

BOMBAY IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S NOVELS: A STUDY FROM GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: Bombay, the city where Salman Rushdie spent his childhood, features prominently in four of his novels, namely *Midnight's Children* (1981), *The Satanic Verses* (1988), *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995) and *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999). However, in traditional literary approaches, the built environment and the materiality of Bombay evident in Rushdie's fiction are largely lost disallowing Rushdie's portrayal of the city to be explained as the real-imagined lived space, which Henri Lefebvre (1991) defines as "representational space" and Edward Soja (1996) as "third space". In the globalized world of ubiquitous placelessness, the strategies and the tactics of recovering the lived space, sometimes involving the micro level of the body and sometimes larger scales such as the communities, are matters of great significance for the prominent spatial thinkers of our times. Therefore, by considering that Rushdie's depiction of Bombay provides an access to its lived space, and particularly concentrating on the issues related to the land-reclamation in Bombay, this paper finally aims to explore how Rushdie's sense of place is a progressive, global sense of place, which neither collapses in to a reactionary nostalgia; nativist bigotry, nor does it surrender to a spectral, deterritorialized globality.

Keywords: Bombay, city, place, placelessness, globalization.

The issue of land-reclamation in the Bombay novels of Rushdie is a microcosmic and materialistic account of Rushdie's portrayal of Bombay in his *oeuvre*. In Rushdie's depiction of Bombay, the city comes across as "process"; a site of interconnection and flows; balanced precariously between movement and stasis; always a migrant's city of transience where simultaneously loving and demoniac homes are built, but only temporarily. However, despite the lack of fixity and stability in its depiction, Bombay in Rushdie's novel is also a unique city flavoured by a typical Bombay-variety of cosmopolitanism from below, which Arjun Appadurai in different context calls the city's "self-governing cliché"¹. In Rushdie's novels, the episodes connected to land-reclamation in Bombay illustrate that materiality of space is also a product of socio-spatial activities and a result of contestation of multiple interests – those of its inhabitants and of outside and impersonal agencies of spatial restructuring². The latter, in the globalized world, is also often the space of the corporatized capital; and sanctioned by the

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rhetoric of development and modernity rapidly encroaching the lived space of the developing nations of the global south with relative ease. Rushdie's sense of place as evident in depiction of land-reclamation in Bombay offers access to the lived space of Bombay as a product in contestation with spatial restructuring by State-sponsored capitalist remodelling of the city throughout the last half of the twentieth century. However, according to Rushdie, Shiv Sena's ethnic imaginings of Bombay³ finding a stronghold in the city is equally damaging in emerging as a reactionary force to the inherent multiplicities of Bombay, intensifying in the hastily globalizing metropolis. The paper also aims to show that these nuances of Rushdie's portrayal of Bombay connects it to Doreen Massey's concept of "global sense of place" (1994) that is, the radical process of envisioning places as having unique characters, but at the same time recognizing their transient nature as processes and products leading to combating the crisis of identity and community initiated by the onslaught of the global capital without falling in the trap of essentializing or tribalizing them⁴.

BOMBAY AS LIVED SPACE

Rushdie's depiction of Bombay in his novels has often been analysed as diasporic place-making, which amounts to considering it as performative and deterritorialized space of nostalgia. Bill Ashcroft's analysis of the spatial practices of diasporic communities is very significant in this context. He says: "In the case of diasporic peoples, 'place' might not refer to any location at all, since the formative link between identity and an actual location might have been irredeemably severed" (2001: 125). He further illustrates how place for diasporic communities is often meaningful as a deterritorialized symbol:

The place of a diasporic person's belonging may... be situated in family, community, in those symbolic features which constitute a shared culture, a shared ethnicity or system of belief, including nostalgia for a distant homeland (2001: 125).

Rushdie's own comment about place-making in *Imaginary Homelands* apparently supports a similar notion⁵. However, we would like to contest the notion that Rushdie's Bombay is a "transparent" mindscape; a city bereft of immediacy, and re-constructed solely by (romanticized or problematized) re-

membrance and nostalgia. Despite being novels of memories, we believe that Rushdie's depiction of Bombay is not exactly an instance of "memory mapping", which may qualify such a terrain as "representation of spaces", and threaten the agency of the lived space. Lefebvre, influenced by the literary tradition of "social realism", believes that the artists' space can also be the "representational space", but only conditionally of "such as a few writers and philosophers, who describe and aspire to do no more than describe" (Lefebvre 1991: 39). However, there is a paradox in Rushdie's evoking of the lived space – while it is very strongly evident especially for the readers who share Rushdie's experience of living in these places; the places are not inscribed through descriptive techniques. In other words, there is strong sense of territoriality and neighbourhood recreated through the socio-spatial practices of their inhabitants. Therefore, although the "real" locale of Bombay in Rushdie's novels is sometimes contested, modified, distorted or updated by memory of the expatriate writer, Rushdie's imagination simultaneously gives us access to Bombay as a space of the "users" and "inhabitants" at the point of living their everyday life.

However, to claim that Rushdie's portrayal of Bombay gives an access to its "lived space" is not to assert that Rushdie's understanding of the city is egalitarian. The elite neighbourhoods of South Bombay convincingly depicted in Rushdie's novels is, as Zeeny Wakil says, a "Wonderland, Peristan, NeverNever, Oz" (1988: 59) as far as the "urban drama" of the rest of the city is concerned by being sanitized of its poverty, squalor, over-crowding, unplanned growth, and the politicized chaos⁶. Rushdie persuasively talks about the fabulously wealthy, westernized residents of Bombay from the nineteen forties to the nineteen nineties comprising of the super-rich Parsee migrants, descendants of affluent Kashmiri Muslims, business magnets who are rare Cochin Jews etc. As Gyan Prakash illustrates in *Mumbai Fables* (2011), Bombay, just like Mumbai, also had its stories of oppressions as being conceived as a commercial city since its birth, the ruthless power of capital had always resulted in restructuring of its spatial dynamics. For instance, Rushdie's celebratory paean to the Art Deco pattern of architecture of the city, which replaced the Gothic monuments of Bombay with updated internationalisms, fails to take in to account that its mechanized aesthetics is closely linked to the process of production of the industrial modernity of the interwar period (Prakash 2011: 102-103). However,

Rushdie's manages to evade its hegemonic closure by focusing upon Bombay as a space of appropriation of the abstract spaces of planners, builders, and the State by the inhabitants of the place, and his role as a "rhythmanalyst" who instead of falling victim to the spectral charm of the city, "hears" (and often smells) the explosive rhythmic multiplicities of its colourful everyday life, provides a point of entry to Bombay as a work of artistry and life rather than a product of capitalist agendas⁷. The episodes connected to land-reclamation in Bombay help in illustrating the nuances of these propositions.

LAND-RECLAMATION IN BOMBAY

The physical space of Bombay itself is socially engineered as the rise of Bombay as a colonial city is integrally connected to land-reclamation. The seven separate islands, namely Colaba, Little Colaba, Bombay, Mazagaon, Worli, Parel, Mahim were gradually connected throughout the eighteenth and the nineteenth century by the land-reclamation projects undertaken by the British colonial authority to form the continuous land mass, which constitutes the present city. Land-reclamation continued well in to the twentieth century and was undertaken even after India's independence. David Harvey (1993) incisively considers place (like time and space) as a product of speculative capitalist investment. The historian Gyan Prakash (2011) analyses the Backbay land-reclamation projects undertaken in south-western Bombay in the twentieth century in a similar vein. As he illustrates, the Backbay reclamations in Bombay were undertaken since the mid nineteenth century to "rob the sea for the rich" (2011: 80), that is, to create neighbourhoods "for the wealthy classes who desired sea-facing residences in close proximity to the business-district" (2011: 80). However, under the initiative of Sir George Llyod, the governor of Bombay in the early twentieth century, the Backbay reclamation gathered greater momentum, and was promoted by the colonial authority as the solution to the housing problems faced by the over-crowded city. But the plan was poorly conceptualized and executed, ending in a major fiasco. Sir George Buchanan, the consulting engineer grossly underestimated the time and the money that would be required for the project and the architect W.R. Davidge conceptualized a grand utopia for the affluent, which would have no realistic impact upon the housing problems of the city. Prakash also

refers to the heroic legal battles of the patriotic barrister K.F. Nariman, which ultimately exposed the Backbay reclamation as “Llyod’s folly”, although the blame was shifted on the shoddy work of Buchanan. However, this debacle did not stop the colonial government to take up the building up of the city along the sea with renewed enthusiasm in the ensuing decades of the nineteen thirties; and the iconic Marine Drive with its plush neighbourhoods of Art Deco architecture was mostly constructed at that point of time. Prakash’s analysis of the final phase of Backbay reclamation in the nineteen seventies seems like an action replay of the earlier fiasco. To overcome the problems of filth, chaos, overcrowding, in short, to counter the problems of the “unplanned” growth of the city, the proposal to build a twin city in the mainland as a counter magnet to Bombay was suggested by Bombay’s leading architects and civil engineers such as Charles Correa, Shirish Patel and Pravina Mehta, and was greatly endorsed by the novelist Mulk Raj Anand in his journal on art and architecture – MARG. City Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) was formed as the authority to oversee the construction of New Bombay and it began its work in 1973. However, the government’s reemphasis on the Backbay reclamation reinforcing the importance of the north-south axis of the city rather than expanding to the East in the form of a new city became a major impediment for the dream of New Bombay to succeed. Additionally, the postcolonial government did not fare any better in the concerns of public interest as this stage of the Backbay reclamation, like its earlier counterpart, also met with charges of fraudulent activities, massive corruption and staggering inefficiencies. The lucrative unreclaimed plots of Marine Drive, which were named ironically by the government as Nariman Point, were sold without tenders by the government to private builders and real estate developers, which resulted in many underhand dealings including selling of the expensive plots at a rate much lower than their market value. Finally, a petition in public interest against the State, the Union Government, the ministers, and the Bombay Municipal Corporation was made in the Bombay High Court and V.P. Naik, the then chief-minister, had to resign because of the scandal. However, the final Backbay reclamation had restructured the shoreline of Bombay yet again as the high rises of the Cuffe Parade and the Nariman Point were constructed in this phase.

THE LAND-RECLAMATION AND THE GLOBAL SENSE OF PLACE IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S NOVELS

Rushdie sums up succinctly in *Imaginary Homelands*: “Bombay is a city built by foreigners upon reclaimed land” (1992: 10). The Bombay that we find in Salman Rushdie’s novels comprise largely of these prosperous localities and neighbourhoods built upon the lands of Backbay reclamation, connected by the boulevard of Marine Drive. For example, the elite neighborhood of Malabar Hill is very well captured in all the Bombay novels – the Methwold Estate in which Saleem lives in *Midnight’s Children*; Aurora Zogoiby’s Elephanta in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, which Sir Darius Cama visits, and Dolly Kalamanja’s stately mansion “Dil Kush”, in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*; demolishing which comes up Gibreel Farishta’s penthouse located on the top floor of the Everest Villa in *The Satanic Verses* are all located in the Malabar Hill. Other up market neighbourhoods such as in *Midnight’s Children*, Uncle Hanif and Aunt Pia’s apartment in Marine Drive; Scandal Point, where Salahuddin grows up in *The Satanic Verses*; or in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, Cuffe Parade of Rai’s childhood years and Apollo Bunder, where the Cama family lives and which Rai buys later also feature in the novels. Additionally, the post-Independent phase of Backbay reclamation in Bombay features prominently in Rushdie’s novels, which he eloquently calls as the “reverse – Atlantis rising from the waves” (1995: 185).

In *Midnight’s Children*, the birth of Bombay is described from the arrival of the Koli fishermen to the Portuguese annexation of it and naming it not after the Pomfret goddess Mumba Devi but after the harbour – Bom Bahia and finally passing over of it to East India Company as a dowry in the marriage of Catherine Braganza of Portugal to Charles II of England (121-122). After that, as Rushdie illustrates, the British “off they went, with their Fort and land-reclamation, before you could blink there was a city here”. The episode of Dr. Narliker illustrates Rushdie’s concern with land-reclamation more clearly. The eccentric gynaecologist, Dr. Narliker, has an innovative solution to the problems of overcrowding – birth control and at the same time excavating lands from the sea so that the ever growing population of the newly independent nation-state has more “land to stand on” (243). Ahmed Sinai taken in by the grandiose vision of the doctor, invests heavily but too cautiously in Dr. Narliker’s grand plans of land-reclamation,

which ends in a failure with Dr. Narlikar's accidental death in the hands of the language marchers and a major financial loss for Ahmed Sinai as his involvement in the project cannot be traced. On one hand, Rushdie focuses upon the rational, scientific utopian vision of Dr. Narlikar, who considers the futuristic tetrapodes as the solution to the problems of unplanned (population) growth in the city. His adamant belief in the marvels of the new technology makes him invest the tetrapodes with the compensatory procreative potentials lacking in Ahmed Sinai at that point in the narrative. On the other hand, the beggar women instinctively recognize the phallic potential of the tetrapodes and worship it as the "Shiva-lingam", thereby fulfilling the metaphorical implications of Dr. Narlikar's vision by linking the techno-rationalist process of "production of space" organically with the instinctual fervour of biological reproduction. However, Dr. Narlikar reacts violently, and is caught by the language marchers and hurled in to the ocean along with his tetrapodes. This backward, atavistic assault of the "old dark priapic forces of ancient, procreative India (...) upon the beauty of sterile twentieth-century concrete" (1981: 244) symbolize a subverting of the instrumentalizing impulse of the massive State-backed capitalist remodelling the city of Bombay with the intensities of the lived space. But, what Dr. Narlikar fails to achieve is accomplished by the Narlikar women, who later extend their sprawling business empire to the real estate sector, owning the high rises of Malabar Hills on the reclaimed land, which replaces the quaint villas of Methwold Estate. Saleem returning to Bombay, much later in the seventies with his son, realizes that "Back-to-Bom" is not really possible (1981: 631-632). The landmarks of the Warden Road and Kemp Corner of his childhood have all changed and the "palaces" of William Methwold have been replaced by "Pink Obelisks" of the Narlikar women. Thus, in *Midnight's Children*, the issue of land-reclamation is directly connected with Saleem's disenchantment with Bombay – the failure of the scheme to modernize it in the fifties pointing to the city's vivacity, but its success in the seventies reinforcing Bombay's acceptance of the lifeless, homogenizing impulses of the large-scale development programs.

In *The Moor's Last Sigh*, Rushdie himself rightfully uses the metaphor of palimpsest to describe the multiplicities and pluralities of Bombay. He says "the city itself, perhaps the whole country was a palimpsest" (1995: 184) relating it to Aurora Zogoiby's palimpsestic Mooristan paintings, where

“worlds collide, flow in and out of one another, and washofy away (...). One universe, one dimension, one country, one dream, bumpo’ing into one another, or being under, or on top of” (226). Illustrating similar fluidity in the production of Bombay’s space, an episode of land-reclamation also features in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*. Moraes Zogoiby’s father, Abraham Zogoiby, the owner of the powerful business syndicate of the De Gama-Zogoiby dynasty also has stakes in real-estate development in the Backbay area. Alluding to the scandalous corruption of the Backbay reclamation project in the seventies, K.K. Kolatkar, the head of Bombay Municipal Corporation teams up with Abraham Zogoiby to spoil the plan of constructing the new city in the mainland – New Bombay, so that the value of the reclaimed land soars higher and as Rushdie rightly observes the area remains home to “some of the most valuable real-estate on earth” (1995: 186). They also flout the rules regarding the maximum height of construction in the area through bribery and declare inhabitants who have come to live in the city after the last census illegal, cancelling literally their right to the city, which in effect means generating a labour force of poor migrants ready to work in the construction sites for meagre wages. The fraudulent land-reclamation scheme in *The Moor’s Last Sigh* is one of the mega crime rackets run by Abraham Zogoiby, and reveals the unique nature of Bombay, and such other cities of India and the global south, where illegalities and black-markets are integral part of extensive real estate investments⁸. Although, this particular aspect of the criminalizing of capital predates the open market economy of India, ushered in the early nineties; but reinforces the tradition and the legacy of corruption concerning large scale real estate investments in India that only becomes more attuned to global forms of transactions manifested in the new-age and high tech deceptions embedded in the work-culture and business ethics of Adam Zogoiby, the younger, adopted son of Abraham Zogoiby in the novel. As in *Midnight’s Children*, the episode further reinforces the violence of the abstract spaces upon the lived space of the city, in this case a criminalized utopia orchestrated by State-backed capitalist expansion.

Particularly, in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* Rushdie masterfully illustrates his nuanced understanding of the “unsolidity of the solid ground” (54). The novel is connected by a series of earthquakes, the ultimate one leads to Vina Apsara’s disappearance underground, reinforcing the tragedy of Or-

pheus/ Eurydice myth, around which the novel is built. In this novel Rushdie uses “geology as metaphor” (1999: 203) – the physical rupturing of the “natural space” becoming a commentary on not only the mythic metatext of the novel, but also the “social space” that Rushdie intends to investigate in this novel. Therefore, unsurprisingly Rushdie, in this novel, fleshes out his concerns regarding the land-reclamation very clearly. Talking about Bombay in the sixties, the narrator says “in those days of upheaval the ground itself seemed uncertain, the physical land, seemed to cry out for reconstruction” (1999: 60). Rai’s father, V.V. Merchant, being an “architect, excavator and local historian”, obsesses with the pre-history of the city and digs deep in to “the underground memory of the city the British built” so that he could find “fixity in knowledge, seeking solid ground beneath the shifting sands of the age” (1999: 60). On the other hand, Rai’s mother, Ameer Merchant is an “entrepreneur, a developer” whose dream is to build “mansions fit for God, but men will live in them” (1999: 60). Ultimately, her dream of “Cuffescrapers”, the high-rises of the Cuffe Parade materializes, but its Apollonian energy is usurped by the devious scheming of the chief villain of the Bombay part of the novel – Pилоo Doodhwala. Doodhwala’s plan of “More Cuffe... phor our Parade” (1999: 165) reflects the evil nexus of the developers and the government during the Backbay reclamation; and eventually results in falling apart of the marriage of Rai’s parents. After Ameer Merchant’s untimely death, Rai and his father go to visit the construction site in Cuffe Parade. The description is eloquent:

The long process of levelling and the reclamation was almost complete. The villas, promenade and mangrove forest was long gone, and the sea had retreated before the power of the great machines. An immense brown expanse of land stretched before us, an almost blank slate upon which history was only just beginning to write. The huge dusty space was broken up, articulated by metal fencing, and large signs forbidding various activities, and the concrete and steel foundations of the first tall buildings; also pile drivers, stream-rollers, trucks, wheel-barrows, cranes (1999: 204).

Rai believes that the desert-like emptiness of the construction site is symbolic of the “desert of the spirit” (1999: 204); however, his father surmises that this is “the empty canvas”, which, with the artists’ intervention might bring forth the “Ozymandian colossi” of the mighty from where they can look down upon the city. While Rai’s father, despite his late ironic

sympathy with the upcoming city, represents the introverted and romanticized pre-occupation with place reflecting the nostalgia of a conservationist who seeks to preserve its heritages; Rai's mother, being a builder, is full of entrepreneurial energy responsible for fragmenting, instrumentalizing and homogenizing of space by the unfeeling capitalist programmes, and thus, eventually erroneously siding with the corrupted Pilloo Doodhwala. On the other hand, Rushdie's vision of recovering of place is aestheticized in Rai, the photographer's, different response to the city. He photographs the city at moments of "exists" such as funerals, airports, cinemas, which, much like Rushdie's depiction, becomes an effective way of preserving the unique city as a process.

The Satanic Verses does not have any specific reference to the land-reclamation. However, Rashmi Verma rightly points out that the instance of Saladin Chamcha coming back to Bombay finally to find out that his ancestral property is worth millions and is ready to be sold off to the developers by Saladin's stepmothers unsentimentally effectively illustrates this proposition "One more high-rise, one less piece of old Bombay... What's the difference? Cities change" (535)⁹. In the nineteen eighties, a bungalow amidst the vertical skyline of Scandal point, a neighbourhood near Marine Drive, would naturally be an immensely coveted property for the real-estate developers. Although in this novel, there is a reconciliation of Saladin with his father and his home city Bombay, yet Saladin's "return" is not unproblematic as the novel is left open-ended, thereby raising questions of the authenticity of Saladin's romanticized homecoming to the lost city of his childhood.

In *Midnight's Children*, we find Bombay of the fifties and the sixties; Saleem along with son Adam returns to it in the seventies but only at the last to find it changed. In *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie again contrasts Bombay of the fifties and sixties with Bombay of the eighties; in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, Rai leaves Bombay somewhere in the seventies; in *The Moor's last Sigh*, we find the most recent depiction of Bombay as Moraes Zogoiby leaves Bombay after the Bombay blasts in 1992. Therefore, in matters of periodizing, Bombay that we find depicted in Rushdie's novels is mostly at a point in history where its spatial restructuring in the Backbay area is informed by the ideology of postcolonial modernity rather than a post-modern globalisation. In that case, the abovementioned enterprising moments of urban growth and development of Bom-

bay needs to be seen through the lenses of nation-building rather than through the discourse of globality, largely dominated by the rise of decentralized, dematerialized, performative capital, and as this essay aims to show its ability to simultaneously homogenize and fragment unique, local cultures and places. However, Rushdie's novels are replete with unreliable narration of history. In *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, Bombay in the seventies "had become Mumbai" under Pilo Doodhwala's MA party (1999: 215), this actually happened in 1995 under the Shiv Sena government. Therefore some of the concerns of the "placelessness" of globality is preponed in Rushdie's landscape of Bombay; and while in many cases Rushdie's sense of place is an anticipation, but in a certain way it also a documentation of a global sense of place especially as it emerges as an antidote to nativist claims of monolithic identities of place, such as Shiv Sena's renaming of Bombay as Mumbai privileging the Marathi identity of Bombay over its other identities. In *The Moor's Last Sigh*, there are two competing villainous forces – the capitalist Abraham Zogoiby and the communalist Mainduck Fielding, the latter being a thinly-veiled caricature of the Shiv-Sena supreme Bal Thackeray. But in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, Rushdie coalesces both these villainous forces in the figure of Pilo Doodhwala, recognizing that they are the two sides of the same coin. Zogoiby's capitalist ventures, in readying Bombay with the looks of a global metropolis, result in stripping places of their unique identities. On the other hand, stemming from the parochial yearnings of the comforts, security and the material advantages of a monolithic, straightforward place-based identity is the reactionary and the destructive politics of the nativist parties such as the Fielding's Mumbai Axis; Pilo Doodhwala in being a corrupt builder and a neo-conservative politician merges both these forces.

Bombay suffered from a grisly communal riot in 1992 after the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya by Hindu fundamentalist forces; and endured subsequent serial blasts seen as retaliation to the riots by the predominantly Muslim underworld. Tangentially alluding to the real-life tragedy, in the wake of the blasts destroying the landscape of the city, Moraes Zogoiby leaves Bombay for Spain in *The Moor's Last Sigh*. In *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, there is a similar abandonment – Rai in the "decisive moment" of leaving Bombay, following the advice of his photography mentor M. Henri Hulot, identifies the enemy, who not only initiates the near divorce be-

tween his parents but also the divorce between Rai and his beloved Bombay – Piloo Doodhwala. Rai leaves Bombay and Rushdie leaves writing about his home city (till date) as the twin forces of urban alienation uniting in “Pilooism won the day” (1999: 247).

CONCLUSION

The concern that emerges in Rushdie’s portrayal of Bombay is that the emergence of Bombay as an entrepreneurial city is eroding away the exquisite charms; the delightful quiriness; the peculiar rhythms; and the enchanted life-style of a unique city. In its first step of registering itself as a global (post)metropolis, Bombay is getting efficient, mechanized, and imbibing the unhappy conditions of monotony and the boredom of the placelessness of our times albeit in the peculiar context of the global south, which Appadurai sums up very well:

these cities also produce the social black holes of the effort to embrace and seduce global capital in their own particular ways, which are tied to varied histories (colonial and otherwise), varied political cultures of citizenship and rule, and varied ecologies of production and finance (Appadurai 2000a: 627-628)¹⁰.

However, as stated before, Rushdie’s depiction of Bombay does not stop at this point, and becomes a way of investigating the damages of nativist politics, emerging sometimes as reactionary forces to the modernities of globalization (for example, Main Duck Fielding in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*); and sometimes coalescing with its developmental agendas (for example Piloo Doodhwala in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*). Much of the legitimacy of Shiv Sena, and its fictional counterpart of Mumbai-Axis, are derived from the ideology of “Bhumiputra”, that is, the rights of the son of the soil, which allows them to practice an exclusionary politics of considering all Non-Marathis and in recent towing with the Hindutva ideology of Bharatiya Janata Party, also the Muslims as outsiders. This paper has aimed to show that Rushdie considers the “land” of Bombay itself as a “product” and “in-process”, and therefore points out that essentialized identities based on the natural ties to the land are always the manufactured rhetoric of vested interest groups. Rushdie’s focuses upon Bombay as a space of the inhabitants, who gain their right to the city by be-

ing users rather than being natural or legalized occupants of it. Thus, one might say that Rushdie's depiction of Bombay is informed with the awareness of the fact that places have always been palimpsestic but in the age of time-space compression, this process is intensifying, and places are becoming sites of interconnections and flows initiated by the entrepreneurial energy of the global capital. At the same time, Rushdie resists the onset of the condition of placelessness evident in Bombay's restructuring as a global city without suffering from either the impulse of preserving Bombay's heritage as he recognizes the transient nature of places very well, and simultaneously strongly refuses to give in to the nativist yearnings of a monolithic identity of place, thus, intuiting a "global" sense of place of hopeful adaptations and resistances.

NOTES

¹ Appadurai (2000b n.p.) brilliantly illustrates "the cosmopolitanism in Mumbai is rarely identified with self-cultivation, universalism, or with the ideals of globalism with which it is historically linked in Enlightenment Europe. Rather, it is primarily identified with cultural co-existence, the positive valuation of mixture and intercultural contact, the refusal of monoculturalism as a governing value, and a strong sense of the inherent virtues of rubbing shoulders with those who speak other languages, eat other foods, worship other gods, and wear their clothes differently".

² In recent times, it has become a common-place idea to consider "place" not as an empty container to be filled up with people and events; or a passive platform upon which the active time has its impact. Henri Lefebvre's greatly influential book *The Production of Space* (published in French in 1974 and translated in English in 1991) must be considered instrumental in initiating such a paradigmatic shift by bringing about an ontological and epistemological shift in spatial studies. Amongst many, two major points emerging from Lefebvre's pioneering analyses must be taken in to consideration. First, the disciplinary impetus of spatial studies should be upon the "social" space rather than the "physical" or the "mental" space. The social space remains inaccessible to pedagogy emanating from the illusion of the mental space, termed as "illusion of transparency" and the illusion of the physical space, termed as "realistic illusion". Therefore, an enabling approach, focusing upon space as both "mental" and "physical" yet not exclusively defined by either of the two is required. Secondly, the "social space" is neither "imaginary", "ideal", "fetishized" nor a passive platform of the being in duration. Lefebvre famously defines "the (social) space is a (social) product", (1991: 27) which is at once hegemonic, but also the site of resistance (1991: 68-74). Lefebvre's (1991) famous spatial triad comprising of Spatial practice – space produced at the level of perception, action and materiality; Representations of space – abstract and transparent spaces of the mind, which are imposed upon the lived social space; and Representational space – the lived space of the "user" and "inhabitants", which is simultaneously accessed through "associated images and symbols" and is constituted by the "rhythm" of the everyday life is further useful in categorizing the social space. Soja carries forward the notion of Lefebvre's "representational space" to formulate his concept of the "third space". However, Soja's journey is more eclectic in being reflected through Bell Hooks, Homi Bhabha, Gloria Anzaldúa, Foucault etc. and more utopian in focusing exclusively upon the empowering aspects of the "third space" in being "radically open" to and being constituted by "otherness" and "alterity". In this process, Soja's radical trialectics loses some of the dialectical rigour of

work (of artistry and life) vs. product (of bureaucratic society of controlled consumption) of Lefebvre's social space. Soja carries forward the notion of Lefebvre's "representational space" to formulate his concept of the "third space". However, Soja's journey is more eclectic in being reflected through Bell Hooks, Homi Bhabha, Gloria Anzaldúa, Foucault etc. and more utopian in focusing exclusively upon the empowering aspects of the "third space" in being "radically open" to and being constituted by "otherness" and "alterity". In this process, Soja's radical trialectics loses some of the dialectical rigour of work (of artistry and life) vs. product (of bureaucratic society of controlled consumption) of Lefebvre's social space.

³ Shiv Sena is a Maharashtra-based political party. It was founded by Bal Thackeray in 1966 and openly operates with the ideology of claiming Maharashtra and Mumbai for Marathis. With Shiv Sena's coming to power in Maharashtra, Bombay was renamed as Mumbai in 1995. In Rushdie's Bombay novels, the change of the name is equivalent to change in the character of the city – from being a cosmopolitan thriving city to a city of increasing parochial sentimentality, communal violence and underworld dons.

⁴ Doreen Massey in her celebrated essay "The Global Sense of Place" (1994) both challenges and foregrounds the important issues of the differential mobility engineered by the "ethnocentricity" and the "gender" aspects of time-space compression and calls this discrepancy "power geometry" of time-space compression. Although Massey's analysis mainly forwards the cause of the gendered space, the next part of Massey's essay illustrates the crucial issue of "locality" in the era of "annihilation of space by time". Massey equates two distinct strands on this – one group lamenting the loss of anchoring or "rootedness" in "place" and community in the flux of our times; and the second group considering this yearning for a place based identity as a reactionary nostalgia for an "unproblematic", "romanticized" identity. However, Massey finds both these hypotheses partial as attachments to places need to be taken in to consideration and simultaneously "reactionary nationalism", "competitive localisms" and "introverted obsessions with 'heritage'" need to be avoided (1994:151-152). Finally, Massey foregrounds "a sense of place, which is *extroverted* (emphasis added), which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local" (1994: 155). Thus "place", particularly in globalized world, becomes "a particular unique point of (...) intersection" of various flows, which reinforces the fact that places are "processes" only artificially fixed and stabilized by boundaries, but at the same time to be strategically recovered to become the loci for creative subjectivities. In a latter work, *For Space* (2005), Massey updates her hypotheses on how to investigate space as a site for "radical heterogeneities", for which, it should neither be treated as "depthless instantaneity", nor "always-already territorialized". Although Manuel Castells and Saskia Sassen operate in different traditions, their understanding of "place" and "placelessness" point to a similar trajectory. Castells concerned with the impact of the informational economy on the socio-economic and the simultaneous spatial restructuring of our times, theorizes on how "spaces of flows" are superseding "spaces of places", which results in meaning escaping from "places" and societies and being endlessly deferred in the mesh of a decentred network. This creates the lasting paradox "people live in places, power rules through flows". However, Castells is also mindful of the appropriation capability of the real people countering the high abstraction of the spaces of flows through the grass root urban movements but is simultaneously aware of them turning in to "defensive, protective, territorially bounded". He finally advocates "an alternative spaces of flows on the basis of the spaces of places". In the event of simultaneous rise of "cities and regions" (sub-national units) and "globalized digital markets and free trade blocs", (supra-national units) Saskia Sassen in her celebrated thesis of the global city, maps their rise as strategic spatial units, which act as sites of centralized control of the global economy simultaneously enabling one to focus upon the ground level politics of the transterritorial urban network.

⁵ Rushdie says: "Our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be able to reclaim precisely the thing that was lost: that we will in short create fictions, not actual cities or villages but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind" (1992: 2).

⁶ For instance, the walks in the poorer part of the city generally lead to thorough misreadings by the privileged *flaneur*. The child Saleem and Amina's drive to the North of the city to Pioneer Café (297-298); Moor's escapades with the gatekeeper Lambajan Chandiwala (196-197) and the ayah Jaya He (193), Aurora's outings to capture the naval strikes of 1946 realistically in her otherwise non-mimetic canvas (129-132) or Rai's photographic expeditions (210-214) give us a glimpse of the poorer parts of the city such as Crawford Market, Dhobi Talao, Worli, Falkland Road, Dharavi and Churchgate Station resulting in creating an overtly melodramatic city of hot and humid climate; anonymous crowds and shanties; beggars, street urchins, thugs, criminals, and communists. Once jailed in Bombay Central, Moor is chastised for failing to have any idea of the underbelly of the city (287). In *The Satanic Verses*, Zeeny Vakil accuses Saladin of similar lack of knowledge of anything of Bombay beyond the leisured and protective lifestyle offered at Scandal Point (59). These charges are not mitigated either by the surrealist description of Moor's life at Bombay Central Jail (286-290) and his latter outings as a henchman of Mainduck Fielding to destroy the textile strikes organized by Dr. Datta Samant in areas such as Worli, Parel and Bhiwandi (306); or the token excursions to the intellectual hang outs of the dhabas and dens of Dhobi Talao along with Zeeny Vakil and her friends Bhupen Gandhi (thinly veiled Arun Kolatkar) and George Miranda (60-61; 561-562). A rapid throwing of names of locales inform the depiction of these areas, but instead of fleshing them out with vivid memories of the uniqueness of the inhabitants, they remain at surface and as Rai, the photographer observes, hide their inner meanings by wearing a "domino mask" (211). Thus, the intense urban alienation and involution of the Third World city and also its actual spaces of appropriation remain elusive to Rushdie, who ends up investing them with a false sense of festival.

⁷ Lefebvre's emphasis on the quotidian in his three volumes *The Critique of Everyday Life* (2002), which he considered as his original contribution to Marxism is very significant. Lefebvre theorized that with the entry of everyday in to modernity, it becomes at once homogeneous, repetitive (an interstice of linear repetition of rationality and cyclical repetition of nature) and fragmentary, but also capable of revealing the "extraordinary in the ordinary", and eventually being the "yardstick of revolution". Lefebvre is contemptuous of critics who consider the study of the banal to be useless and seeks to supplant it with grander schemes of either festivals or marginalizing the lived experience through technocratic rationalizing of it. For Lefebvre, the concept of alienation goes beyond Marx's limiting it to the economic sphere, and the successful revolution involves disalienation of the everyday life. Closely connected with his concept of everyday is his concept of rhythmanalysis developed in *Elements of Rhythmanalysis* (1992). Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis of the everyday life seeks to capture the rhythm of the cyclic time of nature in the life of the modern man subjected to a fragmentary existence of the logic of the linear time of technocratic rationality. The purpose of the trained rhythmanalyst is to "hear" the rhythms (as opposed to being a passive consumer of spectacles) produced by the polyrhythmic body's (non) belonging in the "concrete modalities" of the outside world – this aspect of Lefebvre's study is exerting immense influence in the upcoming field of affect theory.

⁸ Adarsh Housing Society Scam in Bombay in the 2000s which included high officials from the Army, Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority, Maharashtra State Government, and private builders is one of the many real-estate scams that have hit India in the recent past.

⁹ Verma, in her essay, also incisively comments upon how the conjuncture of globalization and provincializing informs Bombay and uses Rushdie's depiction of Bombay as one of her case studies.

¹⁰ Appadurai (2000a) also rightly points out that Bombay is a city of contradictions, where the dematerialized global capital in the form of investments by the Multinational companies and the global modes of transactions encounters the local exigency of cash economy in peculiar ways, particularly, producing spectralities that qualify the empirics and the materiality of the housing crisis in Bombay in potent ways. Appadurai considers that the housing problem in Bombay is very much manufactured at multiple levels (as opposed to being merely causally linked to sociological parameters of over-crowdedness) through speculative capital investments, often filtered through the "illegal" black market and criminalized in the process; through the

spaces of fantasy of the glamour-stricken middle-class; and also encountered through the spaces of appropriation produced by the body-politic of the homeless, the destitute, and the very poor. He further links this spectrality of the housing crisis in Bombay to the “imaginary of the cleansed space” (644) of the Shiv Sena of contemporary Mumbai leading to establishment of a “Hindu” and “Marathi” geography of Bombay. Appadurai rightfully reasons that Shiv Sena’s “monstrous” urban utopia of solving the urban crisis of scarcity by deducting the Muslim population from it has found currency in the city, which is willing to believe in any schemes that would alleviate its intense poverty. Further, Shiv Sena encourages an entrepreneurial outlook for the city simultaneously establishing its linkage with the global economy and promising its divorce from the chaos of cash-based economy and intricate web of social-relationship it invokes, which also includes “business” generated by Muslim and Non-Marathi sectors. Thus, Appadurai illustrates the complex inter-relationship of the global capital and ethnic urban violence engineered by nativist politics by focusing on the local registers of Bombay, and also noticing in the process its peculiar irregularities. However, in another article, Appadurai also points out some of the grass-root movements which resist such sectarian forces by empowering the soft-target of ethnic-violence, that is, the urban poor, from below.

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