in order to understand the politics of lived space it is necessary to make connections between “elaborate representations of space on the one hand and representational spaces (along with their underpinnings) on the other” (230). Such a method is useful to explain a subject “in whom lived, perceived and conceived (known) come together within a spatial practice” (230). For Ranjani Mazumdar Lefebvre’s philosophical underpinning of spatial subjectivity offers “a remarkable entry into the spatial metaphors and symbolic politics” of the city. It makes possible a reading of Bombay and its “seductive trap that seems to offer much to the upward bound but actually gives very little” (Thorner *Metaphor* xxiii). It is from such a realm of representational space that Chandra’s narrative moves into the intertextual space of the mythical city of dreams. This space allows for a complex exploration of articulation of the ambitious drives of the city’s inhabitants; at another level, it presents the city as a sea of slums belonging to the endless migrants in the city who, as Sartaj muses, arrive in the city

Full of hope. And there was a fullness of them, there were just too many of them. Most would not be successful, but more kept coming to this city of gold. From this surplus and hunger, from this simple equation, came ... business. (141)

This narrative of hopes and dreams has been central to the way Bombay has been imagined in literature and cinema and has informed the city's cultural imagination throughout the twentieth century. For poet Nissim Ezekiel, Bombay "flowers into slums and skyscrapers" while Patte Bapurao, the Marathi poet, views the city as a stage of oppositions where, in the midst of buildings, trains, factory mills, and the ubiquitous crowd, there exists a subculture of gambling, crime, and the other nefarious doings of the mafia (Patel and Thorner *Metaphor*, xix). Bombay is, thus, a space characterized by the rapid proliferation of humanity, diversity, plurality of experience, language, and class. The city transforms into Lefebvre's representational space in its symbolization of a magnificent dream of promise and possibilities for all.

For many the city becomes the site for the enactment of exploits, escapades and the exercise of power. In the novel Ganesh Gaitonde's journey in the city is symbolic of the lives of the many people who come to Bombay to find their fortunes but are, sooner or later, lured into its dark and grim underworld. Sartaj Singh "could hold the whole city in his heart, from Colaba to Bandra":

Now it was too vast, escaped from him, each family adding to the next and the next until there was that cool and endless glow, impossible to know, or escape. Had it really existed, that small empty street, clean for the children's cricket games and dabba-ispies and tikkar-billa, or had he stolen it from some grainy black-and-white footage? Given it to himself in gift, the memory of a happier place? (23)

Sartaj and his aide Katekar are key strands through which the narrative traverses the many streets, bye-lanes and *gullies* of the city. As Sartaj forays into the city's streets and slums, his solitude and romanticized idealism are challenged by the 'trickster city' and its overwhelming wickedness, ferocity, scandals and breakdowns. Katekar, on the other hand, loved the everyday life in the city evident in of the "enormous bustle of millions on the move, the hurtling local trains with thick clusters of bodies hanging precariously from the doors, the sonorous tramp and hum of the crowd inside the tall hall of Churchgate Station" (72). The daily hustle and bustle of the city made Katekar "feel alive" (72). His city signifies the represented space of urban pandemonium, chaos and confusion wherein paradoxically exists order and cohesion. This bohemian city is a crawling mammoth that, Sartaj fears, may one day fall apart and be gone. This sense of loss is intrinsic to the experience of urban modernity. As discussed

earlier, Thomas Blom Hansen and Rajnarayan Chandavarkar show the ways in which class divisions, sectarian violence and crime has always been a part of the urban fabric of Bombay⁹. The city of opportunities is also the city of abuse as exploitation operates in almost all spheres of life. Yet, as Sartaj concedes, “There is a certain pleasure ... in thinking about how bad it gets ... and then in imagining how it will inevitably get worse. And still we survive, the city stumbles on. Maybe one day it’ll all just fall apart, and there was a certain gratification in that thought too” (93).

Writing on the culture of cities, Henri Lefebvre made a distinction between the different levels and dimensions that go into the reading of a city. *Sacred Games* offers such a multi-dimensional reading as Chandra situates his action in the slums and shanties of the city, exposing the underbelly of “this swarming, gleamy flux, the breathing of this undulating city” (133). The description of the Navnagar slum in the early pages of the book mirrors the lives of the migrant community where “everything was smaller, closer, the pathways narrow between the uneven walls of cardboard and cloth and wood, the tumbling roofs covered with plastic” (20). Katekar’s “furious contempt” for these jhopadpatti-dwellers who let “dirt and filth and garbage pile up not two feet from their own door, who let their little daughters squat to make a mess exactly where their sons played ... people who ruin Mumbai” reflects the attitude of the city towards those surviving at the periphery (20). The slum develops the image of the city as ruin through the articulation of a tense space where the yearning for a home and a fear of homelessness is constantly experienced, resulting in the production of a distinct form of spatial anxiety. Katekar, whose caste certificate reads as OBC (Other Backward Caste), is disapproving of the residents of Navnagar slum primarily because he feels they are encroaching on his city, his home—a space that he is apparently reluctant to share. The reasons for such hostility can be traced to the catastrophe of 1992-93 and the politics of the Shiv Sena when every man began to feel secure only in his part of Bombay. In her paper on the aftermath of the riots of the city Jyoti Punwani states,

Thus Bombay came to be divided into ‘safe’ and ‘unsafe’ areas in January 1993, the balance being skewed in favour of the majority community, even in Muslim majority areas, more Muslims than Hindus were killed. (239).

Katekar's attitude is reflective of these ideas of safety and belongingness which, he feels, is threatened by the migrant communities (in this case the migrants from Bangladesh), thus leading him to relegate them further beyond the boundaries of the periphery:

The communities tended to cluster together, lane by lane. People like to stay with those they know, like seeks like, and even in the thick crores of the city, in this jungle where a man can lose his name and become something else, the lowest of the low will seek his own kind, and live with them in proud public squalor. (111-12)

Sartaj is dismissive of Katekar's prejudice and thought it unfair of Katekar to single out this particular locality as especially stinky:

The whole city stank at some time or the other. And after all, the citizens of Navnagar had to pile their rubbish somewhere. It was not their fault that the municipality's collection trucks came by only once a fortnight, to make a dent in this undulating ridge of garbage to their left. (78)

Interestingly, Katekar himself lived in a small kholi amidst "a crowded huddle of kholis, mostly pucca, with electrical wire strung over the roofs and through doorways" (25). His small dwelling contains the Lefebvrian spatial practices where his wife, Shalini, appropriates with "a clean efficiency that lived very functionally in the very small space that was hers" (24). This space is informed by Shalini's awareness and enactment of her role as the homemaker. The appropriation of this little space to create the ambience of a happy family translates into the representational essence of the ways in which the inhabitants of Bombay negotiate and internalize the city. As each family (and individual) adds to the next, the city is enveloped in a "cool and endless glow, impossible to know, or escape" (23). The migrants produce a space within the city, claim it for their own, but live in constant fear of its loss; Shalini is certain of her ownership of the space of the kholi, which she confidently transforms into her home. The city thus symbolizes the representational space of home that is invoked and claimed by all, but is used very differently. Katekar's kholi is also symbolic of the spatial crisis of Bombay. The "shape of his home" that housed his family was divided by a black sheet:

On his side of the sheet there was a small colour television on a shelf, and next to it pictures of his parents and Shalini's parents, all

garlanded, and also a large gold-framed photograph of the boys at the zoo. There was a Lux soap calendar turned to June and Madhubala. Under it, a green phone with a lock on the dial. At the foot of the chatais, a whirring table-fan. Behind his head, he knew, there was a two-in-one and his collection of tapes, songs from old Marathi films. Two black trunks stacked on top of each other. Clothes hanging on hooks, his shirt and pants on a hanger. Shalini's shelf with its brass figures of Ambabai and Bhavani, and a garlanded picture of Sai Baba. And the kitchen, with racks all the way to the roof and rows and rows of gleaming steel utensils. And then on the other side of the black sheet, the shelves with schoolbooks, two posters of Sachin Tendulkar at bat, one small desk piled high with pens and notebooks and old magazines. A metal cupboard with two exactly equal compartments.

(24)

The spatial structure of the kholi is symbolic of the gradual destruction of privacy and the rapidly disappearing possibility of having a personal world. Katekar's life in the kholi is symbolic of the spatial disillusionment that has gripped the city. The spatial conflict presented through the focus on the kholi also addresses the tension between "lived" and "conceived" spaces of the city. The kholi is a lived space for Katekar and his family, but for the homeless urban poor it represents an abstract, conceived space for that result in the much-desired recognition and legitimization of citizenship. The presence of a common water tap and the absence of a toilet in the kholi symbolizes the need to create a functional space for the natural everyday cycles. The conflict between this common space and the private space of the kholi results in the production of a space where the "private" realm co-exists with, and yet is distinctly separate, from public one.

Language is yet another device that Chandra employs to capture the nuances of Bombay. In a city of migrants, where new migrants meet old ones, language tends to acquire a life of its own. Bombay's relationship to language is fascinating given the presence of a powerfully influential Hindi film industry. In the *Bambayya* language, generated by the films of Bollywood, emerge the performance of the hybrid city (Mazumdar 44). This linguistic performance embodies the polyglot culture. In turn this occupies the fluid space of multilingual street culture that is heavily inflected with

diverse regional accents. “The spoken language of Bombay cinema has over the years been considered dynamic and cosmopolitan”, says Mazumdar (44). In *Sacred Games*, the city finds further expression through the discursive space of the profane street language that is so unique to the city. Chandra’s narrative is generously peppered with the untranslated vocabulary that contains the “bitter secret of life in the metropolis: *paisa phak, tamasha dekh*” are spelt out (11; italics in original). *Bambayya* becomes the identity marker for many characters including Gaitonde:

Now this was our own language, kanchas and gullels for bullets and pistols. The Cobra Gang and all the other companies might say daane for bullets, and samaan for pistols, but we said kanche and gullels. [It] set us apart from the rest, made us belong to each other more because we spoke a private tongue, and to become one of us you had to learn it, and in learning it you were changed. I saw this in the new boys as they worked hard, trying to pass from being mere neighbourhood taporis to respected bhais. They learned the language, and then the walk, and they pretended to be something, and then they became it. And so for American dollars, we said choklete, not Dalda like the rest of our world; for British pounds, lalten, not peetal; for heroin and brown sugar, gulal, not atta; for police, Iftekar, not nau-number; a job gone wrong was ghanta, not fachhad; and a girl so impossibly ripe and round and tight that it hurt to look at her was not a chabbis, but a churi. (118)

The need to highlight the uniqueness of the gang is fuelled by a desire to mark it as different from those operating elsewhere. The significance of different speech variants lies in the fact that they act as unique identity-markers of not only the many different criminal communities but also of the different crime pockets in the city. In the context of Lefebvrian spatial theory, the speech variants of the gangs, once again, signify Bombay as a representational space, a space that is invoked, imagined and appropriated by the overarching mantle of criminal vocabulary.

Spatial crisis and claustrophobia are visible everywhere and are central to Bombay’s spatial identity. The strategies that the inhabitants adopt to realize their desires and aspirations drive the narrative of the city. Spatial claustrophobia combined with deprivation creates multiple and overlapping worlds that are difficult to

comprehend. The various forms of exchange and interchange both between individuals and communities result in a new global cultural economy. Arjun Appadurai reads as a “complex, overlapping, disjunctive order”—an idea that he elaborates in the essay “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy” (1990). In this context, Bombay is replete with competing narratives of power, exploitation, violence and indigenous attempts at redemption and justice, most of which are fuelled by the gangster mythology that emerges from this psychological urban world¹⁰. The dark textures of the city have enabled a representation of the ideas of ruin and spatial disenchantment as *Sacred Games* testifies. The social space of the city acts as the prism through which the experience of disenchantment can be grasped. Gaitonde’s dark city portrays Bombay as a lawless space, where state and police authority routinely succumb to criminal predators: the world of Bombay “is shot through with crime, riddled with it, rotted by it” (326). The promise of the postcolonial liberal order and the Nehruvian model of modernization and national development are dangerously challenged by the underworld. Chandra’s Bombay represents an urban world that is fabricated, pieced together, rather than formed organically. This city is forged by the operations of the gangland that permeates and operates on built environment. In the novel, Guruji maintains, “life feeds on life ... And the beginning of life is violence” (576). Bombay thus becomes an ambiguous and crime-ridden space for the confrontation between law and crime. The city appears racked by the breakdown of citizenship and the legal order. It becomes a visual spectacle for as even though crime is not Bombay’s “exclusive preserve”, in the city the scale appears immense” (Prakash *Mumbai*, 306).

The representation of crime in literature, theatre, and film has provided, and continues to offer, a fairly complex overview of the relationship between legality and illegality, individual versus the establishment, and the futility of the judicial system. In the context of the modern city, crime narratives facilitate the navigation of not only the topography of the city, but also the cartography of urban consciousness that is ravaged by conflict. Crime narratives work through a dialectic of pleasure and revulsion as they confront the fragility of the social network and challenge the establishment. In the context of the urban, crime narratives are significant for they reveal that if the city is a space of delight and spectacle; it is also the home of the gangster who seeks to control this space of delight. He attempts to territorialize its

spaces and, in the process, both legitimate and illegitimate spaces blend together within the gangster's world. The codes of morality, legality, rationality, and identity are thus challenged in the urban disorder. The city as the site of rationality and reason is challenged as the fictive gangster narratives that address the volatile conflicts of city life, and the spaces of illegality, decadence and corruption in particular.

The modern city is the glorious culmination of the culture of industrial capitalism, but behind this facade lurks the seductive world of crime, estrangement and alienation. Through the evocation of the city as a violent space, Vikram Chandra situates Bombay as the site of ruin, to powerfully remind us that the glitter of consumption comes at a price. Thus, the Bombay of *Sacred Games* is claimed by all but belongs to none. The "aged-and-cured wickedness of the city, its piquant scandals, its bitter breakdowns, its ferociously musty unfairness ... its resplendent and rotting flesh" (301) underlines the spatial structure of Bombay. The contemporary social topography of Bombay is an essential mix of heterogenic elements faced with attempts of coercive homogenization by the administration. In this context, the space of crime translates into an alternative space to such socio-political coercions. Vikram Chandra's Bombay signifies the larger transformation of post-colonial urban space by enabling the presence of unpredictability and violence. In the novel the pamphlets circulated by the Hizbuddeen contains several mentions of Bombay, and Sartaj is outraged that his beloved city is constantly at the centre of much terrorist plotting. :

"Now, this is interesting. Mumbai is specifically mentioned, in each of the pamphlets."

...

"Here," Anjali Mathur said. "It says, 'A great fire will take the unbelievers, and it will begin in Mumbai.' This line is repeated in the other pamphlets with minor changes. 'A fire will begin in Mumbai and sweep across the country.' But always, Mumbai is mentioned."

Sartaj was outraged. "What do these bastards have against Bombay? They don't mention any other cities?" (556)

This outburst only highlights the deep sense of despair and the recognition of a world that cannot be quantified but is fluid, dangerous, and shrouded in mystery. Suketu Mehta too deliberates on the overwhelming personality of Bombay. He wonders,

“Why are all these people going to Bombay? What is there in Bombay that from all directions there is a cry, “Bombay! Bombay!” (516).

The gang-world acts as an alternative community to the existing urbanscape. The city, however, is Gaitonde’s cocoon:

In the early morning hours, sometimes, I was able to dream of Mumbai. In that light half-sleep, I put myself into those lanes, and I was young and happy again. I relived my victories, my narrow escapes, my triumphs of tactics and strategy. And not only these grand moments—these historical landmarks the whole city remembered. (801-2)

Yet, towards the end of the novel, he too is shaken by the idea of the Bombay’s “flayed, stinking corpses”:

I imagined this crawling ants’ nest of a city eaten by fire, all of it crumpled and black and twisting and finally gone. They led miserable, small lives, these scuttling millions. After they were gone, after the great cleansing wind that would take not only this city but every other one, there would be space for a new start. (837)

Within this urban decay and dereliction, the desire for home, domesticity, and peace continues to elude its citizens. The depictions of Bombay’s anarchy and disorder as an urban legend in the grand unfolding drama of corruption, conflicts and political intrigues—the city as fascinatingly dark, crowded, murky, ruthless and violent—in *Sacred Games* translates into a powerful allegory for contemporary cityscape.

III

The allegorical representation of Bombay continues in Murzbaan Shroff’s vibrant debut collection of short stories, which has garnered him two Pushcart Prize nominations. *Breathless in Bombay* is a collection of vignettes from the lives of those struggling to survive in the ruthless city. The tales capture the dichotomy of Bombay through the lives and cultures of the people in the city, from the elite rich to the middle class to the urban poor. In his Introduction to the book, Shroff narrates an incident of his friend’s outburst at the migrants who stock their belongings at the police chowky in Kemp’s Corner (the friend, incidentally, lived at Kemp’s Corner,

South Bombay that happens to be one of the richest areas of the city). He resents the use of this official space by people who are neither legitimate nor recognized as citizens of Bombay; he calls them “encroachers” and demands to know “why they were permitting these people to use our roads as their home, cooking, eating, washing, and defecating there?” (ix)¹¹. To this the cops replied, “Kai, sahib, Let them be, no? They also deserve to live. Where they will go if we throw them out? How do they affect our lives in any way by being here?” (ix). The friend’s attitude is reflective of the larger outlook of the ‘legitimate’ citizens of Bombay towards the migrants of the city. Shroff’s stories give voice to the desires, hopes, dreams, conflicts and complexities of the marginalized actors within the stratified society.

The modernist city of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been overwhelmed by capitalist globalization (Prakash *Mumbai*, 20). Globalization produces a different set of urban narratives that contain different kinds of regimes. The new hierarchical order of the cities and urban dwellers demands the negotiation of questions of citizenship and identity. The politics that administer these spaces mock the ideal of the city as the space of civil society and rational discourse, observes Partha Chatterjee in *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (2004). *Breathless in Bombay* attempts to capture Bombay’s fascinating transition to global modernity. While urban change is an indisputable truth, the narratives of change in Bombay reveal the deep flaws that inform it. This narrative contains the picture of the dysfunctional city. As the image of the cosmopolitan city shatters, the very powerful fable of Bombay reveals the “unintended city” of the urban poor that lies underneath.

Following Max Weber, the Indian architect and social activist Jai Sen defines the “unintended city” as “the often unintended result of planning and social work programs and policies, as opposed to direct exploitation” (1976). This “unintended city” is the underside of the original master plan of urbanscape, whose focus has always been the “official city.” The “unintended city” is needed by the official city for its survival but, as Ashis Nandy says, “it cannot own up to its ‘unintended’ self” (2). The “unintended city” is symbolic of the unintended consequences of modernity. It reveals the disjunction between the neat architecture of modernist projects and the contradictory results that were actually obtained. Urban life in India has been

subjected to a process of careful control and regulation that began in the colonial period. This has been discussed at length by Dipesh Chakrabarty in *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies* (2002) and Sudipta Kaviraj in *Civil Society: History and Possibilities* (2001). The regulatory projects generated their own “unintended” results which, in turn, laid the premise for the essence of postcolonial Indian cities. The citizens of the “unintended city” are often the poor migrants who occupy a space that is geographically and politically recognized as official but is otherwise unintended.

The strain that exists between the “official” and the “unintended” city is at the heart of the urban imagination in India (Mazumdar 6). The “unintended” city needs the official city to survive and function. Thus, rejection by the official city produces “deep resentment and anger” among the inhabitants of the “unintended city” as they despair for legitimacy. It is for this reason, Sandeep Pendse argues, “the toilers come to constitute a mass of people infused with a deep discontent and a searing sense of loss, an army in search of an enemy, of a target to hit out at” (23). As sections of the city get engulfed in the vortex of crime and corruption, dystopian forms of urban life emerge that operates on a non-legal codes. In *Breathless in Bombay* Murzbaan Shroff aims to arrest this overwhelming dystopia of urban life and represent Bombay “as lived in the heads of its people” (xii). Using a wide range of characters the author focuses on the everyday problems of those eking out a living at the periphery. Beginning with the water crisis of the laundrywallas in “Dhobi Ghat”, and the *maalishwalla* Bheem Singh’s reminiscences of the life in the village, each story narrates the lives of characters waiting for the realization of their hopes and dreams. The monstrous city of Bombay is “oblivious” to the existence of these “piquant little communities holding its own, frozen, by its own choice, in time” (6) as the stories of Chacha Sawari and his horse in “The Queen Guards Her Own,” Mrs. Mullaforoze in “The Great Divide” and “Jamal Haddi’s Revenge” reveal. There is the story of love lost between Vicki and Nandkumar in “Traffic” as they are enveloped by the fast-paced life of the city. The title story celebrates love found and is the final story of the volume. The stories present a montage of life in Bombay—the disparities between the poor and the wealthy, prejudice, the clash of tradition and progress, corruption and greed, hope and love. The tales de-center the overwhelming narrative of global city as the author arranges his narratives around the otherwise invisible characters in the

urban framework. The negotiation of the city's invisible spaces by these characters highlights the fact that for them spatial continuity, cohesion and order are possible only if they seek it in the indiscernible pockets of the city.

The city represented is twenty first century Mumbai. However, the complexities of nomenclature are effectively ruled out as Shroff refers to the city by its former name, Bombay, subtly implying that coincident with a change of name was a change in city-ethic. Salman Rushdie echoes this sentiment in his analysis of Suketu Mehta's *Maximum City* (2006) when he describes Bombay as a "ruined metropolis" which has almost been destroyed by the "corruption, gangsterism, and neo-fascist politics" prevalent in present-day Mumbai¹². Shroff's stories read as semi-autobiographical accounts of the authors' experiences in Bombay; the poignant memories of the city are interwoven with stories of loves lost and re-conquered over time. The characters embody the inscrutability and allure of an urban existence in this city of relentless industry and enterprise. Bombay's culture of trade—what Suketu Mehta calls *dhandha*—is effectively portrayed in the stories. In an age where merit is devalued and honesty has become decadent, money is the supreme facilitator for urban advancement—there is no attempt to conceal the diversity of needs and greeds which are articulated in the space of the city. The multi-striated economic structure of the city is interpolated by a diversity of people who create a fiscal matrix premised upon the principle of individual gain. In recent years, this compulsive acquisitiveness has transcended the individual and become a distinguishing feature of Bombay itself, thus encouraging writers to portray the city as a conglomeration of individual dreams and material ambitions. Shroff acknowledgement and celebration of the plurality of the city rests on his apprehension of the collective representation of urban identities; rather, he seeks to identify and celebrate the individual within the. Even as Shroff attempts to characterize contemporary Bombay in its entirety, he relates incidents and events from the perspective of the individual instead of generalizing the experience.

This brings to attention the essence of postmodern urban life that is structured by difference and disparity. While globalization has resulted in the commercialization and homogenization of the city's marginalized spaces, urban life is not independent of the sweat and toil of the otherwise unrecognized, and unacknowledged population. Shroff attempts to highlight this aspect in his stories. The city is structured by vicious

contrasts, and it is a space of both temptation and betrayal, marked by various class-bound forms of struggle. The city makes possible encounters and relationships among those struggling to survive, but this is not easily achieved. The centers of power obliterate the visibility of sections of the society so that the urban narrative is centered not on the workforce but on the city. Based on the slums (*bastis*), shanties (*chawls*), gutters and back alleys (*gullies*) of Bombay, the stories reveal a strong sense of community and fellow-feeling amongst those struggling to make their fortunes in the city.

Urban space in Bombay is splintered and fragmented by the technological forces of global capitalism as is evident in the stories. Mataprasad Mahadev's narrative in the opening story "Dhobi Ghat" reveals the ruthless underside of globalization and commoditization. His profession is threatened by the "squat-legged, motor-driven competitor" (2), the washing machine, and Mataprasad is bewildered as to how he could "fight a machine that never strikes back, that just takes over man's life quietly, with new, new promises everyday" (3). He is baffled that "people were happy to bury their prejudices just so they could be seen as modern" (2). Shroff devotes entire pages to the description of the *dhobi ghat*, the washing area, and the process of washing to draw attention to the workings of the lives of the *laundrywallas*. Life in the *dhobi ghat* had "its own space, its own serenity ... its own language, pace, and traditions" (6). This quietude and sense of community is threatened by the city's attempts at beautification so that the *ghat* is at risk of being dotted with skyscrapers—"waiting to swoop down on the inhabitants of the *ghat* and crush them" (16)—once the authorities had their way. The open ending of the story reiterates the fact that people at the fringes of the city continue to bear the brunt of modernization and the imminent invasion of new technologies and temptations, just as the city "weighed its gloomy pallor of the people, reminding them of the baggage they carried: another day of abstract non-achievement, simply the mediocrity they'd inherited or the luxury they'd not" (23).

For the migrant masseur Bheem Singh, in "The Maalishwalla," the city of Bombay was different. Demanding? Yes! Life sapping? Yes! You had to have alliances and a ready salute for those in power. There was always someone to bow to—like the *lungiwalla* dada in the slum where he

lived [...] the head *maalishwalla* who allowed him into the coterie, after an initial deposit of twelve hundred rupees[...] that arrogant *policewalla*, who came to the beach every night, to rob [him] of his earnings [...] *Haraami* police, *haraami* city! City of bastards” (60; italics in original)

As a professional masseur in Chowpatty, Bheem is so desperate to make money (so that he can return to his bride in his home village) that he is unable to do anything about the man he sees aggressively pestering an unwilling prostitute on the beach. As he watches the crowd around him, the truth about the city comes home: Bombay is a “city of cold transactions” (61), a “city of dark realism, of lonely, self-preserving nights and hot, oppressive days” (71). Characters like Bheem Singh are not strangers to modern Bombay but its intimate other; they hold up a mirror to the lives of the rich and the elite, reflecting the spatial grotesque of the other side of capitalist colonization. The spatial practices of these marginalized people reflect the possibilities of survival in a space that they cannot claim for their own; but their survival is constantly threatened as they are subjected to constant demographic dislocation and power-play. Such spatial displacement results in the segmentation of the city and the larger concentration of slum pockets and squatter settlements. The attempts to negotiate the difficult conditions in the city result in the duplication of traditional village life in urban space. Mataprasad reminds his co-workers that the ‘mistake’ of abandoning their homes “for greener pastures was like cutting off your nose to spite your face—the consequences were indeed terrible” (19). He tries to reason with his counterparts, but the effort is rendered futile:

he had tried to build them a village within a city, a home with traditions not unlike those of the one they had left behind. Had he not succeeded? Had he not built a community that was united and bonded by traditions? And weren’t their homes exactly like those in the village: without doors, without locks, open to all who wished to enter? (20)

The social and cultural resonance of the rural forms in the urban setting does not signify, as Rajnarayan Chandavarkar points out in *Imperial Power and Popular Politics* (1998), the persistence of tradition in the face of modernity. The village emerged as an aspect of the city’s urban landscape. Instead of following the ordered sequence of tradition and modernity, Bombay developed by intertwining and

interweaving different histories. Migrants from near and far traversed and marked the urban landscape with the imprints of the village, language, ethnicity, region, and religion. With social and cultural ingenuity, the working class immigrants forged strategies to survive the conditions of urban modernity. Feeling at home in the impersonal and merciless metropolis, amidst the relentless routine of work and the loneliness of separation, is always a challenge. Through the methods of duplication the migrant lives his reality in the city by assembling an imaginary home and putting together an irreconcilable world. It is in this context that Bombay exists as a representational space for all the inhabitants of the city, but as a territorial space it continues to elude those millions of migrants who arrive at the city to seek their intangible fortunes.

In contrast to the despairing narratives of Mataprasad and Bheem Singh, the title story “Breathless in Bombay” captures the vagaries and facade of the Bombay elite in the wedding of Aringdham Bannerjee and Ritika Trilok. Aringdham’s meticulous planning of the wedding, the theme, dress-code, cuisine—Punjabi, Goan, Hyderabadi, Continental—are attempts to “camouflage the reality; it threw a deft security blanket over his past, the shame of being born poor, of having led a life of grim, unyielding misery” (274). Aringdham was “a perfectionist”

a man who saw to minutiae. He couldn’t bear the idea that others might find him lacking. What if the upper echelons of the society, to whose comfort and opinion he was catering, dismissed him as unfinished?

What if they discovered his origins, which were not like theirs? (274)

Aringdham’s childhood was spent in a *chawl* with penury and misery for companions. Very early in life he recognized that their one-room apartment symbolized a “world where relationships did not survive, nor niceness, nor dignity, where all that was good was forgotten in a daze of myopic blindness and where limits were crossed with unpardonable ease” (275). His desperation for acceptance and fear of rejection are premised on the ugly social realities of the city coupled with the understanding that social mobility is the key to social acceptance and recognition. He desired escape from the “prison of his childhood” where

Aringdham learned how money, or the lack of it, could shatter families, how husbands could turn into wife-pounding savages, how wives could cheat and run out in husbands, how brothers could arrange

to have sisters felt up, how sons could take to easy money and daughters to lives of easy virtue. He vowed that he'd never let that happen to his children; he'd build a wall high and solid till he could no longer see the squalor, no longer hear the shouts, the curses, and the screams of denial. Eventually he'd forget their existence altogether. (275).

This mirrors the socio-psychological realities of the upper echelons of 'civil' society and also exposes their farcical attempts at civilized and dignified living. More importantly, Aringdham's ideology brings to the fore spatial inequities that are founded on the social and economic stratification of people and spaces¹³. It is no wonder, therefore, that he felt nothing but contempt for his mother "her whining ways, her stories of deprivation, and her sagas of life's extended betrayals" (276). He felt that his relationship to his parents was "a pure accident" and could see no reason to change his opinion (276). Aringdham's much-desired escape from the grim realities of his childhood and the dream of achieving membership of the exclusive upper class rests on unpleasant social realities which, seen in terms of Lefebvrian spatial practices, signifies the acceptance or denial of the city's spaces. Lefebvrian theory posits that representations of space are conversant with the ideologies of production and consumption. Specific spatial forms of society are informed by concepts and codes appropriate for the dominant social order. Such a concept of space is greatly challenged by the city's unplanned growth and its accompanying magnitude of urban problems. Bombay is a spectacle of modernity, an ideal of modern urban life. Here, state machinery controls the physical layout of the city and keeps the urban sprawl at bay. The high-rise buildings, multiplexes, shopping malls, and museums clearly demarcate the city into orderly spaces, public and private, work and leisure. This methodical arrangement of the urban enhances Bombay's image as an embodiment of the good life. The squalor and poverty are tucked away from sight. Aringdham's success can be gleaned from his satisfaction of reaching "where he wanted":

a world where stars shone warmly, where everything appeared brilliant and perfect, where achievement had no limit, beauty no boundaries, and poverty and coarseness no place whatsoever ... everything shone for him and for him alone. (278)

Aringdham's story inverts the celebrated notion of anonymity that the city offers. He does not seek anonymity like the countless poor and disenfranchised who struggle to

claim their space in this land of opportunities. Rather, he seeks recognition and his carefully constructed social persona is a significant step towards establishing his identity. In her article *Provincializing the Global City: From Bombay to Mumbai* (2004), Rashmi Varma speaks of the complex “text-ile” of the city, using the metaphor of fabrication to describe the process of self-fashioning which an individual undergoes to consolidate his/her local identity within the city (65). Recreating an urban identity is no easy task, and being saddled with a *chawl* upbringing has grave social implications as Aringdham discovers. He has to prove his ability to survive in the city by constructing his life in an environment very unlike the one he had escaped from. He embarks on a quest, which is not his alone but that of every inhabitant of Bombay—to inherit/earn the right of belonging to the city—and the narrative traces the trajectory of his transformation. The vastness of the city is condensed into a neat spatial framework as he conceives the elite urban spaces and much of his narrative transpires within the interiors of this composite space.

Aringdham’s narrative locates Bombay as a representational space that is internalized to obliterate unpleasant truths. Yet, for those, like his parents, residing in the city’s sordid underbelly, Bombay offers a space of contentment despite its obvious challenges:

for theirs was not the vice of music, or of fine food, or of dance, or of clever conversation. Theirs was the vice of deep abysmal sleep ... the will of fate and the stars above ... theirs was the vice of a single dream, an unchanging dream; to prepare for another day of labor, another day of toil, another day of survival, which would allow them to sleep on a half-empty stomach, or half-full, if they were that lucky, that is. (306)

The choice of class seclusion by the upper-class Bombayites’ can be located within the framework of the ‘politics of exclusion’ in the city that seeks to sanitize spaces in order to render them acceptable to a certain set of standards. The degree of contestation of public space notwithstanding, spatial exclusion represents the conflicts between the needs and ambitions of the urban poor, middle-class expectations, official regulations (backed by powerful interest groups) and privacy concerns of the elite. This clearly indicates that the city offers possibilities of the negotiation of its spaces. Although economic prosperity and exclusivity are significantly distinct from the

condition of the marginalized, the disproportionate economic distribution is glaringly visible in the simultaneous existence of extremities and spatial disparities.

New strategies of urban development give rise to new forms of spatial politics. In Bombay, urbanization's marginalizing tendency has led to the contestation of spaces among the urban poor and the middle classes. In his study of gated residential enclaves in Bombay, Mark Anthony Falzon argues that urban lifestyles are influenced by a global consumerist culture that shape people's perceptions of space and its organization:

[T]he middle and upper classes tend to perceive the homeless, slum dwellers, beggars, "urchins," and hawkers as undesirables who "encroach" on the city's public spaces and make it difficult for the former to lead what they see as a decent, healthy, and safe life. For the elites, life in the city is a constant siege ... [it is] against this siege that one must fortify. (159-60)

Similarly Leela Fernandes, in her book *India's New Middle Class: Democratic Politics in an Era of Economic Reform* (2006), argues for the growing visibility of the new classes of the city whose identity is based on their roles as consumers. This apparently results in the "politics of forgetting" where certain social groups are rendered invisible (the underworld) and forgotten (the workforce); such processes of exclusion are naturalized by the elite and the upper-class through subjective definition of citizenship (192).

Breathless in Bombay illustrates a significant shift of literary locales; the author actively engages himself in a nether-world of urban poverty, prostitution, and political intrigue¹⁴. Bombay's skyline defined by its towering skyscrapers is replaced by the murky interiors of the inner pockets of the city and the squalor of slum dwellings, exposing the vast invisible urban collective of the city. For Shroff, life on the city streets is a true representation of the urban predicament and he endeavors to contextualize this existence within the greater parameter of Bombay's urban fabric. In this context, the stories are a departure from conformist city literature which uses the urban landscape primarily as a backdrop for its tales of upper-middle class agony and angst. Shroff, Mehta, and Vikram Chandra, and other contemporary writers, are becoming increasingly sensitive to the inconsequentiality faced by ordinary

individuals who are engulfed by the multitude and they foreground the city as the battling ground where a diversity of lives (which are usually written off as ordinary or marginal) struggle to find their space¹⁵. From this perspective it is possible to read the city as a vast panoramic text of the urban scene. This reveals a city in which the effects which potentially disturb the idea of an ordered city can be conveniently ignored: the constant noise of traffic and people, or smells and fumes that choke the streets can be overlooked but not denied. Crime, deprivation, poverty, and loss cease to have any existence in a city that is celebrated as a visual ensemble rather than a living, breathing entity. However, as de Certeau spells out, despite the strong appeal of such a view, it may lead to the overlooking of some of the most important facets of city life. For de Certeau, the story of the city “begins on ground level with footsteps” that allows pedestrians to ‘write’ the city without ‘reading’ it:

They are myriad, but do not compose a series. They cannot be counted because each unit has a qualitative character: a style of tactile apprehension and kinesthetic appropriation. Their swarming mass is an innumerable collection of singularities. Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together. In that respect, pedestrian movements form one of these “real systems whose existence in fact makes up the city.” They are not localized; it is rather they that spatialize. (*Practice* 97)

This implies that walking in the city renders the individual indifferent to representations and the panoptic gaze of those who control it. To grasp the city as a site of contestation, it is important not only to read the performative agencies in these sites but also recognize the context within of the production and reception social and cultural milieu.

Debates on modernity and the metropolis have emerged largely in the context of changes experienced in cities but this does not provide a lens to view or comprehend the complexities of different sites of the modern metropolis. One of the major features of the urban experience in India is that the urban form has neither been overwhelming nor hegemonic. The city itself is marked by the ambiguity between the ‘urban’ and the ‘rural.’ In urban imageries, the ‘village’ is never absent from everyday life in the city. The narrative of migration and departure from home is a key element of urban life. The different ways in which the spaces of the city are consumed conjure

a powerful and mythic image of the city. The city evokes a whole range of experiences so that as an imagined space it is contradictory and complex, generating intense performances by the actors. In his Introduction to *Breathless in Bombay*, Shroff writes that “the story of Bombay is the story of sacrifice”:

Perhaps there is no other city in the world where the struggle spills so vividly and unabashedly out onto the streets, for that’s what people are here for: to make the journey, to realize their dreams ... How many trades? How many dreams? How many journeys can a single city take and deliver? (xi)

Shroff’s Bombay represents both the human and humane aspects of the city as it reimagines the bitter-sweet realities of the city through the lives of those who people it. The urban predicament reflected here brings into focus the represented space of the city as a spatial arrangement of a multilayered societies existing within a single geographical space. The spatial practices of the inhabitants of the city inform the ways in which the many spaces of the city are used, appropriated and contested.

IV

Sociological studies on Bombay reveal the existence of parallel, and often multiple, equivalents of the various systems of the city. Bombay is

this beautiful city of seven Islands, this jewel by the Arabian sea ... this enigma of cosmopolitanism where races and religions live side by side and cheek by jowl in peace and harmony, this diamond of diversity, this generous goddess who embraces the poor and the hungry and the huddled masses. (Mistry, *Family* 160)

The result in the creation of multiple worlds existing in a single geographical space, but this space is shared, understood, used and appropriated differently. In addition, the relations of economic interdependency and exploitation mark the city as a space containing global wealth as well as local poverty. In his book *Soft City* Jonathan Raban points out that the urban landscape is akin to a theatrical performance in which conflicting practices act out in spatial configurations (11–32). Stories of the rich and poor in conflict inhabit empowering narratives of social justice within the urban environment. The spatial configuration of the city produces social codes for the

representation and interpretation of the urban landscape. The powerful narratives and counter-narratives of Bombay act as the ideal vehicle for the narration of urban conflict and cohesion. As the city participates in aspects of global consumer culture it signals the emergence of particular perceptions of space and its organization. The spaces of the city are shared and negotiated, albeit unequally, between middle-class dreams of urban serenity and the hopes of the homeless. The middle and upper classes tend to perceive the peripheral inhabitants as undesirables who encroach on the city's public spaces, making it difficult for the former to lead what they see as a decent, healthy, and safe life. For the elites, life in the city is a constant battle for metaphorical seige, it is "a zero-sum battle for residential space and street commerce, figured as a struggle between civic discipline and organized crime" (Appadurai *Spectral*, 649). For the urban poor, this battle remains ambiguous. These tensions reveal the workings of the inhabitants of the city, the ways in which they accommodate and react to the urban crisis.

Henri Lefebvre, in *The Production of Space*, states that "no space disappears in the course of growth and development: the *worldwide does not abolish the local*" (86; italics in original). This implies that social, economic and spatial contexts of urban space are products of local circumstance and global phenomena, each not exclusive of the other. Cities are built structures that are inclusive of the officially recognized space as well as the spaces in the margins. The secondary spaces constitute the residual spaces that contain the elements discarded by the process of capitalism. As discussed in Chapter 2 "residual spaces" are those left-over spaces after the transformation of a particular urban space. These discarded spaces become important to understand the nature of contemporary modernity. Thomas Blom Hansen study evokes the density and despair of Bombay to present a concentrated vignette of the city's residual spaces and the logic of sustenance and survival that drives the underworld. Ideally, residual spaces do not fit into any vision of the city because they materialize and take a life of their own, and are governed by their own normative specificities. Both *Sacred Games* and *Breathless in Bombay* produce the idea of the residual city and locate Bombay in its moment of crisis.

As contemporary Bombay experiences an exhilarating process of global advancement, it is also witness to the marginalization of the lesser known

communities and spaces in the city—a fact strongly reiterated by Chandra and Shroff. While globalization had introduced the city to new ways of urban development, it has also promoted exclusion and marginalization. Theorists like Saskia Sassen argue that globalization underestimates the agency and contingency of the local (*The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, 1991). In this context, the imaginary city of literature contests and complements the institutionalized narratives of the city. Postcolonial cities like Bombay are endowed with multiple legacies that make them sites of spatial engagement. The interactions and exchanges between the multiple spatialities of the city, as well as the transactions between the local and the global mark it as a complex and contested site. The process of spatial production and spatial reorganization in Bombay needs to be understood in its unique historical, social, and cultural context. The state is an active agent in globalizing the city, but there exists agencies whose role is equally decisive. Even though marginalized groups expose the failures of globalization, the process of spatial reorganization and approximation of the city has engendered numerous forms of grassroots politics among the urban poor. Arjun Appadurai reads the newly emerging forms of citizenship as “deep democracy” or “globalization from below” where the inhabitants of the periphery engage with urban governmentality by using “legitimate precedents” to legalize their cause (2000). Literary mapping of the city’s spaces is but one of the many interventions that can aid in the understanding and negotiation of urban space. Much of recent literature on Bombay encourages the association and exposition of the multiple realities of the city. Vikram Chandra and Murzbaan Shroff’s representation of the spaces of Bombay explicate the ways in which the city carries different significations for its diverse population. The texts use the idea of multiplicity in all its forms to mark the disintegration of the secular order upon which the city had been founded, and there is a violent transition from a celebratory mode to a more sinister one.

The interest generated by a combination of fiction and reportage while describing the city, and the information revealed in these narratives locate Bombay as a thriving commercial city and an impending urban catastrophe. With continued urban expansion the crowd becomes a metonym for the city in modernist discourse, and is perceived as a group of people who have lost their individual selves in their pursuit of a universal justice (Lehan 71). The spaces of Bombay’s underbelly are instrumental in creating a distinctive character of the city. In *Sacred Games* Bombay is exhilaratingly

liberated, a free zone where identities can be constructed and traded effortlessly. In *Breathless in Bombay* the invisible and inconceivable spaces on the city streets give autonomy to the lesser-known populations of the city¹⁶. This freedom may be translated as a certain lawlessness which pervades the city and is manifest in its public encroachments. It signifies the haphazard disarray of commercial activities, the teeming abundance of human resources, and a general non-conformity of opinions within the framework of Bombay.

Notes

¹ The emergence of new urban spatialities and their negotiation inform the work of postmodern geographers like Edward Soja, David Harvey and Michael Dear. They argue that the centreless postmodern city is inherent in the emergent urban spatialities.

² Recent years witnessed many men being subsumed into the underworld. The underworld operations empowered them with money and power, and restored their sense of self and individuality.

³ The conventional wisdom of the period highlighted the control of the city's spaces by gangs. The members of these gangs were mainly Muslims who were lured into organized crime by money and power.

⁴ Dawood Ibrahim fled to Dubai in the 1980s after the police cracked down on the operations post a series of killings and extortion rackets. He continued to operate in Bombay through his gang known as the D Company.

⁵ Bombay's underworld and its operative laws can be traced back to the Hollywood gangster movies that inspired the organization of the underworld.

⁶ Vir Sanghvi's comments on *Sacred Games* are available in Vikram Chandra's official website <<http://www.vikramchandra.com>>

⁷ Chandra, Vikram. *Sacred Games*. 2006. New Delhi: Penguin, 2007. Henceforth, all citations are from this edition of the novel.

⁸ In *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (2004), David Harvey identifies the postmodern city with the rise of historical eclecticism, multiculturalism, consumerism and spectacle.

⁹ Rajnarayan Chandavarkar's *Imperial Power and Popular Politics: Class Resistance and the State in India 1850-1950* (1998) offers a revisionist view of the relationship between class and politics in India

between the period of the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 and Independence. The book underlines the significance of the role of the working classes in shaping the pattern of India's capitalist development.

¹⁰ In Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh* for instance, the profile of contemporary Bombay reverberates with violence and criminal energy.

¹¹ Murzbaan Shroff, *Breathless in Bombay*. (London: Picador, 2008). Henceforth, all citations are from this edition of the book.

¹² Salman Rushdie's comments on *Maximum City* are available in Suketu Mehta's official website, <www.suketumehta.com>

¹³ An example of urban stereotype is the figure of the young man who symbolizes the problems of overpopulation and unemployment in the city. Jimmy Porter in John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* is a representative figure of collective resentment towards the establishment.

¹⁴ The scarcity of spaces in Bombay is evident in the way its population is distributed. Two-thirds of its population is cramped into a mere 5 percent of its total area. The remaining expanse of the city is monopolized by the rich.

¹⁵ The recent spate of works of fiction on Bombay gives voice to marginal urban identities and activities which lie beneath the surface of the bustling city.

¹⁶ In Gregory Roberts' novel *Shantaram* Didier Levy, the Frenchman, defines civilization on the lines of what is forbidden and what is permitted. The city's underbelly is a space where everything is permitted, but is otherwise an a barbaric space.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

It was my Bombay, but also not-mine.

—Salman Rushdie

There was only one place for me: Bombay.

—Vikram Chandra

This thesis has discussed Bombay's historical significance as the most modern city of India. Yet, the issue that continues to dodge this position is that of the availability of space in the city. In the context of spatial scarcity Bombay has been both an inclusive and exclusive space that embraces all who come to the city to seek their fortunes, but fails to provide the necessary spatial arrangements for their survival. This spatial crisis resulting from the uneven topography of Bombay has been at the centre of much intervention, literary and otherwise. Rahul Mehrotra writes about the existence of parallel cities in Bombay in the following words:

In contemporary Bombay, the existence of parallel cities is a very striking phenomenon. Until a few decades ago, the many worlds in the city occupied different spaces, but have now coalesced into a singular but multi-faceted entity. Today, the city's image comprises of strange yet familiar juxtapositions—a roadside Hindu shrine abuts St Thomas' Cathedral, chimney stacks are dwarfed by skyscrapers, fishing villages and slums nestle at the foot of luxury apartments, and bazaars occupy the Victorian arcades! (309)

Recent writings on Bombay offer a fruitful site for understanding the culture of the city more expansively. The politics of the city as a spatial formation produces an incredible mixture of experiences. This baffles Suketu Mehta as he struggles to understand the essence of the city:

Why do people still live in Bombay? Every day is an assault on the individual's senses, from the time you get up, to the transport you take to go to work, to the offices you work in, to the forms of entertainment

you are subjected to. The exhaust is so thick the air boils like a soup. There are too many people touching you: in the trains, in the elevators, when you go home to sleep. (508)

In *The Image of the City* Kevin Lynch has emphasized that to study the city is not always a matter of simple observation: “we must consider not just the city as a thing in itself,” Lynch writes, “but the city as being perceived by its inhabitants” (3). James Donald elaborates on the ways in which accounts of the city are “sustained and produced through the myriad imaginative cityscapes narrated by literary and cinematic productions” (Westwood and Williams 12). As already suggested in Chapter 2, literature and cinema present a never-ending commentary on the city and the manifestations of the urban. Most often the city is imagined and interpreted through these representative forms, so that the ‘real’ and the fictive are woven together in intertextual discourses. Lewis Mumford has discussed about the ways in which a culture writes about its cities is reflective of the fears and aspirations of that culture. Writers are among the most insightful of urbanites. Their observations of the city claim special attention for they produce ‘texts’ that are complex cultural products which inform the mediations on urban life. Fictive narratives of the city constitute a ‘narrative space’ in which, as Richard Sennett suggests, “the novelist held up a magic mirror. It showed images of the city that were more legible than they were to the urbanite using his own unaided sight on the street” (190). The ways in which the city is narrated disseminates given perspectives and structures of imagination¹. The relation between novel and city, then, is not merely one of representation. The text is actively constitutive of the city; it informs the writing of the city and thus produces it for the reader.

The representation of Bombay in literature and cinema has been a major focus for recent postcolonial deliberations on urban space. Without doubt cinema is perhaps the largest reservoir of the urban experience in India. Of course, literary representations are not stagnant either for they alter significantly as new voices within postcolonial Indian Writing in English have added significant dimensions to the exploration of the city in postcolonial terms. Drawing upon the concept of urban space, this dissertation has examined the way the spaces of Bombay find expression in fiction. It has focused on authors who have been very much a part of the city, and has investigated the use of urban spaces to create the myth of the Indian city. All the texts

discussed in this work subvert the notion of the modern city as recognizable and mappable. This act of subversion is united by the negotiation and representation of Bombay's spatialities. Each writer discussed here offers an account of the city that understands urban space as a complex and multifaceted structure that expresses and is constructed by multiple discursive and signifying practices.

Urban space signifies the representational problems which the city has always presented, and the multifarious nature of the urban is at the heart of literary explorations. Literary imaginations of the urban center on the politics of location, and thus represent the urban as a series of spaces that amalgamate to present a 'whole' idea of the city. Literary narratives imbue the city of Bombay with a sense of chaos, confusion, and dislocation that resonate with postmodern accounts of urban space². These representations of urban space also interrogate the free-play of possibilities within enclosed boundaries, inequalities, and violence. These interrogations through literary devices reveal the construction of meaning in the city and, to varying degrees, bring to the fore a philosophy of the city. This however underscores the difficulty of organizing and ordering the narrative's treatment of the city within the constraints of the excessive and illimitable nature of urban space. This means that no narrative strategy can ever claim to encompass it. For the writers considered in this work the understanding of urban space constitutes a challenge to its modes of representation and interpretation. They seek to disrupt the idea of the city as a unitary object and, instead, highlight spatial practices that signify the city as multiplicitous in nature. Literary narratives, thus, encompass the enormity of city life, in diverse ways because diversity is the founding premise of urban space, not just in terms of its population, but also in its form, meaning and practices.

The lived space of the city exists in its represented spaces. In other words, by producing narratives of the city, literature re-produces the spaces of the city within the text, conjuring up the space of the city through the projection of images and narratives. The primary objective of this thesis has been to explore the narratives of Bombay to reveal the literary geography of the city in selected Indian fiction in English. In doing so the thesis hopes to make a contribution to current scholarly debates on literary representations of the city. In particular, an attempt at reading the spatial structure of Bombay through the Lefebvrian model is pursued in order to

provide a new method of examining this very modern Indian city. The thesis surveys the novelistic accounts of urban landscape of Bombay at different stages of its history until the contemporary moment to comprehend the challenges and opportunities of a literary representation of the city. Importantly, the fictive nature of these narratives presents a challenge to grasp the realities of the city that are an overwhelming part of the Indian imagination. The core texts discussed in the chapters are literary enactments of the metropolitan experience in Bombay. In this endeavour, the thesis has considered leading cultural theorists and human geographers and their interdisciplinary research on urban spaces and the city. The thesis has also embarked on a review of urban theory besides examining the literary and cinematic city as representative of the urban experience.

The representative fictions of Salman Rushdie, Shama Futehally, Rohinton Mistry, Kiran Nagarkar, Vikram Chandra and Murzbaan Shroff compose a poetics of urban modernism where the rhetoric of the metropolis is transformed into a space of the imagination. As a cultural marker, the city of Bombay is the essential ground of postcolonial urban existence in India—it is “the most modern, most cosmopolitan city in the whole country” says Rohinton Mistry in *A Fine Balance* (220). At the same time, it is the site for the intersection of the politics of space and locality, with the legacies of cultural and historical myth, as explicated in Chapter 2.

The third chapter looks at *Midnight's Children* and *Tara Lane* as journeys of self-exploration through the roads of Bombay. The protagonists' (Saleem Sinai and Tahera) quest for mastering the urban landscape is symbolic of a conflicting urban aesthetic that is slowly becoming incomprehensible. While Salman Rushdie offers a humanely affirmative yet skeptical vision of the subjective history of Bombay, Shama Futehally's insular portrait of the city sets itself against the conception of the individual within society. When Rushdie wrote *Midnight's Children* the sense of nostalgia for the lost city of his birth is palpable as he—“the bomb in Bombay”—on behalf of his beloved city, invites his readers to

watch me explode, bones splitting breaking beneath the awful pressure of the crowd, bag of bones falling down down down, just as once at Jallianwala, but Dyer seems not to be present today, no Mercurochrome, only a broken creature spilling pieces of itself into the

street, because I have been so-many too-many persons, life unlike syntax allows one more than three, and at last somewhere the striking of a clock, twelve chimes, release. (647)

The writer's intention of locating his "imaginary homeland" presents itself by negotiating the social mores and cultural practices of a city burdened with the responsibility of being the representative symbol of India's developing urban aesthetics. The depiction of Bombay—the "city of mixed-up mongrel joy"—is suggestive of Rushdie's attempt at mapping the urban collective as symptomatic of the Nehruvian idea of progress, and indeed of Rushdie's reconciliation with the city of Bombay (Rushdie *Moor*, 376). Sara Upstone reads Rushdie's representation of the urban as

a direct challenge to the privileging of the city as a space of unrealised possibility. Whilst the Bombay of *Midnight's Children* may initially suggest magical potential that resonates with utopian idealism, the relationship to utopia is in fact ultimately interrogated. (87)

Rushdie constructs Bombay as nostalgic space of remembrance where:

Most of what matters in our lives takes place in our absence: but I seem to have found from somewhere the trick of filling in the gaps in my knowledge, so that everything is in my head, down to the last detail (17)

This highlights his deep sense of longing for the past, especially for the since, given his political nature of his controversial life, he cannot return to it. This space, that is otherwise suggestive of the future, in fact looks backwards. Saleem Sinai's idealization of Bombay is representative not of a tangible possibility, but instead of the unrealizable dreams of the postcolonial citizen. The continuous endeavor to grasp the utopian underscores the problematic relationship between the space of idealized utopia and its real-life contemporary—Bombay.

The focus on the production and reproduction of class structures in the context of urban India is at the heart of *Tara Lane*. The notion that Western conceptions of class were unsuited to the Indian context is belied in Futehally's narrative that is premised on class practices through which the narrative inspects the element of postcolonial identity within the structure of the 'home.' The space of the home, alongside material cultures of home, is the space of everyday practices of domestic

life. The home is the site for the spatial interplay of the personal with shared and collective memories and experiences. The material and imaginative geographies of home are closely bound together, as shown in Futehally's novel. By juxtaposing the private space of the home with the public space of the city *Tara Lane* focuses on the home as a private space—both in terms of a physical space where home is inhabited (lived), and also as a symbolic space of emotions that ensures security and nostalgia. The 'home' becomes the metaphor for the family and nation. More importantly, the concept of 'home' is intertwined with issues of colonialism, gender and class, so that the varied connotations of 'home' are stretched to a space of wider national significance.

The fourth chapter examines the urban minority in *A Fine Balance* and *Ravan and Eddie*. Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* presents with a sense of inevitability the destruction of the protagonist's home and lives. The homelessness of the protagonists is premised on caste, class, religious and nationalist discourses. Ishvar and Omprakash's low caste status and poverty means that they experience a specific form of discrimination, and are also disproportionately affected by the politics of the Emergency. During crisis differences are buried by a shared antagonism towards the repressive state machinery as Bombay transforms into a wider space of political differences. Like many immigrants to the city, Ishvar and Om find the only accommodation available to them in one of the slum colonies which are, in turn, demolished because the "new law says the city must be made beautiful" (291). Ishvar's matter-of-fact statement, "it's almost impossible in this city to find a house. When something becomes available you must grab it" (161), underlines the fragility and precariousness of their marginal position in society. Their entry into Dina's apartment provides them with a home and temporarily reduces their marginal status. Even as they send their son to Bombay Mr. and Mrs. Kohlah realize that finding a space to live

was next to impossible ... in a city where millions were living in slums and on the pavements. And not just beggars—even people with jobs who had the money to pay rent. Only, there was nothing to rent. (293)

Dina nostalgically reminisces about her early days with her husband Rustom,

those enchanted evenings of music recitals, and emerging with Rustom from the concert hall into the fragrant night when the streets were quiet ... in those days the city was still beautiful, the footpaths were clean, not yet taken over by pavement-dwellers, and yes, the stars were visible in the sky in those days, when Rustom and she walked along the sea, listening to the endless exchange of the waves, or in the Hanging Gardens, among the whispering trees, planning their wedding and their lives, planning and plotting in full ignorance of destiny's plans for them. (330)

Mistry's representation of the imaginative spaces of the city is evident through his re-negotiation of the idea of India. What emerges in the process is the fraught allegiance between the city's urban poor and the state machinery. More importantly, Mistry's narrative exposes the city that exists in the mind—the city as an imagined haven of a better life—by mapping the transformation of Bombay, thereby reinforcing the assertion that literary narratives are relevant to understand the role of minorities within the urban space.

Kiran Nagarkar's *Ravan and Eddie* in many ways continues a tradition of literary representations of postcolonial relationships with urban space defined in terms of the experience of the 'other'. The novel shares with the earlier narratives the sense of the urban confusion and the presence of manipulative state politics that indicate a radically polarized city. Through the framework of communal anxiety that dominates the narrative Nagarkar presents Bombay as a space of power-play. The portrayal of the differences is suggestive of the urban community's tendency to turn to communalism as an answer to its problems. This represents a significant rewriting of the conventional readings of the intractable yet flexible divisions among those residing at the periphery. The novel posits an alternative urban division in terms of generational tensions which metaphorically signifies the larger changes in the ways space is occupied and appropriated.

The idea of the modern city as a distinct and bounded entity lies shattered as literary, cinematic, and sociological representations present a dark and dysfunctional city. Such urban imaginations and imaginaries transport the reader/audience into a terrifying world where the city is rendered imperceptible. The fifth chapter of this thesis reads *Sacred Games* and *Breathless in Bombay* as representative of an elusive

postmodern city. The unpredictable and unstable topography of Bombay is the focus of Vikram Chandra's imaginative journey of contemporary urban crisis. At the core of *Sacred Games* is a crumbling city that exerts itself from within and outside. While Suketu Mehta's *Maximum City* articulates the experience of Bombay with ruthless truthfulness, Chandra's novel pushes the envelope in its portrayal of the excessive, adventurous, cruel, and yet desirable city. Here the city loses its abstract character as the space of the underworld is mapped through the folklore circulating within the city of Bombay³. The navigation of these spaces generates a regime of terror that is mysteriously ordered and held together by the workings of the netherworld. The spatial inequities in Murzbaan Shroff's text are essentially similar as the social and economic stratification of the people is physically demarcated by a difference in social elevation. The high-rise buildings indicate a certain fixity, exclusivity and economic prosperity but these are separate from the circumstances of the pavement dwellers whose lives are conditioned by a transience that stems from a lack of adequate housing. There is an ongoing struggle to assert one's space and individuality in a city which threatens to subsume it within the rest. Comilla, the hairdresser, in Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games*, reflects on the spatial crisis that the city encounters everyday, "Space was so expensive in Bombay that even the best salons always had too many chairs squeezed in, too much business. And every day the salons were full" (366). The disproportion of economic distribution in this neo-liberalized city is glaringly emphasized by the simultaneous existence of characters such as the dhobis, who lay claims on the private domestic spaces, and the dispossessed, who guard their precious few feet of public street-space with their lives. Inextricably bound together in a complex web of concrete and elusive spaces, the inhabitants of this mega-city are distinguished by their claims of residency as 'real citizens' and 'squatter citizens', with the majority of people occupying the second category. Such narratives of Bombay coexist with other narratives of nostalgic lament for a world that is lost, a city that was once attractive but is now out of control.

The present work has focused on the production and experience of everyday urban spaces, resulting in the production of identity within the framework of the city. The sense of a city being informed by a diverse range of experiences coupled with the abrupt discontinuities of spatial surface designate the city as an overwritten space. The politics that emerge from the negotiation of such urban spaces has been taken as the

point of departure to consider the ways in which the novels represent the multicultural city despite the presence of powerful socio-geographical imaginaries surrounding it. The spatial journey of the city defies closure, for to assert a closure would mean a successful capturing of the spaces of the city which, of course, is impossible. Literary narratives attempt to represent the city and, by extension, this work has attempted to map the literary representations of the urban fabric of Bombay. However, urban space cannot of course be reduced to a literary phenomenon. This space defies determination and definition. Nevertheless, much of recent literature on the city endeavours to foster an association between the 'local' and the 'locale.' However, at this juncture, the question arises as to whether it is possible to imagine the city in entirely new ways that challenge the very framework of the dominant frameworks of urban literature? As globalization continues to make its presence felt in more powerful ways than ever, the need to record the transformations of this period in inventive ways is imperative. In such a case, the categories which have been previously employed to describe the workings of urban representations are no longer sufficient. New forms of knowledge, thinking and representation have to be employed in order to account for the effects of the multiplicity of urban space. The fact that the city continues to evoke such interest only suggests that it offers fertile ground for the analysis of protean, if troubled, realities of contemporary existence.

Notes

¹ The *Bildungsroman*, for example, is the heroic creation of the self in the city. Dickens' novels expose the subterranean community networks that exist beneath the class-divided city. The French novelists too have commented on the social complexity of the city.

² Studies in this direction include Edward Soja's *Postmetropolis* (2000) and Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson's edited volume of *A Companion to the City* (2000) among others. These texts represent urban space as multiplicitous, unreadable and therefore alienating.

³ Interestingly, the workings of the underworld and mafia (killings, extortion rackets) are all part of an everyday narrative of the city. Cinematic attempts to capture this knowledge are evident in a host of films by Ram Gopal Varma. His *Satya*, for example, celebrates the psychological narrative of Bombay's underbelly through the characters of Bhiku Mahatre and Satya. Earlier, Vidhu Vinod Chopra's *Parinda* narrated the experiences of the city's nether world.

Bibliography

Primary Texts

- Chandra, Vikram. *Sacred Games*. 2006. New Delhi: Penguin, 2007. Print.
- Futehally, Shama. *Tara Lane*. 1993. Penguin/Ravi Dayal: New Delhi, 2006. Print.
- Mistry, Rohinton. *A Fine Balance*. 1995. London: Vintage, 1997. Print.
- Nagarkar, Kiran. *Ravan and Eddie*. 1995. New Delhi: Penguin, 1996. Print.
- Rushdie, Salman. *Midnight's Children*. 1980. London: Vintage, 2006. Print.
- Shroff, Murzbaan. *Breathless in Bombay*. London: Picador, 2008. Print.

Secondary Sources

- Agnew, John A., John Mercer, and David E. Sopher, eds. *The City in Cultural Context*. Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1984. Print.
- Ahmad Abbas, Khwaja. *Bombay, My Bombay! The Love Story of the City*. Delhi: New Ajanta, 1987. Print.
- Albuquerque, Teresa. *Urbs Prima In Indis: An Epoch in the History of Bombay*. New Delhi: Promilla & Co., 1986. Print.
- Amin, Ash and Nigel Thrift. *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*. Cambridge: Polity, 2002. Print.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983. Print.
- Appadurai, Arjun. *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*. Calcutta: Seagull, 2007. Print.
- . *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. Print.
- . ed. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986. Print.
- Ashcroft, Bill. *On Post-Colonial Futures: Transformations of Colonial Culture*. London: Continuum, 2001. Print.
- . Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. London: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- Ashcroft, Bill. *Post-Colonial Transformation*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001.

Print.

- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*, London: Routledge, 1989. Print.
- . eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Attwood, D.W., M. Israel and N. K. Wagle, eds. *City, Countryside and Society in Maharashtra*. Toronto: Center for South Asian Studies, 1988. Print.
- Ballhatchet, Kenneth and Harrison, John, eds. *The City in South Asia: Pre-Modern and Modern*. London: Curzon Press, 1980. Print.
- Banga, Indu, ed. *The City in Indian History: Urban Demography, Society, and Politics*. Delhi: Manohar for Urban History Association of India, 1991. Print.
- Basu, D. K., ed. *The Rise of the Colonial Port City in Asia*. Santa Cruz and Berkeley: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1979. Print.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *America*. London: Verso, 1988. Print.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity, 2000. Print.
- Bellow, Saul. *More Die of Heartbreak*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1987. Print.
- Benjamin, Walter. *One Way Street and Other Writings*. London: Verso, 1985. Print.
- . *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999. Print.
- Berman, Marshal. *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. New York: Verso, 1983. Print.
- Bhabha, Homi J. *The Location of Culture*. 1994. London: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- Blum, Alan. *The Imaginative Structure of the City*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2003. Print.
- Boo, Katherine. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*. New Delhi: Hamish Hamilton, 2012.
- Borden, Iain, Joe Kerr, Jane Rendell with Alicia Pivaro, eds. *The Unknown city: Contesting Architecture and Social Space*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000. Print.
- . Joe Kerr, and Jane Rendell, eds. *Strangely Familiar: Narratives of Architecture in the City*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.
- Bose, Ashish. *Studies in India's Urbanization 1901-1971*. Bombay & New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., 1973. Print.
- . *India's Urbanization, 1901-2001*. 1973. New Delhi: McGraw Hill, 1978. Print.
- Boyer, M. Christine. *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994. Print.
- Breckenridge, Carol, ed. *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World*.

- Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1995. Print.
- Brennan, Timothy. *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation*. London: Macmillan, 1989. Print.
- Brenner, Neil, ed. *The Global Cities Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Bridge, Gary and Sophie Watson. *The Blackwell City Reader*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002. Print.
- Brooker, Peter. *A Glossary of Cultural Theory*. 2nd ed. London: Arnold, 2002. Print.
- Buchanan, Ian. *A Dictionary of Critical Theory*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010. Print.
- Burgin, Victor. *In/Different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996. Print.
- Byrne, David. *Understanding the Urban*. Palgrave: Macmillan, 2001. Print.
- Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978. Print.
- Castells, Manuel. *The Informational City: Information Technology, Economic Restructuring and the Urban-Regional Process*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989. Print.
- . *The Network Society: A Cross-cultural Perspective*. Northampton, Mass. : Edward Elgar Pub., 2004. Print.
- Cinar, Alev, and Thomas Bender, eds. *Urban Imaginaries: Locating the Modern City*. Minneapolis and London: U of Minnesota P, 2007. Print.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002. Print.
- . *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007. Print.
- Chandra, Vikram. *Love and Longing in Bombay: Stories*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1997. Print.
- Chandavarkar, Rajnarayan. *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India: Business Strategies and the Working Classes in Bombay, 1900-1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994. Print.
- Chatterjee, Partha. *The Nation and Its Fragments*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993. Print.
- . *A Possible India: Essays in Political Criticism*. New Delhi: OUP, 1997. Print.
- . *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004. Print.
- Chaturvedi, Vinayak, ed. *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*. London: Verso, 2000. Print.
- Chaudhuri, Sukanta, ed. *Calcutta: The Living City, Vol. II*. Calcutta: Oxford UP, 1990. Print.

- Cooke, P. *Theories of Planning and Spatial Development*. London: Hutchinson, 1983. Print.
- Cox, Harvey. *The Secular City*. New York: Macmillan, 1961. Print.
- Da Cunha, Gerson. J. *Origin of Bombay*. Bombay: Society's library, 1900. Print.
- D'Monte, Darryl. *Ripping the Fabric: The Decline of Mumbai and Its Mills*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2002. Print.
- Dalrymple, William. *City of Djinn: a year in Delhi*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2004. Print.
- Dandekar, Hemalata C. *Men to Bombay, Women at Home: Urban Influence on Sugao Village, Deccan Maharashtra, India, 1942-1982*. U of Michigan, 1999. Print.
- Dangle, Arjun, ed. *Poisoned Bread: An Anthology of Modern Dalit Literature*. 1992. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2002. Print.
- Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. London: Verso, 1990. Print.
- . *Planet of Slums*. London: Verso, 2007. Print.
- Dear, M. *The Postmodern Urban Condition*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. Print.
- Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle*. Brooklyn: Zone Books, 1994. Print.
- de Certeau, Michel. 1998. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Vol. 1. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1988. Print.
- . *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Vol. 2. Trans. Timothy J. Tomasik. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1998. Print.
- . and Luce Giard. *Culture in the Plural*. U of Minnesota P, 1998. Print.
- Desai, Anita. *Baumgartner's Bombay*. Boston : Houghton Mifflin Co., 2000. Print.
- . *Fire on the Mountain*. 1977. London: Vintage, 1999. Print.
- . *Clear Light of Day*. 1980. London: Vintage, 2001. Print.
- Desani, G. V. *All about H. Hatterr*. 1948. New Delhi: Penguin, 1998. Print.
- Deshpande, Shashi. *That Long Silence*. 1988. New Delhi: Penguin, 1989. Print.
- . *Small Remedies*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2001. Print.
- Dhondy, Farrukh. *Bombay Duck*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1990. Print.
- Dossal, Mariam. *Imperial Designs and Indian Realities: The Planning of Bombay City, 1845-1875*. Bombay: Oxford UP, 1991. Print.
- . *Mumbai: Theatre of Conflict, City of Hope*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2010.
- Durkheim, Emile. *The Division of Labour in Society*. 1893. New York: Free Press, 1997. Print.
- Eade, J. and Ch. Mele, eds. *Understanding the City: Contemporary and Future Perspectives*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002. Print.

- Edwardes, S. M. *The Rise of Bombay: A Retrospect*. Bombay: Times of India P, 1902. Print.
- . *The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island*, 3 vols. Bombay: Times of India P, 1909-1910. Print.
- . *By-Ways of Bombay*. Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., 1912. Print.
- Eleridge, H. Wentworth, ed. *World Capitals: Toward Guided Urbanization*. New York: Anchor, 1975. Print.
- Engels, Frederick, *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*. 1884. London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1887. Print.
- Fainstein, S. and Campbell, S., eds. *Readings in Urban Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001. Print.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans. Constance Farrington. New York: Grove, 1963. Print.
- Featherstone, M. and S. Lash, eds. *Spaces of Cultures: City, Nation, World*. London: Sage, 1999. Print.
- Fernandes, Leela. *India's New Middle Class: Democratic Politics in an Era of Economic Reform*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2006. Print.
- Frisby, David. *Fragments of Modernity*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986. Print.
- Fox, Richard G., ed. *Urban India: Society, Space and Image*, ed. Durham: Duke University Program in Comparative Studies on Southern Asia, 1971. Print.
- Frisby, David. *Cityscapes of Modernity*. Oxford: Polity, 2001. Print.
- Frykenberg, F. E., ed. *Delhi Through the Ages: Selected Essays in Urban History*. Culture and Society. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1981. Print.
- Furber, Holden. *Bombay Presidency in the Mid-Eighteenth Century*. New York, Asia Pub. House, 1965. Print.
- Futehally, Shama. *Reaching Bombay Central*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2002. Print.
- Garreau, Joel, *Edge City*. New York: Anchor Books, 1992. Print.
- Giedion, Siegfried. *Space, Time, and Architecture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1941. Print.
- Girouard, Mark. *Cities and People: A Social and Architectural History*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1985. Print.
- Gopal, Priyamvada. *The Indian English Novel: Nation, History and Narration*. New York: Oxford UP, 2009.
- Gottdiener, Mark D. *Postmodern Semiotics*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995. Print.
- . *The Social Production of Social Space*. Austin: U of Texas Press, 1985. Print.
- . and Leslie Budd. *Key Concepts in Urban Studies*. London: Sage, 2005. Print.

- Ghurye, G. S. *Cities and Civilization*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1962. Print.
- Graham, Stephen and Simon Marvin, *Telecommunications and the City: Electronic Spaces, Urban Places*. London: Routledge, 1998. Print.
- Gupta, Dipankar. *Nativism in a Metropolis: Shiv Sena in Bombay*. South Asia Books: 1982. Print.
- Gupta, Narayani. *Delhi Between Two Empires 1803-1931: Society, Government and Urban Growth*. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1981. Print.
- Gupta, Shiv Charau. *Delhi: The City of Future*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1987. Print.
- Guha, Ramachandra. *India After Gandhi: the History of the World's Largest Democracy*. 2007. London: Picador, 2008. Print.
- Habermas, Juergen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Trans. Thomas Burger. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991. Print.
- Hale, Nanette and Tabish Khair. *Unhinging Hinglish: The Languages and Politics of Fiction in English from the Indian Subcontinent*. Copenhagen : Museum Tusulanum P, 2001. Print.
- Hansen, Thomas B. *Wages of Violence: Naming and Identity in Postcolonial Bombay*. 2001. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2005. Print.
- Harvey, David. *Paris: Capital of Modernity*. London: Routledge, 2003. Print.
- . *Spaces of Hope*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000. Print.
- . *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989. Print.
- Hasan, M. Fazlul. *Bangalore Through the Centuries*. Bangalore: Historical Publishers, 1970. Print.
- Hazareesingh, Sandip. *The Colonial City and the Challenge of Modernity: Urban Hegemonies and Civic Contestations in Bombay City 1900-1925*. New Delhi, Orient Longman, 2007. Print.
- Heber, Reginald. *Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India from Calcuta to Bombay, 1824-1825*. London: John Murray, 1829. Web. 23 October 2010.
- Irani, Anosh. *The Bombay Plays: The Matka King and Bombay Black*. Toronto: Playwrights Canada P, 2007. Print.
- . *The Song of Kahunsha*. Minneapolis, Minn. : Milkweed Editions, 2006. Print.
- Isin, F. E. and Turner, B. S., eds. *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*, London: Sage, 2002.

- Print.
- Jacobs, Jane, *The Death and Life of the Great American Cities*. 1961; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971. Print.
- *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.
- Jameson, Frederic. *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London: Verso, 1991. Print.
- Jaye, Michael C. and Ann Chalmers Watts, *Literature and the American Urban Experience: Essays on the City and Literature*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1985. Print.
- Jeyaveeran, Ruth. *The Road to Mumbai*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004. Print.
- John, Mary E., Pawan Kr. Jha and Surinder S. Jodhka, eds. *Contested Transformations: Changing Economies and Identities in Contemporary India*. New Delhi: Tulika, 2006. Print.
- Jodhka, Surinder S., ed. *Community and Identities: Contemporary Discourses in Culture and Politics in India*. New Delhi: Sage, 2001. Print.
- Kaarsholm, Preben, ed. *City Flicks: Cinema, Urban Worlds and Modernities in India and Beyond*. Denmark: Graduate School, International Development Studies, Roskilde University, 2002. Print.
- . ed. *City Flicks: Indian Cinema and the Urban Experience*. Kolkata: Seagull, 2004. Print.
- Kalia, Ravi. *Chandigarh: The Making of an Indian City*. 1987. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1999.
- Karkaria, R. P., ed. *Charm of Bombay: An Anthology of Writings in Praise of the First City in India*. Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala, 1915. Web. 19 December 2009.
- Kaul, H. K. *Historic Delhi: An Anthology*. Oxford UP, 1985. Print.
- Kazmi, Nikhat. *The Dream Merchants of Bollywood*. Delhi: UBSP, 1998. Print.
- Khan, Shafaat Ahmad. *Anglo Portuguese Negotiations Relating to Bombay, 1660-1677*. London: Oxford UP, 1922. Print.
- Khilnani, Sunil. *The Idea of India*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998. Print.
- Kidambi, Prashant. *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890-1920*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- King, Anthony D. *Colonial Urban Development*. London: Routledge & Paul, 1976. Print.
- Kirpal, Viney, ed. *The Postmodern Indian English Novel: Interrogating the 1980s and the 1990s*. Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1996. Print.

- Kosambi, Meera. *Bombay in Transition: The Growth and Social Ecology of a Colonial City, 1880-1980*. Stockholm, Sweden : Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1986. Print.
- Kostof, Spiro. *The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings Through History*. Boston : Little, Brown, 1991. Print.
- Kracauer, Siegfried. *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*. Edited and Trans. Thomas Y. Levin Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1995. Print.
- Kumar, Amitava. *Bombay-London-New York*. New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.
- Lal, Vinay and Ashis Nandy, eds., *The Future of Knowledge and Culture: A Dictionary for the Twenty-first Century*. Delhi: Viking Penguin, 2005. Print.
- Lapierre, Dominique. *The City of Joy*. 1985. New York: Warner, 1991. Print.
- Leach, Neil, ed. *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*. New York: Routledge, 1997. Print.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *Critique of Everyday Life*. New York: Verso, 1991. Print.
- . *The Production of Space*. 1974. Trans. D. Nicholson-Smith. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell. 1991. Print.
- . *Writings on Cities*. Trans. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell. 1996. Print.
- . *The Urban Revolution*. Trans. Robert Bononno. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2003. Print.
- Legates, Richard, and Frederic Scout, eds., *The City Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.
- Lehan, Richard. *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1998. Print.
- Loomba, Ania, ed. *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*. Durham: Duke UP, 2005. Print.
- Lorenz, Edward, Helen Liggett and David C. Perry, eds. *Spatial Practices: Critical Explorations in Social/Spatial Theory*. London: Sage, 1995. Print.
- Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT; Harvard UP, 1960. Print.
- Macionis, John J. and Vincent N. Parrillo, *Cities and Urban Life*. Prentice Hall, 2006. Print.
- Manor, James. *Power, Poverty and Poison: Disaster and Response in an Indian City*. New Delhi: Sage, 1993. Print.
- Manshardt, Clifford. *Bombay Today and Tomorrow*. Bombay: Taraporevala, 1930. Print.
- Markandeya, Kamala. *Bombay Tiger*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2008. Print.
- Masselos, Jim. *The City in Action*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2006. Print.

- Massey, Doreen, J. Allen and Steve Pile, eds. *Understanding Cities, City Worlds*. London: Routledge, 2005. Print.
- . *For Space*. London: Sage, 2005. Print.
- Mazumdar, Ranjani. *Bombay Cinema: An Archive of the City*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2007. Print.
- Mehrotra, Rahul and Sharda Dwivedi. *Bombay: The Cities Within*. New Delhi: Book House, 1995. Print.
- Mehta, Suketu. *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found*. New York: Knopf, 2004. Print.
- Mehrotra, A. K., ed. *A History of Indian Literature in English*. London: Hurst, 2003. Print.
- Menon, Meena and Neera Adarkar. *One Hundred Years, One Hundred Voices: The Millworkers of Girangaon, An Oral History*. Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2004. Print.
- Menon, Meena. *Riots and After in Mumbai: Chronicles of Truth and Reconciliation*. New Delhi: Sage, 2012. Print.
- Miles, Malcolm, Tim Hall and Iain Borden, eds. *The City Cultures Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- Mishra, Pankaj. *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana: Travels in Small Town India*. New Delhi: Penguin, 1995. Print.
- Misra, R. P., ed. *Million Cities of India*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1978. Print.
- Mistry, Rohinton. *Family Matters*. New York: A. A. Knopf, 2002. Print.
- . *Such a Long Journey*. London: Faber & Faber, 1991. Print.
- . *Tales from Firozshah Baag*. London: Faber & Faber, 1987. Print.
- Mitchell, Don. *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Right for Public Space*. The New York: Guilford Press, 2003. Print.
- Moraes, Dom. *Bombay: The Great Cities*. New York: Time Life, 1979. Print.
- Morey, Peter. *Rohinton Mistry*. Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 2004. Print.
- Mukherjee, Meenakshi. *Rushdie's Midnights Children: A Book of Readings*. New Delhi: Pencraft, 1999. Print.
- . *The Twice Born Fiction: Themes and Techniques of the Indian Novel in English*. 1971. New Delhi; Pencraft, 2001. Print.
- . *Realism and Reality: Novel and Society in India*. 1985. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1992. Print.
- . *The Perishable Empire*. 2000. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2002. Print.
- Mukherjee, S. N. *Calcutta: Myths and Histories*. Calcutta: Subarnarekha, 1977. Print.
- Mumford, Lewis. *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its*

- Prospects*. New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1961. Print.
- Nair, Janaki. *The Promise of the Metropolis: Twentieth Century Bangalore*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.
- Nandy, Ashis. *An Ambiguous Journey to the City: The Village and Other Odd Ruins of the Self In the Indian Imagination*. Oxford UP, 2007. Print.
- Neuwirth, Robert. *Shadow Cities: A Billion Squatters, A Urban New World*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Padgaonkar, Dileep. *When Bombay Burned*. New Delhi: UBSPD, 1993. Print.
- Palsetia, Jesse S. *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*. Boston: Brill Academic Publishers: 2001. Print.
- Parker, Simon. *Urban Theory and the Urban Experience: Encountering the City*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.
- Patel, Sujata Patel and Alice Thorner, eds. *Bombay: Metaphor for Modern India*. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1995. Print.
- . *Bombay: Mosaic of Modern Culture*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1995. Print.
- Patel, Sujata and Jim Masselos, eds. *Bombay and Mumbai: The City on Transition*. New Delhi, Oxford UP: 2003. Print.
- . and Kushal Deb, eds., *Urban Studies: An Exploration in Theory and Practices*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2006. Print.
- Pinder, D. *Visions of the City: Utopianism, Power and Politics in Twentieth Century Urbanism*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Pile, Steve and Thrift, Nigel, eds. *City A-Z*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.
- Pinto, Jerry and Naresh Fernandes, eds., *Bombay, Meri Jaan: Writings on Mumbai*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2003. Print.
- Poolani, Sunil K. *Urban Voice: Essays from the Indian Subcontinent*. Navi Mumbai: Frog Books, 2003. Print.
- Prakash, Gyan. *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India*. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton UP, 1999. Print.
- . *Mumbai Fables*. Harper Collins in association with India Today Group: Noida, 2010. Print.
- . ed. *The Sarai Reader 2: The Cities of Everyday Life*. New Delhi: Centre for the Study of Developing Societies and Society for Old and New Media, 2002. Print.
- . and Kevin M. Kruse, eds., *The Spaces of the Modern City: Imaginaries, Politics, and Everyday Life*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2008. Print.

- Prakasha Rao, V. L. S and V. K. Tewari. *The Structure of an Indian Metropolis: A Study of Bangalore*. New Delhi: Allied, 1979. Print.
- Puri, Jyoti. *Woman, Body, Desire in Post-colonial India. Narratives of Gender and Sexuality*. London: Routledge, 1999. Print.
- Rao, M. S. A., ed. *Urban Sociology in India: Reader and Source Book*. New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1974. Print.
- Ray, Nishit R. *Calcutta: The Profile of a City*. Calcutta: K. P. Bagchi & Co., 1986. Print.
- Ray, Sangeeta. *En-Gendering India: Woman and Nation in Colonial and Postcolonial Narratives*. Durham: Duke UP, 2000. Print.
- Roberts, Emma. *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan, with Sketches of Anglo-Indian Society*. 3 vols. London: Wm. H. Allen & Co., 1835. Print.
- Roberts, Gregory David. *Shantaram*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2005. Print.
- Robinson, Jennifer. *The Ordinary City: Between Modernity and Development*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Rodwin, Lloyd and Robert Hollister, eds. *Cities of the Mind: Images and Themes of the City in Social Sciences*. New York: Plenum P, 1984. Print.
- Rohatgi, Pauline, Pheroza Godrej and Rahul Mehrotra. *Bombay to Mumbai: Changing Perspectives*. Mumbai: Marg Publications, 1997. Print.
- Rosenthal, Donald B., *The City in Indian Politics*. Faridabad: Thomson P, 1976. Print.
- Ross, Robert and Gerard J. Telcamp eds. *Colonial Cities: Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context*. Boston : M. Nijhoff for the Leiden UP, 1985. Print.
- Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands*. London: Granta-Penguin, 1992. Print.
- . *The Moor's Last Sigh*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1995. Print.
- . *Step Across This Line: Collected Non-Fiction 1992–2002*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2002. Print.
- Sarin, Madhu. *Urban Planning in the Third World: The Chandigarh Experience*. London: Mansell Publishing, 1982. Print.
- Schlor, Joachim. *Nights in the Big City: Paris, Berlin, London 1840-1930*. Trans. Pierre Gottfried Imhof and Dafydd Rees Roberts. London: Reaktion Books, 1998. Print.
- Schwartzberg, Joseph E., ed. *A Historical Atlas of South Asia*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978. Print.
- Seabrook, Jeremy. *Life and Labour in a Bombay Slum*. London: Quartet, 1987. Print.
- Sassen, Saskia. *Globalization and its Discontents. Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money*. New York: New Press, 1998. Print.

- . *Cities in a World Economy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2000. Print.
- . *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001. Print.
- . ed. *Global networks, linked cities*. New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.
- Scott, A.J and E.W. Soja, eds. *The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996. Print.
- Segbers, Klaus. *The Making of Global City Regions: Johannesburg, Bombay/Mumbai, Sao Paulo and Shanghai*. Baltimore, John Hopkins P, 2007. Print.
- Sennett, Richard. *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994. Print.
- Sharma, Kalpana. *Rediscovering Dharavi*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2000. Print.
- Sheppard, Samuel. *Bombay*. Bombay: Times of India P, 1932. Web. 1 November 2007.
- Shields, Rob. *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle*. London: Routledge, 1999. Print.
- Singh, Patwant. *Of Dream and Demons: An Indian Memoir*. Delhi, 1994. Print.
- Sinha, Pradip. *Calcutta in Urban History*. Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1978. Print.
- Sipes, Lisa Elaine. *Inside Mumbai: Conversations with Ten Women*. ICES Publishing, 2005. Print.
- Sita, K., V. S. Phadke and S. Banerjee-Guha, *The Declining City Core of an Indian Metropolis: A Case Study of Bombay*. New Delhi : Concept Publishing Company, 1988. Print.
- Smith, David A. *Third World Cities in Global Perspective: The Political Economy of Uneven Urbanization*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996. Print.
- Soja, Edward. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. London: Verso Press, 1989. Print.
- . *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1996. Print.
- . *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2000. Print.
- Spear, Percival. *The Delhi Omnibus*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2002. Print.
- . *Delhi: A Historical Sketch*. Bombay: Oxford UP, 1945. Print.
- . and Margaret Spear. *India Remembered*. Delhi, 1981. Print.
- Srivastava, Neelam. *Secularism in the Postcolonial Indian Novel: National and cosmopolitan Narratives in English*. London and New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.
- Subramanian, Lakshmi. *Indigenous Capital and Imperial Expansion: Bombay, Surat and the West Coast*. Oxford UP, 1996. Print.

- Suri, Manil. *The Death of Vishnu*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2001. Print.
- Sundaram, P. S. A. *Bombay: Can it House its Millions?* New Delhi: Clarion Books, 1989. Print.
- Swedberg, Richard and Ola Agevall. *The Max Weber Dictionary: Key Words and Central Concepts*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2005. Print.
- Taneja, Kusum Lata. *Morphology of Indian Cities*. Varanasi: National Geographic Society of India, 1971. Print.
- Tharoor, Shashi. *Show Business: A Novel*. New York: Arcade, 1993. Print.
- Thorner, D. *The Shaping of Modern India*. Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1980. Print.
- Tindall, Gillian. *City of Gold: The Biography of Bombay*. 1982. New Delhi: Penguin, 1992. Print.
- Tikekar, Aroon. *The Cloister's Pale: A Biography of the University of Bombay*. South Asia Books, 1986. Print.
- Tinker, Hugh. *Reorientations: Studies on Asia in Transition*. Singapore: Donald Moore Books, 1965. Print.
- Tonkiss, Fran. *Space, the City and Social Theory: Social Relations and Urban Forms*. Cambridge: Polity, 2005. Print.
- Tonnies, Ferdinand, *Community and Society*. New York: Harper & Row, 1887. Print.
- Toynbee, Arnold. *Cities on the Move*. New York: Oxford UP, 1970. Print.
- Turner, Roy, ed. *India's Urban Future*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1962. Print.
- Turner, Bryan S. *Marx and the End of Orientalism*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1978. Print.
- . *Max Weber: From History to Modernity*. London: Routledge, 1991. Print.
- . *Citizenship and Social Theory*. London: Sage, 1993. Print.
- . *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism*. Routledge: London, 1994. Print.
- . *Social Theories of the City*. London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press. 1997. Print.
- Tyrewala, Altaf. *No God in Sight*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2005. Print.
- Umrigar, Thrity. *Bombay Time: A Novel*. New York: Picador, 2001. Print.
- Upstone, Sara. *Spatial Politics in the Postcolonial Novel*. London and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2009. Print.
- Van Willigen, John. *The Indian City: A Bibliographical Guide to the Literature on Urban India*. 2 vols. New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1979. Print.
- Vakil, Ardashir. *Beach Boy*. New Delhi: Penguin, 1997. Print.
- Visvanathan, Shiv and Harsh Sethi, eds. *Foul Play: Chronicles of Corruption 1947-1997*.

- New Delhi: Banyan, 1998. Print.
- Wacha, D.E. *Shells from the Sands of Bombay, 1860-1875*. Bombay: Bombay Chronicle Press, 1920. Print.
- Wallis, Brian. *If You Lived Here: The City in Art, Theory and Social Activism*. Seattle: Dia Art Foundation, Bay Press, 1991. Print.
- Watson, Sophie and Gibson, Katherine, eds. *Postmodern Cities and Spaces*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1995. Print.
- . and S. Bridge, eds. *Blackwell Companion to Urban Studies*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2000. Print.
- Weber, Max. *The City*. Trans. Don Martindale and Gertrud Neuwirth. New York: Free Press, 1958. Print.
- Weimar, D.R. *The City as Metaphor*. New York: Random House, 1966. Print.
- Wentworth-Walsh, Dorothy. *A Room in Bombay and Other Stories*. North Melbourne Vic.: Pluto Press: 2005. Print.
- Westwood, Sallie and John Williams. *Imagining Cities: Scripts, Signs, Memory*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997. Print.
- Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City*. New York: Oxford UP, 1973. Print.
- Zaidi, S. Hussain. *Dongri to Dubai: Six Decades of the Mumbai Mafia*. New Delhi: Roli, 2012. Print.
- Zukin, Sharon. *The Culture of Cities*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. Print.

Essays/Articles/Book Chapters

- Albrow, M. "The Impact of Globalization on Sociological Concepts: Community, Culture and Milieu". J. Eade, ed. *Living in the Global City*. New York-London: Routledge, 1996. 20-36. Print.
- Appadurai, Arjun. "Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics." *Public Culture* 14.1 (2002) 21-47. Web. 23 July 2008.
<www.publicculture.dukejournals.org/cgi/reprint/14/1/21.pdf>
- . "Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination." *Public Culture* 12.1 (2000) 1-19. Web. 23 July 2008.
<www.publicculture.dukejournals.org/cgi/reprint/12/1/1.pdf>

- . "Mumbai 11/26: Is Mumbai's resilience endlessly renewable?" *The Immanent Frame: Secularism, religion and the public sphere*. December 7, 2008. Web. 26 June 2009.
< <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2008/12/07/is-mumbais-resilience-endlessly-renewable/>>
- . "Spectral Housing and Urban Cleansing: Notes on Millennial Mumbai." *Public Culture* 12.3(2000) 627 -651. Web. 23 July 2008.
<www.publicculture.dukejournals.org/cgi/reprint/12/3/627.pdf>
- Bagchi, Jeebesh, "Acceleration and Conflicts: Comments on the Cinematic Object in the 1990s and After." *Journal of the Moving Image* 5 (December 2006) Web. 5 June 2009. <http://www.jmionline.org/jmi5_2.htm>
- Biswas, Moinak, "Mourning and Blood-Ties: Macbeth in Mumbai." *Journal of the Moving Image* 5(December 2006) Web. 25 June 2009.
<http://www.jmionline.org/jmi5_4.htm>
- Bose, Brinda, "Modernity, Globality, Sexuality, and the City A Reading of Indian Cinema." *The Global South* 2.1 (2008). Web. 7 July 2007.
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/the_global_south/v002/2.1.bose01.pdf>
- Castells, Manuel. "Materials for an Explanatory Theory of the Network Society". *British Journal of Sociology* 51.1 (2000) 5-24. Print.
- Brush, John E. "The Morphology of Indian Cities." Roy Turner, ed. *India's Urban Future*. Berkeley: U of California Press, 1962. 57-70. Print.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "Open Space/Public Space: Garbage, Modernity and India." *South Asia* 14.1 (1994) Print.
- Davis, Mike. "The urbanization of empire: megacities and the laws of chaos". *Social Text*, Spl Issue: *Global Cities of the South*. 22.4 (2004) 9-15. Print.
- During, Simon. "Postcolonialism and globalisation: a dialectical relation after all?" *Postcolonial Studies* 1:1 (1998) 31-47. Print.
- Donald, James. "Metropolis: the city as text", in Bocock, R. and Thompson, K., eds. *Social and Cultural Forms of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity. 1992. Print.
- . "The city, the cinema: modern spaces", in Jenks, C., ed. *Visual Culture*. London: Routledge, 1995. Print.
- Harloe, M. "Social Justice and the City: The New Liberal Formulation". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Studies*. 25.4 (2001) 890-897. Print.
- Hsu, Wendy F. "Between Narrative and Expressive, Fantasy and Melodrama in Bombay (Bollywood) Film." Web. 21 September 2007.

<www.vcas.wlu.edu/VRAS/2003/Hsu.pdf>

- Kaviraj, Sudipta, "Filth and the Public Sphere: Concepts and Practices about Space in Calcutta." *Public Culture* 10.1(1997) 81-114. Print.
- Klein, Ira. "Urban Development and Death: Bombay City, 1870-1914". *Modern Asian Studies* 21. 4(1986) 725-755. Print.
- Kumar, Ravindra. "Changing structure of urban society in colonial India." *Indian Historical Review* 5, nos. 1-2 (1978-1979) 200-15. Print.
- Lele, Jayant. "Saffronization of the Shiv Sena: The Political Economy of City, State and Nation". Sujata Patel and Alice Thorner, eds. *Bombay: Metaphor for Modern India*. 995. New Delhi: Oxford, 2007. 185-212. Print.
- Masselos, Jim. "Power in the Bombay Mohalla, 1904-15: An Initial Exploration of the World of the Indian Urban Muslim." *South Asia* 4 (1976) 75-95. Print.
- . "Social Segregation and Crowd Cohesion: Reflections around some preliminary data from 19th century Bombay city." *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 13.2 (July-Dec 1979) 145-167. Print.
- Mee, Jon, "After Midnight: The Novel in the 1980s and 1990s", in A. K. Mehrotra, ed. *A History of Indian Literature in English*. London: Hurst, 2003. Print.
- Laura Moss, "Can Rohinton Mistry's Realism Rescue the Novel?", in *Postcolonializing the Commonwealth: Studies in Literature and Culture*, ed. Rowland Smith. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2000. 157-65. Print.
- Murphey, Rhoads. "City and Countryside as Ideological Issues: India and China." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 14.3 (June 1972) 250-67. Print.
- Nagpur, Anant, "City of Bangalore." *Space and Culture* 6 (2003) 85. Web. 21 July 2008. <www.sac.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/6/2/85.pdf>
- Nair, Janaki, "Battles for Bangalore: Reterritorialising the City." Web. 23 January 2008. <<http://www.sephis.org/pdf/nairpap.pdf> >
- . "Language and Right to the City." Web. 23 January 2008. <https://courses.washington.edu/banglr06/wp-content/uploads/2006/08/nair_language_and_right_to_the_city.pdf >
- Panjabi, R.M. "Chandigarh: India's Newest City." *The Geographical Magazine* 31.8 (1958) 401-414. Print.
- Patel, Sujata, "Bombay and Mumbai: Identities, Politics and Populism", in Patel and Masselos, eds. *Bombay and Mumbai: The City in Transition*. Delhi: Oxford UP, 2003. 3-30. Print.

- Pendse, Sandeep. "Toil, Sweat and the City." Sujata Patel and Alice Thorner, eds. *Bombay: Metaphor for Modern India*. 995. New Delhi: Oxford, 2007. 3-25. Print.
- Prakash, Gyan. "Edward Said in Bombay". *Critical Inquiry* 31 (2005). 498-504. Print.
- . "The Urban Turn." In *Sarai Reader*, no. 2: *The Cities of Everyday Life*. New Delhi: Sarai, 2002. 2-7. Print.
- Punwani, Jyoti. "'My area, your area': how the riots changed the city", in *Bombay and Mumbai: The City in Transition*. Eds. Sujata Patel and Jim Masselos. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2003. 235-264. Print.
- Rao, Vyjayanthi, "Slum as theory: the South/Asian city and globalization". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30.1(2006) 225-32. Print.
- Roy, Abhijit, "Live(li)ness and Network Publics in Post-Liberalization Indian Popular Films." *Journal of the Moving Image* 5 (December 2006) Web. 25 June 2009. <http://www.jmionline.org/jmi5_5.htm>
- Sassen, Saskia. "Impacts on Information Technologies on Urban Economics and Politics" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Studies*. 25.2 (2001) 411-418. Print.
- Spodek, Howard. "From 'Parasitic' to 'Generative': The Transformation of Post-Colonial Cities in India". *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 5 (1975) 413-43. Print.
- . "Studying the History of Urbanization in India." *Journal of Urban History* 6 (May 1980) 251-95. Print.
- . "The Urban History of India: An Update". *Journal of Urban History* 12 (May 1986) 293-308. Print.
- Trousdale, Rachel. "City of Mongrel Joy": Bombay and the Shiv Sena in Midnight's Children and The Moor's Last Sigh". *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 39 (2004) 95-110. Print.
- Tyabji, F. B. "Social life in 1804 and 1929 amongst Muslims in Bombay." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 6 (1930)286-300. Print.
- Varma, Rashmi. "Provincializing the Global City: From Bombay to Mumbai." *Social Text* 81 (2004) 65–87. Web. 28 January 2009.
- Vasudevan, Ravi. "Cinema in urban space." *Seminar*, no. 525: 'Unsettling Cinema' (May 2003) 21-27. Web. 8 August 2009.
- Zukin, Sharon. "Urban Lifestyles: Diversity and Standardisation in Spaces of Consumption". *Urban Studies*. 35.5-6 (1998) 825-839. Web. 5 May 2009.