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The house in South Asian Muslim women's early anglophone life-writing and novels

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THE HOUSE IN SOUTH ASIAN MUSLIM WOMEN'S EARLY ANGLOPHONE LIFE-WRITING AND NOVELS

BY

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Abstract

This dissertation undertakes the first sustained examination of representations of Islamicate material culture, domestic interiors, residential forms, and historic sites in the early Anglophone writing of South Asian Muslim women. Reading the memoirs of Pakistani diplomat Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, *From Purdah to Parliament* (1963), in conjunction with three early Anglophone novels, namely, Zeenuth Futehally's *Zohra* (1951), Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided* (1957), and Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961), I develop the analytic category of autoethnographic spatial discourse in contradistinction to the harem fantasy inflected colonial spatial discourse prevalent at the time in order to describe the representational practice of these twentieth century Muslim women authors, who by virtue of writing in English are compelled to serve as cultural translators. I argue that their writing positions them as cultural agents engaged in a curatorial intervention that brings the past, the built environment and cultural practices to bear on forms of remembering, and greatly influences the form of the early novel in India and Pakistan.

The first chapter shows that the traditional residential form was crucial to Ikramullah's self-fashioning as an exceptional member of the reconstituted postcolonial Muslim elite milieu of Pakistan. Ikramullah used her command over ceremonial and material culture to articulate a hybrid identity that incorporated the seemingly incommensurable inheritance of Islamicate cultural traditions and the learned codes of colonial modernity. The second chapter investigates why the novels escaped sustained scholarly attention when they first appeared, in what contexts they enjoyed renewed

interest, and what this tells us about the field of literary history in South Asia. I argue that the current frames through which early novels in South Asia are viewed require some recalibration in order to accommodate discussions of Muslim women's writing in English. The third and final chapter presents readings that suggest that while the private residence is conceptually monumentalised in *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, the autoethnographic spatial discourse in *The Heart Divided* and *Zohra* privatises monumental landscapes as sites of transgressive love, folding them within the domain of interiority and erotic excess.

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For a large part of my graduate career, I suffered from the obsessive need to research the antecedents of any idea or information that bore the most tangential relation to the topic of my dissertation. It seemed as though I would never be able to cover all the bases, and I was convinced that until one did that, one could not write with authority. However, I was lucky to have Professor Luiza Moreira as my advisor. In every meeting with her, I would unloose a deluge of facts, frameworks, and concepts I had beaten into the shape of claims, and Professor Moreira would unfailingly restate and organise them in more useful forms. This dissertation would never have been completed without her unflagging encouragement.

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work ethic and chip away at overwhelming tasks little by little. They comforted me during crying jags, and, with Isabella To and Anastasiya Lyubas, and Sami Kharabsheh, filled the long cold winters and brief wondrous summers of Binghamton with warmth and laughter. Brendan Mahoney, Darwin Tsen, and Charlie Wesley helped demystify academia in the early days, often by coming up with hilarious but completely feasible titles for conference panels. I am grateful for their friendship, and the friendship of several members of the community of scholars at Binghamton, who rallied together to extend support throughout crises big and small.

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Introduction

> Dina Lal wasn't moving. He wasn't going to be pulled towards make-believe lines on a tonga. He wasn't climbing on board a train heading for the other side. He wasn't joining villagers taking step after tired step towards a make-believe border. He was staying put and everyone who knew him thought him mad because of it. He made only one concession that summer. He moved from his childhood home inside the old city of Lahore to the house of an Englishman… Later, when he looked back on his life knowing full well the price, in family members, that his decision to stay in Lahore extracted from him, he knew it could not have been different. Lahore, in flames or not, was his. In stillness, rare in in a city bursting with life and now death, the city was his… Hindu or not, he wasn't, goddamnit, going anywhere.
>
> --Sorayya Khan, *Five Queen's Road* (2009)

> In the silence of my room, with the romantic stage set in the windows, I arrange my bits and pieces, some I have brought with me, without really knowing why, some I have found here, all random and meaningless. A little feather I picked up while walking in the park gleams in front of me, a sentence I read somewhere rings in my head, an old yellowing photograph looks at me, the outline of a gesture I saw somewhere accompanies me, and I don't know what it means or who made it, the ball containing the guardian angel shines before me with it plastic glow. When I shake it, snow falls on the angel. I don't understand the meaning of all of this, I am dislocated, I am a weary human specimen, a pebble, I have been cast by chance on to a different, safer shore.
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> --Dubravka Ugresic, *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* (1996)

The inaugural moment of state formation in South Asia, which turned imperial subjects into postcolonial citizens, was attended by the constitutive violence of Partition. Certain homes and bodies became violable while others were allowed to retain their sanctity. This constitutive violence of the inaugural moment of the state created exiles, émigrés, refugees, as well as suspect minoritised publics which refused expulsion despite the lure of safer coexistence among their own on the other side, or among an entirely

different milieu elsewhere. Those who stayed put, like the fictional Dina Lal from *Five Queen's Road* (2009) above, often found their houses and identities confiscated, fragmented and remade by forces beyond their control in order to fit a modernising nationalist design. The labour of writing about the first half of the twentieth century in India and Pakistan is thus also a labour of creating usable pasts from the disarray of multiple dislocations, exclusions, expulsions, re-makings and resettlements. Whether this disarray arises from the condition of exile, refugeehood, and minoritisation, or from the disciplining forces of colonial modernity, the instability of the-nation-in-the-making, the violence of the-colony-in-its-unmaking, the momentary incomprehensibility described by Dubravka Ugresic, which renders the assemblage of one's acquisitions and memories random and meaningless, can be read as a *profound unhomeliness*. In the supposed sanctity of one's room in exile, the accumulated things and impressions of the day escape meaning, denying the inhabitant a sufficiently rich matrix of contexts from which to draw a sense of self. To capture and order these material objects and memories can thus become a central concern of self-narration, especially when national identity is called into question, as is the case with Ugresic, who belongs to that generation of authors which grew up in the former Yugoslavia and witnessed the traumas of its dissolution. To re-create, re-assign or restore meanings to objects and spaces which have been usurped by other grander narratives—of colonial domination, nation and modernity, for example—thus applies not only another layer in the sediment of meanings attached to places and things, but also reaffirms the insistent presence of those silenced and made invisible in the project of nationalisation. This dissertation investigates the reciprocal relationships between material objects, domestic interiors, monumental spaces and the writing of self

and community by one such historically marginalised community—that of South Asian Muslim women.

For the purposes of this investigation, I assemble here a selection of texts—three novels and a memoir—which each tell the story of growing up Muslim, *purdahnasheen*[1], exceptional, and educated, in the first half of the twentieth century, in Islamicate[2] cities that were then part of the British Empire and now lie in India and Pakistan. I read the autobiographical and ethnographic writing of Pakistani diplomat Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah[3] (1915-2000) in relation to three early Anglophone novels published between 1951 and 1961 by Ikramullah's contemporaries Zeenuth Futehally (1904-1992), Mumtaz

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[1] The word *purdahnasheen,* from Urdu, refers to women who follow *purdah*, that is, veiling and/or gender segregation practices. *Purdah*, in colonial India was not limited to only to Muslims. Elite Hindu women also observed *purdah* from unknown men, and resided in separate apartments meant solely for women. As we shall see in the texts, the particular extent to which women adhered to *purdah* varied from family to family, depending upon the views of the patriarch, the social milieu of the family, and the extent to which women were willing to circumvent tradition.

[2] Marshall G. S. Hodgson defines 'Islamicate' in *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (1974), as referring "not directly to the religion, Islam, itself, but to the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims" (59). Instead of using terms such as 'the Muslim world' or the 'Islamic world,' it is useful to conceive of the pre-colonial Near-Eastern and South Asian landscape in terms of three adjacent empires—Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal—which shared a set of mutually comprehensible cultural motifs. See: Hodgeson, Marshall. *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization Volume 1: The Classical Age of Islam.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977.

[3] Born in Calcutta to a prominent political family, Ikramullah spent much of her childhood in railway colonies in the suburbs where her father served as district medical officer. She was initially educated at home by her brother's tutors and by English and Anglo-Indian governesses until she enrolled at an English convent in Calcutta at age twelve. She later obtained a PhD from UCL—becoming one of the first Muslim women to do so—when she moved to London with her husband, who was a member of the Indian Civil Service. She became an active member of the Muslim League on her return to India and moved to Karachi after independence. She was one of only two women elected to Pakistan's first Constituent Assembly, but resigned in 1953 to protest against repeated adjournments and delays in framing Pakistan's constitution. Thereafter, Ikramullah served as a delegate to the UN and other international organisations. From 1964 to 1967, she was appointed as Pakistan's ambassador to Morocco. Ikramullah published in both English and Urdu. Her thesis on the development of the Urdu novel and short story was published from London. Apart from her memoirs, she also authored a biography of her cousin and Pakistani Prime Minister Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy. Some of her essays are collected in *Behind the Veil: Ceremonies, Customs and Colour* (1953). Ikramullah observed *purdah* from age nine until her marriage at age eighteen. The dedication to her memoirs playfully reads, "To my husband who took me out of *purdah* and has regretted it ever since," as suggested by her husband.

Shah Nawaz (1912-1948), and Attia Hosain (1913-1998). This assemblage of early Anglophone writing from India and Pakistan, which has not been considered in relation to each other before, allows us to examine a budding representational practice coming to terms with nations and identities in the making. This understudied corpus of texts advances our understanding of the strategies used by elite—that is, upper-class, and highly educated—Muslim women in Pakistan and India to inscribe their life-worlds into regional history while also pushing the boundaries of literary form by incorporating an excess of cultural description in their novels. In addition, this assemblage of texts also enables us to revaluate what might function as an Islamicate cultural site in the subcontinent, what meanings might inhere in these sites beyond the official narratives of the nation, how some Muslim women emerged from their historic invisibility to inscribe these meanings, and more broadly, how literary texts intervene in the construction of these sites and their meanings.

The Novels

Zeenuth Futehally's *Zohra* (1951) is set primarily in the city of Hyderabad during the last decades of the Asaf Jahi dynasty (1724-1948). Before its forcible accession to the Indian Union in September 1948, Hyderabad was the capital of one of the largest and wealthiest princely states of the same name[4]. In *Zohra,* we are introduced to the

[4] Smaller in area only than the kingdom of Jammu and Kashmir in the north, the princely state of Hyderabad was as large as England and Scotland. It was one of the three princely states that refused accession to India. Lucien D. Benichou points out that Hyderabad was uniquely positioned at the time of independence since unlike other large princely states, it was still ruled by the same Muslim dynasty that had begun its reign in the eighteenth century without much opposition from "an indigenous counter-elite to the old princely aristocracy" (5). Until the 1930s, during which period Zohra is set, the political scene in Hyderabad was "dominated by the towering personality of the Nizam" (5). See: Benichou, Lucien D. *from*

eponymous heroine as a young girl of sixteen, who while being deeply embedded in the aristocratic Islamicate culture of the city, also aspires to study art at the unconventional college established by the visionary Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore in Santiniketan in Bengal. Early in the novel, her skill in the Persian language moves her father to declare that she "might become a great scholar, even a poet," especially since in addition to possessing "a special gift for languages," she is also "sensitive and has a delicate imagination" (11). Because of her father's great love for Persian poetry and his patronage of poets and artists, Zohra is able to attend and be "deeply stirred" by *mushairas*—poetry-readings—organised in the men's quarters of the segregated mansion in which her family resides as long as *purdah* arrangements are made (20). Furthermore, despite the strict adherence to the protocols of *purdah* at home, the narrative includes quite a bit of travel for Zohra—for instance, to the Himalayan hill-station of Mussoorie, to Bombay, to the caves at Ajanta and Ellora, and even to Paris. By essaying her protagonist's troubled negotiation of these alien and unsegregated spaces, Futehally represents secluded Muslim women's deep ambivalence at being thrust out of *purdah* into mixed company by their husbands after being reared in traditional households where they were no avenues of meeting non-familial men. This destabilises the notion that women's agency is inextricably linked to visibility in the public space, and probes the inclinations of those elite Muslim women whose fathers or husbands were keen on bringing them out of *purdah* as an act of benevolent reform and modernisation[5].

Autocracy to Integration: Political developments in Hyderabad state (1938-1948). Chennai: Orient Longman, 2000.

[5] Commenting on Rashid Jahan's Urdu short story "Dilli ki Sair" (A Sight-seeing trip to Delhi), which appeared in the iconic *Angarey* (1932) magazine, Priyamvada Gopal writes that the "benevolent and paternalist project" of allowing women access to new kinds of spaces was "initiated on terms that [were]

In the novel, Futehally is keen to show that despite being allowed one kind of access to new spaces—through travel with her husband—Zohra is denied entry into the space of the university. Even though her husband puts his doctorate in Physics from Cambridge to good use by joining the university recently established by the Nizam in Hyderabad, Zohra's aspirations of studying art away from home come to naught as soon as she acquiesces to marriage. After much agonising consideration of defying her parents' wishes to marry the ambitious but much older and temperamentally mismatched Bashir, Zohra finds herself unable to disappoint her family after all. During their extended honeymoon in Mussoorie, as she is adjusting to conjugality, accompanied by her sudden introduction to mixed society after an adolescence spent in *purdah*, Zohra learns she is to bear a child.

The novel dwells on Zohra's ambivalence to motherhood, just as it does on her lack of enthusiasm toward marriage, in order to establish her reluctance to accept traditional gender roles. It becomes increasingly clear that Bashir exerts a tyrannical control over Zohra, infantilising her on the one hand and on the other, making no concessions for her sequestered upbringing when she struggles to adjust to mixed society and cope with the attentions of non-familial men, whom she is exposed to for the first time only after marriage. Furthermore, while Zohra is characterised as susceptible to the "sheer ecstasy of the beauty around her," Bashir is "scornful…of poets and poetry" (73). Futehally introduces Bashir's altogether more sensitive younger brother Hamid half-way through the novel as a returnee from Europe intent on disseminating ideas of social

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not one's own," such that *purdahnasheen* women often "experienced the spaces outside the home into which they were 'brought' as fundamentally hostile, even uninhabitable" (52). See: Gopal, Priyamvada. *Literary Radicalism in India: Gender, Nation and the Transition to Independence.* NY: Routledge, 2005.

justice and anti-imperialism through a bookshop and publishing enterprise in Hyderabad. The development of a forbidden romance between Zohra and Hamid, which remains unconsummated, occupies the rest of the plot. Zohra becomes increasingly disillusioned with her inability to participate in the public life of the nation-in-the-making, and seeks to fulfil her desire to contribute by organising lessons for children and widows at her home. The novel concludes with Zohra's tragic demise from pernicious anaemia after she contracts the plague while attempting to help one of her pupils.

While Futehally's *Zohra* represents the life-world of a young Muslim woman from an aristocratic household in the Islamicate city of Hyderabad in the Deccan, Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided* (1957) is largely set in Lahore, with significant action in Srinagar, Delhi, and Multan. These are northern cities, now divided between Pakistan and India. While these cities were part of a region which had seen Muslim conquest as early as the eleventh century[6], unlike Hyderabad, which remained a wealthy princely state still under the sway of a Muslim ruler until independence, Lahore, Multan, and even Srinagar had been captured by Ranjit Singh as part of the Sikh empire in the early nineteenth century. Muslim political ascendancy had thus been checked even before the British East India Company annexed Punjab and Kashmir from the Sikhs and sold the latter to the Hindu Raja of Jammu[7]. Just over a decade later, Company forces sacked Delhi, ousting the last Mughal emperor and effectively destroying any vestiges of Islamicate political power in the north. By the late colonial period during which Shah

[6] Multan had been conquered by a general of the Umayyad Caliphate as early as the 8th century. Lahore became an important provincial capital under the Ghaznavids, who conquered the city in 1014.

[7] After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, the Sikh empire was weakened by palace intrigues. Hostilities commenced between the East India Company and Sikh armies in 1845 and two Anglo-Sikh wars were fought between 1845-46 and 1848-49. At the conclusion of the first Anglo-Sikh war, the Company sold Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu.

Nawaz wrote her novel (1943-48), Islamicate urban centres in the north had suffered almost a century of British colonial disciplining, while the Nizam of Hyderabad farther south had managed to cling to power while accepting the suzerainty of the British crown.

In *The Heart Divided*, Shah Nawaz insinuates into the narrative a great deal of discussion about the history and position of Muslims in the subcontinent, which strains the form of the novel[8]. Divided into two books, the novel strives for an expressive totality that emphasises the internal unity of South Asian Muslims. Shah Nawaz not only underscores the Islamicate nature of the cultural landscape of the northern subcontinent, but also highlights the natural unity of the land itself from Punjab to Kashmir. Shah Nawaz establishes the centrality of Kashmir to the imagined geography of the as-yet-unrealised nation of Pakistan through descriptions of the landscape viewed from aboard train and car from Lahore to Srinagar[9]. These descriptions emphasise the geological unity of the area by following the course of the river Jhelum in reverse[10], and by noting the infinitesimal gradations in vegetation and landscape that mark the seamless transition from the plains of Punjab into the fabled Himalayan paradise of Kashmir. While emphasising the inalienable catenation of the landscape of Kashmir and Punjab, Shah

[8] Tarun K. Saint writes that the novel "presents a lively and readable account of the way important debates in the sphere of high politics of the 1930s and 40s percolated into middle-class life at critical moments when the rift between the communities widened" (75). For Saint, Shah Nawaz's "attempt to interweave the personal and the political domains are of particular interest" as it gives readers "a sense of the ideological differences within the community," which are represented through "near-documentary style descriptions of political debates" (76, 87). The form of the novel is thus strained by the inclusion of contemporary attitudes of elite Muslims toward high politics. At the same time, the resolution of the ideological differences among the Muslim elite revealed by the inclusion of these political debates drives the narrative of the novel. See: Saint, Tarun K. *Witnessing Partition: Memory, History, Fiction.* New Delhi: Routledge, 2010.

[9] Shah Nawaz was traveling to New York in April 1948 to discuss the impending the UN Security Council resolution on Kashmir with the New York Herald Tribune when her flight tragically crashed in Ireland, killing all aboard.

[10] The river Jhelum, like many of the rivers that are part of the Indus basin, has its headwaters in Indian Kashmir, and then flows westward into Pakistan.

Nawaz also places Delhi—and especially Old Delhi—within a continuum of Islamicate cultural centres that includes Lahore, Lucknow, Agra, as well as Arabia, Syria, Palestine, and Turkey[11]. In the context of the history of the decline of Muslim sovereignty in the northern subcontinent, Shah Nawaz's investment in the representation of the natural unity of the land from Punjab to Kashmir, and her emphasis on the Islamicate nature of the urban centres of the northern subcontinent can be seen as a significant move intended to intervene in contemporary narratives of Muslim identity and cultural contribution. Shah Nawaz is invested in representing the monumental landscapes of Old Delhi, the Mughal gardens of Lahore, and the natural splendours of the lakes and mountains of the Kashmir valley as sites where the elite Muslim protagonists of her novel retreat to find spiritual communion with the historical past, to mourn, and to form transgressive romantic attachments. In doing so, Shah Nawaz inscribes contemporary Muslims onto these sites while in turn constructing these sites as inalienable to the cultural and natural heritage of South Asian Muslims.

The protagonists of *The Heart Divided* are three siblings—Habib, Sughra and Zohra—who belong to a wealthy and prominent Muslim family deeply entrenched in Lahore's elite society. The first book allegorises communal disintegration through the failed romance of Habib and Mohini, a fiery young Hindu activist from the equally elite Kashmiri Pandit family. Through the unwillingness of the two families to come to terms with an inter-communal alliance, Shah Nawaz exposes the deep cleavages between Hindus and Muslims. Neither Habib nor Mohini are allowed to break the strict codes of

[11] One of the protagonists of the novel, Sughra, figures the "drab" landscape of her marital home in Multan as part of a larger Islamicate imaginative geography that extends to "far Arabia and further still Syria and Palestine and Turkey," which are in turn represented as "lands, whose very history beat in her blood" (119).

conduct that enabled the two communities to live in adjacency for centuries while each maintaining a distinct identity. Unable to resolve her ideals of inter-communal integration as a potent anti-colonial strategy that would make the personal political with her nationalist family's steadfast refusal of accepting a union with Habib, Mohini falls gravely ill and retreats to the Kashmir valley to convalesce. With no resolution forthcoming, she ultimately succumbs to her illness at the conclusion of the first book. The second book shifts the focus to the sisters Sughra and Zohra as they formulate their stake in the nation-in-the-making. While Zohra becomes increasingly alienated from her family as she begins teaching at a college away from home and becomes involved in workers' struggles, Sughra re-shapes her romantic notions of past Islamic grandeur into the vision of an egalitarian nation based on Islamic principles. Tarun K. Saint characterises Sughra's ideological position as that of "regressive feudal nostalgia" and Zohra's as that of "Congress nationalism," during this period of their estrangement (81). However, Sughra's imaginative geography owes itself more to ideas of anti-colonial Pan-Islamism rather than to feudal nostalgia, as is evidenced by her increasing investment in effecting social justice. After the death of her young son, Sughra is galvanised to action and throws herself into political activity on behalf of the Muslim League. She also gains practical experience of social work in the poorer neighbourhoods of Lahore. The sisters clash on the appropriate means of achieving an egalitarian, independent state which would not minoritise Muslims any further. Through carefully staged debates between these two characters, Shah Nawaz traces the origins of the traction gained by the idea of Pakistan among South Asian Muslims in a relatively short period of time.

The novel concludes with an ominous foreboding of the violence of partition tempered by the happy couplings of the siblings, which reinforces the internal cohesion of the community. Despite initial familial opposition, Zohra's marriage to a young Muslim socialist professor of modest means is finally accepted, as is that of Habib to the widowed Najma, also Muslim. Sughra too is reconciled with her estranged husband after making the difficult choice to wrench herself away from a budding romantic attachment to a married Muslim League activist in Delhi. We know that Dina Lal's chaotic Lahore from *Five Queens Road*, where his wife is abducted from her own bungalow, never to be recovered, is the spectre that looms ahead, yet *The Heart Divided* ends on the eve of Partition with the herald of Pakistan—the crescent moon and star—hanging on a background of pale green sky above a crimson sunset.

Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) is set entirely in Lucknow, with a similar attention to the distinctive culture of Awadh, or Oudh, which flourished briefly during the century and half long dissipation of centralised Mughal power between the death of emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 and the annexation of the province by the East India Company in 1856. Oudh is associated with legendary decadence, simultaneously constructed in contemporary accounts as the epitome of Islamicate cultural refinement, as well as the foremost example of the moral degeneration of Muslim civilisation[12]. Its distinctive culture has been described as "an exaggerated version of the highly Persianized Indo-Mughal style of living and consumption that had flourished in the imperial court in Delhi, with its own distinctive touch of decadence," with the nawabs and nobles indulging "in prodigality on the luxury goods and the patronage of urban

[12] See: Trivedi, Madhu. *The Making of the Awadh Culture.*New Delhi: Primus, 2010.

culture" (Oldenburg 25, 22). Like *Zohra,* we are introduced to the orphaned protagonist Laila at a young age—on her fifteenth birthday, to be precise. Like the two Zohras, and Sughra, from the other novels, Laila's world is initially circumscribed by the codes of *purdah,* but opens up incrementally as the narrative progresses, and she too defies her family to pursue marriage to a university lecturer from a family that Laila's aunt deems "very ordinary" (199). Of the three novels, *Sunlight* is the most deeply invested in the musealisation of the family house, which, like the nation, is partitioned by the end of the novel.

Objects and Spaces

Writing in English, and thus for a metropolitan audience, the authors of the texts under consideration in this dissertation serve as cultural translators. For these Muslim women authors, the *masnad*[13], the filigreed silver *paan-daan*[14], the silver-handled fly-whisk, the embroidered *achkan*[15] are as important as descriptions of rituals, ceremonies and codes of behaviour for conveying something *more* than what Roland Barthes had called the Reality Effect in his influential 1968 essay[16]. For Barthes, the profusion of superfluous objects in the nineteenth century European realist novel tacitly signifies the real; indeed, their function is to announce, insistently, "*we are the real*" (147). The *masnad,* the *paan-daan,* and the fly-whisk however are imbued with a particular

[13] A *masnad* is a heavily embossed or embroidered tapestry that covers the *takht.*

[14] A container for keeping *paan*, a preparation of betel leaf, sliced areca nuts, condiments, and sometimes tobacco.

[15] An item of men's clothing.

[16] See: Barthes, Roland. "The Reality Effect." *The Rustle of Language*. Trans. Richard Howard. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986. 141-148.

memorial charge in the texts: together they signify the distinctness, richness, and impending obsolescence of traditional South Asian Islamicate material culture. The knowledge of this impending obsolescence, which Orhan Pamuk has described as the "massacre of objects" in a modernising society, coupled with the fragmentation of Muslim families and estates which held these traditional objects, imbues the texts with an urgency that demands attention (46). Unlike the feather, the yellowing photograph, and the snow-globe in the passage from *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* quoted above, which are rendered random and meaningless by Dubravka Ugresic in order to convey, with great effect, the sense of dislocation brought on by exile from a country that has ceased to exist as a political unit, the richly embroidered *masnad,* the filigreed *paan-daan*, and the silver-handled fly-whisk are laden with meaning. These objects, and the arrangement of the body in relation to them and to the domestic space, convey difference and its disciplining under the imperatives of colonial modernity.

Colonial modernity in the urban native elite home manifested in changes in the use of domestic spaces and their relation to each other, to inhabitants, and to the outside. The prevalent urban vernacular residential form—the traditional introverted courtyard house—faced inward, its rooms facing each other and the enclosed space of the open-to-sky courtyard instead of the street. On the other hand, the most prominent colonial residential form, the bungalow, faced outward into the verandah and toward the compound. While the bungalow was detached and enveloped by open space, the introverted courtyard house was often part of a dense urban agglomeration, sharing walls with other residences, with the enclosed courtyard and terraces inside and the narrow

streets outside being the only open spaces[17]. The introverted courtyard house enabled the seclusion of women while the spatial organisation of the bungalow was interpenetrated by colonial ideologies of ideal domesticity, and anxieties of protecting the Englishwoman from India and Indians even as Indian domestic staff waited on *memsahibs* compelled to perform racial and civilizational difference[18].

Eventually, despite the difference in their architectural forms, and the intents which these differences served, the forms of living in the introverted courtyard house and the bungalow began to overlap in the late colonial period as the native elite began inhabiting bungalows in the Civil Lines and traditional courtyard houses no longer secluded women[19]. The very postures of the body changed as *takht*[20] living centred on the

[17] Anthony D. King, the foremost authority on the bungalow, writes that "[t]he bungalow was the opposite of the courtyard house in the indigenous city," where "a central courtyard allowed the penetration of light and air, as the houses were three-four stories high and they were closely clustered, cellular structured buildings all around, the lower rooms dark and cool. Activity in this courtyard house was centripetal: movement was inwards towards the courtyard. In the bungalow it was centripetal outward, in to the verandah and further into the compound" (35). Anoma Pieris distinguishes the introverted courtyard house form from that of the bungalow form by emphasising that unlike the latter, it was "not objectified for public display," but rather directed domestic activity away from the street into interior spaces[,]…supported cohabitation in an extended family, and demarcated public and private thresholds in regard to gender" (32). See: King, Anthony D. *The Bungalow: The production of a global culture.* London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984; Pieris, Anoma. *Architecture and Nationalism in Sri Lanka: The Trouser under the Cloth.* NY: Routledge, 2013.

[18] Thomas Metcalf writes that from the late nineteenth century onward, one can see the "fullest elaboration of…an ideology of 'distance,' built upon a still enduring sense of difference," which manifested in the form of "a set of nested boxes, each walled off from the larger Indian world outside" (177). The bungalow was a prime example of this, with the memsahib playing a "critical role" in making it "an island of Englishness, secure from a noxious India" by "enforce[ing] within the house and its surrounding compound, the ideals of cleanliness, order, and industry" (178). See: Metcalf, Thomas. *Ideologies of the Raj.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

[19] I develop this point fully in Chapter 1 through a close and comparative reading of Ikramullah's descriptions of inhabiting the bungalow and the traditional courtyard house in the twentieth century. Jyoti Hosagrahar also writes that in Delhi, "the identities of the *haveli* landscape and that of the bungalow interpenetrated each other," arguing that there was a "charged interconnection between the two spaces" which made the development of the two seemingly antithetical house forms…deeply interrelated" as "residents of Delhi responded to the new model of urban life…by disdaining and rejecting, mocking and mimicking, participating and conniving, and learning and accepting" (33). See: Jyoti Hosagrahar, *Indigenous Modernities: Negotiating architecture and urbanism*. NY/London: Routledge, 2005.

dalans (verandahs) around the courtyard was replaced with specialised rooms and specialised furniture. The reclining body immortalised in the odalisques of Orientalist paintings, staged anthropological photographs, and picture-postcards owed its posture to its receptacles—the divans, carpets and bolsters. The upright seating of chairs elevated the body away from the floor susceptible to miasmatic contagion[21]. Meals taken on carpets spread on the floor are replaced by meals taken on dining tables. Colonial disciplining of space was not limited only to the public but also extended to the private through discourses of hygiene and ideal domesticity. At the same time, from the late nineteenth century onwards, native reformist literature, such as the wildly popular scripturalist conduct manual for Muslim women *Bihishti Zewar* (Heavenly Ornaments), also pushed their own agendas with regard to disciplining the *zenana*—the women's apartments, or the architectural manifestation of *purdah*[22].

A cultural history of the residential architecture of the Islamicate city in South Asia might shed more light on the ways in which forms of living and late colonial residential forms were mutually altered in response to social, political and economic

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[20] In *From Purdah to Parliament* (1963), Ikramullah describes the *takht* as a "raised wooden platform, covered with an embroidered or woven material, or only with clean white sheets. They had elaborately carved or lacquered legs, very often of silver. On special occasions *masnads* would be placed over them. *Takhats* were always placed against a wall and had several bolsters scattered over them for one to recline on" (1-2). Ikramullah stresses the centrality of the *takht* as a piece of domestic furniture by stating that it "was, literally, the stage of all household activities*"* (2).

[21] The miasmatic theory of disease transmission popular in the nineteenth century ascribed illnesses to emanations from unsanitary surfaces, including native bodies.

[22] Judith Walsh writes that advice manuals specifically targeted towards women and concerned with domestic practice began appearing in major Indian languages mid-nineteenth century onwards. Between 1860 and 1900, more than forty domestic manuals were published in Bengal specifically for the education of Hindu Bengali women. These addressed "women's domestic life,… home management and account keeping" among other topics (22). Similarly, Urdu-Hindi print cultures saw "an extensive Muslim reform discourse on home and family life," which was especially concerned with "order, efficiency, scientific method, and "scientific method"" (22). See: Walsh, Judith E. *Domesticity in Colonial India: what women learned when men gave them advice.* Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004.

transformations. However, current scholarship on the subject is piecemeal and focuses more on the Islamicate city rather the private residence. William Glover's *Making Lahore Modern* (2008) and Jyoti Hosagrahar's *Indigenous Modernities* (2005) both include a chapter each on the changing residential architecture of Lahore and Delhi respectively. However, while these are informative in other regards, as architectural historians, Glover and Joshi are not concerned with the enumeration of the transformation of the forms of living, the regimes of the body and its reciprocal relationship with domestic space and material objects concomitant to the changes in the residential architecture they describe[23]. Hosagrahar approaches closest to an analysis of the changing "rituals of inhabiting" when she turns to fictional representations of the Old Delhi *haveli,* or the introverted courtyard mansion, in nineteenth century Urdu literature (34). My dissertation extends this line of enquiry further by assembling a corpus of texts that is positioned to provide unique insights into late colonial rituals of inhabitation in elite, modernising Muslim households.

The texts I have chosen become further significant in this regard since a history of the transformation of the modes and rituals of inhabitation they describe is also difficult to find in official archives, which are concerned with the collective and the grand rather than the individual and the quotidian. Materials in the official archive are often ordered to

[23] Glover's chapter "Changing Houses: Rethinking and Rebuilding Townhouses and Neighborhoods" discusses the role of colonial spatial imagination and of domestic reform literature in restructuring domestic space in Lahore, while Hosagrahar's chapter "Fragmented Domestic Landscapes: From Mansions to Margins" traces a century of the remission of the extensive neighbourhood-like *haveli*-complex in Delhi into ever smaller units, paralleling the disintegration of Mughal sovereignty. Hosagrahar argues that "[i]n Delhi the development of the house form and meaning was inseparable from the transformations of the urban form" and it is in this context that she presents her findings (44). Her focus is thus not on domestic interiors and inhabitation. See: Glover, William. *Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and imagining a colonial city*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008; Jyoti Hosagrahar, *Indigenous Modernities: Negotiating architecture and urbanism*. NY/London: Routledge, 2005.

create national myths[24], which while requiring the identification of continuities and discontinuities with the past as in a text of self-narration, is enshrined in monuments, museums, and other large-scale public commemorative sites and events. The texts I have chosen can be argued to function as one node in the field of commemorative forms that mediate our relationship to the past. They commemorate the intimate everyday life-worlds of elite Muslim women coming of age as the last generation of inhabitants of the accretive traditional segregated house, even as each text displays a different kind of ambivalence to the domestic spatial arrangements supported by these traditional houses of the Muslim elite.

As commemorative acts of representation, the three novels—Zeenuth Futehally's *Zohra* (1951), Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided* (1956) and Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961)—thus exhibit a degree of self-conscious[25] detail that recalls, simultaneously, the intimacy of autobiography, the highly situated cultural description of ethnography, and the sumptuous plenitude of the material imagination of the nineteenth century European realist novel[26]. Appearing at a time when the

[24] Historian Durba Ghosh writes that, "[i]n spite of recent efforts to downplay the importance of the nation…, the ways in which archives are national institutions that regulate access by scholars, both formally and informally, often structure the information historians are able to retrieve" (28). See: Ghosh, Durba. "National Narrative and the Politics of Miscegenation: Britain and India." *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History.* Ed. Antoinette Burton. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

[25] Ulka Anjaria has observed that in the literatures of late colonial South Asia, "[t]he feeling of historical entrance into modernity was palpable, and *gave this period a self-consciousness that was perhaps unmatched*" (12, emphasis mine). See: Anjaria, Ulka. *Realism in the Twentieth Century Indian Novel: Colonial Difference and Literary Form.* NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

[26] As recent research has shown, prolific descriptions of the material world increasingly became the hallmark of nineteenth-century European realism, which was, as Supriya Chaudhuri puts it, "historically attuned towards the articulation of expressive meanings through worldly goods, most specifically through the articles of domestic use (such as furniture) that define inhabited space" (178). Janell Watson has demonstrated that starting from the last decades of the nineteenth century, French literature exhibited an increasing occupation with the description of bibelots, that is, curiosities, trinkets, collectibles, antiques, or art objects unified by their superfluousness. Material objects were increasingly deployed to convey

Anglophone novel was still relatively new to South Asian literary cultures[27], they blur genre conventions and display both a keen historical consciousness as well as a certain kind of descriptive excess, which positions their authors as cultural agents engaged in a curatorial intervention that brings the past, the built environment and minoritised cultural practices to bear on forms of remembering in the absence of the site (the home) itself. While historical consciousness manifests in the novels through the recapitulation of major political events, emerging ideas of a national polity, and the construction of narratives of the ancestral past, the descriptive excess I refer to here can be seen in the ways in which material and intangible aspects of cultural heritage are represented. Many of the concerns that undergird this dissertation arise from the question of how to interpret the thickness of the historical consciousness and cultural description of these novels while foregrounding the necessarily partial and constructed nature of literary representation. In other words, how to approach the thick historical and cultural description as a formal choice, and undertake a reading of the novels that understands

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"information about their user[s] and the world of people," and "authors begin to provide more and more information about objects themselves and the world of objects to which these belong," such that "[b]y the end of the century, the presence of objects in texts no longer need[ed] to be justified by their connections either to people or to the 'real'" (1). Elaine Freedgood has suggested that "Victorians had a relationship to things, or to things in the process of becoming commodities, that…in its profusion, intensity, and heedless variety, displays that appalling lack of irony, of distance, of coolness that we so often cringe at in the worst examples of Victorian middle-class taste" (148). Through readings of *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Mary Barton* (1848), *Great Expectations* (1861), and *Middlemarch* (1871-72), Freedgood finds that the plenitude of material objects in "the mid-Victorian novel especially…allows us to read things along the potentially treacherous routes of metonymic contiguity" (158). See: Chaudhuri, Supriya. "Phantasmagorias of the Interior: Furniture, Modernity, and Early Bengali Fiction." *Journal of Victorian Culture* 15:2 (2010): 173–93; Freedgood, Elaine. *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel.* London: University of Chicago Press, 2006; Watson, Janell. *Literature and Material Culture from Balzac to Proust: The Collection and Consumption of curiosities.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

[27] The first Anglophone novel, *Rajmohan's Wife,* authored by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, had only appeared in 1864. The novel form itself had begun to be adapted into Indic languages in the nineteenth century. For a helpful chronological table of nineteenth century proto-novels and inaugural novels in various Indian languages, see: Mukherjee, Meenakshi, ed. *Early Novels in India.* New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2002.

their value as alternate archives of a particularly unnarratable past[28], but treats them as *more than* documentary evidence.

As I show in the first chapter of this dissertation, it is clear from her memoirs, *From Purdah to Parliament* (1963), and from her collection of ethnographic essays *Behind the Veil: Ceremonies, Customs and Colour* (1953), that Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah fashions herself as a cultural agent through her curatorial attempts at ascribing meaning and context to vernacular domestic spaces and material culture. Her descriptions of jewellery, furniture, objects of daily use, religious and cultural rituals, habits of life and cultures of display in the colonial bungalow and in the traditional introverted courtyard house intervene in the established colonial ethnographic discourse, which proliferated a particular set of reified representations of native domestic spaces. Ikramullah draws on autoethnographic techniques and authority to write against accounts of South Asian Muslim domestic spaces which tap into the well-established genre of harem writing. Similarly, the novels deploy the autoethnographic mode to re-create life-worlds shattered by the ineluctable reversals associated with change of regimes, the reorganization of social structures, and the solidification of communal identities by providing rich descriptions of upper-class Muslim domestic interiors and material culture, rituals associated with birth, death and marriage, and Islamicate—and in one case, Buddhist—historical sites. They are chock full with signposts—often in the form of the

[28] Here I refer to the unnarratability of the traumas of Partition, especially with regard to women, as *Sunlight* directly addresses the familial fragmentation and urban reorganization of Partition in the Islamicate city of Lucknow, and *Zohra* and *The Heart Divided* are set in the decades immediately preceding the event. As Sangeeta Ray has put it in the context of the representation of women who were victims of rape during the gendered and ethnic violence of the population transfer, "the unnarratable lives of these women undermine the efficacy of the pedagogical narratives of both nations and reveals the founding ambivalence at the core of every progressive national narrative" (136). See: Ray, Sangeeta. *En-Gendering India: Woman and Nation in Colonial and Postcolonial Narratives.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000.

untranslated names of traditional appurtenances, such as the *paan daan*, the *masnad,* the *takht* I mentioned earlier—that indicate their embeddedness in the specific Islamicate cultures of Lahore, Lucknow, Delhi and Hyderabad.

The juxtaposition of Ikramullah's memoirs and ethnographic writing with the novels thus produces a particularly useful constellation, because it allows us to observe the ways in which cultural description works in the narrative context of ethnography, life-writing, and novel. Ikramullah's ethnographic essays orient us toward the ways in which material culture, domestic interiors and residential forms can be used to articulate elite Muslim women's relation to the past, to colonial modernity and to the postcolonial refashioned community. Ikramullah's life-writing further emphasizes the role of domestic architecture and material culture in her self-fashioning, and lets us into the fictional houses and life-worlds represented in three novels authored by women who were arguably part of a similar background as Ikramullah. Taking this path to the interpretation of the thick cultural description of the novels enables us to read them as autoethnographic[29] and commemorative texts rather than as part of an objective factual historical record. Reading these texts as subjective, selective and partial, but nonetheless useful and valuable representations of elite late colonial South Asian Muslim culture, which incorporate both the *ethnos* of ethnography and the *bios* of autobiography within the self-reflexive mode of autoethnographic expression, allows us to appreciate both the interpenetration of generic conventions in early Anglophone novels by South Asian Muslim women, as well as the broader historical context within which materiality

[29] I provide a detailed discussion of the ways in which I use the term 'autoethnographic' as a characteristic of a text in Chapter 3.

becomes an important means of speaking about self, past, modernity and community. Instead of a total view of South Asian Islamicate culture at the penultimate moment of Partition, this constellation of texts provides a composite mosaic of elite Muslim women's attitudes toward the built environment in relation to individual, communal and national identity. Furthermore, by juxtaposing rituals of inhabitation in late colonial Islamicate households and representations of everyday life-worlds of elite Muslim women in cities that would eventually lie in Pakistan and India, these texts pre-figure discussions of domesticity, modernity and Muslim women's agency in both a majority Muslim state and a state in which Muslims form a significant minority.

Encountering the Small Voice of History

Received as "single novels of self-discovery," since their authors were not prolific—like other women novelists such as Nayantara Sahgal, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Anita Desai, and Kamala Markandeya, who have been enshrined in the canon of the Indian novel in English as preeminent twentieth century Anglophone novelists—*Zohra, The Heart Divided* and *Sunlight on a Broken Column* represent *more than* the different instances of the set of socio-cultural and religious codes and rituals that constituted the system of *purdah* (Narayan and Mee 224). They vivify lived cultural and spatial practices of late colonial elite Muslim households, and dramatize a moment in South Asian history during which families had to grapple with reorganizing their allegiances and affiliations according to the new order of the postcolonial nation-state. The novels chart this mounting disarray of allegiances and affiliations even as they focus sharply on the development of their female protagonists. Even in *The Heart Divided*, arguably the most

'political' of the novels, interspersed as it is by frequent expositions about political and historical events, and contemporary debates surrounding the same, Mumtaz Shah Nawaz uses these very expositions to foreground the processes through which elite Muslim women could have been compelled to form their own allegiances—which may not have coincided with their families'—to political ideologies current at the time, and to participate in the labour of imagining the potential forms of the nation-in-the-making.

Yet at the same time, *The Heart Divided* too shares with *Zohra* and *Sunlight* a certain posture toward the traces of Islamicate culture in the intimate as well as the public domains. While *Sunlight* can be read as an extended meditation on the ways in which the representation of the intimate and inhabited—from the gestures of the body to the furniture which serves as the receptacle of the body—can aggregate into the description of a specific culture as it approaches ruination, *The Heart Divided* and *Zohra* make intimate the space of the uninhabited architectural remnant. The desire to access, represent, and record the past against imminent erasure is evident in the each of the texts, and it manifests in an engagement with materiality and description of rituals and habits that far exceeds the needs of the narratives of women's emancipation, political upheaval and the birth of nations.

Taken together, these texts construct nuanced representations of elite urban Muslim women's conceptions of cultural heritage and colonial modernity as they took shape and transformed in the period spanning from 1920s to mid-1950s. They provide thick descriptions of the material culture of elite Muslim domestic spaces, which constitute a deliberate effort to musealise as well as critique a way of life rendered obsolete by various factors including, but not limited to, land reforms abolishing the

system of *zamindari*[30], property laws instituted to rehabilitate refugees during the Partition of the British Indian empire, and the social transformation that accompanied the transition from feudal structures to democratic forms. Zeenuth Futehally clearly states that the immediate impetus for crafting her only novel was a consciousness of cultural difference and its impending erasure. In the preface to the first edition of *Zohra*, Futehally writes: "I became increasingly conscious of how different that little world of ours, in Hyderabad, had been and I felt the urgency to record it, for owing to the passage of time it was fast disappearing" (262). Similarly, Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah too introduces her memoirs, *From Purdah to Parliament* (1963), with the acknowledgement of "a great desire, an urge" to record the "great panorama" of the three distinct eras—the last vestiges of Mughal culture, British Imperialism, and the struggle for independence—that she had witnessed and participated in during her lifetime, and which had all already passed into memory at the time of her writing in the late 1950s and early 1960s (xvii).

These texts, produced by privileged, but doubly minor authors (in that they were Muslim and women), can be argued to provide that "small voice" of history, as Ranajit Guha puts it, which is often lost amid grand mythologies of nation and state and can only claim a hearing "by interrupting the telling in the dominant version, breaking up its

[30] The *zamindari* system was an indirect system of revenue collection used during the Mughal period but adopted and modified by the British East India Company through the Permanent Settlement act of 1793. *Zamindar* (literally landholders) were intermediaries between the cultivator and the government. While during the Mughal period, they held court and acted as local administrators with judicial and military powers and duties, after the Permanent settlement, these powers were rescinded and they remained only hereditary tax collectors. The system was extremely exploitative to the tillers because they were reduced to tenants and could be charged extortionate taxes under this system. But rather than merely an economic system, *zamindari* extended to political and social relations as well, with *zamindar* exerting a patron or sovereign-like influence on tenants, and tenants dependent solely on the *zamindar* rather than the state for their material well-being.

storyline and making a mess of its plot" (12). Ikramullah's life-writing as well as the novels of Futehally, Shah Nawaz and Hosain can certainly be read as alternative archives which furnish the silences and failures of official historiography, of which there are many, especially when it comes to the gendered and ethnic violence of Partition and its long afterlife of divided families, securitized refugees, and contested citizenship. However, that is not to say that this dissertation conflates literature with historiography or ethnography, and positions the novels and memoirs merely as corrective supplements to dominant narratives of nationalist historiography. Instead, this study differentiates between South Asian Muslim women as historical subjects, and the literature and life-writing produced by South Asian Muslim women. I focus on the latter to parse the textual strategies through which domestic interiors, material culture, residential forms and monumental landscapes are appropriated to produce a distinctive discourse of space, which disrupts the colonial spatial discourse while imagining alternatives to the postcolonial national spatial order.

From the strategies of self-fashioning in *From Purdah to Parliament,* which underscore the significance of domestic interiors, material culture and residential forms, to the conceptual monumentalisation of traditional residential forms in *Sunlight on a Broken Column* and the privatisation of the monumental landscape of Islamicate cities in *Zohra* and *The Heart Divided*, this study explores the different ways in which the built environment is represented in the novels and memoirs under consideration. Responding to the material turn in literary studies, which has been taken up particularly vigorously by

scholars in the field of Victorian studies[31], as well as the spatial turn, which has been popularised by the transdisciplinary work of scholars building upon studies by Bertrand Westphal, Edward Soja, Eric Bulson, Franco Moretti and Robert Tally Jr., this dissertation strives to interpret how South Asian Muslim women's early Anglophone writing represents the meanings and histories that can be "stockpiled" in material objects, domestic interiors and monumental sites, to use and extend Elaine Freedgood's expression from *The Ideas in Things* (2006), and produce unexpected affects.

Global Literary Cultures and Muslim Women

While I situate my dissertation within these transdisciplinary fields of material culture and spatial studies, in addition to appropriating interpretive tools from cultural anthropology, I also view my work as an intervention in the fields of both South Asian literary studies as well as the global literary cultures of Muslim women. Despite my focus on Muslim women authors from a region which is not currently the major theatre where Muslim identities and their relations to the West are formed and disseminated, but nonetheless has its own specific history of ideas of Muslimness, I see my dissertation as part of that strain of scholarship which is invested in interpreting Muslim women's self-representation in life-writing and literature, whatever their period of publication or geographic origin. This dissertation thus aims to furnish one understudied area of the global literary cultures of Muslim women with material from an earlier, inaugural

[31] In *Bodies and Things in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture* (2012) Katharina Boehm traces the material turn in Victorian studies to the 1980s, when "Victorians' enchantment with the rich material culture of the period" became and "central concern" for the field and studies of "the place of things in Victorian culture" began to proliferate (3). See: Boehm, Katharina, ed. *Bodies and Things in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture*. NY: Palgrave , 2012.

moment—that of state and communal formation in India and Pakistan—which challenges the flattening of Muslim women and their literary ventures into a monolith.

Muslim women's writing has attracted fierce and divided critical attention recently. Contemporary Pakistani women novelists such as Kamila Shamsie, Uzma Aslam Khan, Sorayya Khan, and Fatima Bhutto are members of a growing circle of globally recognised Muslim women authors which includes Laila Lalami, Ahdaf Soueif, Leila Aboulela. While their work displays a great range in subject matter, there is other strain of 'worlded' popular fiction wherein Muslim women authors can be seen to have acquired the same kind of specialised authenticity and authority that European and American women travellers were accorded when they published their impressions of the picturesque harems of the Orient. This strain of popular 'worlded' Muslim women's writing is often categorised as misery memoirs, or, as Lila Abu-Lughod calls it, "pulp non-fiction," and abounds in accounts of suffering, repression and gender violence in Muslim societies[32] (87). Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Irshad Manji, and even to a certain extent, Azar Nafisi, have been criticised for purveying such 'native testimonials,' misery memoirs and

[32] Reflecting on her exchanges with journalists seeking expert opinion on women and Islam in the months after 9/11, Abu-Lughod remarks on the insistent focus on religiocultural rather than political and historical explanations sought of Middle-East specialists for the vast and seemingly inexplicable hatred of the *jihadis* for the US. When faced with questions like, "Do Muslim women believe "x"? Are Muslim women "y"? Does Islam allow "z" for women?," Abu-Lughod is compelled to question "why knowing about the "culture" of the region, and particularly its religious beliefs and treatment of women, was more urgent than exploring the history of the development of repressive regimes in the region and the U.S. role in this history" (784). This thirst for the cultural understanding of Muslim majority regions through the position of Muslim women in and their experiences with 'Muslim society' led to the appearance of a number of native informants in the western publishing scene: 'insiders' speaking out in a particular mode about atrocities against women in Muslim societies and about the unique cruelties of Muslim patriarchy. These 'native testimonials' and pulp non-fiction offerings from writers like Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Azar Nafisi, Irshad Manji, Norma Khouri, Carmen bin Laden, Nonie Darwish, Wafa Sultan and many others swiftly climbed up several best-seller lists and became fixtures in book-clubs due to their uncritical appreciation by a 'western' reading public that saw its worst suspicions about Islam vindicated in these 'true-life' tales of woe. See: Abu-Lughod, Lila. *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.

'pulp non-fiction.' Critics such as Hamid Dabashi[33], Fatemeh Keshavarz[34], Saba Mahmood[35] and Lila Abu-Lughod have drawn attention to the ways in which this writing has been co-opted to authorise uncritical Islamophobia and, in some cases, military interventionism. Given this proliferation of popular fiction that bases its appeal on authentic representation, especially of those elements that confirm stereotypes of Muslim women and Islamicate cultures, it is of signal importance to accord serious scholarly attention to the global literary cultures of Muslim women. New approaches to Muslim women's writing are needed, which probe further than the evaluation of feminist agency in the texts. At the same time, it is also important to consider how historical context and contemporary discourses influence the form, content, and circulation achieved by the texts produced by Muslim women.

In the case of the memoirs of Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah and the novels of Attia Hosain, Zeenuth Futehally and Mumtaz Shah Nawaz, it is important to examine the afterlives of the texts—how they were initially received, and soon forgotten, excluded from the canon of early Anglophone writing by women in South Asia, and recently re-published, re-entering scholarly discussion decades after publication. If connections are to be made between the historical environment surrounding their critical evaluation and re-emergence, we will find that the afterlives of these texts parallel such processes and phenomena as the minoritisation of Muslims in postcolonial India, renewed interest in

[33] Dabashi, Hamid. "Native informers and the making of the American empire." *Al-Ahram Weekly* 797 (2006): 1-7.

[34] Keshavarz, Fatemeh. *Jasmine and Stars: Reading More Than Lolita in Tehran: Reading More Than Lolita in Tehran*. University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

[35] Mahmood, Saba. "Retooling Democracy and Feminism in the Service of the New Empire." *Qui Parle* 16.1 (2006): 117-143.

Raj nostalgia in 1980s Britain and in the Partition in late 1990s India, the runaway success of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), the formation of Indian and Pakistani writing in English as fields of literary scholarship, the ongoing efforts of literary historians to address the complicated imbrication of ideas of the nation and ethnic belonging in postcolonial literatures. We must also consider the impact, on the circulation of and scholarly interest in these texts, of the burgeoning global interest in Muslim women's lives and writing—first under colonial regimes, then in the context of postcolonial citizenship, in light of the Islamic revolution in Iran, the various wars and revolutions in the Middle-East, and finally the global war on terror. Representations of Muslim women, the spaces they are able to negotiate in Muslim majority societies, and the forms of resistance they have fashioned are enduring avenues of scholarly enquiry, often instrumentalised to shape current ideas about Islam and Islamic societies. By turning to Muslim women's self-representation that addresses a time when Pakistan and India—one a Muslim majority state and the other a state with a significant Muslim minority—were yet in the making, these texts serve as valuable sources for current scholars interested not only in Muslim women's conceptions of citizenship, nation, social and romantic relations, but also in the Islamicate built environment, material culture and domestic space. In turn, the afterlives of these texts refigure the afterlives of the monuments, material objects and residences they describe.

The critical reception of contemporary Muslim women's self-representation overlays decades of studies that have examined widely disseminated Orientalist representations of Muslim women produced by European colonists and travellers. While South Asian Muslim women's writing has received scant attention, the field of Muslim

women's writing and especially the discourse on 'the Muslim woman' has received sustained and often negative and Othering scrutiny. As Mohja Kahf puts it,

> The dominant narrative of the Muslim women in Western discourse from about the eighteenth century to the present basically states, often in quite sophisticated ways, that the Muslim woman is innately oppressed; it produces Muslim women who affirm this statement by being either submissive nonentities or rebellious renegades—rebellious against their own Islamic world, that is, and conforming to Western gender roles (177).

South Asian Muslim women's self-representation cannot be seen in isolation from these representations, even if they are not constructed specifically as a corrective only to this Western imaginary of the Muslim woman as an oppressed being awaiting liberation, but rather portray multiple patriarchies and value systems laying claim to Muslim women's bodies. However, bringing South Asian Muslim women's writing to the global conversation on the 'plight' of Muslim women at the present moment serves not only to counter the monolithic conceptualization of the veil-bound Muslim woman by highlighting the diversity of experience flattened by the overemphasis on Islamic veiling and spatial segregation, but also addresses the need of scholarship on Muslim women beyond Muslim majority countries in the Arab world and in North Africa to encompass the development of Muslim women's writing at a time and place where they formed a significant minority.

In her survey of the history of representations of Muslim women in European literature from the twelfth to the nineteenth century, Mohja Kahf finds that even *before* any major colonial incursion into the Orient, the Muslim woman began to be set up as a "negative ideal" for the Victorian woman at the centre of the cult of domesticity emerging in Europe in the eighteenth century (116). As Ann McClintock has shown, the rise of this cult of domesticity installed a regime of leisure that required European women

aspiring for membership in the "respectable class"—not yet consolidated into the bourgeoisie—to perform "a time consuming *character role*" that not only denied these women any kind of productive labour, which was beginning to become exclusively the domain of the manufacturies, but also concealed all signs of the domestic labour of housework (emphasis original 161). This character role redefined womanliness in terms of its distance from profit and any occupation that provided monetary compensation. At the same time, this domestic confinement of the Victorian woman, which would become crucial in consolidating middle-class identity, cast her as "sweet preserver and comforter, the vessel and safeguard of tradition" who replicated and inculcated "the presiding domestic values of monogamy, thrift, order, accumulation, classification, quantification and regulation," which were also the values of European liberal industrial rationality (McClintock 161, 168). Nancy Armstrong, in her study of conduct manuals produced in the eighteenth century, finds that this domestic ideal of bourgeois Victorian womanhood was created as an antithesis of aristocratic behaviour emphatically "[differentiating] the new woman from the woman who served as the means of displaying aristocratic power," and posited "that any woman's value necessarily depreciated as she took up the practice of self-display" (72). This "sumptuary self-display" had hitherto been crucial for aristocratic women to negotiate complex courtly alliances as proxies of their families, but as this was now a declining arena of power, such practices could be deemed morally reprehensible in favour of the liberal rational values of thrift, order, accumulation etc. listed above (Kahf 115). Drawing on the work of Nancy Armstrong, Mohja Kahf argues that the Muslim woman came to stand in for the values hitherto associated with aristocratic women, which had since become passé. Being "safely foreign," the sign of

the Muslim woman provided a negative ideal to the sign of the Victorian domestic woman by taking on the undesirable characteristics of the aristocratic woman: "She was skilled in self-display, engaged in frivolous amusements, flaunted her sexuality, instigated corrupt desires in men…functioned as an object for the male gaze," and "aroused the wrong kind of desire," thus serving as "an object lesson in the right kind of desire" (Kahf 116, 117).

It is in the context of these changes in Europe—the rise of the cult of domesticity and its covert entwinement with the cult of liberal industrial rationality—that the Muslim woman too, like the Victorian woman, is arrested within the domestic sphere, but while for the latter, this sphere signified a generative field of privacy, peace, shelter and order, for the Muslim woman, this domestic space refers to the harem, which is represented as an inherently oppressive place almost as soon as it entered European circulation in the seventeenth century. As Europe's colonial incursions into the Muslim world gained momentum, it became even more important to foster a discourse that pits the domestic spheres of the now consolidated Western bourgeoisie against the domestic spaces of the Orient, and represent the latter as debased in comparison, in order to validate the civilisational superiority of the emergent colonial powers. Consequently, a discourse of the impenetrable but highly sexualized spaces of the harem and of passively languorous veiled Muslim women trapped within it gained circulation.

However, despite the enduring stereotype of their incarceration within the harem, few studies have focused on the ways in which Muslim women have articulated their relationship to the built environment, especially in the late colonial South Asian context. Inderpal Grewal's *Home and Harem* (1996), for example, bases its construction of the

harem as a conceptual category to be deployed in opposition to home, which refers to the domestic space of the English nation, solely in unexamined received ideas of the "undifferentiated notion of female incarceration that is figured as inimical to the notion of citizenship which relies on an idea of freedom as the promise of the nation" (231). Grewal uses the conceptual category of the harem without any reference to its material aspects, or the specificity of its local iterations such as the *zenana* and *antahpur*, in order "to suggest that in colonial discursive practices, all of these lose their specificities to mark a colonial 'phantasm'…of the incarcerated 'Eastern' woman, lacking freedom and and embodying submission and sexuality as well as an inaccessibility that colonial power hopes to penetrate" (5). Janaki Nair too focuses on Englishwomen's writings in her article on the ways in which the *zenana* was constructed at different times between 1813 and 1940[36]. It is only in recent scholarship that the material aspects of Muslim women's representations of space have attracted attention. Antoinette Burton's *Dwelling in the Archive* (2003) and Ruby Lal's *Coming of Age in Nineteenth Century India* (2013) explore the role of space in relation to Muslim women's literature and self-narration. Lal's work "chart[s] the history of becoming woman through an exploration of diverse paradigmatic spaces" such as the forest, the school, the household and the rooftops, while Burton argues that the ancestral house in *Sunlight* is constructed "as a very specific kind of space, a "telling place" through whose doors, windows, and passageways people's pasts are glimpsed, in whose rooms life-stories are relived and consequently re-membered" (Lal 4; Burton 16). This dissertation extends this work by developing a

[36] See: Nair, Janaki. "Uncovering the Zenana: Visions of Indian Womanhood in Englishwomen's Writings, 1813-1940." *Journal of Women's History* 2.1 (1990): 8-34.

sustained analysis of the autoethnographic spatial discourse present in Ikramullah's autobiographical and ethnographic writing, and in the three early Anglophone novels I have chosen. I argue that this autoethnographic spatial discourse combines aspects of self-narration and cultural description in ways that counter prevalent discourses of Muslim women's life-worlds and the spaces they inhabit.

The Spectre of Partition

I have applied the descriptor 'South Asian Muslim women's writing' to the texts I have chosen to assemble as a constellation in this dissertation for the purposes of understanding the reciprocal relationship between material culture, domestic interiors, commemoration and representational practice. However, there are several other frameworks within which some of them can and have been situated by other scholars. The obvious and most used lens through which these texts can be viewed, given the period narrativised by these texts, is that of Partition Studies, which continues to grow as a cohesive field of scholarly enquiry particularly through feminist historiographical interventions ever since the publication, in 1998, of Urvashi Butalia's *The Other Side of Silence* and Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin's *Borders and Boundaries*. Moreover, recent scholarly work within the ambit of Partition Studies has seen a literary turn, since Partition literature has been argued, as Mushirul Hasan puts it, to "expose the inadequacy of numerous narratives on Independence and Partition, compel us to explore fresh themes and adopt new approaches that have eluded the grasp of social scientists, and provide a foundation for developing an alternative discourse to current expositions of a general theory on inter-community relations" (18). Literature is thus argued to vivify the human

costs of Partition, supplementing the facts and figures of official history, not by providing more avenues of empirical evidence or mimetic accounts to help restore eventfulness to the incomprehensible Partition event, but rather by underlining its traumatic violence through the registers of testimony, memoir, hearsay, rumor and even through elisions that constitute the "drone of silence" which resists easy identification as either "a silence of a not-being-able-to-speak or of an ought-not-to-speak" (Daniel 150). Whether or not literature produced around the 1940s and 1950s confronts the Partition event directly, it cannot escape being scrutinized for the traces of the Partition—its gendered violence, the inexplicability of the seemingly 'overnight' breakdown of communities, its causes, its orchestrators, its beneficiaries, its victims—all of which overdetermine the way we approach the literary text.

However, despite the positioning of literature as an archive for the cultural memory of Partition, it is important to acknowledge the ambivalence regarding the nature of the silences engendered by Partition—the failure of language, as it were, to capture violence—because it is through these failures that a particular way of speaking about the Partition is normalized. The language used to represent Partition often constructs it as something "fundamentally inexplicable," received with "stunned disbelief," as if people were "caught unawares" by it (Chakrabarty 117). This is the structure of "trauma and tragedy," wherein even as "History seeks to explain the event; the memory of pain refuses the historical explanation and sees the event as a monstrously irrational aberration" (Chakrabarty 117, 119). Literature is seen as one of the avenues that may represent what cannot be explained by the causal narrative of history, that which "belongs to the marginalia of history—accidents, coincidences and concurrences that, while

important to the narrative, can never replace the structure of causes for which the historian searches" (Chakrabarty 117). Literature thus provides a space to articulate and begin to surmount this incomprehensibility that separates memory from history, especially with regards to Partition, and in doing so illustrates the discursive strategies through which Partition is constituted. One of these discursive strategies is the trope of madness, or of analogies of madness, whether "subversive", "inverted or elevated," which emerges in Partition literature as a frequently used "conventional shorthand to communicate [this] sense of incomprehension" (Saint xvi-xvii). This conventional shorthand is also visible in non-literary discourses on Partition as well, wherein it is used to underscore the aberrational character of Partition violence. But while literature serves as a discursive practice through which we may "hear in 'unqualified horror or despair' the more difficult cadence of 'tragedy,'" disciplinary historiography cannot be allowed to be disrupted by this unqualified horror constructed as resistant to meaning and analysis (Bhalla qtd. in Pandey 62). And yet Partition is often framed in the discourse of disciplinary history as a limit event, "represented as being so overwhelming, and so palpable and obvious, that it practically disappears from the analysis," and is "reduced…to a set of grand statistics, which allow but one inference: that the violence was extraordinary, not to say aberrational" (Pandey 188). The representation of Partition events, whether literary or historical, is thus a fraught exercise which is often in danger of reproducing a particular vocabulary—of incomprehensible madness, of inexplicable overnight breakdown of community, of exceptional retaliatory gendered violence, looting and rioting, and of the rightful occupation and usurpation of property belonging to

members of the 'enemy' community—without much space for a fresh probing of this discourse.

As Kavita Daiya has put it in *Violent Belongings* (2008), "it is to Partition that we often turn, even today, as an evocative repository of the meanings, metaphors and conceptions of contemporary ethnic belonging in South Asia," and as such, it is easy to let our readings of literature produced during the decades immediately preceding 1947 be overdetermined by these frames of ready reference that saturate the discourse about that period (2). It is no wonder then that some of the novels under consideration in this dissertation have often been read as partition novels. Not only are they set in the decades preceding Partition (and in the case of *Sunlight,* immediately after as well), they narrativise women's experiences of the increasing division at the level of family due to conflicting political and ideological allegiances, which anticipates the coming vivisection of the nation. Given that these novels provide an intimate glimpse into the *zenana* and the everyday lives of women therein, all three novels bear the promise of the kind of insight that Anis Kidwai proposes to furnish in writing her account of 1947-49, *Azadi ki chhaon mein* (1974) (translated in English as *In Freedom's Shade* and published in 2011): "a historian will one day need to know not just dates but also the inner states of minds and hearts of the people" (xvii). It is precisely the search for this kind of an insight that has led to the examination of ever diverse alternative archives of the experience of the 1930s and the 1940s in the subcontinent. Positioning these texts—novels as well as memoirs—as such an archive has been one way of challenging statist elisions of Partition violence and the colonial legacy of figuring the public space of the nation as masculine, with women's claims on it understood only in terms of their relation to men. For instance, in

one of the first articles about *Sunlight* to appear in a western academic journal, Anuradha Needham reads it in contrast to novels like *Midnight's Children,* which at the time of the publication of article in the early 1990s was being hailed as a 'definitive' narrative of the birth of the Indian nation through its vivisection, despite explicitly stating its fictionality, and which had achieved wide circulation in western academia. Needham draws attention to *Sunlight,* published twenty years before *Midnight's Children*, as "(an)other narrative of nation," which exposes the "profoundly gendered ways in which nationalism formulates itself," and which deserves more than the scant critical attention it had received until then (95).

Moreover, given the gendered nature of partition violence, scholarly interest in women's writing on the Partition has intensified, as is evidenced by the wide critical attention received by novels like Shauna Singh Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers* (1999) and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* (1988). Much of this scholarship situates these novels in relation to gender, nation, home, belonging, trauma, and memory. However, unlike other novels that come under the heading of women's writing on Partition, like Amrita Pritam's Punjabi novel *Pinjar* (1950), or Jyotirmoyee Devi's Bengali novel *Epar Ganga Opar Ganga* (1967), for instance, which directly confront the embodied gendered violence of Partition—rape, mutilation, abduction, initiation into sexual slavery, 'recovery' by the state and rejection by family and clan—the novels under consideration in this dissertation are not concerned with these aspects of Partition violence. Rather, these novels chart the trajectory of elite and exceptionally well-educated Muslim women's negotiation of access to public spaces within the codes of *purdah,* their struggles with patriarchal structures installed to discipline transgressive

romantic desires and aspirations for individual autonomy within a joint-family system, their anxieties regarding the choice of remaining a religious minority in India vis-à-vis becoming an immigrant in Pakistan, and their memorialising of traces of Muslim culture in the city-scapes of the two coming states as well as in the domestic architecture and material culture of elite households.

A Description of the Chapters

There is much that can be said about the constitutive violence of Partition, but here I want to avoid its specter from swallowing entirely other aspects of literary representations of elite educated Muslim women's lived experiences during the 1930s and 1940s. Rather than excavate these narratives for clues to 'explain' the nature and antecedents of partition violence, this dissertation reads these texts as a cohesive corpus of *South Asian Muslim women's writing about South Asian Muslim women,* which has thus far received little sustained academic consideration. In reading these texts in conjunction with each other, I do not aim to construct a genealogy of concerted and homogenous Muslim separatism that later crystallized into the Pakistan Movement. Instead, this dissertation uses a small cross-section of the corpus of South Asian women's writing, strategically limited to a particular publication period, to examine how mid-century Muslim women's Anglophone writing and self-representation in the region deployed autoethnographic strategies to construct a spatial discourse that encompasses domestic interiors as well as the monumental landscape of Islamicate cities. I turn first to the memoirs and ethnographic essays of Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah. As narratives of self and community, Ikramullah's memoirs, *From Purdah to Parliament* (1963) and

ethnographic essays collected in *Behind the Veil* (1953) provide a valuable introduction to the ways in which cultural description and self-fashioning articulate with each other. Ikramullah's representational strategies are clear: she imbues domestic objects, especially family heirlooms with informational value, which she then interprets in the context of her vision of the collective ancestral history of South Asian Muslims. Having established the appurtenances of traditional houses, rather than public monuments and historical ruins as authentic sites from which to access the past, she then authorises secluded Muslim women as producers of authentic knowledge with regard to domestic architecture, spatial practices and material culture. In doing so she authorises herself as well, seizing the monopoly over Indian architectural and spatial discourse from British colonial administrators. Finally, through a juxtaposition of the traditional courtyard house vis-à-vis the 'modern' bungalow of the Civil Lines in her memoirs, *From Purdah to Parliament*, she makes it clear that residential forms were crucial to her self-fashioning as an exceptional member of the reconstituted postcolonial Muslim elite milieu of Pakistan. In other words, Ikramullah uses her command over ceremonial and material culture to articulate a hybrid identity that incorporates the seemingly incommensurable inheritance of Islamicate cultural traditions and the learned codes of colonial modernity.

In chapter 1, which also serves as a critical introduction to the dissertation, I examine Ikramullah's life-writing and memoirs in the context of colonial spatial discourse and harem fantasy, which form the discursive field within which her writing is embedded. A discussion of this discursive context makes Ikramullah's interventions in formulating an autoethnographically inflected spatial discourse clear and meaningful. I use the qualifier autoethnographical in this dissertation to convey a hybrid form of

cultural description which encompasses both the autobiographical as well as the communal, and is simultaneously accommodative of and resistant to dominant discourses. Ikramullah adopts an architectural approach to self-narration, which can be seen in the novels of Futehally, Shah Nawaz, and Hosain as well. Together, these texts form a constellation that while being embedded within various intersecting discourses on domestic space and its significance to national identity, succeed in producing an autoethnographically informed spatial discourse that accommodates some aspects of prevalent contemporary notions about domestic space but overwrites others, thus generating new insights about late colonial elite Muslim women's relation to the built environment.

Having addressed the ways in which cultural description functions in the life-writing of one elite late colonial Muslim woman author, chapter 2 examines the critical reception and publication history of *Zohra, The Heart Divided* and *Sunlight on a Broken Column* in order to situate these novels within the literary landscape of South Asia. I investigate why these novels escaped sustained scholarly attention when they first appeared, in what contexts they enjoyed renewed interest, and what this tells us about the field of literary history in South Asia. I argue that the current frames through which early novels in South Asia are viewed require some recalibration in order to accommodate discussions of Muslim women's writing in English.

Chapter 3 delves into the ways in which transdisciplinary studies of literature have approached the issue of cultural description in the novel. I propose that instead of reading the thick description of domestic interiors, material culture and the monumental landscape of the Islamicate city as something of an extraliterary excess that needs to be

surmounted in order to get to the heart of what the novels are trying to convey about national history, modernity, or domesticity, we focus our attention on this very descriptive detail in order to work through what symbolic weight it carries and how this relates to the kinds of interpretation possible. Focusing on the literary evocation of materiality, I examine how the appurtenances that propped up the South Asian late colonial Muslim elite are represented in the novels as indices of dramatic social transformation, repositories of memories of the ancestral past and sites of complex negotiations with late colonial and postcolonial modernity. Furthermore, I argue that while the intimate sphere of the private residence is conceptually monumentalised in *Sunlight*, the autoethnographic spatial discourse of *The Heart Divided* and *Zohra* privatises monumental landscapes as sites of transgressive love and folds them within the domain of interiority and erotic excess.

Chapter 1 The Ancestral House and Self-Fashioning: Autoethnographic Spatial Discourse

In this chapter, I explore some of the ways in which domestic interiors, material culture, and vernacular residential forms could figure in the self-conception of a late colonial elite Muslim woman as well as in the reconstitution of a modernising public. I examine three strategies of self-fashioning in Calcutta-born Pakistani diplomat Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah's autoethnographic writing. First, Ikramullah overwrites colonial spatial discourse and harem fantasy. This enables her to then authorise Muslim women as authentic sources of indigenous knowledge. Finally, she strategically reappropriates elements of imperial Mughal material culture on the one hand and colonial modernity on the other in order to affirm her own exceptional hybridity. These moves establish an inheritance narrative that posits the postcolonial elite milieu of Pakistan, of which Ikramullah was a member, as the bona fide recipients of the legacy of eight centuries of South Asian Islamicate culture. While this narrative of an emerging postcolonial nation is a worthy subject of enquiry in its own stead, my intention in this chapter is to establish it as part of the context in which residential forms and domestic objects gained meaning, so as to better understand the ways in which they are represented in the three novels from this period that I discuss in the third chapter.

My chief interest in this chapter lies in investigating how Ikramullah interprets domestic interiors and material culture, in order to trace the spatial discourse inherent in her autoethnographic writing. I contend that this autoethnographically inflected spatial discourse effects a break from the colonial spatial discourse, which privileges cultural

difference over hybrid forms. In Ikramullah's writing, the biography of objects—lost during the long decline of Islamicate power in South Asia, and subsequently salvaged through the efforts of the resourceful Muslim elite—reflects the biography of the South Asian Muslim public, which is marginalised and eventually resurgent in postcolonial Pakistan. My discussion of Ikramullah's memoirs and ethnographic essays in this chapter is meant to provide the historical and theoretical context to the novels of three of her contemporaries—Mumtaz Shah Nawaz (1912-1948), Zeenuth Futehally (1904-1992) and Attia Hosain (1913-1998). I examine the representation of young Muslim women's relationship to the built environment in these novels in chapter 3.

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One of the most complete descriptions of the traditional residential architecture of early twentieth century South Asian urban upper-class Muslim communities occurs in an essay by Pakistani politician, diplomat, and author Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah. The essay, "Interior of a Muslim Home," is one in a series of ethnographic pieces commissioned to satiate the interest of a specifically Western audience about the salient features of Pakistani culture, especially those that distinguished it from other subcontinental cultures and necessitated the creation of the Pakistani state[37]. The essay appears as the first of eighteen such works initially written, in Ikramullah's words, to satisfy the curiosity of "Western visitors [who] were fascinated, and more interested in customs followed 'behind the veil' than in politics," and later collected in the volume,

[37] "The creation of Pakistan," writes Ikramullah, "which at the time was the first and largest Muslim state to have achieved independence, generated a great deal of interest, and there was much curiosity about it in the West, especially since it had once been part of the subcontinent of India. It was mainly the Westerners who were keen to know what the reasons were for the need for a separate state, and eventually, for the creation of it" (xii).

Behind the Veil: Ceremonies, Customs and Colour, first published by Pakistan's Department of Information in 1953, and later revised and republished in 1992 and again in 1998 by the Oxford University Press (xiv). It is significant that "Interior of a Muslim Home" precedes other essays with titles such as "Customs, Traditions and Etiquette," "Milady's Household," "The Pleasures of the Table," "Varieties in the Wardrobe," "Jewels of the Past," and even, "The Gentle Art of Flirtation," which argues that late colonial upper-class Muslim "society was too sophisticated a society not to allow for harmless dalliance between the sexes," and that this kind of harmless dalliance was normalised "by making flirtations almost obligatory between certain relationships, such as between brothers and sisters-in-law of both sides"[38] (95). The essays collected in *Behind the Veil* thus offer a comprehensive account of material and culinary cultures, norms of etiquette, religious festivals, and rituals marking birth, marriage and death. The

[38] Fatima Mernissi casts a darker light on Ikramullah's figuration of the communication of *purdahnasheen* women with familiar men as harmless dalliance. In *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Muslim Society* (1975), Mernissi writes: "A society that opts for sexual segregation, and therefore for impoverishment of heterosexual relations, is a society that fosters…seduction as a means of communication" (140). Instead of understanding these conventions of communication between the sexes as harmless banter indicative of social control mechanisms that do not tend toward the absolute repression of female sexuality, Mernissi says that this mode of communication "is a conflict strategy, a way of seeming to give of yourself and of procuring great pleasure without actually giving anything," which can be read as the "expression of an often uncontrollable emotional avarice" in adult relationships (140). Mernissi further explains that flirtation as a code of communicative behaviour in segregated societies arrests gender relations in a perpetual adolescence that is inimical to relationships free of manipulation and domination: "In a society where heterosexual relations are combatted, emotional fulfilment is inhibited. As we are taught to fear and mistrust the other sex, and therefore to relate to its members through seduction, manipulation, and domination, we become mere puppets who extend the games of seduction, acceptable during adolescence, into our relations as mature men and women" (141). In the novels I discuss, a common theme is the representation of transgressive love from the point of view of segregated women coming of age during a time when nationalist discourses of women's emancipation had figured companionate marriage as a defining aspiration for the 'New Woman,' and although secluded, young Muslim women were expected to adapt quickly to patrilocal traditions after marriage and enact the ideal of companionate marriage. In Zeenuth Futehally's *Zohra* (1951), one of the relations Ikramullah marks for "obligatory flirtation"—that between a woman and her brother-in-law—develops into a deep but ascetic attraction that provides the central crisis of the novel and is significant to the growth of its eponymous protagonist. See: Mernissi, Fatima. *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Muslim Society.* Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987.

ethnographic observations made in the essays are intended to convey the sophistication of upper-class late colonial Muslim society, as well as naturalise some of its disciplinary mechanisms as subtle, benevolent and certainly not stifling for women. Ikramullah believed that "[w]hen civilisation is at its height, food clothing, and all everyday activities take on the elaborateness of a work of art," and it is this complexity that she attempts to capture in *Behind the Veil* (27). Beginning with "Interior of a Muslim Home" conveys Ikramullah's emphasis on the production of knowledge with regard to the domestic interiors of the Muslim elite in late colonial South Asia, an interest we can also find in her memoirs.

Ikramullah's writing in *Beyond the Veil* as well as in her memoirs *From Purdah to Parliament* (1963) translates the social institution of the *purdah* and the spatial segregation practices of the *zenana* into a representation of lived experience. This act of translation is valuable because it vivifies upper-class segregated domestic space, accommodating some aspects of contemporary ideas on life and social relations 'behind the veil,' while debunking others. Writing about the *zenana* as social institution as well as domestic space in the 1940s entailed intervening in various long established discursive fields. Colonial spatial discourse, ethnography, harem fantasy, formulations of ideal-typical domesticity, modernity and national identity, all frame and contextualise Ikramullah's representations of the domestic interiors and material culture of the upper echelons of late colonial Muslim society. In what follows, I discuss the imbrication of Ikramullah's writing within these discursive fields while also exploring the representational moves through which she engages in self-invention and accrues authority

and authenticity. What emerges is an autoethonographic spatial discourse that illuminates the role that residential architectural forms play in self-fashioning.

Inheriting the Nation: Material Culture and Self-Fashioning

Through comments made in Ikramullah's introduction to both editions of *Behind the Veil*, it is clear that the book's intended foreign audience is meant to view contemporary Pakistani culture as the lamentably diminished but nonetheless true recipient of the legacy of the grandeur of the imperial Mughal court,[39] and that this proud legacy was upheld mostly by Muslim women through their preservation of pieces of material culture and their on-going practice of rituals and ceremonies. I will address this second point presently, but first it is necessary to examine Ikramullah's move of underscoring material culture as a valuable means of accessing ancestral past and establishing civilizational continuity. As cultural historian Marius Kwint has observed in *Material* Memories (1999), objects can furnish recollection, stimulate remembering and form records "through the deployed mnemonics of public monuments or mantelpiece souvenir," and may be seen as "analogues to living memory, storing information beyond individual experience" (2). In Ikramullah's writing, heritage objects used or displayed in a domestic setting take on similar properties, but are interpreted toward specific ends. Establishing the informational value of objects of domestic material culture in relation to ancestral history and positing them as authentic and meaningful sources of understanding the past enables Ikramullah to figure women—even those who led secluded lives behind

[39] "In describing the customs and ceremonies," writes Ikramullah, "I have often wandered into the past, for it was the courts of the Mughal Kings of Delhi and Lucknow that set the fashions that are followed to this day. It was in that age of splendour and opulence…that this manner of life was evolved" (xxii).

the veil or those who were not visible in their participation in the making of the history of the nation—as producers of meaning with regard to domestic interiors and the objects therein.

Furthermore, as Clifford Geertz has observed:

> At the political center of any complexly organized society…there is both a governing elite and a set of symbolic forms expressing the fact that it is in truth governing. No matter how democratically the members of the elite are chosen…or how deeply divided among themselves they may be…they justify their existence and order their actions in terms of a collection of stories, ceremonies, insignia, formalities, and appurtenances that they have either inherited or, in more revolutionary situations, invented (152).

Anthropologists have shown how ceremonies and heirlooms are used to legitimise regimes and elite status in many societies[40]. Ikramullah engages in a particular interpretation of the ceremonies and material culture of the South Asian Muslim elite—one that furnishes a narrative of dramatic loss and enterprising recovery culminating in the establishment of the state of Pakistan. Her narrative legitimises both the new regime, as well as Ikramullah's elite status as a member of the dominant class in the new homeland of South Asian Muslims. It is true that Ikramullah's narrative of the ancestral past of her imagined community—that of South Asian Muslims—undeniably focuses only on its affluent members, and the inheritance of stories, ceremonies and appurtenances by other similarly privileged but also enterprising members who come to constitute the dominant class of the postcolonial citizenry. However, Ikramullah's writing is at the same time a useful introduction to the ways in which elite Muslim women could

[40] See: Moore, Sally Falk, and Barbara G. Myerhoff. *Secular Ritual.* Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1977*;* and Kertzer, David I. *Ritual Politics and Power*. CT: Yale University Press.

engage in self-invention, accrue discursive authority and gain membership within a reconstituted public. These representational strategies provide an important context that complements readings of Muslim women-authored early Anglophone novels in the region beyond the established lens of the colonial encounter, national allegory, social criticism and nostalgia by exploring the role of domestic interiors and architectural forms such as the private residence in women's literary self-representation.

Writing about the genesis of *Behind the Veil*, Ikramullah recounts how Fatima Jinnah[41], one of the leading figures of the Pakistan movement, and acclaimed as *Mader-e Millat* (Mother of the Nation), had urged Ikramullah, then a member of the Constituent Assembly, to provide visiting foreign dignitaries with a glimpse into Pakistani culture, and how Ikramullah began writing the essays that would constitute *Behind the Veil* as a means to accomplish this task. Ikramullah writes:

> I took them to lunches and to teas, and…I showed them houses which had some vestige left of our way of life, and showed them whatever of our culture remained—the trousseaus of the brides of the *taluqdars* of Lucknow, jewels from princely states whose members had taken refuge in Pakistan. 'This is nothing, we've practically lost everything,' would be my comment…
>
> Jewels that had been handed down for generations, and silver that had been treasured for decades, were all lost. It looked as though one would never again see in any household even a faint echo of past grandeur. Yet…phoenix-like the manners and customs of the past revived in this new State of Pakistan… (xiv, xxvii).

[41] Fatima Jinnah (1893-1967) was a close associate and political aide to her brother Muhammad Ali Jinnah, founder of the All India Muslim League and the first president of Pakistan. A dentist by profession, she did not hold any official governmental positions in the state of Pakistan, but she was closely involved in the organization of the Muslim League and in advocating for women's inclusion in the Pakistan movement. Along with Ikramullah, she established the Muslim Women Students' Federation. She also organized the Women's Relief Committee to safeguard and advocate for women's interests in relation to refugee rehabilitation efforts after independence. In 1965, she unsuccessfully contested presidential elections against the incumbent Ayub Khan, who allegedly managed to remain in power through allegedly duplicitous means.

For Ikramullah, displaying cultural heritage meant taking tourists to traditional private residences rather than, for instance, historical sites associated with Mughals such as those within the walled city of Lahore. Vestiges of a certain form of life were to be found in inhabited residences rather than uninhabited ruins or monuments, and it is this form of life and the appurtenances associated with it that Ikramullah insists on representing and memorialising in her writing. Houses—and households that contained objects that evidenced links to the distant ancestral past—emerge as important sites in Ikramullah's inheritance narrative with regard to postcolonial Pakistani culture. In other words, the mantelpiece souvenir rather than the public monument (if we recall Kwint's discussion of the 'deployed mnemonics' of objects) is Ikramullah's preferred object and record through which to interpret and recount the narrative of the past. In *The System of Objects* (1968, 2005), Jean Baudrillard finds that once "blood, birth and titles of nobility have lost their ideological force," as was the case with the abolition of princely states in favour of democratic forms of government in postcolonial India and Pakistan, "the task of signifying transcendence…[falls] to material signs—to pieces of furniture, objects, jewellery and works of art" (89). Inherited material objects thus become important "vectors of status" in post-feudal societies (Baudrillard 89). Their symbolic value transcends their functional and aesthetic value, and it is this symbolic content that Ikramullah exploits in order to both authorise Muslim women as authentic sources and producers of cultural knowledge and to furnish a particular narrative of the ancestral past of elite South Asian Muslims such as herself.

Of these objects, Ikramullah places special emphasis on heirlooms. "Family heirlooms," writes Pierre Bourdieu, "not only bear material witness to the age and

continuity of the lineage and so consecrate its social identity…they also contribute in a practical way to its spiritual reproduction, that is, to transmitting the values, virtues and competences which are the basis of legitimate membership in bourgeois dynasties" (69). In Ikramullah's formulation, heirlooms bequeathed from one family member to another or acquired from a fragmenting Mughal aristocracy during its period of decline legitimise membership in the imagined community of the postcolonial nation. For Ikramullah, objects in private collections, secreted away by those seeking refuge, are able to convey more fully the narrative of loss and eventual partial recuperation underpinning her view of Pakistani history and postcolonial Pakistani identity, which she traces through seven centuries of Islamic rule followed by a century of "cataclysmic upheaval[s]" culminating in the inauguration of the Pakistani state where, "phoenix-like the manners and customs of the past [were] revived" (xxvii, xxvii). Every gesture to inaugurate a nation anew requires the re-envisioning of its past, and this may be read as Ikramullah's underlying motive in framing her ethnographic observations. While this frame is important to bear in mind, it is also important to focus on the objects Ikramullah chooses to furnish this narrative. In the subsequent chapters, where I discuss three early Anglophone novels by late colonial Muslim women from Ikramullah's milieu, we shall see that while all novels may not evidence a sustained narrative geared toward inventing a national past through their representation of domestic space and material culture, there is nonetheless a profusion of descriptive detail with respect to furnishings and objects of daily use, and the jostling of traditional appurtenances with modern ones. The objects from which Ikramullah extracts an unbroken genealogy of Islamicate culture are the same ones that the novels use to represent the tension between tradition and modernity, indicating the

multiple layers of meaning encoded within the private residence and its furnishings, and the diversity of interpretations availed by Muslim women authors.

Ikramullah is not alone in articulating this narrative of loss, inheritance and resurgence with regard to South Asian Muslims. It also appears, albeit to different extents, in Pakistani author Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's novel *The Heart Divided* (1957), in Indian author Zeenuth Futehally's novel *Zohra* (1951), and in British-Indian author Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken* Column (1961). I discuss the novels in greater detail in the following chapters, but here I want to sketch some significant similarities in the narratives of ancestral past that occur in each, and are shared by Ikramullah's writing as well. This allows for a fuller understanding of the particular narrative of South Asian Muslim history that underwrites Ikramullah's work. I discuss Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided* at some length here as the historical narrative the novel offers regarding South Asian Muslims is most resonant with Ikramullah's writing, since both authors were ardent supporters of the Pakistan movement. Their texts display the shared concern of representing South Asian Muslims as a distinct collectivity deserving of its own state where majoritarian democracy would preserve and expand the power of the Muslim elite while also guaranteeing rights for women and underprivileged Muslims. Ikramullah, after all, was a member of the Muslim League and served with Shah Nawaz's mother Jahan Ara in Pakistan's first Constituent Assembly. The political positions of Ikramullah and Shah Nawaz are clearer and more apparent in their writing, if one wishes to undertake such a reading, than our other authors.

While Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* and Futehally's *Zohra* do not offer such an explicit political commentary, they nonetheless share at least two characteristics

with Ikramullah's and Shah Nawaz's texts. Firstly, there is a preoccupation with establishing a long aristocratic lineage for the protagonists in each narrative. Francis Robinson has observed that family history, along with place of settlement, was an important source of identity for Muslims in South Asia, especially if claiming descent from the Prophet, which conferred elite status[42]. The importance of family history resided in its conferral of an aura of nobility and in establishing a cohesive group identity maintained through generations by enterprising networks of patronage and careful marital alliances. In Ikramullah's writing, family heirlooms materialised family histories and evinced the geographical reach of the family's migration. They affirmed the status of the family as patrons of artisanal objects, as well as helped to distribute this status throughout the generations. Ikramullah's narrative of the ancestral past culminates in its inheritance—both materially through family heirlooms, and discursively through the labour of imagining the nation—by the postcolonial elite in Pakistan.

While this is not the case in all three novels, they do however share a strikingly similar ancestral origin story—one that stretches back several centuries, and is committed to memory by all members of the descent group. In *Sunlight on a Broken Column,* for example, young Laila, the narrator-protagonist is exhorted by her guardian, Aunt Abida, "Never forget the family into which you were born" (38, 39). Laila recounts in response that the youngest generations were still taught to recite the names of all their ancestors

[42] Robinson writes that "[t]he growth f the modern state, the introduction of new systems of knowledge, the expansion of capitalist modes of production, and the spread of communications of all forms…made possible the fashioning of all kinds of new identities at local, regional and supra-regional levels," and that while seemingly unlikely, "Muslim identity…[became] a prime theatre of activity" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with family becoming "an important source of identity zealously maintained in family histories, most especially if claiming descent from the Prophet," along with place of settlement "exemplified by the custom…of adopting names of [the] home *qasbah*" (272). See: Robinson, Francis. "The British Empire and Muslim Identity in South Asia." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 8 (1998): 271-89.

and that "since that time five hundred years ago when the first of them had fought his way across the northern mountains through the Khyber Pass to the refuge of green valleys many marches south, their ghosts had stood sentries over all action, speech and thought" (39). Family tradition lies heavy on Laila, indicating the ambivalence of a protagonist whose narrative culminates in the fragmentation of family, rather than its reconstitution as the elite in the postcolonial republic, as in Ikramullah and Shah Nawaz. In her memoirs, *From Purdah to Parliament,* in contrast, Ikramullah humorously relates how a family retainer who had begun her service in the household of Ikramullah's great-grandfather was so mindful of their family traditions that she "never went shopping for even a trifling thing without recounting the whole genealogical table of the family for the edification of the shopkeeper" (21). In addition to the conscientiousness with which families of elite status—and their retainers—regarded family history, tradition and lineage, the trope of legendary foreign origins far beyond the limits of the Indian landmass also appears in Ikramullah's writing, when in her memoirs she recounts the Iranian ancestry of her maternal grandfather[43].

In general, in each of the texts, there is an emphasis on the generational privilege accrued from ancestors who enjoyed the patronage of Persianate, Turkic or Mughal courts, or arrived in India from Central Asia and/or Iran. However, this does not detract from the representation of the experience of colonial domination, but rather brings it to greater relief through the evocation of great loss. This is the second characteristic common to the representation of the elite South Asian Muslim milieu in the writing of

[43] I discuss Ikramullah's representation of her grandfather Nawab Syud Muhammad in greater detail in the final section of this chapter.

Ikramullah and in the three novels. The novels too are concerned with foregrounding the simultaneously privileged but politically and socially insecure position of the Muslim elite in the late colonial period. In *Sunlight on a Broken Column* for instance, Hosain uses the career of Laila's uncle Hamid to emphasise the vulnerability of the Muslim landowners of Oudh. Despite the inherited title of *Taluqdar* and a substantial estate, Uncle Hamid struggles to secure his position as feudal power wanes in the early decades of the twentieth century[44]. Uncle Hamid attempts to safeguard the elite status of his family by contesting elections "at a time when it is uncertain which class of persons will obtain political power" and it has also become clear that "greater power would lie in the hands of those who would form the new government" rather than the traditional landed elite (233). It is not difficult for Uncle Hamid to secure a nomination in the provincial elections of 1937, even though he has to manoeuvre between the potential nominees of the Congress and the Muslim League to do so, and ultimately decides to contest one of the four reserved seats granted to the *taluqdars*. Hosain writes that "[c]onstituencies and ministries were distributed among gentlemen like cakes, and ladies were offered seats in both houses like bouquets," and securing a nomination became "a gigantic game of chess,

[44] Thomas Metcalf writes that the Oudh *taluqdars* were a "specially favored and legally privileged group of zamindars…marked off from all other landowners by the possession of *sanads* awarding them unfettered proprietary title over their estates," and created as a class of that would serve as a "strong conservative bulwark for the Empire" after the revolt of 1857, which in Oudh had taken the form of agrarian uprisings (6). There were only 270 of them, but they held 60% of the land in Oudh and were, as Metcalf describes them, "if not a true landed aristocracy, an elite group very much conscious of their superior status in rural society," forming special organisations such as the British Indian Association of Oudh and independent political parties to express "their corporate sense of belonging to a distinct group" and to contest legislative seats "on a platform of private property and free enterprise" (6-7). However, "[w]ith their elitist ethic, their extensive landholdings, and their close ties with the British, the taluqdars were peculiarly vulnerable to the threat of zamindari abolition" which was passed into law in 1951, and which limited acquisition of land to thirty acres and stripped all landholdings except those that were unlet as home farms or grove land (7). See: Metcalf, Thomas R. "Landlords Without Land: The U.P. Zamindars Today." *Pacific Affairs* 40.1/2 (1967): 5-18.

or some mathematical problem of permutations and combinations," or "a game of musical chairs" empty of "political passion" but displaying "an implacable wish for power" (193, 196, 225). While some members of the Muslim elite believed that "party affiliations were mere labels; a concession to democratic forms," and that "they would succeed as in the past, because of the pressure their power and influence could put on voters," Uncle Hamid recognised that the feudal order that sustained the *taluqdari* was swiftly coming to an end "now that millions of ordinary men and women were being given the right to vote by the new constitution" (193). His anxieties are encapsulated in an outburst during a discussion with his sons when he exclaims: "Our existence is threatened…! Our fathers and forefathers handed us down rights and privileges which it is our duty to preserve." (199). Even though Uncle Hamid wins the elections, he gravely presages that "[i]t will be open to any future Government to abolish the landlord system altogether, in spite of statutory safeguards," and, as Hosain writes in the final section of the novel, "[a]t the end of a long, legal struggle landowners had to accept the fact that their feudal existence had been abolished constitutionally as swiftly as by the revolution they had always feared" (232, 277). Within a decade of his first success in elections, Uncle Hamid passes away, ultimately having been unable to prevent the fragmentation and expatriation of his family, the loss of the inherited estates, and the partitioning of the family townhouse Ashiana in Lucknow.

Hosain's narrative sets the *taluqdars* up as the last link to the brief grandeur of the nawabate of Oudh, which flourished in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as one of the successor states that grew out of the decline of the Mughal empire. Yet the *taluqdars* are not represented as true aristocrats, but rather a class of land-owners who

were allowed to pursue their own eccentricities for a time, and inhabit the houses, gardens and orchards vacated by the last nawab, his court, and those who depended on his patronage. The sense of impending loss is prevalent in the novel, which opens with the death of the protagonist's grandfather and the subsequent reorganisation of the domestic patterns of Ashiana to accommodate the modern lifestyles of Uncle Hamid and his non-*purdah* wife.

Let us now look at the ways in which the origin story of the family at the heart of the novel—and threats to its position of privilege—are represented in *The Heart Divided* and *Zohra. The Heart Divided* delves deeply into the personal proclivities and received narratives of communal history that may have led young upper-class Muslim women to endorse the Pakistan movement in the 1930s and 40s. Through sisters Sughra and Zohra, the novel dramatizes two divergent narratives of the evolution of political consciousness among young Muslim women. The elder Sughra envisages a political formation that would guarantee the protection of the underprivileged based on Islamic principles, while the increasingly estranged younger sister Zohra is inflamed first by the kind of reactionary anti-colonialism that posits independence as the solution to all problems of inequality, and, later, by socialist ideals that expand her horizons beyond the injustices of the immediate colonial encounter to focus on gross inequalities in Punjabi society. However, both sisters, while initially at loggerheads with each other with regard to political allegiances, ultimately reconcile with their acceptance of the inevitability of a separate state for South Asian Muslims.

Both are informed by a communal self-perception received from their father, Sheikh Jamaluddin, who is represented as an "admirer of the West…[and] had been one

of the first Muslim young men from the Punjab to go to Cambridge, where he had taken a degree in law…and had even fallen in love with a young English girl" (3). Yet Shah Nawaz deftly juxtaposes Jamaluddin's admiration for the West with his acquiescence to a traditional marriage with a cousin, and, despite his initial determination to "live his life like an 'English gentleman'," Shah Nawaz characterises Jamaluddin as one of those scions of a class of wealthy landed elite who found it unnecessary to deviate from traditional modes of domesticity, and "consoled himself by…making the strange request that his fiancée…be taught English" (4). Thus Jamaluddin is presented to readers as an incompletely hybridised character type in whom the processes of transculturation are supplanted by the comforts of 'home' and the trappings of dynastic wealth. Despite an initial fascination with other forms of social and intimate relations, Jamaluddin's return to Lahore halts his desire to look beyond the traditions of the cultural milieu within which he is embedded. "[O]nce he was home again," writes Shah Nawaz, "the old habits began to reassert themselves," and "[a]s the years went by, Sheikh Jamaluddin really began to believe that perhaps the old ways were the best" (4, 5).

Shah Nawaz represents these incorruptible 'old habits' and 'old ways,' which outlast youthful aspirations of adopting 'the Western way of life,' in terms of compliance with family traditions, rendered vital to civilizational continuity in the face of colonial debasement. Early on in the novel, Shah Nawaz includes a scene where Jamaluddin schools his younger daughter Zohra on the history of South Asian Muslims. I quote at length from the novel here because the passage clarifies the narrative of decline and minoritisation that underpins Ikramullah's particular attention to objects, rituals and domestic interiors as sites of self-invention for the Muslim elite. Questioning Zohra's

understanding of the history of South Asian Muslims, Jamaluddin provides correctives to her colonial history textbooks by saying:

> You know, how we Muslims came here; the first of our ancestors as far back as 712 A.D. You know, how we ruled here for nearly 800 years, and you know how the country prospered and art and culture flourished in that period. You also know, the way by which the British came here first, as traders and then at a time when India was weak, how they exploited our weakness to become our rulers. You also know that the Indian people realized this too late, that when they did, they rose up in revolt, and it was the Muslims, who led that rebellion, which your school books call the Mutiny of 1857?... So much your history books tell you, but they forget to mention how the Muslims were crushed and beaten after the revolt of 1857. The white ruler, realizing the latent strength of the Muslims, oppressed and weakened them in every way, their lands were confiscated, their well-known families obliterated, their industries destroyed, and in some cases, even the thumbs of the skilled workers cut off… Crushed and bitter, angry, yet beaten for a long time, they hated the British and shunned all that was Western.

Here we find a clearly articulated communal history that traces its origins to a particular point of arrival. Here, the eight centuries of Islamic regimes in the subcontinent are figured as a period of heightened artistic and cultural activity, which was brought to a violent conclusion by the brutal suppression of the revolt of 1857.[45] According to this narrative of the history of South Asian Muslims, after the suppression of the revolt, the Muslim community was further decimated by continued disproportionate persecution by British colonial authorities.[46] This decimation engendered the adherence to 'old habits'

[45] 1857 marked the year of the Sepoy Mutiny, or, the First War of Indian Independence, which brought an end to the rule of the British East India Company and inaugurated the British Raj through the Government of India Act, 1858, which transferred power from the Company to the Crown, and effectively dismantled all traces of the declining Mughal empire. The last emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, although only a nominal figurehead, declared his support for the rebellion, and at its failure, was tried for treason and exiled to Burma. All his male heirs in line of succession were eliminated. Members of Mughal families, especially those residing within the imperial capital of Delhi, were tainted with the suspicion of collusion with the rebels and persecuted. Many chose to leave for other cities. This exile is figured as a significant moment of the narrative of South Asian Muslim collective memory. It appears in literature as a trope in a genre of Urdu poetry, the *shahr-i-ashob*, or, lament for the city.

[46] However, as we have just seen, the Muslim *Taluqdars* of Oudh were in fact given several concessions by the British colonial authorities in order to strengthen their power base in the United Provinces. See: Footnote 2.

and ‘old ways’ among members of the landed Muslim elite in Punjab, especially in their private lives. The importance of securing family tradition amongst elite Muslims is figured here as a reaction to legitimate fears of civilizational erasure, in much the same way as Partha Chatterjee has shown how the Bengali Hindu elite compensated for their lack of agency in the public domain by figuring the home as an impenetrable site where civilizational values could be nurtured and made safe from the debasement of colonial domination[47].

On the other hand, civilizational continuity is figured in terms of an ancient noble lineage unaccustomed to subordination. Shah Nawaz represents a family that is well aware of this lineage and the elite status it signifies: “They were a proud and arrogant lot,” she writes, “who traced their descent through hundreds of years to Arab sheikhs, who came to India with the early Muslim conquerors,” and became “feudal lords owing allegiance to the paramount power, but leading an independent existence” in the Punjab throughout the many regimes that gained control of the fertile and strategic area (4). Thus Shah Nawaz distances the family on which the novel centres from any experience of direct and violent subjection, and yet at the same time imbricates them within the systemic subjugation of colonialism, which Zohra describes as being “the slaves of another race and therefore unable to change anything at all,” referring to her desire for the kind of governance that would succour the “stench-ridden streets of the city and the shrunken bodies and weary eyes of the working people” (286). The constant reminders of

[47] See: Chatterjee, Partha. “The Nationalist Resolution of the Woman Question.” *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*. Eds. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid. Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989. 233–53; also Sinha, Mrinalini. *Colonial Masculinity: The ‘Manly Englishman’ and the “Effeminate Bengali’ in the Late Nineteenth Century.* Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1995; and Chakrabarty, Dipesh. “The Difference-Deferral of (A) Colonial Modernity: Public Debates on Domesticity in British Bengal.” *History Workshop Journal* 36 (1993): 1–33.

this embeddedness in colonial relations through long discussions of political history in the novel and the depiction of all members of the Jamaluddin family as decidedly anticolonial allows Shah Nawaz to position Jamaluddin to speak for South Asian Muslims as a category, and of their persecution under the British regime, despite the relatively privileged status his family has enjoyed for generations.

The preoccupation with lineage surfaces in Zeenuth Futehally's *Zohra* (1951) as well, and is similarly meant to establish the peculiar circumstances of the Muslim aristocracy in late colonial India—both politically minoritised, yet relatively privileged in terms of class, and fiercely protective of ceremonies, rituals, material culture and domestic spatial practices that harkened back to an earlier period of Islamic political ascendancy. The eponymous heroine's mother Zubaida Begum, for instance, is described as a "picture of beauty and repose" akin to "some old miniature painting of a bygone queen," which is represented as natural since she "traced her ancestry back to Akbar and Babar, the Mughal emperors," and, as befitting a descendent of the Mughals, "her demeanour proclaim[ed] her a scion of that proud dynasty" (8). Mughal lineage is clearly prized and associated with distinct physical characteristics and modes of behaviour. 1857 appears again as a definitive and well-remembered moment of the catastrophic reversal of family fortunes, banishment and exile. Futehally constructs Zubaida's grandfather as one of many inhabitants of the Mughal capital of Delhi who were forced to flee after its sack in 1857, and who kept the memory of this flight alive by recounting "the tales of those harrowing days," to younger members of the family (8). This narrative of dispossession and displacement deftly conveys the relationship between the Mughal imperial centres of the north, specifically the capital of Delhi, and the southern successor state of Hyderabad.

"After long years of dangerous wandering," writes Futehally, Zubaida's grandfather "ultimately c[a]me to Hyderabad and found shelter…[where] there was still some vestige of Muslim culture left" (8, 9). These vestiges appear in Futehally's novel, as well as in Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, which is set in late colonial Lucknow—another city where a strong trace of Islamicate culture remained—as descriptions of objects and postures of the body associated with traditional modes of living. I return to the representation of domestic interiors, material culture, ceremonies and rituals in each of these novels in chapter 3, but here I want to signal that the ethnographic detail with which these descriptions are treated in the novels should be seen in relation to cultures of collecting and display post 1857, and that Ikramullah's ethnographic accounts in *Beyond the Veil* and in her memoirs provide a useful means of understanding the meanings that can inhere in objects.

According to the narrative of communal history sketched in Ikramullah, Shah Nawaz, and Futehally, during the long decline of imperial Mughal capitals in the north in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, princely states like Oudh, Bhopal and Hyderabad emerged as centres of Islamicate culture where natives could still have access to tenuous power despite the expansion of the dominions of the East India Company. Ikramullah figures these enclaves as spaces where "families of the landed gentry, retaining some of their wealth…were able, to…keep up the standard of living of their ancestors" and "the colour and legendary romance of the past [was] still preserved, and on ceremonial occasions one got the impression of stepping right back into the past" (xxvi). In *Sunlight*, Hosain briefly describes some of the attempts at "emulating the legendary excesses of the late kings" indulged in by two of Baba Jan's companions in terms of an interest in

hunting, breeding fighting cocks and pigeons, and commissioning richly embroidered clothing such as "cotton *Angrakhas* and delicate caps [that] cost the sight of many workmen and more than the dowry of their wives and daughters" (33). Characterising one of these companions as "a poet and builder of palaces who had his zenana guarded by negro eunuchs," Hosain elaborates further on his fantastic excesses thus: "It was said he had made naked women roll the length of the throne-room in a race for a bag of gold sovereigns; that he, copying kings, had played chess in the courtyard with nude girls and youths as pieces" (33). In nineteenth century Lucknow then, we are given to understand that those who had managed to retain, acquire or extend their wealth and influence in the aftermath of the Mutiny often sought to style themselves as decadent and idiosyncratic patrons of "sensual extravagances" (33).

As Maya Jasanoff has shown in *Edge of Empire* (2005), in the Islamicate enclaves that thrived during the interregnum between the death of the Mughal empire and the ascendancy of British imperial control, relative newcomers to affluence and power competed to acquire the trappings of the Mughal nobility—regardless of whether they were *nawabs,*[48] seeking to expand the repertoire of emblems authorising their sovereignty, or European adventurers in the theatre of colonial conquest seeking to accrue cultural capital to strengthen their social status at home. These 'trappings' included family heirlooms, manuscripts, jewels, metalworks, art objects, and other rare,

[48] Nawabs were semi-autonomous Muslim rulers with a tenuous grip on power during the long decline of the Mughal empire. The British administration too granted the title of nawab for services rendered. This was thus a fairly heterogeneous group, but one that prided itself on exalted status, past glory, and purity of descent. Members often fashioned themselves as refined patrons of the arts.

precious, or sacred things that functioned as prestige items[49] and could confer status to the owner. These trappings were sought after since, as Jasanoff has found, "[i]n many parts of the Muslim world, collecting meaningful and valuable objects enhanced a sovereign's personal charisma, or *barakat,* and with it, his ability to command the loyalty and admiration of this subjects" (74). Thus, regional rulers and members of the aristocracy created collections of objects—libraries and treasure houses called *toshakhana*—just as European travellers assembled cabinets of curiosities to display the trophies and souvenirs of their colonial adventures. Through these collecting practices, enterprising members of the Muslim elite were able to reinvent themselves in extravagant style in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In her account, Ikramullah replicates this tactic of reinvention, but by legitimising it through the claim of inheritance, while also underscoring the role of women in this process. As Angma Dey Jhala has shown in *Royal Patronage, Power and Aesthetics in Princely India* (2011), assemblages of objects found in the *toshakhana* were often shaped by *zenana* women, and they were "influential patrons and the creators of an imperial style" and instrumental in "constructing a new colonial aesthetic, which bridged indigenous ornamentation with occidental innovation" (2, 3). Investigating "the history of material culture in *zenana* ateliers during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries," Jhala finds that "[t]his cross-cultural material culture extended beyond the patronage circles of the court to reach broader, popular audiences," forging "a transnational concept of display, interfusing aesthetic elements from Asia and Europe, the modern and the pre-

[49] I take the term prestige item from Igor Kopytoff in "The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process." *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective.* Ed. Arjun Appadurai. NY: Cambridge UP, 1986.

colonial, the religious and the secular" (3, 4). Ikramullah's writing shows that Jhala's insights into the collecting and display practices of the princely *zenanas* also apply to elite Muslim women well into the twentieth century as they site a privileged and exceptional identity in the traditional residence filled with objects that convey both "relationships with larger colonial market forces and consumption trends, as well as earlier pre-colonial patronage systems, linked to regional artisanal producers and craft centres" (33).

Jasanoff shows how assembling collections of meaningful objects was a means of self-fashioning for the Muslim elite in the princely states during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Collecting at the 'edges of empire,' where sovereign status was tenuous, served to compensate native princes for their lack of power: curtailed by the East India Company in other spheres, they could exercise their patronage by supporting a thriving commodity culture based on the exchange and collection of prestige items. Ikramullah's meticulous description of the material culture of urban upper-class late colonial Muslim households in her ethnographic essays and in her memoirs must be read in this context of cultural inheritance and self-fashioning during an earlier period of political flux. Ikramullah's narrative of Pakistani history figures privately held collections of prestige items and the meanings associated with them as crucial to civilisational continuity: we find an emphasis on family heirlooms as a means of creating an uninterrupted lineage stretching back through eight centuries for the newly constituted postcolonial elite citizenry of Pakistan. In other words, for Ikramullah, material culture is an authentic site where national identity can be produced. The biography of objects (lost

and subsequently salvaged) reflects the biography of the public (marginalised and eventually resurgent), and tells the story of the nation.

This recalls the structure and logic of what James Clifford has called salvage, or redemptive ethnography, which assumes a relationship of critical nostalgia with the past akin to the literary genre of the pastoral, and generates a representational practice aimed at the rescue, through textual inscription, of endangered or extinct cultures. While Ikramullah is certainly "bringing a culture into writing," that is, "moving from the oral-discursive experience…to a written version of that experience (the ethnographic text)," she does not replicate the "questionable, allegorical structure" of salvage ethnography, which is disproportionately invested in projections of a purer, uncorrupted, more authentic past in order to excuse a "withdrawal from any full response to an existing society," since "[v]alue is in the past, as a general retrospective condition, and is in the present only as a…private sensibility" (113, 114). Ikramullah's interventions in her capacity as a member of parliament to advocate for the resettlement of refugee craftsmen such that their skills can be nurtured in order to preserve traditional material culture show that her depiction of the heights of sophistication achieved by artisans in the past is not meant entirely as a lament that exonerates her from investing in the material conditions of the present.

As a claimant of the full rights of postcolonial citizenship—she was, after all, a member of Parliament, and after her resignation, served as Ambassador in Morocco—Ikramullah also draws on the authority vested in her by the state. This assured authority, however, does not mean that she positions herself as an uncritical spokesperson on behalf of the Pakistani state in her writing. Instead, she writes, "I began my parliamentary career

with dissent, and continued in this manner for as long as I was in the Assembly, and outside it" (166). Ikramullah had pre-empted her maiden speech at the Legislature with an "intervention" endorsing an unpopular resolution suggesting an itinerant Constituent Assembly that would meet alternatingly in Karachi and Dhaka, in order to dissipate the "feeling …that Eastern Pakistan [was] being neglected and treated merely as a 'colony' of Western Pakistan" (165, 228). The Prime Minister had shot her down with "mock horror," exclaiming, "Women never understand practical difficulties" (166). But Ikramullah remained unfazed in the face of "opposition and even derision" during her time in parliament (176).

When she tried to secure help from the state for the resettlement of highly skilled craftsmen and artisans who were refugees in Pakistan, and attached to a guild system that had been fragmented during the Partition, Ikramullah writes that her "colleagues looked upon this idea with tolerant amusement, as a folly to be expected from fashionable ladies," and that her "voice was a cry in the wilderness," but that she succeeded in instigating the formation of The Artisans and Craftsmen's committee (177). Sympathetic to the plight of skilled craftsmen who were compelled to give up their expertise in "arts and crafts…particularly associated with the Muslim culture" to "become *thelaywallas*[50] selling *chaat*[51] at Clifton beach," Ikramullah made the case that the central government should step up to bear the expenses of rehabilitating craftsmen because it would serve to "create an image of Pakistanis as a gifted people" (234, 178,177).

[50] Itinerant vendors with carts loaded with merchandise.

[51] A popular South Asian snack.

Ikramullah's cultural salvage-work in her writing can be seen clearly as inaugural rather than elegiac in the light of the commitments she articulates here. Her stance is not that of a native ethnographer describing a culture in the throes of its passing, or one that remains fixed in a remote, whole, distant, and completely observable spatiotemporal plane, but rather articulates an investment in living traditions that exalt their practitioners. In addition to the 'textual recovery' Ikramullah performs in her ethnographic accounts of Islamicate material culture from South Asia, Ikramullah also actively strived to "save [the] precious heritage of craftsmanship from disappearing" by using her position as a member of parliament to secure relief efforts to those refugees who were skilled "jewellers, … makers of brass and copper utensils, goldsmiths and silversmiths" (177). Ikramullah's textual salvage-work, which memorialises the life-ways of South Asian Muslims during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, is lent heft by her efforts to find a way to continue the legacy of craftsmanship that supplied the objects which anchor memories of those life-ways.

Ikramullah writes: "I felt that if we did not do something about rehabilitating our artisans and craftsmen we would soon be completely denuded of our heritage and we who had lost the monuments of our culture would also be bereft of our craftsmanship which can add some beauty to our daily lives" (178). Once again we see Ikramullah's preference for portable objects of daily life, which can be created anew given the timely action of the state in preserving their producers, rather than immovable monuments like "the Taj Mahal and the… Jama Masjid of Delhi [which] will forever remain across the border" (234). The material aspect of South Asian Islamicate culture was important to Ikramullah, but I want to stress here that in her representational practice, she chose to

encode family heirlooms and objects of traditional arts and crafts with the valence of cultural recovery, rather than produce elegies for 'lost' Islamicate cities. Ikramullah thus fashions herself not only as a deft hand at the 'textual fabrication' of tradition, but also as an advocate of the preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage[52]. By focusing on material culture in this way, and especially material culture to be found preserved in the households of certain elite Muslims, Ikramullah's 'textual rescue' complicates the premise of the allegory of salvage as purely 'textual fabrication' divorced from contemporary lived experience.

Clifford has said of colonial ethnographic discourse, even in the guise of literature (Clifford refers to Eliot's *Middlemarch*, set a generation before its publication), that its "disappearing object is…in significant degree, a rhetorical construct legitimating a representational practice," which is predicated on "a style of sociological writing that… [seeks to] describe whole cultures (knowable worlds) from a specific temporal distance and with a presumption of their transience" (112, 114). This emphasis on transience is, Clifford cautions, crucial to the very authority of the ethnographer. "The recorder and interpreter of fragile custom," writes Clifford, "is custodian of an essence, unimpeachable witness to an authenticity. (Moreover, since the 'true' culture has always vanished, the salvaged version cannot be easily refuted)" (113). Clifford terms this specific posture of cultural description the 'ethnographic pastoral,' wherein "[h]istorical worlds… [are]

[52] The UNESCO defines Intangible Cultural Heritage as "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity."

salvaged as textual fabrications disconnected from ongoing lived milieux and suitable for moral, allegorical appropriation by individual readers" (114). Clifford asks how these "[p]astoral allegories of cultural loss and textual rescue" could be transformed in such a way as to relate to the future rather than the past (115). In Ikramullah's ethnographic account of South Asian Islamicate cultures, despite the refrain of catastrophic loss and diminishment, one finds an emphasis on transformation, resilience and transmutability, rather than transience — "phoenix-like," she writes, if we recall, in *Beyond the Veil*, "the manners and customs of the past revived in th[e] new State of Pakistan" (xxvii). In *From Purdah to Parliament*, Ikramullah explicitly positions the new state as also appropriating the colonial insignia of power — "all [the] appurtenances to the British Raj," she writes, "had now become symbols of our own sovereignty" (157). For all her preoccupation with establishing a particular historical narrative of the ancestral past of elite South Asian Muslims, Ikramullah's 'textual rescue,' looks toward the postcolonial future rather than the Mughal past from which she accrues some of her authority.

Overwriting Colonial Spatial Discourse: Authorising Muslim Women's Knowledges of Material Culture and Built Environment

Returning to the second point I made earlier about Ikramullah's emphasis on the role of women from elite households as the true actors who perform the labour of sustaining and interpreting the objects and ceremonies that consolidate the history of South Asian Muslims and legitimise its inheritance in postcolonial Pakistan, it is important to see Ikramullah's move in relation to some of the discourses that made domestic interiors and practices of display and collection therein such contested sites in

the late colonial period. This enables us to read the novels of Hosain, Futehally and Shah Nawaz as part of a constellation of Muslim women-authored texts that while being embedded within various intersecting discourses on domestic space and its significance to national identity, succeed in producing an autoethnographically informed spatial discourse that accommodates some aspects of prevalent contemporary notions about segregated domestic space but overwrites others, generating new insights about late colonial elite Muslim women's relation to the built environment. Historian Antoinette Burton has observed in *Dwelling in the Archive* (2003) that to a significant degree, women's writing in late colonial India was "preoccupied with domestic architecture, its symbolic meanings and its material realities, because [authors] were keenly aware that house and home were central to their social identities and the cultural forms through which they experienced both family life and national belonging," yet she cautions against dismissing "women's memories as either privatized commemorations of family forms and domestic life," or the ethnographic detail with which they represent "the material culture of house and home…merely as memorabilia" (5-6). Instead, Burton argues that women authors during this period "used domestic space as an archival source from which to construct their own histories" (6). Ikramullah certainly accomplishes this, as I will show in this section, and her essays and memoirs offer more than privatized commemoration or catalogues of bygone Raj memorabilia, engendering instead a spatial discourse—a way of speaking about architectural forms and heritage objects that is authorized by indigenous women's knowledge rather than by colonial investigative modalities.

In his work on German colonial spatial discourse in Southwest Africa[53], John Noyes shows how "discourse plays an integral and primary role in the colonization process, and…[how] this role is…found in a very real ability to organize space into structures conducive to the functioning of the colony" (18-19). For Noyes, colonial discourse[54] was instrumental in producing, disseminating and authorising the territorial possession of colonies. "If the term possession can be applied to a geographic territory," he writes, "it is only possible on the order of symbolic representation which writing affords" (225). The representational moves through which Ikramullah communicates aspects of Islamicate cultures in South Asia must be read in the light of these colonial discursive practices which enacted colonial authority by ordering disparate texts and communicative acts under one sign—that of imperial subordination. As Noyes explains:

> Writing served to collect the myriad diverse lines traced by the movements of explorers, traders and scientists, later of settlers and soldiers, but also by the natives, and organize them into a "text"—a unity which could be called the colony. At the same time, it collected diverse statements relating to the colony and collated them into a body of knowledge. And this organization served as the motivating force which was able to effect the movement of more settlers and soldiers, traders and scientists.

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[53] See: Noyes, John K. *Colonial Space: Spatiality in the Discourse of German South West Africa 1884-1915*. Chur, Switzerland: Harwood, 1992.

[54] Stephen Slemon usefully describes colonial discourse, following the work of Homi Bhabha and Peter Hulme as "the name for that system of signifying practices whose work it is to *produce and naturalise* the hierarchical power structures of the imperial enterprise, and to mobilise those power structures in the management of both colonial and neo-colonial cross-cultural relationships" (6). David Spurr has cautioned against a monolithic understanding of the term in *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (1993), drawing on Foucault's formulation of discourses as "tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force-relations," where "there can exist different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy" (qtd. in Spurr 11). Noyes' work focuses on the spatial production involved in colonial discourse since, he argues, "[w]hat colonial discourse does is to present us with a set of instructions—on how to look upon the world and see only colonial space; how to move through the landscape and cross only colonial space; how to write about the world and mean only colonial space" (24). See: Slemon, Stephen. "Monuments of Empire: Allegory/Counter-Discourse/ Post-Colonial Writing." *Kunapipi* 9.3 (1987): 9-16; Spurr, David. *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.

In *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge* (1996), Bernard S. Cohn uses the term 'investigative modality' to encapsulate this process of the collation of a body of knowledge about the colony from diverse sources. "An investigative modality," Cohn explains, "includes the definition of a body of information that is needed, the procedures by which appropriate knowledge is gathered, its ordering and classification, and then how it is transformed into usable forms such as published reports, statistical returns, histories, gazetteers, legal codes, and encyclopedias" (5). These investigative modalities encompassed historiographic, observational, enumerative, museological surveillance and survey practices. The colonial spatial imagination was informed by these diverse but interconnected and mutually authenticating investigative modalities that generated interpretations of the colony which made it comprehensible as a territory to distant metropolitan audiences, travellers, adventurers, agents of colonial authorities, and even to native subjects who were beneficiaries of colonial educational institutions.

At the same time, it was also shaped by metropolitan ideas about aesthetics, design practices, hygiene and social engineering. This is seen most explicitly in colonial urban planning where, "the use and manifestation of dominance…is particularly blunt," making the imbrication of architecture and the built environment within colonial practices particularly transparent (AlSayyad 5)[55]. Zeynep Çelik approaches this imbrication by extending Peter Hulme's formulation of colonial discourse to architecture and examines the role of ethnographic accounts of Algeria and Algerians in influencing

[55] See: AlSayyad, Nezar. Ed. *Forms of Dominance: On the Architecture and Urbanism of the Colonial Enterprise* Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 1992.

colonial urban planning and design practices in the city of Algiers[56]. Çelik writes that ethnography is particularly useful for her transdisciplinary study, "because as a discipline historically entangled in the politics of colonialism…ethnography played a major role in defining the sociocultural characteristics of the "Algerian" society as well as its spatial parameters" and that "[t]hese definitions, in turn, were instrumental in shaping colonial designs" (6). In the context of colonial India, William Glover characterizes colonial spatial imagination as "bear[ing] a historically specific relationship to its colonial field of production," because of "its distinctive interpellation of assessments, judgements, and observations rooted in Anglo-European contexts and histories" which were "transpos[ed] onto…entirely new social and material terrains," and which "shaped the way colonial officials—and, increasingly, Indian residents—conceptualized an ideal of desired relationships between colonial society and its material forms" (30, 31). In the ethnographic essays and life-writing of Ikramullah, as well as in the novels of Hosain, Futehally and Shah Nawaz, this transposition of colonial spatial order is incomplete and jostles with other inherited and improvised hybrid forms of ordering and experiencing domestic and other spaces. This jostling is made clear in Ikramullah's memoirs *From Purdah to Parliament*, where she describes how a colonial bungalow was modified to function as a 'traditional Muslim house' and how her mother was able to observe *purdah*

[56] "Architecture in the colonial context," writes Çelik, "should …be viewed among the practices that make up the colonial discourse. My argument here is based on an expansion of Peter Hulme's definition of colonial discourse as "an ensemble of linguistically based practices unified by their common deployment of colonial relationships." To Hulme's repertoire, which ranges from bureaucratic documents to romantic novels, I would like to add architecture, whose expression is also coded by linguistic conventions, albeit visual and spatial ones." See: Çelik, Zeynep. *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations: Algiers under French Rule*. Berkeley: UC Press, 1997.

even while residing in housing designed for colonial administrators that closely approximated utilitarian ideals of order uniformity and hygiene[57].

Cohn also shows how "[t]he power to define the nature of the past and establish priorities in the creation of a monumental record of a civilization, and to propound canons of taste, are among the most significant instruments of rulership" (10). Ikramullah overwrites[58] the vast amount of knowledge collated using colonial investigative modalities by producing a monumental record of Islamicate civilization in South Asia and propounding a canon of taste authorized and preserved by Muslim women with lived experience of pre-1857 domestic material culture, spatial practices and ceremonial customs. If the territory Ikramullah seeks to possess through symbolic representation in her writing is taken to be newly independent Pakistan, then this possession is enacted by means of undercutting the monopoly on the knowledge of Islamicate architectural practices[59] and material culture hitherto claimed by British colonial spatial discourse, and

[57] I discuss these examples in the section "Siting a Privileged and Exceptional Identity in the Traditional Residence."

[58] Sara Upstone expands upon the concept of "overwriting" used by the editors of *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* in their introduction to the section on place, by employing the term throughout her *Spatial Politics in the Postcolonial Novel* (2009) to "[capture] the sense of the territory as a text…[and to encapsulate] the sense in which colonial treatments of space attempt to obscure an existing diversity with order," which nonetheless leaves its trace (6). Upstone contrasts the ways in which the colonial spatial order operated as a myth with postcolonial spatial representations which emphasise fluidity and diversity. Postcolonial analyses of colonial spatial discourse "[seize] upon the mythic nature of order and its fabricated status" and effect "a return to that fluidity overwhelmed by the colonial project, the diversity of all space which means that its ordering into mapped, defined locations and 'natural' territories is always an imposition" (11-12). The idea of a "return," as I see it, is problematic, but I view Ikramullah's work and the work of the novelists I discuss in this chapter as overwriting or overlaying embedded contemporary spatial discourses, whether colonial or nationalist. See: Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The post-colonial studies reader*. London: Routledge, 1995; and Upstone, Sara. *Spatial Politics in the Postcolonial Novel*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2009.

[59] In *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (1989), Thomas R. Metcalf shows how the efforts of architectural historians like James Fergusson, author of the *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (1876), established a definitive—i.e. scientific and intelligible—account of Indian architecture. "[A]rchitectural styles," writes Metcalf, "were conceived of as being derived from, and expressing the values, a religiously defined grouping," and each of these was placed along a gradient of

by doing so through a sustained emphasis on Muslim women's understanding of the built environment, ceremonial objects and rituals. Cohn finds that as the British increasingly replaced the Mughals as patrons in the nineteenth century, they created a "system of classification which determined what was valuable," in terms of objects and artefacts produced or found in India, and until the twentieth century, Indians were largely "bystanders to discussions and polemics which established meaning and value for the Europeans" (77). This system of classification was, needless to say, also "part of a larger European project to decipher *the* history of India" (Cohn 77). Ikramullah can be seen as one such twentieth century entrant into the discussion of the meaning of objects, who ascribes a narrative of history to them, albeit for the purpose of demonstrating the civilizational continuity of Islamicate cultures in the region. In an essay on attitudes toward history that underwrote the discourse on the aesthetics of colonialism, Thomas R. Metcalf describes the assumed mastery of non-specialist colonial bureaucrats over Indian architectural elements[60]. Referring to a letter written by Lord Curzon, then Viceroy of India to Lord Cromer, British Proconsul in Egypt, to discuss the matter of donating a hanging lamp to the Taj Mahal, Metcalf unpacks this mastery of Indo-Islamicate architectural history inherent in colonial spatial discourse thus: "Curzon knew what the

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decline (27). India's "era of ancient greatness" was located in "an extended period of Buddhist predominance," and medieval Hindu architecture was disparaged as the debased product of an idolatrous and corrupt society (28). Islamicate architectural styles from 1200 A.D. until the reign of Aurangzeb, when Mughal architecture was seen to have begin its descent into decadence, were figured as Indo-Saracenic, and, being "reassuringly familiar and aesthetically satisfying," merited inclusion in colonial designs to confer continuity and legitimacy to British colonial rule (35). See: Metcalf, Thomas R. *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj.* Berkeley: UC Press, 1989.

[60] In "Past and Present: Towards an Aesthetics of Colonialism," Metcalf explains the patronage of Indo-Saracenic forms as an assertion of mastery over the architectural styles of early Islamicate dynasties, and an attempt to "make the present appear to be the past" (15). See: Metcalf, Thomas R. "Past and Present: Towards an Aesthetics of Colonialism." *Paradigms of Indian Architecture: Space and Time in Representation and Design*. Ed. G. H. R. Tillotson. Oxford: OUP, 1997.

Taj was, how it should be decorated, and who had the responsibility for its ornamentation" (12). In her writing, Ikramullah's shifts this sense of natural mastery over the subjects of indigenous residential architecture, material culture, and decorative arts to Muslim women instead of agents of the colonial administration. This move authenticates her own statements regarding the spatial practices of the *zenana*, and, while it involves the scripting of women as preservationists and bearers of national culture, which is a formulation well favoured by nationalist discourses in general—as Nira Yuval-Davis has shown in *Gender and Nation* (1997), and Partha Chatterjee and scholars building on his work have shown in the case of Indian nationalist discourses—it does not detract from the potential of Ikramullah's autoethnographic writing to introduce a spatial discourse that illuminates the nature of Muslim women's relationship to the built environment in a field of production[61] teeming with colonial and nationalist discourses of space, modernity, and domesticity.

In her introduction to the first edition of *Behind the Veil*, Ikramullah states that "it was in the leisurely and luxurious life behind the veil that these customs originated, and even today it is in the women's world that they hold sway…It is in the women's world, unobserved and unattended by men, that the numerous ceremonies take place" (xxi). Thus it is the *zenana*—the space inhabited by women exclusively—that is most strongly associated with the preservation of cultural practices, rather than the space of the colonial city or that of the postcolonial nation. Ikramullah's emphasis on women's role in transmitting and preserving imperial Mughal culture is further evident in the ways in which she figures women—a great-aunt and two maidservants, one of whom is described

[61] I use "field of production" here in the sense Bourdieu does.

as “a sort of custodian of family traditions” and the other, as “virtually a walking volume of the *Arabian Nights”*—as the crucial link between vanished imperial Mughal grandeur and its limited renewal in wealthy Islamicate enclaves like Lucknow, Bhopal and Hyderabad after 1857 (xxiii, xxiv). “While those of our generation are content to call all ornaments for the hands ‘bracelets’, and all ornaments for the neck ‘necklaces’,” writes Ikramullah, women like her great-aunt “always gave each piece of jewellery its special name according to its style” (xxiii). Ikramullah positions herself as an authority on the subject of South Asian Muslim material culture, rituals and traditions through claiming intimate contact with these women, who taught her the names and functions of different pieces of jewellery and furniture, the rituals associated with birth, death, marriage and religious events, and the sociocultural structures and relations that had prevailed in pre-colonial times. Ikramullah thus establishes herself as a native ethnographer with access to terrains of knowledge unavailable to or overlooked by her Western audience, at the same time as she establishes Muslim women as authentic sources of this knowledge.

Harem Fantasy and Colonial Spatial Discourse: Travellers’ Tales, Ethnography and Autoethnography

The scene of her interactions with these women, and the site of the acquisition of her knowledge is the private residence, rather than the public arena, to which Ikramullah had ample access. Her engagement with domestic interiors can be seen both as a move to open up a discursive space for the discussion and dissemination of the domestic architecture and material culture of the late colonial Muslim native elite, as well as a means to produce an autoethnographically inflected spatial discourse that situated the

introverted courtyard house as a significant part of South Asian Muslim collective memory, identity and social relations.

Some remarks on the way I use the term "autoethnographical" are necessary here. The term autoethnography as understood as a method of qualitative sociological research, arose out of the work of post-World War I Chicago School ethnographers, who pursued "biographically opportunistic research," which called for "sociological involvement in settings close to their personal lives, arenas with which they had a significant degree of self-identification" (Anderson 375). This kind of self-reflexive anthropological or sociological observation involved "turning of the ethnographic gaze inward on the self (auto), while maintaining the outward gaze of ethnography, looking at the larger context wherein self experiences occur" (Denzin 227). The case for self-observation in field-work was first articulated in detail by cultural anthropologist David Hayano in a 1979 essay where he used the term auto-ethnography to distinguish the detached-outsider gaze of colonial ethnographers from the anthropological observation of cultures by members of the same[62]. In relation to textual practices of self-narration, Francoise Lionnet first used the term autoethnography in *Autobiographical Voices: Race, Gender, and Self-Portraiture* (1989) to refer to Zora Neale Hurston's autobiography *Dust Tracks on a Road* (1942). Calling Hurston's representational strategies in her autobiography "a kind of 'figural anthropology' of the self," Lionnet formulates autoethnographical self-narration as "the defining of one's subjective ethnicity as mediated through language, history, and ethnographical analysis" (99). Lionnet reads *Dust Tracks* as a means through

[62] See: Hayano, David. "Auto-ethnography: Paradigms, problems, and prospects. *Human Organization* 38 (1979): 99-104.

which Hurston attempts to "salvage her own 'vanishing' Negro culture" from a "position of fundamental liminality—being at once a participant in and an observer of her culture," which enables her to turn her autobiographical writing into an "allegory of an ethnographic project that self-consciously moves from the general…to the particular…and back to the general" (99-100).

In a similar fashion, Ikramullah's memoirs and ethnographic essays display a preoccupation with textually shoring up the 'vestiges' of high Islamic culture before they disappear beyond any means of salvage. Zeenuth Futehally too articulates this concern in the preface to the first edition of *Zohra*, where she writes that she "felt an urgency to record" her experience of the social world of late colonial Hyderabad, "for owing to the passage of time it was fast disappearing" (262). She further writes that she "was in an especially fortunate position to do this for [she] belonged to it, and yet was apart from it, and could therefore take a somewhat detached view" (262). Futehally's understanding of the representational modes she deploys in her novel thus also echoes Lionnet's reading of Hurston's liminality as both participant and observer of the culture she describes. Futehally began writing *Zohra* while residing in Japan and she credits her diasporic status with lending her the opportunity to think about ways of making late colonial Hyderabadi high society comprehensible to others, and to articulate her view of a typical elite Muslim woman's life within such a milieu during a time of great political ferment.

Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson have posited autoethnography as a "hybrid term" in *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (2001), observing that it "has gained increasing utility in autobiography studies for its focus on the *ethnos*, or social group that is the project of ethnography, rather than on the *bios* or individual

life" (157). Smith and Watson argue that autoethnography as used in cultural studies "offer[s] critics of life writing sites and tools for situating it as a mode of cultural production in which various voices and versions contest, and contend for, authority," (69). Futhermore, as Irma McClaurin puts it, "all auto-ethnography,…as a particular kind of reflexive form, is simultaneously autobiographical and communal, as the Self encounters the Collective," since for her, autoethnography involves the "layering and use of experience as a critical point of departure for both the production of the text and the interpretation of ethnographic data" (69, 68). It is this cultural studies understanding of autoethnography as a hybrid term that encapsulates both individual and communal aspects of self-reflexive textual representation that I find particularly useful in reading Ikramullah, Futehally, Shah Nawaz and Hosain. Furthermore, Mary Louise Pratt's formulation of autoethnography as simultaneously accommodative of and resistant to colonial discourse in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), is also particularly germane to my readings. Autoethnographies, Pratt states, are

> instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with* the colonizer's own terms...in response to or in dialogue with...metropolitan representations…Autoethnographic texts differ from what are thought of as "authentic" or autochthonous forms of self-representation…Rather, autoethnography involves partial collaboration with and appropriation of the idioms of the ... conqueror (7, emphasis in original).

This selective appropriation of metropolitan discourse is then "merged or infiltrated to varying degrees with indigenous idioms to create self-representations intended to *intervene* in metropolitan modes of understanding" ("Transculturation and Autoethnography" 28). Ikramullah's autoethnographically inflected spatial discourse is embedded within ethnographic discourses of segregated domestic space but involves the deployment of indigenous idioms to offer interpretations of space and spatial practices

hitherto precluded by colonial investigative modalities and by reform-minded nationalist discourses. Her ethnographic essays in *Behind the Veil* are directly addressed to a metropolitan audience and intended to intervene in colonial spatial discourse and the discourse of the harem. Although her writing is embedded within discourses that have historically represented Muslim women only as objects of the ethnographic interview, Ikramullah's autoethnographical representation of self and community constructs Muslim women as producers of knowledge and meaning with regard to Islamicate material and ceremonial cultures in South Asia.

Pratt writes that "autoethnographic expressions suggest a particular kind of cultural self-consciousness, an awareness of one's life-ways or customs *as they have been singled out by the metropolis,* be it for objectification in knowledge, for suppression or for extermination" (44, emphasis in original). It is this cultural self-consciousness that underwrites Ikramullah's descriptions of life behind the veil. In *From Purdah to Parliament*, for example, Ikramullah describes the labour that women undertook in segregated households, which she characterises as being full of "a great deal of noisy activity" at all times, thanks to a "large number of dependents, relatives and old servants" (20). While at first she describes these activities in terms of "some minor domestic crisis… in which in which everybody was taking an inordinate amount of interest," and storytelling sessions with which the old aunts indulged the children, albeit "with such a wealth of detail that it gave it an intimate personal quality," later on Ikramullah goes into further detail regarding all the tasks which engaged the labour of not only the residents of the *zenana* but also frequently required extra help (20). These tasks included hand

dyeing, hand printing, the preparation of herbal cosmetics, and quilt-making in addition to others associated with specific ceremonies. Ikramullah writes:

> Gossamer *dupattas* of ladies and fine muslin *kurtas* of men were never worn unless *chunoard,* that is to say crimped. This sort of crimping was not done by tongs, but by pulling out a half-inch of material at a time between thumb and forefinger and twisting it. The use of sweet-smelling herbs was still in fashion. The sorting, pounding and preparation of them to be used as a base for cosmetics, shampoo, hair-oil and to be put as a sachet to scent one's clothes and linen took a lot of time. One of the sophistications of our life was having newly made, freshly filled quilts each winter. Hand-printed satin quilts, lined with silken soft muslin, which were dyed and herb scented, smelt delicious. They were filled with beaten-up cotton to a snowy lightness and then held in place with most attractive stitching. For all these tasks, an extra pair of hands was more than welcome and in the midst of it news was gathered (22).

I have reproduced this long passage here because it is important to convey the great amount of detail Ikramullah lavishes on her description of typical activities undertaken by secluded women in traditional households. Ikramullah recounts practices which had no place in the "manageable proportions of a Western home," but which were nonetheless indications of the sophistication, artistry, and labour of secluded women (20). The products of this labour, lost to modernisation, are held in great esteem by Ikramullah, for they evidence the gaps in colonialist ethnography regarding the *zenana,* or, in Pratt's terms, the life-ways and customs singled out by the metropolis for suppression or for extermination. Ikramullah's descriptions of the typical household activities of women in the *zenana* counter its construction as a dark, ossified, but eroticised space wherein languorous women cured their boredom by indulging in intrigues. Rather, Ikramullah portrays a convivial atmosphere of shared labour where social discourse was lubricated by the exchange of news.

Furthermore, Ikramullah directly engages with contemporary Western women's ideas about secluded Muslim women when she writes that "[o]one of the mistaken

notions women of the West have about our women is that 'the poor things' missed all the fun of shopping, but that was not so" (24). Ikramullah then goes on to describe the consumption practices of secluded Muslim women, insisting that "women did not miss any of that great joy of Eve's life; only they had all the fun of shopping without having to push and jostle in a crowd and stand for hours waiting their turn to be served," since women vendors would be frequent visitors to the *zenana,* peddling both news of the goings on in the neighbourhood and "a hundred and one attractive little things, perfume, *kajal, surma,* embroidered slippers, coloured powder for dying one's *dupattas"* (24-25, 21). Ikramullah argues that the visual pleasures of shopping were not lost to secluded women because they did not stroll the streets and gaze at window dressings. Instead, merchants brought their wares to the house and "the *takhat* on the ladies' verandah was turned into the most attractive of counters" that rivalled any window display (25). In fact, Ikramullah writes that "no shop window in later life [gave her] quite the thrill [she] got watching those heaped piles of satin and silks and satins" (25). Ikramullah emphasises not only the visual but also the tactile pleasures of handling sumptuous heaps of jewellery and silks other "gorgeous stuffs," describing how her "aunts and mother would put exploring fingers on them, feeling the quality, placing them against each others' cheeks for texture" (26).

This voluptuous sensuousness with which Ikramullah describes secluded Muslim women's experience of consumption, along with her use of "the Arabian Nights world" as a shorthand for the traditional households she had access to, both indicate that while challenging some aspects of contemporary notions of life behind the veil, Ikramullah accommodated others—especially those of what Mary Roberts has called the feminine

harem fantasy, which was predicated on bourgeois expectations of sumptuous consumption and luxury. This simultaneous countering of impressions of confined indolence and ennui with descriptions of convivial labour on the one hand, and accommodation of images of riotous colour and sumptuousness with regard to secluded women's activities, on the other, is consistent with Pratt's notion of autoethnographic expression as selectively collaborative with dominant discourse while also undermining the same. In this case, the dominant discourse consisted of ethnographic accounts of the *zenana*, which in addition to local colonial discourses intersected with the more transnational discourse of the harem.

While ethnographies of Muslim women abounded during the colonial period, these were often compiled by European or American missionaries and travellers using the colonial investigative modalities that Cohn describes, and seldom included observations on Muslim women's relation to the built environment beyond a reproduction of the standard harem discourse, which Caren Kaplan succinctly sums ups as "'getting inside' an enclosed or secret place and 'discovering the truth' through a moral or scientific expedition, justifying Western imperialism and its invasive tactics…with the primary tropes of the 'colonial harem' [being]: supine concubines, lush interiors, water pipes, and an atmosphere of indolence and decadence" (37-38)[63]. I include here only two brief

[63] However, Mohja Kahf cautions against causally linking harem discourse too closely with colonial domination, as the beginnings of the typification of Muslim women as passive leisurely creatures incarcerated within the harem awaiting the pleasure of their husbands in fact coincides with earlier shifts in the discourse of individual liberty and gender relations in Western political discourse. Kahf relates harem discourse to new ideologies of middle-class domesticity, which consolidated around the negative ideal of the Muslim woman who was associated with "irredeemable difference and exoticism; intense sexuality, excessive ornamentation and association with fetish objects; and finally, powerlessness in the form of imprisonment, enslavement, seclusion, silence, or invisibility" (8). See: Kaplan, Caren. "'Getting to Know You': Travel, Gender, and the Politics of Representation in Anna and the King of Siam and The King and I." *Late Imperial Culture* Eds. Román De La Campa, E. Ann. Kaplan, and Michael Sprinker. London:

representative examples of harem discourse and colonial discourse inflected writing on Indian segregated households in order to clarify the kind of 'behind the veil' writing tradition that Ikramullah, and indeed early Anglophone novelists like Shah Nawaz, Futehally, and Hosain were writing within and against when they undertook the representation of elite Muslim domestic spaces in the late colonial period.

My first example of this tradition is *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque during four-and-twenty years in the East; with Revelations of Life in the Zenana* (1850), a two-volume account produced by Fanny Parkes, a 19th century Welsh ethnographer, 'incorporated wife,'[64] traveller and collector who accompanied her husband to India and resided there for over twenty years. *Wanderings* was well-received on its publication in London[65] and has since achieved a remarkable longevity. It was edited and reissued by Indira Ghosh and Sara Mills in 2001, and by William Dalrymple in 2002. Dalrymple's version, *Begums, Thugs and White Mughals*, or alternatively, *Begums, Thugs and Englishmen* (2003), casts Parkes as "an enthusiast and an eccentric with a burning love of India," who became 'Indianized,' outspoken, sympathetic, and

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Verso, 1995. 33-52; and Kahf, Mohja. *Western Representations of the Muslim Woman: From Termagant to Odalisque*. Austin: UT Press, 1999.

[64] Indira Ghose and Sara Mills refer to Fanny Parkes as an incorporated wife in their introduction to a revised edition of Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque. An incorporated wife "is a woman who draws her status and rank from the position of her husband within an institution" (3). See: Parlby, Fanny Parkes, Indira Ghose, and Sara Mills. *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001.

[65] The contemporary reviews of the book proclaimed it "[f]resh, intelligent, and minutely interesting" (*The Court Journal*); "a very splendid, very attractive work' (*The Asiatic and Colonial Quarterly Journal*); "interesting and instructive work…singularly attractive" (*The English Review*); '…one of the most beautiful monuments of genius, taste, feeling… without parade, ostentation, or intrusive aims at vulgar popularity…' (*Blackwood's Lady's Magazine*). One unflattering review, however, stated that "[t]he flippancy and levity… with which she refers to her own faith, savour more of the cock-pit than the boudoir… in future editions… we trust to see every thing undeniable indecent or profane carefully expunged from the work.' (*Calcutta Review*). See: *Grand Moving Diorama of Hindostan, displaying the scenery of the Hoogly, the Bhagirathi, and the Ganges, from Fort William, Bengal, to Gangoutri, in the Himalaya* London: Asiatic Gallery,1851.

independent during her solo trips within India while residing there, rather than simply remain "an unwitting outrider of colonialism" who is "implicated in the project of gathering 'Colonial Knowledge'" (ix, xxii). Dalrymple goes on to state that "*Wanderings* becomes an explicitly feminist text" at times, especially when she "reports on the… restrictions which she felt women in both East and West suffered in common" (xx). Dalrymple make a gross overstatement here, since Parkes' writing offers ample examples of its embeddedness in colonial discourse and harem discourse. In her reading of *Wanderings*, Sara Mills writes of Parkes that "[m]ost of the knowledge she displays is of this eclectic amateur type, whereby snippets of information that she finds interesting are displayed without an overall framework of knowledge about the different cultural environments within which they make sense or normally occur," but that "[i]n writing about the zenana…Parkes marks herself as an imperial subject and also contributes to the imperial task of revealing the secrets of the colonised country" (43) [66].

The addendum of "revelations of life in the zenana" in the title already points toward the special niche that descriptions of segregated life occupied within colonial discourse, and also to Parkes' savvy move to position her account within this niche. Published at a time when female-authored harem narratives, seen as a "uniquely female area of cultural production," had begun to peak in popularity among European readers, Parkes' account participates in an established genre of women's writing focused on revealing the opacity of Oriental domestic spaces[67] (Lewis 13). In doing so, she embeds

[66] See Mills, Sara. "Knowledge, Gender, and Empire." *Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies.* Eds. Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose. NY: Guilford Press, 1994. 29-50.

[67] In *Rethinking Orientalism* (2004), Reina Lewis writes that "[f]rom the eighteenth century on, whether you wrote about living in one, visiting one, or escaping from one, any book that had anything to do with the harem sold. Publishers knew it, booksellers knew it, readers knew it and authors knew it. And women the

her representation of the typical Indian *zenana* within the contemporary harem discourse, which figured segregated domestic space "as a distinctive locus sexualis," inviting visions of tyranny, confinement, excess and sexual perversion (Apter 121). In accordance with these tropes, Parkes writes, "A zenana is a place of intrigue, and those who live within four walls cannot pursue a straight path: how can it be otherwise, where so many conflicting passions are called forth?" (391).

In addition to this evaluation of the *zenana,* as Janaki Nair has shown, Englishwomen's writings on the subject figured segregated domestic space in India differently at different times between 1813 and 1940: as a site in need of immediate reform, as a symbol of the reified collective past, as a symbol of subversive female power to be surveilled and reviled, as a site where natives effected their resistance to "civilisation," and finally, as a site that could serve to justify prolonging the colonial project since it exemplified the incompleteness of civilizational progress[68]. In *Ideologies of the* Raj (1995), Thomas Metcalf writes that the secluded Indian *zenana* woman was conceived of as "[h]ardly less than a prostitute" leading "a life of idleness in closed and unhealthy rooms" with "her entire existence suffused with sensuality" and "typified India's moral degeneracy in her behaviour" (108). Furthermore, Antoinette Burton has shown how the *zenana* was pathologised as unsanitary in the medical discourse of

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world over…cannily entitled their books with the evocative words 'harem', 'Turkish', 'Arabian' or 'princess', and pictured themselves in veils and yaşmaks on the front cover" (12). Lewis also traces the beginning of the popularity of female-authored harem narratives to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Embassy Letters* (1763), finding a steady increase with a peak occurring between 1850-1890, after which the genre faced a decline. Female-authored harem narratives were seen as particularly authentic and conferred legitimacy and authority on early women travellers and ethnographers. See: Lewis, Reina. *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem*. NY: I.B. Tauris, 2004.

[68] See: Nair, Janaki. "Uncovering the Zenana: Visions of Indian Womanhood in Englishwomen's Writings, 1813-1940." *Journal of Women's History* 2.1 (1990): 8-34.

colonial India and was made into a "foundational justification for British women's imperial intervention even while Indian women remained an undifferentiated and allegedly compliant colonial clientele" (389) [69].

In the context of the representation of the South Asian *zenana* by late colonial elite Muslim women, these foregoing studies on Englishwomen's interpretations of segregated domestic space in nineteenth and early twentieth century India are important to bear in mind, but it is also useful to draw on some insights from the wider field of visual and literary studies that deal with representations of the Oriental domestic space, the most numerous and visible of which are those related to the Ottoman harem. In *Intimate Outsiders* (2007), for example, Mary Roberts has shown how what she calls feminine harem fantasy, itself appropriated and refashioned by British women from a dominant masculine fantasy, can become entangled with the ethnographic account. In other words, British women travellers often had their own particular fantasies of the harem—expectations of "distinctive bourgeois female pleasures," for instance—which complicated the ethnographic claims of their writing (13). Yet at the same time, Roberts finds that the modernizing Ottoman elite women who engaged with this British feminine harem fantasy were in turn able to undertake their own refashioning and exercised considerable control over their self-image through harem portraiture, which resulted in the creation of "a visual economy very different from the familiar Western painting of the seraglio" (15). Ikramullah's accounts of life 'behind the veil,' when juxtaposed with the feminine harem fantasy of authors like Fanny Parkes, which figured the *zenana* as a place

[69] See: Burton, Antoinette. "Contesting the zenana: The mission to make lady doctors for India," 1874–1885." *The Journal of British Studies* 35.03 (1996): 368-397.

of intrigue and conflicting passions, can be read in a similar way as Roberts approaches elite Ottoman women's commissions of portraits and the ensuing reappropriation of their self-image. Ikramullah's autoethnographic spatial discourse reappropriates the *zenana* from British women's ethnographic travel narratives and authorises Muslim women as overseers of their own self-image instead of passive and silent recipients of others' interpretations. In relation to the harem discourse on the Ottoman era, Roberts is able to show that "two incompatible concepts of the harem, the Western fantasy and the Ottoman social institution, can in fact be interpreted as mutually defining ideas" (4). We can see the late colonial modernising *zenana* in India too as a space which has been the object of incompatible but mutually defining regimes of interpretation.

Another representative work from the turn of the century, *The Harim and the Purdah: Studies of Oriental Women* (1915) by American author Elizabeth Cooper, includes a chapter on "Indian Home Life," where Cooper disdains describing the home life of urban Indian women, since:

> Here the Indian lady seems to be trying to lose her national characteristics, and Indian society is very disappointing to a visitor from the West who wishes to see something of the life lived by the lady in India. It seems to be merely a copy of the life of the English society woman, and her day is filled with teas, society concerts, and receptions. Their homes are thoroughly English in every department, their drawing-rooms are filled with English bric-à-brac, they go to the entertainments in most luxurious motors; their children, dressed in European clothes, are brought down to see the guest by an English governess, and English is the language of the home (108).

Cooper has no patience to describe these imitative[70] colonial urban households, as she believes that "[i]t is in the villages that true India is to be found, unchanging, languorous

[70] "A native of the East is curiously prone to imitate the Western, but his imitation is nearly always only partial—hardly ever goes to the root of things, and fails by the omission of some important particular," said F.A. Swettenham, British Resident in the Malay states in the late nineteenth century, exemplifying British

India" (102). This India—and its domestic interiors—Cooper describes in great detail, likening the visage of a typical Indian village to an "enlarged barnyard," with low, thatched mud houses bereft of doors, windows, or chimneys (102). She describes the tradition of plastering floors with cow-dung, noting that "to Western eyes, it is a most unsightly operation, as it is done with the hands of the housewife" and that "this smearing of the earthen floors with the national substitute for varnish was one of the chief causes why women were not always ready to volunteer for service in the East" (102-103). With this damning account of primitive unhygienic practices out of the way, Cooper turns her attention to the interior of the typical rural dwelling, echoing the general sense among British ethnographers that Indian houses lacked in furnishings, in "comfort, taste, and decoration," and also in "that spirit which lends enchantments to [the British] idea of home life" (Compton qtd. in Glover 129). Cooper writes:

> There is virtually no furniture in the homes. The stove consists of three or four bricks, around which the fuel, consisting of dried cakes of mud and cowdung, are broken, and which smoulder rather than burn. A few earthenware pots and a large dish in which to serve the food, some brass utensils, and a large jar for carrying water, complete the culinary arrangements. For plates, banana or plantain leaves are used…the fingers are used in place of knives and forks of the more aesthetic races. Chairs and tables are not needed, as the Indian squats upon his haunches, as only an Oriental can; and in silence, regarding only his own food…he eats his meal (103).

This is followed by more descriptions of objects of everyday use in the typical rural household Cooper describes, including dress, jewellery, beds, cradles, and sleeping

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attitudes to colonial imitation. Homi Bhabha uses the concept of "colonial mimicry" to parse the ambivalence inherent in performing stereotypes—colonial mimicry, in his reading is both an appropriation as well as inappropriate, disrupting the authority and power of the colonizer by exploiting the "gap between the colonial mission's reformed subject and its threatening caricature" (Childs and Williams 131). See: O'Halloran, J.S. *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute.* 1895-96. Vol. XXVII. London: Royal Colonial Institute, 1896; and Childs, Peter, and R.J. Patrick Williams. *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory.* NY: Routledge, 2013.

arrangements of adults and infants, and, like Ikramullah, rituals and ceremonies. All of these are marked by the complete lack of the colonial imitation Cooper observes in the Presidency cities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Cooper is uninterested in engaging with colonial urbanism and colonial modernity, as far as they pertain to Indian home life, preferring instead to emphasise the pre-modern(ised) domestic space of the Indian village.

Ikramullah's representations of native elite domestic interiors, material culture and customary rituals must be read in light of these attitudes of colonial spatial discourse—the privileging of the rural household because of its greater degree of cultural difference, the rejection of urban spatial practices as mere colonial imitation unworthy of ethnographic record and of little interest to metropolitan Western audiences seeking authentic "national characteristics," the emphasis on cataloguing material culture and regimes of the body most in line with the conception of indigenous Otherness—exemplified by Cooper. In contrast to Cooper's descriptions of typical Indian households[71], Ikramullah describes the floor plan and living arrangements of a traditional introverted courtyard house in the essay I referred to in the beginning of this chapter, "Interior of a Muslim Home," thus:

> Lift up the veil and let us enter the interior of a Muslim home! This would have been literally true a few decades ago, for the women's apartments were completely separate from the men's. A long passage connected the two, and a heavy curtain hung at the end which gave entrance to the *zenana*. There sat a female porter or *bara darni*, as she was called, and she announced the entry of all; even the menfolk of the family did not enter unannounced. The passage opened on to a courtyard flanked by rooms on all sides; in front of the rooms were

[71] Cooper does briefly describe a Muslim house in the princely state of Hyderabad, in a later chapter, but here she is chiefly interested in the social activities and invisibility of women subservient to codes of gender segregation, observing that women's "social life centres around the three great events of Indian life—births, weddings and deaths" (159).

> verandahs—these were known as *dalans*. The largest was called the *sadr dalan* and was the equivalent of a drawing-room; the ones leading from it were known as *dalans* or *dar-dalans*…Dalans were really the living-rooms, though some were used for sleeping in the winter months; in the summer months, one slept out in the courtyard. Then there were the small rooms known as *tosha khanas*, used for storing essentials. But one does not see houses of this style nowadays except in the older parts of cities such as Lahore, Peshawar, and Dhaka (3-4).

Here, images of abundance replace Cooper's fetishisation[72] of meagre subsistence—the courtyard is flanked by many multi-use rooms and verandahs, other smaller store rooms are used for storage. Ikramullah presents gender segregation as a matter of fact while Cooper, in a chapter called "Hyderabad and the Mohammedan Woman," characterises the *bara darni* as a "great lady surrounded by a bodyguard of amazons…who salute and present arms with military precision when her courtyard is entered by a visitor" (168). Invited to a "Mohammedan home" in the princely state of Hyderabad, which she characterises as "a feudal country, with many of the customs that prevailed in France under the old feudal regime… [where] [t]he Nizam is the overlord," Cooper briefly describes the house as being "surrounded by a great wall, in which was a massive wooden door studded with iron nails," and upon entering the courtyard, one found "rooms opening upon it from the four sides" (156, 172). Cooper describes these rooms as "more like large alcoves, being separated from the court only by arches" (172). Images of enclosure and the strict surveillance of access points dominate Cooper's description, while indigenous architectural names of the rooms are absent. Furthermore, Cooper does not delve into the ways in which these rooms were used by the women inhabiting them, but makes a general statement that "to …Western eyes disorder and chaos seem to reign"

[72] Bhabha connects colonial formulations of stereotypes to Freud's ideas about fetishism, which engenders "an arrested, fixated form of representation" (107). See: Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. NY: Routledge Classics, 2004.

(167). Ikramullah's autoethnographical spatial discourse, informed by the knowledge acquired from intimate contact with older generations of aristocratic Muslim women, thus substantially expands and reorients the colonial spatial discourse produced by women like Elizabeth Cooper. Ikramullah furnishes Western metropolitan readers with an indigenous architectural vocabulary, signalling the existence of a systematised indigenous architectural tradition rather than focusing only on practices of seclusion, or treating private residences only as incidental organic expressions of an essentialised "national character." Furthermore, she de-fetishises the space of the *zenana* while at the same time also deploying images of sumptuousness present in harem discourse—a move which is consistent with Pratt's formulation of autoethnographic communication as selectively appropriative of dominant discourses while being simultaneously infused with indigenous idioms.

Siting a Privileged and Exceptional Identity in the Traditional Residence

Ikramullah's moves of establishing claims to authenticity and authority, strategies of self-fashioning, and of positing herself within a distinctive upper class South Asian Muslim milieu, which are evident in the introductions that frame the essays in *Behind the Veil* are further clarified in her memoirs, *From Purdah to Parliament*. Albeit framed, as her choice of the title suggests, in terms of the liberal narrative of the emergence of the private individual from domestic seclusion into the public sphere of political participation, Ikramullah's account offers more than the story of a sequestered Muslim woman becoming a postcolonial citizen by acquiring an education and a husband who

does not limit it[73]. At stake in the memoirs is the articulation of a set of strategies intended to produce a privileged and exceptional identity that incorporates seemingly incommensurable elements of Muslim native elite tradition on the one hand, and colonial modernity on the other. Crucial to her production of this South Asian Muslim identity are the ancestral introverted courtyard house and the colonial bungalow. Ikramullah adopts what Victoria Rosner has called an "architectural approach to life-writing," in relation to Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey in *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life* (2005), which "interweave[s] architectural details and domestic routines to render the story of a life inseparable from its material environs" (61, 62). Just as Woolf and

[73] Women's education was a hotly contested topic for urban middle-class Muslim families like Ikramullah's. She writes that her family was assailed by "a storm of criticism" when her father, seeing her keenness for formal education, decided to enrol her in an English convent (29). This occurred even though she remained in *purdah* while at school, and special arrangements were made so that she could observe its codes. In her memoirs, Ikramullah makes it clear that her father saw formal English education as an integral part of a Muslim girl's life, soon to become a norm rather than an outrageous choice. Yet she also writes that during the period she was being educated at home by scholastically unsatisfactory governesses, her father would not consider sending her to boarding school, which was an obvious solution, because "[t]he only people who would consider doing such a thing were those who had no tradition at all," and her father, while being "modern in outlook…had a very deep respect for [their] own tradition" (29). Furthermore, her father explains the necessity of her attending an English convent to one of its detractors in terms of Ikramullah's eligibility for contracting a marriage with a professional man, yet it is he who later suggests that Ikramullah study for a PhD while already having achieved this objective by marrying a member of the prestigious Civil Services. Gail Minault has suggested that educated urban middle-class Muslim women often did not rebel against *purdah* practices without the complicity of male family members. She casts Ikramullah as a "dutiful daughter" who "portrays herself as doing what was expected of her in conditions of tremendous and rapid change," and that her successes in obtaining an unprecedented degree of independence were due to her family background (100, 102). While Ikramullah certainly came from a privileged milieu, it must be noted that she makes it clear in her memoirs that it was her keenness for studying which led her father to enroll her to receive formal education at an English convent despite the criticism of extended family members. Later on when she decided to study for a PhD, she was already married and had three small children. When she writes of this period in her life, she in fact acknowledges the Swedish nurse she engaged to look after her children, rather than other family members, for having been invaluable to her studies. Furthermore, Ikramullah's traces her initiation into party politics to a meeting with Mohammad Ali Jinnah facilitated by her father. While for Minault, this is another instance of Ikramullah reaping the benefits of playing the "dutiful daughter," her subsequent political success without the "permission" of her civil servant husband, articulate opposition to international conflict, resignation from parliament as a sign of protest, and most importantly, the absence of any clue in her memoirs that she was compelled to embrace the views and opinions of politically active male members of her family, of which there were many, explodes the paternalistic mould of Minault's "dutiful daughter." See Minault, Gail. "Coming Out: Decisions to Leave Purdah." *India International Centre Quarterly* (1996): 93-105.

Strachey exhibit an "impulse to memorialize and reanimate their childhood homes, neither of which is still owned by their families at the time of writing," Ikramullah, too focuses on childhood residences not continuously occupied by her, and left behind in India after her move to Pakistan, but which clearly function "not merely period pieces that recall…bygone customs," but rather are mobilised for self-invention (Rosner 61).

One of the clearest examples of an architectural approach to self-narration by a Muslim woman author, which also includes a clearly enunciated autoethnographic spatial discourse, occurs in the fictionalised memoirs of Moroccan sociologist Fatima Mernissi. Although Mernissi's *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood* (1994) was published much later than Ikramullah's *From Purdah to Parliament* (1963), and Ikramullah, unlike Mernissi was not a professional sociologist and ethnographer, both texts focus on the transitional period of late colonial modernity and probe Muslim women's relation to the built environment. Mernissi writes:

> I was born in a harem in 1940 in Fez, a ninth century Moroccan city some five thousand kilometers west of Mecca, and one thousand kilometres south of Madrid, one of the dangerous capitals of the Christians. The problems with the Christians start, said Father, as with women, when the *hudud*, or sacred frontier, is not respected. I was born in the midst of chaos, since neither Christians nor women accepted the frontiers. Right on our threshold, you could see women of the harem contesting and fighting with Ahmad the doorkeeper as the foreign armies from the North kept arriving all over the city (1).

Through the concept of the divinely ordained frontier, Mernissi offers a tentative way of understanding pre-modern and pre-colonial spatial relations between the harem, the city, the nation, and the wider world in terms of spatial segregation. In this scheme, the space of the harem, defined by its own boundary conditions, articulates with the space of the city and of the nation, and the disruption of any boundary at any level can potentially destabilise the entire system. However, no sooner than Mernissi describes this

conceptualisation of interlocking hierarchised spaces ordered by frontiers consecrated by divine authority, she reveals that with the advent of colonialism and modernity, frontiers are no longer respected and their arbitrariness and contingency on relations of power is exposed. Mernissi situates Fez in relation to its proximity to Mecca and Madrid—a significant choice of coordinates that orients readers to the zones of influence under which Fez lay in the 1940s, while also underscoring the peripheral position of the city in relation to both centres. Mernissi then relates harmonious social life to the principle of spatial segregation and mutual adherence to prescribed limits—the *hudud*. The colonial presence of France and Spain in Morocco, a violation of national frontiers and sovereignty, is then associated with the desires of women to obtain unrestricted and unsupervised access to the city. These desires undermine the *hudud* just as surely as the colonial powers' incursions into Morocco. The women, writes Mernissi, "fantasized all day long about parading in unfamiliar streets, while the Christians kept crossing the sea, bringing death and chaos" (2). The crisis of the loss of national sovereignty and the crisis of women's demands of access and participation in the public space of the city are thus configured as *spatial crises*.

Part of the French protectorate in Morocco in the 1940s, Mernissi describes how Fez was divided into the Medina and the French Ville Nouvelle. Mernissi invokes the *hudud*—sacred frontier and prescriptive organising principle of harmonious social life—as a means of introducing readers to communal life in an introverted courtyard house in 1940s Fez. Admitting to a lifelong preoccupation with identifying and situating frontiers— "the geometric line organizing [her] powerlessness"—Mernissi represents harem life in protectorate Fez through a series of clear and enforced but increasingly

contested frontiers (3). The first of these frontiers is the threshold separating her immediate family's living quarters from the main courtyard of the house. Mernissi gives a detailed account of the architecture and living arrangements of the house from the perspective of this threshold, describing the main courtyard as a "highly public" area of the house "where life was very proper and strict," due perhaps, although it is not explicitly stated, to the presence of the men's salon and hence the proximity of men's censorious oversight (6, 16). She writes:

> First, there was the square and rigid courtyard, where symmetry ruled everything. Even the white marble fountain, forever bubbling in the courtyard center, seemed controlled and tamed. The fountain had a thin blue-and-white faience frieze all around its circumference, which reproduced the design inlaid between the square marble tiles of the floor. The courtyard was surrounded by an arched colonnade, supported by fur columns on each side. The columns had marble at the top and the bottom, and blue-and-white tile work in the middle, mirroring the pattern of the fountain and the floor. Then, facing one another in pairs, across the courtyard, were four huge salons…When you lifted your eyes toward the sky, you could see an elegant two-story structure with the top floors repeating the square arched colonnade of the courtyard…(4,5).

The unrelenting symmetry of the courtyard is represented as tyrannical and constitutes the focal point of the memories of the house as far as Mernissi's quasi-fictional child-narrator is concerned. Symmetry dominates the courtyard and is amplified by the replication of the geometrical design in the decorative tile-work on all planes—the floor, fountain and colonnade. It seemingly orders even nature—the water from the central fountain bubbles in a "controlled and tamed" manner, and the bit of sky visible is "still strictly square-shaped, like all the rest" (4, 5). The architectural structures of the house are as integral to the narrative as the stories of the women who inhabit it. Domestic architecture materializes the frontiers Mernissi's child-narrator seeks to identify and understand.

Mernissi gives readers the precise architectural layout of her childhood home in the first chapter, and subsequent chapters reveal the spatial practices of the household. These spatial practices convey circumscriptions on women's mobility and visibility while also revealing women's aspirations[74]. Why is such a detailed architectural description integral to Mernissi's exploration of frontiers and to the representation of her childhood memories? Is it because Mernissi is dealing with a subject of long and sustained Orientalist misrepresentation—the harem—and wishes to issue correctives through its materialisation as domestic space? Or is it something else—something much more universal, related to a Bachelardian phenomenology of space wherein narratives of self are necessarily shaped by our first experience of sheltered reverie in the childhood home[75]? Mernissi's choice of using a child's perspective in recounting the spatial relations that dominated the lives of women in an introverted courtyard house de-emphasises the erotic excess associated with the harem and constructs it as a social institution and familial space where hierarchies and modes of appropriate behaviour are learned as well as contested by young questioning minds. At the same time, her narrative

[74] Mernissi dwells in considerable detail on the introverted character of the courtyard house—all access points lead to the courtyard, save one, which is guarded by Ahmad the gatekeeper, and leads to the street. This was the most important threshold—"Our house gate was a definite *hudud*, or frontier," writes Mernissi, "because you needed permission to step in or out," and adds that "[e]very move had to be justified and even getting to the gate was a procedure" (21). An introverted courtyard-house is different from a house with a courtyard in that the emphasis on privacy and the seclusion of women means that the principal interface of the dwelling enclosure relates to the courtyard rather than the street. Areas away from the courtyard, such as the upstairs rooms that housed divorced and widowed female relatives, and the terrace open to the sky where children staged plays and women carried out domestic work, were less rigid and are associated in the text with *hanan*, or tenderness, storytelling, transgression and the exchange of ideas among women of various ages and social standings within the kin-group and beyond. It is here that "[p]aralysed by the frontier, women gave birth to whole landscapes and worlds," and Mernissi's child-narrator learns that acquiring certain skills, such as the knowledge of foreign languages, "is like developing wings that allow…[women] to fly to another culture, even if the frontier is still there, and the gatekeeper too" (129).

[75] Gaston Bachelard figures the house as an "embodiment of dreams" which shelters poetic reveries of motionless childhood, which we return to for repose in our adult lives (6,15). See: Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space.* Trans. Maria Jolas. NY: Penguin, 2014.

reveals the fundamental ways in which early interactions with the built environment and early understandings of spatial concepts like the frontier shaped Muslim women who experienced twentieth century colonial spatial reorganisation.

In *The Architecture of Memory* (1996), anthropologist Joelle Bahloul finds that inhabitants of courtyard houses develop a certain mode of remembering the past. Her work on a Jewish-Muslim household in colonial Algeria reveals that "the social and cultural world is organized in terms of metaphors provided by the house's physical layout" and that "[r]emembrance is moulded into the material and physical structures of the domestic space" (28, 29). "The mental reconstruction of the house," she finds, "proceeds by drawing successive narrative boundaries in the form of concentric circles radiating outward from the courtyard. These circles actually indicate the breadth of residents' social life" (29). Bahloul describes the scheme of rooms lined up around the courtyard as evoking the structure of a "nucleus...a sort of womb whose only opening is the house's heavy wooden gate" (29). Bahloul's observations are consistent with Mernissi's narrative of the ancestral house, where the courtyard draws the focus of the eye through its symmetry, and this order is replicated in the social relations and hierarchies observed within the semi-public space of the courtyard. The courtyard is not only a dominant feature architecturally, but also structures the way Mernissi represents thresholds and frontiers signifying the degree of publicness and discipline within the house. Bahloul's findings raise important questions about how memory is structured by the built environment, and, more significantly in this context, how different residential forms order memory differently.

The significance of the introverted courtyard-house is structuring memories is also apparent in Ikramullah's autobiographical writing. Like Mernissi, Ikramullah too begins her memoirs with two chapters devoted to the interiors and spatial practices of two very different kinds of houses and households presided over by patriarchs positioned as members of two very different generations of the native elite. The first house Ikramullah describes is the one in which she is born. This may be interpreted as a natural move, in the Bachelardian sense of this house constituting the author's "first universe" (4). However, the juxtaposition of this house with the second residence, which appears in the second chapter of the memoirs, is a representational move to claim affiliation to both pre-colonial cultural authority as well as colonial modernity. The first chapter, "An old-fashioned house (1915)" is devoted to the residence maintained by her maternal grandfather in Calcutta, and the second, "In a modern home (1919-22)," is the "modern home" of her father in the Civil Lines[76]—one of many "pseudo-English railway colonies," she writes, "furnished to look exactly like an English house," recalling Elizabeth Cooper's descriptions of the imitative aspect of urban households in Presidency cities (14, 15). The residential architecture of the railway colony was a colonial invention, "drawing on traditional Indian architectural styles blended with concerns of minimising the discomfort caused by the extreme Indian climatic conditions," and featured "high ceilings, thick walls, generous use of ventilators and tall windows, [and] deep verandahs that encircled the house" (Srinivasan et al xxvi). This type of house—the Bungalow—as

[76] "The English," says Ikramullah, "did not like living in the congested parts of the cities; therefore outside every large city there would be open areas known as the *chaoni* or Civil Lines" (14). Civil Lines were products of colonial town planning, where the colonial spatial order manifested most visibly. As District Medical Officer in the East India Railway, Ikramullah's father was entitled to housing in the railway colony within the Civil Lines in Liloah.

Anthony D. King has shown, was first adapted from indigenous rural dwellings in Bengal and later standardised and replicated throughout the British empire, "gradually becoming an increasingly global product over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (Sengupta 905).

Flagging the 1920s as a "stage when Indians went in for extreme Westernization in every way, particularly those who joined the Service, which so far had been reserved for the English," Ikramullah explains that the compulsion of emulation arose because "it was considered to be synonymous with progress" (15). It is important to note that this compulsion was mediated by being in the employ of the colonial administration, and that the choice of furnishings in the Civil Lines was not always unlimited. Describing her first home in the Civil Lines, Ikramullah writes:

> In the drawing room there were the heavy sofas, fender stool drawn near the fire, lace curtains looped up and tied with corded silk, gleaming brass and silver and various other knick-knacks displayed on cabinets. The dining-room had a fairly massive side-board on which was displayed a lot of heavy silver. The hall and study were also furnished in the typical English style of the times and so were our bedrooms (15).

Historians of material culture have shown how domestic furniture can be interpreted as a means of apprehending value systems and modes of living. French cultural historian Daniel Roche's *A History of Everyday Things* (1997, 2000), for example, suggests that domestic furniture "throw[s] light on the rhythms of life, ordering of possibilities, the strategies of the circulation of goods, their hierarchical organisation between the intrusions of the functional and those of the aesthetic" within any given historical period, and "reveals to us a state of society through its significance, giving material form to needs and referring to the silent language of symbols" (168, 174). The symbolic function of the arrangement of domestic objects has also been explained by Jean Baudrillard in

The System of Objects (1968, 2005). Baudrillard suggests that "pieces of furniture confront one another, jostle one another, and implicate one another in a unity that is not so much spatial as moral in character" and that this moral dimension can render a "faithful image of the familial and social structures of a period" (13). In the light of the symbolic content of domestic furniture beyond its functionality, it is significant that Ikramullah focuses much of the description of her father's English style modern home on the drawing room. Its function as a site of display is apparent in Ikramullah's foregrounding of the display cabinet and the side-board laden with heavy silver. The items she describes can be taken as cultural signs organised into a coherent system where the space of the Civil Lines articulates with the architectural form of the residence, which in turn articulates with its interior, and each is intended to display a harmonious emulation of 'Englishness,' which is actually the colonial spatial order materialised. Later, when Ikramullah goes to live in England for a time, she writes that her "small furnished house in Chelsea…did not seem very different from [her] childhood home in Calcutta or [her] home in Delhi," because she "came from that small stratum of society that had adopted the English pattern of life to the minutest detail; cretonne curtains, fender stool, thinly cut bread and butter, cucumber sandwiches and all" (80). Ikramullah's representational strategy invites us to think of the cretonne curtains and the fender stool as objects that hinge the domestic spaces of the Civil Lines bungalows in suburban Bengal with those of the bungalows of Lutyens' Delhi, as well as with the interiors of residences in England. The typical objects of emulative colonial modernity thus form the hinge that enables, to extend the metaphor, the folding of all three bounded interiors neatly over each other such that each becomes, as Ikramullah puts it, "at once

familiar and strange," allowing her a new appreciation of the colonial-modern formation (77).

Supriya Chaudhuri has argued, in the context of nineteenth century Bengal that, "the whole project of colonial modernity involve[d] a new valuation upon the world as a collection of objects in use" and that "[i]t is at this time that colonial subjects begin to acquire a new *habitus* of conspicuous consumption distinguished by the possession and display of previously unknown range of household goods" (173-74). As we have seen earlier, assembling collections of objects was one means through which affluent and enterprising Muslims were able to legitimise their claims to aristocracy and power in nineteenth century Islamicate centres like Lucknow, Hyderabad and Bhopal; and, also, how some late colonial Muslim elite constituted themselves as a public by laying claim to the inheritance of these collections. Collection and display were thus vital to colonial modernity, and drawing rooms materialised the self-representation of residents and their desires to gain membership in a particular class and community. In the case of Ikramullah's father, this meant maintaining requisite outward signs of Englishness expected of civil servants, including heavy sofas, decorative lace curtains corded with silk, and fireplaces and fender stools in the tropical climes of Bengal. The drawing room Ikramullah describes materialised the colonial spatial imagination, which required the living quarters of civil servants to be uniform, interchangeable, and anonymous. As Sara Mills has observed, the colonial domestic space of the Civil Lines "tended not to be the overly personalised space of Victorian Britain, but more a type of impersonal 'national' space," where Englishness could be enacted (57). Living in a space filled with such an intent, no wonder Ikramullah recounts how "servants wore uniforms similar to those

worn by the servants of English people, complete with gloves, cummerbund and monogrammed *pughris*[77]*,"* and how that most English of rituals—the high tea—was regularly observed in the "artificial English colonies" where she spent most of her childhood, and where her family "followed the outward pattern of the English way of life" (15, 18). While the outwardness of this pattern is evident in the display practices of the drawing room, Ikramullah also mentions that her mother was able to observe *purdah* even in these imitation English garden suburbs, indicating the jostling of colonial spatial order and traditional domestic practices. In her study of the history of the drawing room in Bengal, Rosinka Chaudhuri suggests that the drawing room entered the residences of the native elite only in the nineteenth century as part of "processes… [that were] linked to an English education in infinitesimal ways" (223). As such, they initially consisted of repurposed reception halls originally meant for hosting *nautch* performances, and were filled with inharmonious collections of objects with no discernible unifying aesthetic, and only during the course of the twentieth century was "the drawing room transformed…into its current Indian form, attaining, in some circles, an aesthetic style and cultural ambience that was created as a deliberate attempt at Indianization" (222). The drawing room Ikramullah describes was a product of the colonial spatial imagination and evidences its outwardly acceptance by members of the English-educated native elite. As such, this drawing room represents an earlier stage in Rosinka Chaudhuri's evolutionary scheme that involves the gradual incorporation of indigenous elements that took place as the twentieth century wore on. The only native traditions upheld were not overly visible in the material culture of the domestic interior, but rather in the choices made by

[77] A *pughri* is a turban.

Ikramullah's mother with regard to observing the codes of *purdah* in a house not built for such a purpose, and in ensuring that the children gained thorough knowledge of the "orthodox pattern" even while living among "outlandish people" (16,17).

Later on, Ikramullah expresses her own preferences with regard to residential types and styles of furnishings when she describes the repurposed bungalow of her in-laws, which:

> "…had taken on the look of the traditional Muslim house with the large enclosed verandah running the entire length of the house. On the verandah there was the usual *takhat* with the inevitable *paan-daan.* Alongside the wall, *charpais* were stacked, which were taken out in the evening into the courtyard for sleeping. There were *surahis* for drinking water and the samovar on one side for washing. All the living in the East is done on verandahs and, though we now build dining- and drawing-rooms in imitation of the West…we still go on living on verandahs and verandahs always have *takhats* which can be said to be the stage of all our activities. Though houses are now furnished with sofas and chairs and all modern European furniture, the *takhat* still holds its own as the most used piece of furniture in our households. It did not take me very long to feel quite at home in the large *takhat* on the verandah at Nagpur (64).

Ikramullah expresses pleasure at the reappropriation of the bungalow as a 'traditional Muslim house.' This is a transformation materialised through both furnishings and objects of everyday use, as well as spatial practices, which Ikramullah particularly highlights—all the living, she declares, takes place in the verandahs, despite the "orderly, functional, and spatially specialized household" of the colonial spatial imagination had introduced the drawing room and the dining room into native residences (Glover 140). Similarly, the *takhat* and not the sofa is the most beloved receptacle of the body. Rather than cabinets and sideboards which display objects, Ikramullah dwells on items, such as the *paan-daan* and the *surahi,* that are handled intimately in the course of daily activities and form a part of the social life of the verandah. Rather than employing a representational style that evokes the fixity of objects within the domestic interior, as if in

a still-life painting or a photograph, Ikramullah conveys tactility instead. There is also a lack of interiority in Ikramullah's description—the verandah is represented a fairly public stage of social interaction, a publicness similar to that of the courtyard Mernissi describes in her memoirs. In contrast to her enthusiasm for the reappropriated bungalow, Ikramullah presents her views about the furnishings of colonial officers' bungalows in no uncertain terms when she has the opportunity to decorate her first marital home:

> I rejected, lock, stock, and barrel, all the things my husband had accumulated in six years of his service, saying that they were 'awful' and so they were, for they were the typical furnishings of a district officer's bungalow, a hybrid mixture of the worst styles of the East and the West and whatever I may or may not have known about running a household, I did know something about furniture (66).

It is clear then, that despite spending most of her childhood residing in a series of houses designed for colonial officers, Ikramullah articulates a preference for the appurtenances and spatial practices of what she calls a traditional Muslim household.

Contrasting the 'modern home' of her father in the Civil Lines with her maternal grandfather's "very old-fashioned house, built in the style of Muslim houses of the nineteenth century" in Calcutta, Ikramullah impresses upon readers the distinctive features of the introverted courtyard house and the colonial bungalow, respectively (1). In doing so, she also reveals the ideological regimes these dwelling types were ordered by and the social relations that they in turn ordered. Speaking of her grandfather's house in Calcutta, she says that "[t]he house was old-fashioned and behind the times and the life that was lived in it was no less out of date," yet she does not distance herself from either the house or the lifestyle it supported, but rather takes great care to establish her familiarity with the spatial practices, material culture and social relations supported by the house. Why is it necessary for Ikramullah to begin the story of her life and times with the natal home of her mother? Why, given that Ikramullah did not inhabit it continuously

after the age of two, and that the house was sold when she was only eight, is it important for her to assert that she "can remember it very clearly and can describe it almost room by room" (1)? Why does the 'old-fashioned house' figure so prominently in Ikramullah's self-fashioning? Answering these questions is crucial to understanding the fractured and contradictory nature of modernity in late colonial India. They reveal the processes of self-fashioning through which some members of the native elite were able to reconstitute themselves as a new public. This new public consisted of middle-class practitioners of an ideal-typical modernity who became, through sustained cultural entrepreneurship, "new arbiters of appropriate social conduct" and architects of "new modes of political activity that empowered them at the expense of the traditional elites," as Sanjay Joshi put it in his *Fractured Modernity: Making of a Middle Class in Colonial North India* (2001) (2).

Clues to this strategy of reconstitution are revealed in Ikramullah's introductory remarks to her memoirs, where she observes that her life coincided with the passage of three distinct eras of South Asian history: she was "born before the last vestige of Mughal civilization had quite disappeared from the Indian subcontinent," her "childhood was spent in the heyday of British Imperialism" and her early youth and subsequent professional career spanned the decades of growing nationalist movements, eventual decolonisation and the inauguration of the states of India and Pakistan (xvii). Through her life-writing, thus, Ikramullah creates an unbroken genealogy that incorporates traces of Mughal culture, hybrid colonial modernity and authentic postcolonial citizenship. The old-fashioned nineteenth-century Muslim style house serves as a crucial link in Ikramullah's self-fashioning. It is this house and the rituals and codes observed—and preserved therein—that enable her to claim affiliation to a culture already on the wane at

the time of her birth, but still replete with enormous symbolic and cultural capital that families which "regarded themselves as custodians of the Mughal culture," as Ikramullah puts it, still "guarded… jealously as a precious possession" (4).

Ikramullah describes her maternal grandfather, Nawab Syud Muhammad, as the scion of such a family, that is, one which traced its forbears to those "of wealth and position" who arrived in the subcontinent from Iran during the reign of the Mughals and "prided themselves on the fact that, though they had lived for several generations in India, …had married only into families of birth and status similar to their own" (4). Thus, one way in which Ikramullah situates her grandfather, and through him, herself, within the native elite milieu is through establishing the antiquity of the family line, which is said to extend back to "the time of the Mughal Emperor, Faruk Saiyar,"[78] and has ever since been kept pure through endogamy (4). In general, among Muslims in South Asia, maintaining elite status meant issuing claims of endogamy and descent from Arab, Turkish or Central Asian courts. Sylvia Vatuk's ethnographic study of the attempts of members of a Southern Indian descent group or *khandan* to construct an account of their family history stretching back two centuries finds that the "*khandan's* sense of self rests on the fact of sharing close genealogical relationship," as well as on "a strong emphasis on purity of descent" (120). Ikramullah's preoccupation with her lineage also evidences this desire to affirm its 'foreign' origins and underplay autochthonous claims of national belonging.

[78] Faruk Saiyar, or Farrukhsiyar, was the 9th Mughal emperor, and reigned from 11 January 1713 to 28 February 1719.

Ikramullah writes that although driven to secure a position in the British colonial government due to the dwindling fortunes of his family, Nawab Syud Muhammad was never completely at home in the colonial city, "never…[coming] to terms with the new rulers or the way of life they brought with them" (3). Nawab Syud Muhammad had lived in Dhaka, which Ikramullah describes as an "enclave of Mughal culture," and securing employment in the service of the colonial administration required him to migrate to Calcutta, then the colonial capital and "centre of progress and home of the newly prosperous," where he resided since the age of twenty-two (4, 5). Yet Ikramullah is keen to establish *her* connection with the minor Mughal outpost of Dhaka, with her emphasis on Nawab Syud Muhammad's connection to it. His resistance to accepting and practicing the way of life espoused and valued by the colonial administration stemmed, Ikramullah explains, from the anxieties of civilisational erasure and a need to perpetuate what she calls 'family tradition' to secure a private, if not collective or public future, for a venerated erstwhile dominant culture from which his elite status accrued. This concern with safeguarding family tradition as a bulwark against civilizational erasure also appears in Shah Nawaz's novel, *The Heart Divided*, as we have seen in a previous section. Like those post-1857 elite Muslims Sheikh Jamaluddin describes in *The Heart Divided,* who rejected anything British for fear of civilizational erasure, Nawab Syud Muhammad too, as Ikramullah takes great care to establish, was uninterested in the "abject and slavish imitation" of British colonial cultural practices, while also being greatly conscious of and interested in perpetuating the elite status of his family and its "yardstick of …tradition, which took precedence over every other code of conduct," and which set him apart from

other members of the native nouveau riche who were quick to assimilate imperial prescriptions of modern everyday living (6).

Writing on the "colonial experience of becoming modern"[79] and on the experience of 'official time'[80] by the native population living in close proximity to or directly serving the colonial government, Dipesh Chakrabarty and Ranajit Guha have observed how mid-nineteenth century native elite responses to the imposition of imperial order on everyday life sometimes consisted of the dual tactic of engaging in a self-fashioning that undermined the master-subordinate relation of the colonizers and the native elite while also undermining the temporal scheme of the emerging civil-political society under the regime of an "externally imposed official time" (Chakrabarty "Difference" 1, Guha 347). This self-conception derived from "the patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal extended family…[and] was more tied to a mytho-religious idea of time than to the temporality of secular history" (Chakrabarty, "Difference" 21). Thus, rather than elaborating on anecdotes related to his public life—representing him as a public figure through his accomplishments in the service of the British colonial administration—Ikramullah describes Nawab Syud Muhammad as an anachronistic householder known through his filial and kinship relations, his idiosyncratic insistence on 'good taste' and 'good conduct,' and his ritualised interactions with members of his household. In so doing, Ikramullah participates in the "refusal to valorize the civil society that European colonial rule brought in its train" that Dipesh Chakrabarty has enumerated in *Provincializing*

[79] See: Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "The Difference: Deferral of (A) Colonial Modernity: Public Debates on Domesticity in British Bengal." *History Workshop: Colonial and Post-Colonial History* 36.2 (1993): 1-34.

[80] See: Guha, Ranajit. "A colonial city and its time(s)." *Indian Economic Social History Review* 45.3 (2008): 329-51.

Europe (2000) (218). Nawab Syud Muhammad's post in the colonial government, the highest accessible to Indians at the time, appears only in a brief paragraph about his official achievements: Ikramullah mentions in passing that he became the first Indian to head a department and received many titles and honours. What is underscored instead is his rejection of the imperial order beyond the limits of his official work, which he regarded as "almost an act of collaboration" (5). To assuage this guilt over joining the colonial government, Ikramullah says, Nawab Syud Muhammad "gave vent to his real feelings" through satirical essays in the *Oudh Punch*[81] and eschewed a lifestyle ordered by imperial time and codes of domestic conduct in favour of "the values of a vanished age," even though this meant that most of his children, imbibing this outmoded order, "became, by worldly standards, failures" (6, 9).

Nineteenth century debates of modernity among the native elite in Bengal centred on what kinds of conventions were to be followed in domestic life, to what extent the imperial order was to enter the domestic sphere, and to what degree this accommodation was desirable before anxieties of cultural erasure and colonial mimicry overpowered practitioners of this always already out-of-date modernity—a colonial modernity that made self-conscious latecomers of its practitioners. While a section of the native elite sought to synchronise the time of the domestic sphere with that of the civil-political society in order to better serve the requirements of the latter, others saw this accommodation as "a matter of compulsion, of unfreedom, a forced interruption of more important/purer acts," which could only be conducted "outside the working day, which

[81] The Oudh Punch was an Urdu serio-comic illustrated weekly started at Lucknow in 1877 by Munshi Muhammad Sajjad Husain (1856-1915), member of the Indian National Congress. See Constable, Archibald. *Oudh Punch. A selection from the illustrations which have appeared in the Oudh Punch from 1877 to 1881*. Lucknow: Oudh Punch Office, 1881.

was taken up with servicing an alien state machine" (Chakrabarty, "Difference" 21; Guha 347). The more important/purer acts here refer to the sacralised daily routines of the householder that embedded him within a framework of action that did not derive relevance from the colonial state, which was seen as "a contingency and external constraint," but rather drew authority from a "more permanent and deeper rhythm of life" found in a pre-colonial, pre-nationalist mytho-religious system of work (Chakrabarty "Difference" 20, 24). The "truncated and diminished everyday" life that could be lived beyond the temporal regimes of the colonial administration thus became a site of self-assertion for some of the (male) native elite, like Ikramullah's maternal grandfather (Guha 347).

Another way in which Nawab Syud Muhammad's resistance to the imperial domestic order manifested itself was through the strict regulation of the private lives of the women who resided in his house–-especially where they could go and with whom they could engage in social interaction. Ikramullah notes how in Nawab Syud Muhammad's household, even unrelated women did not enjoy unrestricted access to the *zenana*: women vendors such as "dressmakers,… bangle sellers and other women hawker, who must necessarily be allowed in, were regularly vetted by the *derban*" and "the womenfolk of the new-rich of Calcutta" were not considered "fit company for the ladies of his household" (6). In fact, it was considered unseemly for young unmarried girls to travel unaccompanied even to call on relatives. Ikramullah's mother, while residing in her natal home before marriage, thus "never went visiting or received any calls except from relatives," and so came into contact with a very limited number of people outside the members of their own household (6). Somewhat defensive of the

traditional and autocratic figure she has cut of her grandfather, Ikramhullah explains that "[h]e belonged to an age that had vanished and the civilization he was bred in had crumpled to dust before his eyes," but yet he "clung to it, desperately, and to be able to do so he had to be uncompromising," and since "[h]e worshipped at no other shrine and paid homage to no other gods than the god of his own family tradition," one of the ways his uncompromising dedication to the renewal of the rituals of everyday life of the Muslim elite of the minor enclaves of Mughal culture in a colonial metropolis revealed itself was through his selective accommodation to colonial impositions: while he "perforce had to accept certain things for himself and his sons, … he was determined not to accept them for his womenfolk," who were expected to lead an "extremely secluded existence" under "the strictest purdah" (9, 6). In this selective accommodation of colonial modernity, Begum Ikramullah's grandfather appears to have been no different than the nineteenth and early twentieth century Hindu Bengali *bhadralok* who, as numerous scholars following the work of Partha Chatterjee have noted, figured the domestic realm as a space of cultural and spiritual purity and a refuge from foreign contamination, with the woman enshrined within as the bearer of an essential national culture which could only be secured through her continued seclusion or the supervision of her education or the regulation of her sexuality or the paternalistic surveillance of her egress into the public domain under the auspices of anticolonial nationalist movements.

Ikramullah's mother, having been reared in such a household, "did not belong to her own age—she belonged to the age her father had seen vanish" (11). Ikramullah acknowledges that the household presided over by her grandfather was "behind the times" and "out of date," but she does not frame this in terms of a lag between the

imperial metropolis and the colonial periphery that characterizes the discourse of deferred colonial modernities[82] (3). Rather, Ikramullah's memoirs ascribe self-assertion to her grandfather, Nawab Syud Muhammad, who resists synchronicity with the imperial time imposed upon him through his employment in the colonial government by sustaining what Ikramullah calls an "Arabian Nights world" within the walls of his old-fashioned house in Calcutta (26). Thus, Ikramullah makes the case for her own colonial hybridity: through her mother, she is able to claim affiliation to as well as rehearse a pre-colonial dominant culture; and because of her father's occupation as a colonial official, she is able to inhabit 'a modern home' within a replica "English garden suburb" that situates her as a member of the native elite (15).

I want to draw attention here also to the fact that although it is an old-*fashioned* house that Begum Ikramullah describes in the opening chapter of her memoirs, it is not an *old* house, built by a remote ancestor, continuously inhabited, and expanded by successive generations. The contrasts between the two houses notwithstanding, it is instructive to note that both houses and households were, in a sense, self-conscious 'copies' of a culture the respective patriarchs aspired to renew or emulate: while the 'old-fashioned house' in Calcutta replicates the spatial relations of traditional Muslim dwellings predicated upon restrictions on the visibility of women, drawing upon a pattern of domestic architecture associated here specifically with Mughal culture, the 'modern home' in Liloah is represented as a simulacrum of an 'English-style' suburban detached

[82] "[T]he discourse of modernity," says Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994), "is *signified* from the time-lag, or temporal caesura, that emerges in the tension between the epochal 'event' of modernity as the symbol of the continuity of progress, and the interruptive temporality of the sign of the present" and this "lag is indeed the very structure of difference and splitting within the discourse of modernity, turning it into a performative process, …[where] each repetition of the sign of modernity is different, specific to its historical and cultural conditions of enunciation" (245, 247).

garden cottage. However, the introverted courtyard house type is not exclusive to Mughal or even Islamicate cultures, and as a "settlement form," it has existed for "at least nine thousand years" (Rapaport 58). This type of residence was thus not exclusively indigenous to Bengal or to Mughal or generally Islamicate societies, and yet, for the Bengali urban elite, the introverted courtyard house emerges as a marker of cultural authenticity because of the ways in which it enables the continuance of traditional spatial arrangements.

Conclusion

In *Coming of Age in Nineteenth Century India: The Girl Child and the Art of Playfulness* (2013), Ruby Lal approaches the reconstruction of the life-worlds of Muslim women in the nineteenth century through a series of interviews with Azra Kidwai, a scholar and member of an eminent North Indian *ashraf* family, born in 1945. Lal writes that Kidwai's reminiscences and thoughts on the history of the women of her milieu became the guiding principle structuring Lal's arguments. The ethnographic interview provides the ground for the collaborative work of Lal, as well as Kidwai, to challenge disciplinary conventions of historiography, which emphasizes chronological historical narration, and does not accept "the criss-crossing of chronological divisions…and the hypothetical different historical-cultural ethics of different times, to understand particular historical moments and figures" (4-5). Instead, Lal argues persuasively for a way of writing about the past, especially that of women, by juxtaposing the current voice of her interviewee with a diverse assemblage of texts pertaining to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For Lal, "a person in the present, as in the historical past, has ways in which

s/he opens and shuts worldviews both of the past and the present, and that their views become the legitimate grounds for writing a historical past" (5). Lal takes cognizance of the risk involved in her method, which is "to extrapolate from Azra's experiences and impose her feelings and responses on the nineteenth-century world" (3-4). Yet she defends the generative potential of her collaboration with Kidwai, saying, "Azra opens the door, as it were," to the "spatial and textual ordering" of the life-world of Muslim women from *ashraf* classes in the mid-twentieth century (5, 8).

In this chapter, I have used Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah's memoirs and essays to "open the door" to two broad questions: how did elite Muslim women articulate their relation to the built environment and what role did this articulation play in their self-fashioning? Like Lal, I recognize the danger of appearing to posit the interpretations and representations of an exceptionally privileged Muslim woman as objective truths that applied to all elite Muslim women negotiating the competing demands of colonial modernity. My intention, in focusing on Ikramullah's representational strategies, has been to parse her use of domestic interiors, material culture and residential forms in her construction of narratives about the past, self, community and colonial modernity. It is clear that she is particularly invested in communicating the sophistication of secluded women's society, and the extent of their knowledge about customs, ceremonies and domestic material culture. This stance surely overlooks several legitimate issues foregrounded by a diverse array of literature on the practice of *purdah*, which critiques the wretched conditions of secluded women, especially among those families that did not share the same extraordinary privilege as Ikramullah. This is why it is important to separate an understanding of how things actually were for Muslim women in the early

twentieth century—even elite Muslim women—from Ikramullah's *account* of her life in *From Purdah to Parliament* and of the culture she describes in *Behind the Veil*. I have approached her writing thus, not as factual historical record or alternate archive, but rather as a series of selective representations that incorporate both the *ethnos* of ethnography and the *bios* of autobiography within the self-reflexive mode of autoethnographic expression. I have probed how she structures these representations into a particular narrative, paying special attention to the objects she selects to populate the foreground of this narrative. Without an understanding of the colonial discursive field and the postcolonial reconstitution of the Muslim elite as a suspect minority in India and as bearers of legitimate cultural capital and political authority in Pakistan, which activated Ikramullah's investment in cultural heritage and ancestral past, her writing risks misinterpretation as merely a testimonial to the halcyon life-worlds of bygone traditional households. However, her counterdiscourse becomes meaningful in the context of the colonial spatial imagination and harem fantasy, and bears on the interpretation of the novels of late colonial Muslim women writers because it makes explicit their shared historical and social context. Reading Ikramullah in conjunction with the novels, and the novels in the light of Ikramullah's strategies of self-representation, thus creates a composite and polyphonic ground for analysis and interpretation.

Chapter 2 The Literary Landscape

The story of the Indian novel in English, resistant to being subsumed and consolidated within a tradition as it is, may yet be broadly summarised thus: formal innovations begin to appear in nineteenth century Indian literatures[83] arising from a textual economy made possible by the consolidation of a mobile imperial commons,[84] which was supported by an imperial print-culture-in-the-making and mediated by colonial policies.[85] These formal innovations, adapting metropolitan textual resources for

[83] Here I use Indian Literatures in the broadest sense to mean prose fiction and non-fiction in Indian languages as well in English by Indian subjects of the British empire in the nineteenth century. Meenakshi Mukherjee in *The Twice Born Fiction* (1971) says that the Indian novel in English only "made a diffident appearance" in the 1920s, but footnotes Bakim Chandra Chatterjee's unsuccessful first novel *Raj Mohan's Wife* (1864) and Krupabai Satthianandhan's *Kamala, a Story of Hindu Life* (1894) as "stray" examples of nineteeth century Anglophone novels. Vinay Dharwadker prefers to define a long nineteenth century from 1825 to 1925, during which he suggests writers like Henry Derozio, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Toru Dutt, Manmohan Ghose, and Sarojini Naidu "collectively started a process of inventing Indian literariness in English in a highly aestheticized and self-conscious form," which was developed by others writing in English until the appearance of the modernist and Progressive Writers' movements (222).

[84] In *Ten Books that Shaped the British Empire: Creating an Imperial Commons* (2014), editors Antoinette Burton and Isabel Hofmeyr formulate imperial commons as "textual resources over which one could exercise a common right," and "as a site of deterritorialized sovereignty in the textual economy of the modern British Empire" (5-6, 4). Despite issues of uneven access and mediation by the colonial state, they contend, imperial print cultures-in-the-making enabled the book-form to function as an "embodiment of an imperial information system" (7). Elleke Boehmer too draws attention to the traffic in "cultural symbols which exhibited a remarkable synonymity" across the empire (52). "At its height," she says, "the British Empire was a vast communications network....[and] at least in part, a textual exercise" (13).

[85] The Charter Act of 1813, for instance, specified for the first time certain funds to be allotted by the East India Company for the education of Indians—for the "revival and improvement of literature…and for the introduction and promotion of …the sciences," to be precise. While institutions of Oriental learning like the Calcutta Madrassa (1781) and the Benares Sanskrit College (1791) had been founded and funded by the Company, they were charitable projects and not part of a parliamentary mandate. The 1813 Act also allowed Christian missionaries to impart "useful knowledge" and instruct natives on "moral improvements," and although the Act did not specify the language of this instruction, missionaries like Alexander Duff promoted the use of English as the medium of education, creating a sustainable base of native users of English. The next Charter Act of 1833 further entrenched the role of Christian missionaries in providing education to Indians by allocating them monies for this purpose. The English Education Act of 1835 finally formalized English as the medium of instruction and de-funded institutions teaching Sanskrit and Arabic. The intent of this Act is outlined most forcefully in the infamous "Minute on Indian Education," in which Thomas Babbington Macaulay argues that such measures were necessary to create "a

the consumption of newly forming reading publics in a peripheral literary system[86], at first seen as derivatives of mediocre source material[87], soon become attached to the aspirations of the colonial bourgeoisie. Multiple conceptions of modernity, cultural history and community find representation in the novel thus indigenized in Indian languages, but as the twentieth century wears on, the Anglophone novel becomes increasingly authorized as a preeminent vehicle for imagining the nation for a metropolitan audience. With the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) to universal acclaim, the association of the Indian novel in English with ideas and critiques of the nation and its history is cemented by numerous scholars working within the burgeoning field of post-colonial studies[88]. Current scholarship too, as we shall see, exhibits a marked consensus regarding the special relationship of the Indian novel in English—especially early twentieth century examples—and the labour of imagining and disseminating ideas about the nation, community and national/communal history.

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class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect," who may "refine the vernacular dialects of the country… and...render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population." Gauri Vishwanathan's *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (1989) shows how the study of English language and literature in India was instrumentalised as a form of imperial social control and how the educational policies initiated during the nineteenth century authorised imperial domination.

[86] In his "Conjectures on World Literature," Franco Moretti uses the proliferation of the novel form as evidence of the one and unequal world literary system: "[I]n cultures that belong to the periphery of the literary system (which means: almost all cultures, inside and outside Europe)," he writes, "the modern novel first arises not as an autonomous development but as a compromise between a western formal influence (usually French or English) and local materials" (58). This thesis is supported, Moretti says, by over twenty independent critical studies on the novel ranging from Latin America to Japan.

[87] "With total servility," says Meenakshi Mukherjee in *Realism and Reality: The Novel and Society in India* (1985), early Indian novelists "imitated mediocre English novels, often devaluing their own talents in the process" (17-18).

[88] Timothy Brennan, in *Salman Rushdie and the Third World* (1989), places Rushdie in a group of authors he calls the Third World Cosmopolitans, who make 'Third World' experiences intelligible for metropolitan audiences. Principal among these experiences is the disarticulation of the imagined community due to irreducible heterogeneity.

Where in this multiply corroborated narrative of the Indian novel in English does one situate novels like Zeenuth Futehally's *Zohra* (1951), Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided* (1957), and Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961)? What can their reception tell us about the functions of literary criticism and the frameworks that underpin and shape literary studies in India? What are the implications, for these novels, of the dominant frameworks introduced in early literary histories and established in subsequent literary criticism to evaluate and form the canon of Indian writing in English? My purpose in this chapter is to historicise the reception of these novels in relation to early and current scholarship on Indian writing in English, and use insights from historical studies on South Asian Muslim women to explain some of the blind spots evident in the literary criticism examined. I contend that the aforementioned novels are part of a corpus of early Anglophone writing by South Asian women, which has been understudied due to the national focus of literary studies in the region, the dominant frameworks organising the study of Indian novels in English, and the exigencies of literary circulation. Reading the three novels comparatively in relation to each other, to the history of their reception, and to Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah's autobiographical and ethnographic writing, I argue, is particularly timely given that current geopolitical events have generated a great need for the nuanced and contextualised understanding of the cultural practices of Muslims in general and Muslim women in particular. For such an understanding, I argue, this selection of South Asian Muslim women's writing serves as a valuable resource demonstrating the complexity of self-representational positions availed by authors; and it further provides correctives to the monolithic sign of the oppressed Muslim woman. In the following chapter, I discuss in detail how *Zohra*, *The Heart*

Divided and *Sunlight on a Broken Column* articulate elite Muslim women's relation to the built environment and material culture of late colonial Hyderabad, Lahore, Delhi and Lucknow, respectively, but in this chapter, I want to establish the literary landscape from which these novels arose, and which shaped the reception and circulation of these novels.

The Anglophone literary landscape of the twentieth century is generally considered to be dominated by three themes: the Gandhian notions of anti-colonial nationalist ethics, social reform and rural reconstruction, the Nehruvian ideas of Indian cosmopolitanism, and the programmatic social realism espoused by the Progressive Writers' movement. Literary histories unanimously treat Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao as the founding fathers of the Indian novel in English in the 1930s and 40s, and Kamala Markandeya, Anita Desai, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala and Nayantara Sahgal as notable women novelists who appear on the literary scene a decade later, after World War II, in the 1950s and 60s. While the 1930s and '40s are figured as a period of ascendant Gandhian anti-colonial nationalism jostling with Nehruvian visions of modernity, the 1950s and 60s are characterized by the emergence of women novelists and by narrative concerns with "character development and psychological depth, often combined with a sense of the alienated individual, dissatisfied with modern life" (Narayan and Mee 219).

The novel in English was particularly influenced, scholars note, by the prolific journals, prison writing, and autobiographies authored by the icons of the nationalist movements, which shaped novelistic representations of "the contiguity between personal and political prose, [and] between narratives of subjectivity and those of nationalism" (L. Gandhi 172). Between Gandhi, who was born in 1869, and Nehru, who died in 1964,

there stretches nearly a century of more than 150 volumes of published work that shaped the development of English prose writing in India. Sunil Khilnani has argued that the prolific speeches and writings of Gandhi and Nehru "shaped the place and form of English in India in three decisive ways": firstly by "ensur[ing] for the English language a countrywide currency," secondly through "a political commitment to English as a language of public communication…,recognising it as a vital link not just to the wider world but also between Indians themselves," and thirdly because "the forms in which they wrote—autobiographies, public and private letters, journalistic essays and articles, and works of history—helped to define how these genres came to be understood and used in India, by their contemporaries and those who came after" (136). Gandhi's prolific contributions to his two journals *Young India* (1919-1932) and *Harijan* (1933-48) provided source material to canonized novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, who acknowledged that his first novel *Untouchable* (1935) was inspired by Gandhi's description of an encounter with a sweeper boy in *Young India.* Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* (1909) achieved the status of a nationalist classic during its South African ban between 1919 and 1938.

The impact of the personality cult of the Mahatma on diverse Indian literatures has been widely acknowledged by literary historians. Sisir Kumar Das writes in his magisterial *History of Indian Literature* 1911-1956 (1995), that Gandhi emerged, "apotheosized…like the medieval saints and social reformers," in the first half of the twentieth century, to occupy the ideal of the national hero in Indian literature (64). The influence of his work, ideas, style of prose and "epic incarnate" life was pervasive in Indian poetry in all major languages, with "songs and anecdotes about him [being]

composed by anonymous poets in the rural dialects" through which his myth "entered into the folklore of the country" (Das 65). Several "Mahatma novels"[89] were written during this period when Gandhi was emblemized as an icon of anti-colonial agitation under the Civil Disobedience movement inaugurated in 1930 with his dramatic march to Dandi to begin the Salt Satyagraha. Several Gandhian novels adopted the "Mahatma theme' [which] was announced within the nationalist agitation as a uniquely imaginative, carefully symbolic, and irresistibly fictionalisable way of doing politics" (Gandhi 169). Deploying the mode of social realism, these novels were often concerned with social reform and Gandhian rural economics. In addition to Gandhi-as-hero, the figure of the Gandhian hero also appears in the late 1920s and becomes widely popular as a protagonist in late colonial Indian literatures. In tandem with the Gandhian hero, who could be identified by his moral commitment to the Gandhian programme of rural reconstruction with its most visible symbols of *Khadi* (homespun) and the *charkha* (spinning wheel), the Gandhian heroine also emerged as the "New Woman" protagonist, who, by virtue of her femininity—here synonymous with self-sacrifice, self-control and self-purification—had been cast by Gandhi as the true *satyagrahi*[90].

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[89] In *A History of Indian Literature in English,* Leela Gandhi lists Premchand's Hindi novels Premashram (1921) and Rangabhumi (1925), Ramanlal Vasantlal Desai's Gujarati novel *Gram Lakshmi* (1940), Bhabani Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers* (1947) and R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) in English as some novels with a Gandhian theme.

[90] Romita Choudhury argues this point in her dissertation, writing "Gandhi made strategic use of the prevailing notions of femininity to involve women in the struggle for negotiated independence. To women he attributed all the qualities associated with *Satyagraha*, the celebrated Gandhian principle of nonviolent political action. Women, in suffering silently for many centuries, had learnt fearlessness, patience, ahimsa (non-violence), and, most importantly, obedience… Woman, having suffered and sacrificed by virtue of being woman, was naturally strong, courageous, patient, compassionate, and forgiving, and therefore more fit than man to serve as the morally superior conscience of nation and home. Woman, as Gandhi never failed to repeat, was the true satyagrahi, the fighter for truth" (62). See: Choudhury, Romita. *Representations of Language, Gender and Subalternity in Indian Women's Writing in English.* Diss. University of Alberta. 1999. Web.

In this narrative of the development of the Anglophone novel in India, early Muslim women novelists featuring conflicted urban upper-class Muslim protagonists find no purchase. Even when there is a reference to Muslim women's Anglophone novels during this period, it is often only in passing, or a somewhat negative aesthetic evaluation is offered, attached to an appreciation of the work as a 'document' of an Other way of life. Furthermore, early Anglophone novels by South Asian Muslim women are not treated together as a category despite several shared themes, but rather as formally weak examples of singular literary efforts which do not satisfy the requirements of existing frameworks. This dissertation takes a contrasting direction. It focuses on *The Heart Divided*, *Zohra* and *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, reading them in conjunction with each other, but also with Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah's memoirs *From Purdah to Parliament* (1963). Each of these texts provides an intimate glimpse into the institution of *purdah* and the material culture of the *zenana* at a time when both are being consigned to the categories of relic and ruin. Each of these texts narrativises the period between 1930 and 1950, demystifying those 'strange' processes that have eluded satisfactory description and analysis in the historiography of the period. Indeed, as Krishna Kumar puts it in his foreword to 2004's short-lived Indian edition of *The Heart Divided*, the "two grand narratives [of Indian and Pakistani history] follow predictable nationalist tracks, coming close at times, diverging at others, but they stay within the reach of interpretive imagination—*except when they cover the late 1930s*," when "[s]omething apparently strange happened…, so strange that it continues to render even scholarly political history rather thin and unsatisfying" (v; emphasis mine). It was his dissatisfaction with the thinness of historiography that drove Kumar to 'discover' *The Heart Divided* through an

excerpt in Mushirul Hasan's *India Partitioned: the Other Face of Freedom* (1995). The thick description of the 1930s that *The Heart Divided* provides rectifies the lack Kumar ascribes to official historiography. Certainly this is how Kumar introduces the novel to an Indian audience, who he imagines will find Shah Nawaz's narrative more instructive than those of "historians and political analysts of Partition [who] miss the point when they seek the reasons for that monumental tragedy within the triangle of the Congress, the League and the British" (vi).

The 'strangeness' and remoteness of history is domesticated and made comprehensible by these four texts through a thick description of the lived spaces and experiences of elite Muslim women negotiating and eventually coming out of *purdah,* a highly codified set of social practices that extend beyond the mere veiling of Muslim women. Through an architectural approach to self-narration, each of these texts represents different ways in which domestic interiors, material culture, residential forms, and the monumental landscape of Islamicate cities figured in the discursive construction of modernity by elite Muslim women authors. Furthermore, each of these texts describes the multiply directed constraints on elite Muslim women's mobility and participation in public life and the ways in which these restrictions were transgressed. Each of these texts expose the multiple and competing regimes of patriarchy operating on elite Muslim women and the convergences and divergences of the rules of these institutions, which serve not only class interests but are also influenced by colonial as well as anticolonial discourses on women's place in the civic space of two nations that have not yet achieved statehood. In fact, each of these texts provides multiply inflected accounts of the ways in which these two nations were being imagined by contesting nationalisms while also

representing elite Muslim women's aspirations from and investments in the same. Each of these texts portrays elite Muslim women's struggle for self-determination amid the politics of the Muslim League and the Pakistan movement it engendered; the Indian National Congress and its particular brand of Indian nationalism which failed to accommodate significant minorities within its discourse; feudal interests with their complex and shifting loyalties to anticolonial nationalist movements; and socialist concerns, which were often incompatible with all three.

I begin here thus with two early literary histories of the Anglophone novel in South Asia in order to recapitulate their dominant frameworks, and show how these frames excluded late-colonial women's writing in general and Muslim women's writing in particular. I include a discussion of the publication histories of the novels under consideration in order to highlight the extraliterary circumstances that impacted their reach and critical evaluation, and the broader contexts surrounding their republication and re-entry into circulation in the world literary system. I then make the case that, when read in isolation, early Anglophone novels authored by South Asian Muslim women may seem as weak counterpoints to contemporary canonized authors—both men and women writing in English as well as the prolific Muslim women writing in Urdu during this period—yet read together as a body of work, being alive to the interliterariness of South Asian literature, these novels reveal the anxieties and processes of ethnoreligious minoritisation, the tense negotiations of colonial modernity, the (re)configurations of affective attachments to home and city, and of gender and class relations under the new national order(s). I argue then that, as Jessica Berman puts it, like "many of the narratives written by Indian women in the late-colonial period [these novels too] engage in complex

ways with the conventions of narrative fiction and autobiography, developing an intersecting critique of gender and genre that seems to realign women's social and political identities while opening a space for an alternative narrative modernism" (140-41). Reading early Anglophone novels of South Asian Muslim women as examples of alternative narrative modernism then recalibrates the lenses through which they have hitherto been viewed in such a way as to revise earlier critical evaluations and enable us to recognize their role in the discursive formation of gender, domesticity, space and romantic love.

Early Anglophone Novels by Muslim Women and Contemporary Literary Histories

K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar's *Indian Writing in English* (1962) is one of the earliest post-independence literary histories of Indian Anglophone writing. Considered a "major and influential critical [work] on Indian Writing in English," of its time it was nevertheless "condemned by [the] new generation of critics and writers for [its] inability to establish critical standards" (Jussawalla 5, 6). Iyengar acknowledges that his "modest exercise in literary history… [is] not a demonstration of the "new" criticism" and characterizes it as an "almost exclusively …individualist adventure, with all the incidental drawbacks…, but perhaps also with the advantage of a single sensibility (however imperfect) covering the entire field" (ix). As an early work in the field, Iyengar's chief concern is to establish Indian writing in English as a "distinctive body of writing…[that] is likely to grow in volume and vitality" (22). Much of his introduction is devoted to exploring issues of defining the 'Indianness,' in terms of form and content, of Indian writing in English. Given these concerns, Iyengar's method largely consists of a

chronological discussion organized around representative authors, many of whom also happened to be already mythologized as national public figures associated with the formation of 'Indianness.' As Feroza Jussawalla has pointed out, one of the major faults of early Indian literary criticism was the "inability to be critical because of an effort to establish national identity" (9). Iyengar characterizes Indian writing in English as an "experimental new literature [which] would thus need an experimental critical approach for its proper evaluation," yet at the same time, cautions that "[m]uch of Indian writing in English has had no more than a contemporaneous significance" (21). His focus on literary figures who had major parts to play in the nation-story of India makes sense in this context of labouring to establish an enduring "aetiology" of Indian writing in English without the temporal distance that can corroborate the continuing relevance of the texts and authors included in this tentative genealogy: Iyengar can be seen as using an already established narrative of national history to authorize his literary history.

It is no wonder then, that in Iyengar, women novelists are discussed all together in one chapter after individual chapters dedicated to Gandhi, Nehru, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, who are treated as major figures who shaped the development of Anglophone prose in India. Iyengar discusses Toru Dutt and Cornelia Sorabji in some detail as early Anglophone women writers but asserts that "[i]t is… only after the second world war that women novelists of quality have begun enriching Indian fiction in English" (Iyengar 438). Kamala Markandeya and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala are declared as "unquestionably the most outstanding" of the lot, and much of the chapter discusses six novels authored by each of them (438). Attia Hosain is discussed as a minor novelist whose "talent for reminiscence and sensitive observation…doesn't seem to have been

exploited…to the full" (461). This was more so in the case of her novel, *Sunlight on a Broken Column*—which had just been published at the time Iyengar was writing his literary history—than her collection of short stories, *Phoenix Fled* (1953). Iyengar reads *Sunlight* as replete with "valuable social and political documentation" and "a feeling for places, events and words," yet concludes that the novel "lacks…tightness of texture, dramatic action and not simply a sweeping sense of drama, and the impression of inevitability in the interaction between character and action" (461, 464). There is no mention of Zeenuth Futehally and Mumtaz Shah Nawaz—both of whom were contemporaries of Hosain, and like her, authored single novels with the kind of social and political documentation Iyengar finds in *Sunlight.* Thus, it is clear that much of Iyengar's literary history is implicitly nation-centric, and that when he does mention Muslim women authors, he reads their work for social and political documentation.

Meenakshi Mukherjee's *Twice Born Fiction* (1971) is another widely cited source of literary criticism on Indian writing in English, specifically the Indian novel in English. *Twice Born Fiction* focuses on a truncated but "comparatively productive" period—between 1930 to 1964—"in order to arrive at an assessment of the problems, achievements, and further possibilities of the Indo-Anglian novel" (15). Mukherjee seems to anticipate Iyengar's issues with temporal distance and his subsequent appeal to the authority of the nation-story to legitimize his literary history: she eschews discussing novels published beyond 1964 as she believes she would not have "the kind of steady perspective in which one ought to examine literature" without some time having elapsed between publication and scrutiny (15). Mukherjee also draws attention to the inclusion of exceptional and thus non-representative figures in Indian literary histories—authors who

"could not constitute a trend" as "[t]hey were not natural products of the general social and cultural conditions of their time" and thus "cannot be evaluated against, not related to, the history and geography of the India of their time" (17). This is the case with figures like Toru Dutt and Sri Aurobindo, to whom Iyengar devotes a chapter apiece. Mukherjee, however, prefers to focus on overall trends and themes among the Anglophone novels produced in the roughly three decades she limits herself to, and posits three stages in the development of the Indian novel in general, which are applicable also to the Anglophone novel in India, albeit with some overlap. These stages are: historical romance, social or political realism and psychological novels showing an introspective concern with the individual (Mukherjee 19). Mukherjee also identifies several themes in the Anglophone Indian novel of this period, which are then used as frameworks to evaluate and thereby include or exclude novels from analysis. These themes include: social change driven by the disintegration of the old hierarchical and agrarian society and the breakdown of the large joint family, the national movement for Indian independence, the East-West encounter, the focus on non-urban, indigenous and inward-looking situations and characters, the rebellion against the family driven by romantic love as an example of the conflict between social hierarchy and the emergence of the individual, and, finally, the place of faith in socio-cultural life (26-29).

Mukherjee considers *Sunlight* under several of these themes, such as those of social change, the East-West encounter and the rebellion driven by romantic love, but primarily as an example of the use of the technique of an "unself-conscious narrator" to "deal with a young woman's personal crisis set against the larger historical background of the independence movement" (51). Mukherjee writes that Hosain's "method is strictly

autobiographical" and that she does not "make any effort to maintain a distance between herself and the narrator" (51). Mukherjee identifies several drawbacks of *Sunlight: "*as a novel," she says, "it is not satisfactory because of its stock situations, its predictable conflicts between love and loyalty, its over-indulgence in nostalgia and sentimentality, and a general weakness of structure" (53). However, it succeeds, in Mukherjee's estimation, on at least two counts: "[a]s a piece of social documentation" and as a Partition novel which "[presents] the enormous event [as] it was," especially since "the narrator (as well as the author) being a Muslim, the issues of loyalty, idealism and expediency are fraught with a special significance" (53). Of *Zohra* too, she says that a "kind of vague adolescent romanticism is combined with Gandhian idealism" in the novel, which "can be read as an interesting case of a decadent literary convention influencing a modern novel," but suffers from a surfeit of sentimentality shaped by the "convention in a certain variety of Urdu poetry… [in which] the beloved is unattainable (55, 56). Mukherjee also finds no character-development in the eponymous heroine who "remains the same naïve adolescent till the end" (56). Yet "there is no irony in the treatment of Zohra," writes Mukherjee, and "the reader is expected to have complete empathy with her" (56). Again, there is no mention of Mumtaz Shah Nawaz, and the dominant framework used is that of the independence movement and nationalism, while social documentation is seen as the most valuable trait of the novels that are discussed.

In Arvind Krishna Mehrotra's recent edited volume, *A History of Indian Literature in English* (2003), the chapter on the novelists of 1950s and 60s contains only a glancing mention of Futehally's *Zohra*, and a very brief discussion of *Sunlight*, with no mention at all of Mumtaz Shah Nawaz. Contributers Shyamala A. Narayan and Jon Mee

characterise Kamala Markandeya, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai as "a quartet of women writers joining the male trio [of R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao] as India's best known writers in English until the emergence of the Rushdie generation" (220). *Zohra* and *Sunlight* are mentioned as "single novels of self-discovery" in the context of "the English-educated elite and the complexities of their position in relation to traditional and modern roles for women" (224). Here we finally find a favourable assessment of *Sunlight*: Narayan and Mee write that the novel "has proved among the most popular of …studies of elite women's consciousness, widely admired for the lyricism of its prose style and its vivid re-creation of the distinctive Muslim culture of Lucknow before Independence" (224-225).

Clearly Mukherjee's early critical statements about *Sunlight* were softened in the intervening years. In his afterword to a volume of Hosain's previously unpublished short fiction, *Distant Traveller* (2013), Aamer Hussein offers a clue to this change in the reception of *Sunlight* when he points out that "Hosain's career seems to belong to the 1980s when her work was republished," and that this might have been because it was only in the decades after its republication that "it began to receive serious and extensive critical attention" as "[a]cademic discourse finally caught up with her" (228). Hussein positions Hosain's work as "a crucial part of a flowering of South Asian writing in English that saw the emergence of talents such as Rushdie, Bapsi Sidhwa, Vikram Seth, and Rohinton Mistry, ending with the appearance of Arundhati Roy on the scene, just before Attia's death" (228). So while the quartet of Kamala Markandeya, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai dominate the 1950s and 60s, Attia Hosain with her single novel and collection of short stories has drifted to the 1980s.

Publication Histories: Obscurity and Resurgence

Here it is appropriate to include a discussion of the publication history of the three novels for some context. A discussion of the publication history along with the ways in which the novels have been contextualized by publishers for the contemporary reading public, as well as the relative positions of their authors will further illuminate the issues at stake in approaching the work of South Asian Muslim authors, and perhaps help to answer why there is a dearth of a 'canon' of South Asian Muslim women's writing. Attia Hosain, born in 1913 in Lucknow in a prominent *taluqdari* family, held a UK passport and resided in London since 1947, which has placed her in the august company of diasporic authors like Bharati Mukherjee, Amitav Ghosh, and Salman Rushdie. *Sunlight* was first published in the United Kingdom by Chatto and Windus. This was a publishing house well known for its roster of prominent South Asian writers writing in English, which included Nirad Chaudhuri, R. K. Narayan, and Khushwant Singh. *Sunlight* was edited by Cecil Day Lewis, who later became the poet laureate of England. Apart from *Sunlight*, Hosain authored a collection of short stories, *Phoenix Fled* (1953), and, on the centenary of her birth, *Distant Traveller* (2013), a collection including some previously unpublished short fiction was compiled by Aamer Hussein and her daughter Shama Habibullah. *Sunlight* was re-published with an introduction by Anita Desai in 1988 by Virago as part of an international selection of women's writing featuring 'rediscovered classics' by authors such as Dorothy Edwards, Paule Marshall and Phyllis Shand Allfrey (Hussein 224). This republication led to significant interest in Hosain's work, so much so that Aamer Hussein remarks that "[i]n the nine years between the republication of her

books and her death, Attia Hosain became an icon" (Hussein 231). The time was ripe for the republication of Hosain's work: the performance of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) in the global market had opened it up for 'Indian writing in English.' Meanwhile, the English-speaking postcolonial reading public, which now included a sizeable diaspora of middle-class, highly educated South Asians, "was looking for writers in whose depictions of history and struggles with form [they] could find inspiration and [material to] build an alternative canon" (Hussein 224). *Sunlight* fit the bill handsomely with an English that preserved the idioms and cadences of Lucknow's refined, upper-class Urdu to such an extent that it read like a translation. It must be noted that it is this possibility of producing literary fiction in an 'idiolect' of 'Indian-English' that Rushdie's work actualised as well. It became one of the characteristics of Indian writing in English. With its painstaking recreation—often recalling miniature painting—of the material culture of the elite private spaces of late colonial Lucknow, *Sunlight* stockpiled meaning into objects and spaces destined for obsolescence and ruination. It thus offered a sumptuous reading experience for those seeking participation in the Raj nostalgia that swept Britain in the 1980s.[91] Several novels dealing with the entangled lives of the British and Indians in the colonial spaces of the empire gained a new lease of life with their adaptations for television and film. Paul Scott's Raj Quartet and M. M. Kaye's *The Far Pavilions* (1978) were adapted into widely popular television miniseries which began broadcasting in 1984. In the same year, David Lean brought E. M. Forster's enduring classic *A Passage to India* (1924) to the silver screen. The year before, Ruth Prawer

[9191] M. Keith Booker writes that "As a whole, colonial nostalgia (especially involving India) was a central element of British culture in the Thatcherite 1980s" (120). See: Booker, M. Keith. *Colonial Power, Colonial Texts: India in the Modern British Novel.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997.

Jhabvala's Booker prizewinning *Heat and Dust* (1975) had been made into film by Merchant-Ivory productions.

In addition to consumers of Raj nostalgia, *Sunlight* also captured the diasporic South Asian audience with its careful insertion of history in the private domain through the portrayal of the division and loss of home and family at the birth of the postcolonial nation. This 1980s 'rediscovery' of Hosain's work also coincided with the intensification of scholarly interest in postcolonial literary criticism and its problematic of the narration of nation. In one of the earliest scholarly articles about the novel, Anuradha Dingwaney Needham characterises *Sunlight* as "a narrative about the emerging Indian nation and about emerging national identities" that "seeks to re-cast and re-negotiate the preferred narrative of Indian nationalism" (94, 107). In *Home truths: fictions of the South Asian diaspora in Britain* (2002), Shushila Nasta reads *Sunlight* as part of a constellation of texts that includes works by Aubrey Menen and G.V. Desani. Nasta positions *Sunlight* as "centrally preoccupied in a chronicle of the unresolved spaces of memory and with those other minoritarian histories of movement and displacement situated outside the often restrictive parameters of the colonial encounter" (35). Jill Didur reads *Sunlight* as a "subversion of the romance genre that has often been enrolled by nationalist projects" in *Unsettling Partition: Literature, Gender, Memory* (2006). Prominent historian of partition Mushirul Hasan has endorsed *Sunlight* as a nuanced partition novel and in *Dwelling in the Archive* (2003), Antoinette Burton positions it as "an alternative archive of partition," which "reshapes the landscape of the historical imagination, offering a modest corrective to local and in turn to national history" (138). Thus, in general, nation

and national history emerge as the recurring themes in relation to which *Sunlight* has gained scholarly attention since the 1980s.

This point bears some elaboration here. Aijaz Ahmad writes in his critique of Frederic Jameson's characterization of all 'third-world' literatures as 'national allegories,' that "[t]he 'nation'…became the primary ideological problematic in Urdu literature only at the moment of Independence," and then too because of the disintegration of community engendered by the violence of Partition, such that this was "a nationalism of mourning" not overly concerned with anti-colonial nationalist ideologies or with a triumphalist narrative of the end of colonial domination, but rather with a scouring critique of the failures of nationalism (118-119). Ahmad uses Urdu novels published in the decades preceding independence—which was also the period of high nationalism—to demonstrate that far from exhibiting a preoccupation with narrating the nation, these novels were chiefly concerned with social ills like "the barbarity of feudal landowners, the rapes and murders in the houses of religious 'mystics', the stranglehold of moneylenders upon the lives of peasants and the lower petty bourgeoisie, the social and sexual frustrations of schoolgirls"[92] (118). The experience of imperial subjection and the civilisational encounter with the West were primary concerns of the *Anglophone* novel, as Meenakshi Mukherjee has pointed out in *Twice Born Fiction* (1971). Scholars have been unanimous in establishing the nation and national history as principal concerns of twentieth century South Asian novels in English, although social criticism is certainly seen as a valued aspect of early twentieth century novels. Priyamvada Gopal has argued this point extensively in *The Indian English Novel: Nation,*

[92] These concerns were also those of the Progressive Writers' movement.

History, and Narration (2009), where she shows how the Anglophone novel in India "is a genre that has been distinguished from its inception by a preoccupation with both *history* and *nation*" (5). Gopal argues that "the narration of nation gave the Anglophone novel in India its earliest and most persistent thematic preoccupation, indeed, its raison d'être, as it attempted to carve out a legitimate space for itself" and that "the evolution and morphing of the idea of India constitutes *both* the condition of possibility for the emergence of the Anglophone novel *and* a conceptual link between some of the most significant works produced in the genre" (6, 7). Similarly, in another recent study, *Indian English and the Fiction of National Literature* (2013), Rosemary Marangoly George also argues that the "representation of India to the world and to the nation is understood to be the natural and rightful task of Indian writing in English" and that "this was an assumption that ran through all kinds of literary and cultural initiatives that emerged in the 1930s and 1940s" (31).

It is perhaps this entry of the nation as the primary ideological problematic in the literature of the mid-twentieth century that has complicated its study. Much of the existing work on South Asian Muslim women—their lives, self-representation, personal narratives—has focused on an earlier period uncomplicated by the conjunctural terrain of the transition from colony to nation. Siobhan Lambert-Hurley's work on the Begums of Bhopal, Gail Minault's work on Muslim women's education and reform, and even, to a certain extent, Mahua Sarkar's work on the erasure of Bengali Muslim women's voices, deal with the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and while they make an excellent case for constructing the secluded Muslim woman as a historical subject marginalized by the overemphasis on *purdah* and the interest of dominant anti-colonial nationalist

discourses in figuring upper-caste, upper-class Hindu women as bearers of national culture, they do not address the literary self-representation of Muslim women at the moment of decolonization, when concerns with national, ethnoreligious and cultural identity supersede those of education and social reform.[93]

It is at this moment that the smooth categorization of the authors and texts under consideration in this dissertation becomes difficult because of the new national order and the peculiar position of South Asian Muslims within it. The question of which literary history is to claim these authors and their oeuvre is imbricated within the question of where South Asian Muslims truly belonged and how they were to be folded into the new national order engendered by decolonisation. In this context, Ahmed Ali's account of the life of his novel *Twilight in Delhi* (1940) is particularly poignant as it demonstrates how "a crisis of identity into local and refugee" engendered by Partition influenced the reception, publication history and contextualization of late colonial Anglophone literature produced by Muslims in British India (xix). Ali, one of the members of the *Angarey* group which founded the Progressive Writers' Association, was posted in Nanking, China, when India and Pakistan came into being, and he recounts, in a 1993 introduction to *Twilight in Delhi*, how he was "prohibited by the overnight-turned-Hindu Indian authorities…to come back to India… for no other reason than because [he] was a Muslim" (xix). The Partition also extended to the not inconsiderable bureaucracy of British India, and as a member of the Foreign Service, Ali was forced to "opt for"

[93] See Lambert-Hurley, Siobhan. *Muslim Women, Reform and Princely Patronage: Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam of Bhopal.* Oxford/NY: Routledge, 2006; Sarkar, Mahua. *Visible Histories, Disappearing Women: Producing Muslim Womanhood in Late Colonial Bengal*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008; and Minault, Gail. *Secluded scholars: Women's education and Muslim social reform in colonial India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Pakistan despite having been born in and maintaining a residence in Delhi. Significantly, he correlates this eviction with "the banishment of [his] grandparents and the Muslim citizens from the vanquished city [of Delhi] by the British" in 1857 and says, "[y]et while their exile was temporary, mine was permanent, and the loss not only of home and whatever I possessed, but also my birthright" (xix-xx). A sense of permanent exile and the disorder of affective attachments to home and patrimony engendered by the new national order is thus clearly articulated by Ali's statements. This sense of the disruption of site-specific generational and cultural continuity can be gauged by the fact that *Twilight in Delhi* was refused televisation in Karachi because "its scene was laid in the forbidden city across the border" (xx). Delhi was 'forbidden' because it could stand in for the lost patrimonial home of the immigrants, permanent exiles and displaced persons of Partition, evoking painful memories of home and patrimony left behind in India, in the face of the pressures of assimilation into the new national order wherein one could not claim both Indian and Pakistani nationality.

Returning to the publication history of the novels, *The Heart Divided* was published from Pakistan. This can perhaps account for its relative obscurity, if we consider the Indo-centric focus of the interest in South Asia. We have just seen how much of the scholarship on South Asian Literature is concerned with the category of Indian literature in English, from which, being Pakistani, Shah Nawaz's absence can be excused. Pakistani literature in English is not as widespread as an analytical category as the fairly consolidated Indian writing in English, although new scholarship, such as Cara Cilano's *Contemporary Pakistani Fiction in English: Idea, Nation, State* (2013) deploys

the term to great effect. Cilano does include a discussion of *The Heart Divided,* albeit as one of *six* partition novels.

Mumtaz Shah Nawaz died in a plane crash in 1948 before the publication of *The Heart Divided*, which was to be her sole novel. It was left to her mother Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz[94] to arrange for it to be published through Mumtaz Publications in Lahore in 1957. The novel was reissued once by ASR publications, also in Lahore, in 1990. The publisher's note to this edition framed the novel as a corrective to the inadequate history textbooks prescribed in Pakistani high schools, which "were badly written, and were inaccurate to the point of lying" and presented a history that "was one of leaders and events, rather than the history of a people, and women of course, were hidden completely, in the chronology of events" (Khan vi). When assigned as supplementary reading in schools, *The Heart Divided* was found to have had a great impact on students, especially girls, who identified with the strong female role models provided by the protagonists in the novel—"women who had asserted themselves as individuals"—as well as in the life of the author herself (Khan vii). Not much is known, however, of how many school-going children were prescribed the novel, or even about its general readership and reception. The first Indian edition was published only in 2004, and the novel is currently out of print,[95] even though this most recent republication carried a blurb on its jacket

[94] Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz was a prominent politician and social activist who advocated for women's rights throughout her career. She and Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah were the only women members of Pakistan's first Constituent Assembly, which also served as its first parliament, and like Begum Ikramullah, she belonged to an illustrious political family and wrote a memoir, *Father and Daughter: A Political Autobiography* (1971), chronicling her political career beginning as her father's protégé. Her father, Sir Mian Muhammad Shafi belonged to a powerful land-owning family of Lahore and was a lawyer as well as an active politician who established the Punjab Provincial Muslim League.

[95] *The Heart Divided* has passed on to the category of 'rare books' in the terminology of internet based booksellers, commanding hefty prices because of its limited availability. Only 19 libraries hold copies of the book.

declaring the novel "[a]n astonishing 'lost' classic, written in 1947 and never published outside Pakistan," thus framing it as a 'recovered' authentic voice from a time and place that have accrued an immense emotive charge for the Indian reading public. *The Heart Divided* was excerpted in Mushirul Hasan's *India Partitioned: the other face of freedom* (1995) even though its narrative ends before 1947, and Krishna Kumar, who also wrote the introduction to the Indian edition of the novel, mentions it in the context of questioning the received 'commonsense' history of 'pre-Partition' India in *Prejudice and Pride: school histories of the freedom struggle in India and Pakistan* (2001). Kumar frames the novel as a valuable resource that not only presents history from the point of view of young women, but also vivifies the set of mobilizations which culminated in the birth of Pakistan, providing a "Pakistani view…Indians may not have the epistemic means to fathom" (40). In other words, *The Heart Divided* is constructed as a counter-history valuable to both Pakistani and Indian historiography, albeit for different reasons. David Willmer characterises *The Heart Divided* as an exceptional novel because of Shah Nawaz's foregrounding of the social discourse of modernity alongside an overtly nationalist discourse. Willmer argues that *The Heart Divided* provides a glimpse into an experience of modernity that is not "represented either in the standard historiography concerned with the Pakistan movement to which Mumtaz Shah Nawaz…belonged, or in the grand narrative of the Pakistani state's nation-building mythology," and as such, it can be treated as a "historical text of the kind about which Hayden White speaks, one in which the 'value attached to narrativity in the representation of real events arises out of a desire to have real events display the coherence, integrity, fullness and closure of an image of life that is and can only be imaginary.'" (416).

All authors under consideration here having had a similarly limited writing oeuvre of one novel apiece, with Attia Hosain having published a collected of short stories, it is thus reasonable to say that the relative popularity of *Sunlight* may have more to do with the patterns of print circulation—circuits of cultural globalism that underwrite literary value—that work to the advantage of certain texts while limiting others' entry into the literary and cultural marketplace, rather than the literary merit and historical significance of these texts. Moreover, the relative positions of the authors vis-à-vis each other and also within the world literary system play a significant role in the dissemination and availability of their texts. "[E]ach writer's position," says Pascale Casanova, "must necessarily be a double one, twice defined: each writer is situated once according to the position he or she occupies in a national space, and then once again according to the place that this occupies within the world space (81)." If we take this to be the case, the background, publication career and country of residence of the authors under consideration must be borne in mind while discussing this particular set of texts together.

While Attia Hosain's work was endorsed in introductions by Anita Desai and Mulk Raj Anand, the first edition of Zeenuth Futehally's *Zohra,* published from Bombay, included a foreword by E.M. Forster, despite the author's "profound disappointment at the lack of editing on the part of the publisher" (ix). *Zohra* too remained a 'lost' novel, like Shah Nawaz's *The Heart Divided,* not having found publishers outside India, until it was revised by Futehally's daughter and republished in 2004. This edition carries a blurb from February 1952's *The Illustrated Weekly of India,* which declares that the novel "has the distinction of being one of the very few novels in English depicting Indian Muslim life, along with Humayun Kabir's *Men and Rivers* and Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi,"*

while another blurb frames it as an "intensely nostalgic historical record of a city and… a social commentary on a unique way of life," which will attract "all those interested in Indian women's writing in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries." The novel is thus framed as an authentic autoethnography of Indian Muslim life in Hyderabad that is of value to contemporary readers primarily as an archive, even though E.M. Forster, in his 1951 foreword to the original edition of *Zohra,* impressed by the character of its heroine, calls the novel "not only an interesting document but [also] a creative achievement" (Futehally 261).

Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah's memoirs, *From Purdah to Parliament* concluded its first edition run within two years of its publication from London in 1963, and no second edition was forthcoming from the same publishers as they closed down soon after. Begum Ikramullah too did not pursue a re-issue through other publishers at the time. Consequently, the book remained in demand but out of print until 1998, when a revised and expanded edition was published. While the first edition concluded with her becoming a member of the parliament, the new edition included five additional chapters about her life beyond her resignation from parliament and from the Muslim League in 1953 in protest against the repeated delay in the passing of the Pakistani constitution. In her preface to this revised edition, Begum Ikramullah is at pains to frame her text in terms of an eye-witness account of a Muslim woman in public service, and thus shies away from 'controversial' political commentary about events that occurred after her resignation from parliament—such as "the secession of East Pakistan, [and] showing how the seeds of that tragic event were to be found as early as in the deliberations of the First Constituent Assembly" (xiv). The publisher's blurb calls the book "topical…deal[ing]

with a period which is of much interest these days, that is, the Raj and its aftermath." 1998 concluded the 50th anniversary celebrations of Indian and Pakistani independence and this saw a resurgence in the examination of the late colonial period in the region, as is evidenced by the profusion of anthologies of literature from the region, and especially of commemorative and recuperative work on the history of Partition[96].

I provide this brief publication history in order to draw attention not only to the "unequal distribution of literary resources" that influences the ways in which some texts and authors from "peripheral literary spaces" become 'worlded' and gain a certain reach while others do not, but also to the contexts in which texts are picked up for republication (Casanova 76). From the preceding discussion, it is clear that each of the texts under consideration here has received a fresh lease of life through republication or translation many years after first being published. These republications have also framed these texts in a particular manner and thus shaped their reception. Each of these texts has been positioned as an authentic account of a bygone era and style of life that is 'recovered' through the 'marginalized' voices of exceptional South Asian Muslim women authors. That is to say, it is not only on the strength of their extraordinary capacity to vivify a lost—or rather, silenced—past that these voices gain entry into the contemporary literary circuit through republication, but also because of being implicitly cast as native

[96] For example the Golden Jubilee issues of *The New Yorker* in the US and *Granta* in the UK; Rushdie, Salman, and Elizabeth West. *The Vintage book of Indian writing, 1947-1997*. Vintage Books, 1997; Tharoor, Shashi. India: *From Midnight to the Millennium and Beyond*. Harper Perennial, 1997; Khilnani, Sunil. *The idea of India*. Penguin Books India, 1999; Bose, Sugata, and Ayesha Jalal, eds. *Nationalism, democracy, and development: State and politics in India.* Oxford University Press, 1997; Bhasin, Kamla, and Ritu Menon. *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition.* Kali for Women, 1998; Butalia, Urvashi. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. Penguin Books India, 1998.

informants who have 'witnessed' the transitional period between feudalism and democracy, colony and sovereignty.

Frames and their Limits

Other widely studied authors of this period, like Ahmed Ali, who wrote both in English and Urdu, and Ismat Chughtai and Sa'adat Hasan Manto, who wrote in Urdu, are read as representative authors of the Progressive Writers' movement,[97] for their narratives of fiercely iconoclastic feminism in the case of Chughtai, for their representation of partition violence in the case of Manto, and because of the fact that their work was controversial enough to be subjected to obscenity trials, in the case of both Chughtai and Manto. Additionally, Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* (1940) has been hailed as the "first major work written by a Muslim ever to be published in English," and claims have been made of "its significance to the Muslim literary tradition in English [being] as pioneeringly pivotal as Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is to African literature in English" (Malak

[97] The Progressive Writers' movement took the Hindi-Urdu literary sphere by storm in the 1930s by espousing the mode of social realism in prose literature to directly mirror and critique unjust sociocultural practices, poverty, class disparities and feudal attitudes. The first meeting of the All India Progressive Writers' Movement and Association (AIPWA) was held in Lucknow in 1936, presided by Hindi-Urdu writer Premchand, but the literary movement itself can be said to have been sparked by the publication, in 1932, of *Angaray* (Embers), a collection of Urdu short stories by Ahmed Ali, Sajjad Zaheer, Mahmuduzzafar and Rasheed Jahan. *Angaray* created a sensation in the Urdu literary sphere with its radical critique of traditional social institutions, and was denounced by leading newspapers before being banned in 1933, when the "Defence of *Angaray"* was published announcing the creation of the League of Progressive Authors. Mulk Raj Anand and Sajjad Zaheer drafted the first manifesto of this group and several versions of it appeared between 1935 and 1936 when it was adopted as the official manifesto of the first AIPWA meeting. This document asserted that it was "the duty of Indian writers to give expression to the changes taking place in Indian life and to assist the spirit of progress" by "rescu[ing] literature and other arts from the priestly, academic and decadent classes in whose hands they have degenerated for so long; to bring the arts into the closest touch with the people; and to make them the vital organ which will register the actualities of life, as well as lead us to the future" (qtd. in Colm Hogan 265 and Joshi 208). See: Hogan, Patrick Colm. *Colonialism and Cultural Identity: Crises of Tradition in the Anglophone Literatures of India, Africa, and the Caribbean*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2000; and Joshi, Priya. *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture, and the English Novel in India*. NY: Columbia University Press, 2002.

3, 27). Ali and Manto eventually moved to Pakistan and their work is thus claimed by both Indian and Pakistani literary history, but interestingly enough, in *A History of Pakistani Literature in English* (1991), Tariq Rahman includes Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, who resided in India and wrote both in Urdu and English, in addition to creating a large body of critically acclaimed Hindi films, as one of the writers born in British India who can be seen as a pioneering figure in Pakistani literary history.

In contrast, Attia Hosain, Mumtaz Shah Nawaz, and Zeenuth Futehally, do not feature prominently in any of these canons. Nor has their work been seen as part of a corpus of South Asian Muslim women's writing, which would perhaps have served as a more viable framework for their study, given the relative sparseness of their collective literary oeuvre in comparison to that of other canonized authors from this period. *Sunlight on a Broken Column* is Attia Hosain's only novel. She published a collection of short stories, *Phoenix Fled* (1953) in her lifetime, and a compilation of selected unpublished writing, *Distant Traveller* (2013) has appeared posthumously. *Zohra* and *The Heart Divided* are also Futehally's and Shahnawaz's sole novels, respectively. When seen together as a constellation of texts part of a longer tradition of Muslim women's writing in the region, instead of as individual representations and critiques of prevailing social norms and ideologies, these texts provide ample material to study the salient and distinctive features of South Asian Muslim women's writing. However, a look at the volume of scholarly attention received by each of the texts under consideration in this dissertation reveals the scant regard[98] paid to all texts other than *Sunlight on a Broken*

[98] Khurram N. Khurshid and Arnal Dilanta Dayaratna devote a chapter each to *Sunlight* and *The Heart Divided* in their dissertations, *Discourse of Difference: Cultural Resistence, Identity Politics, and Feminist Nationalism in Indo-Muslim Fiction* (2010), and *Reading India's Partitions through Literature* (2006),

Column, which has been variously read as "(an)other narrative of nation,"[99] as a partition novel,[100] as a novel illuminating South Asian practices of *purdah*,[101] and as a commemorative archive preserving the lost ancestral home—the "evidence of the desire to dwell in history when house and home have become uninhabitable…in the wake of the unspeakable violence of the past" (Needham 95, Burton 107). Although Attia Hosain was aligned with the ideals of the Progressive Writers' movement, in that she acknowledged its influence and adopted critical social realism in her writing, she is not generally studied as an AIPWA author or in conjunction with other authors who formed a part of the movement. Nor are Attia Hosain, Mumtaz Shah Nawaz and Zeenuth Futehally studied together as authors of "single novels of [women's] self-discovery," which has been identified by literary historians as a trend in Indian writing in English of the 1950s and 60s (Narayan and Mee 224).

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respectively. Niaz Zaman devotes a chapter to *The Heart Divided* in *A Divided Legacy* (2001), which includes a brief description of the novel. The only other sustained critique of *The Heart Divided* is David Willmer's "Women as Participants in the Pakistan Movement: Modernization and the Promise of a Moral State," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 3. (Jul., 1996), pp. 573-590. Ambreen Hai's "Adultery Behind Purdah and the Politics of Indian Muslim Nationalism in Zeenuth Futehally's *Zohra,"* is, to date, the only full length journal article devoted entirely to *Zohra*. Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah's memoirs have virtually escaped any sustained study with glancing references included in Gail Minault's *Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim social reform in colonial India* (1998).

[99] See: Needham, Anuradha Dingwaney. "Multiple Forms of (National) Belonging: Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*." *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 39.1 (1993): 93-111.

[100] See: Didur, Jill. *Unsettling partition: Literature, gender, memory*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006; Hasan, Mushirul. "Memories of a fragmented nation: rewriting the histories of India's partition." *Economic and Political Weekly* (1998): 2662-2668; Kabir, Ananya Jahanara. "Gender, Memory, Trauma: Women's Novels on the Partition of India." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 25.1 (2005): 177-190; Shamsie, Muneeza. "Sunlight and Salt: The Literary Landscapes of a Divided Family." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 44.1 (2009): 135-153; Burton, Antoinette M. *Dwelling in the archive: women writing house, home, and history in late colonial India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

[101] See: Amin, Amina. *Margins of Erasure: Purdah in the subcontinental Novel in English*. New Delhi: Sterling, 1995.

One can posit many reasons for the texts under consideration in this dissertation to have escaped sustained critical attention. One can too easily argue that these novels have been neglected because of the lack of a more substantial body of work produced by their authors, or due to their aesthetic and stylistic flaws, or due to the lack of an unambiguous commitment to dominant ideologies and critical frameworks of nationalism, feminism, socialism, postcolonialism, etc. One can also argue that they did not conform to the prevailing literary trends and could not yield fruitful analyses using established critical frameworks commonly applied to study the literature of this period. These texts can be situated in the context of post-Partition' fiction, or progressive writing, or feminist critique, and while it must be noted that "such overdetermined contextuality tends to isolate and definitively date any discourse, especially so literature," the work of these authors "went past these signposts to create literature that remains relevant to date," by exploring the multiple uncertainties and contingencies of elite Muslim women's everyday lives that pull these texts in many directions, some of which are incompletely aligned with progressivism or feminism, or elide some of the issues around Partition (Choonara 3). In other words, if read specifically as texts enumerating the horrors of Partition, the oppression of the underclass, the resistance of women to multiple layers of patriarchal control, or even as 'national allegories,' these texts can be found to fall short on providing a fully realized representation, endorsement and/or critique of the same. Each of these texts represents, to various extents, this failure of realizing the perfectly balanced embodiment of the competing claims of modernity demanded of the 'New Woman,' who becomes the only kind of woman worthy of being a historical subject in

this transitional period between foreign domination and sovereignty, through its protagonists' shifting and ambiguous commitments to class, gender, religion and nation.

However, if this is the case, the question still remains as to why these texts have not been considered as a constellation under the organizing category of South Asian Muslim women's writing, and even more importantly, why such a category has not been established among the prevailing critical frameworks as a viable paradigm of research. One cannot deny the significance of the fact that these texts are authored by Muslim women and represent Muslim women's experiences in ethnographic detail during a period when Muslims were minoritised and securitized in the new national order of India and Pakistan, and faced immense pressures of assimilation, which meant that only certain narratives of (forced) migration and refugeehood gained prominence due to their concerns with articulating national allegiance and belonging, while others with different foci were overlooked. It was the identity and national allegiance of the Urdu-speaking Muslims of South Asia, which came under extreme scrutiny during this period. Indian literary history, as we have seen, is overcoded by the narrative of the nation. As Mahua Sarkar shows in *Visible Histories, Disappearing Women* (2008), this dominant narrative of the Indian nation discursively minoritised Muslim women to produce them as invisible. Could it be that Muslim women do not appear in literary histories as major contributors because they were discursively minoritised and were not scripted as normative subjects of the Indian nation? Even as early Anglophone novels by Indo-Muslim women were only deemed of critical interest because of their social realism, since the reality represented diverged from that of the normative national subject, elements of the melodramatic mode were seen as a sign of cultural belatedness and of

weak indigenization of the novel form rather than as formal innovations worthy of critical analysis.

The Invisibility of Muslim Women

In *Visible Histories, Disappearing Women* (2008), Mahua Sarkar offers a helpful discussion of the limits of the scholarship on South Asia with regard to Muslim women. She shows how the questions animating critical inquiry into the history of the region are often framed in such a way as to exclude Muslim women. The scholarship on colonial India, for example, offers several insightful analyses of the ways in which upper caste, bourgeois Hindu women were cast as hyper-visible embodiments of the nation, but does not adequately probe the specific moves through which Muslim women were marginalized in the discursive and narrative regimes underpinning these formulations. Sarkar contends that this marginalization was secured in order to produce "upper-caste, middle-class, Hindu/Brahmo women as liberated, modern embodiments of the new ideal Indian woman…[,] the category "Muslim" as male, inherently dangerous, oppressive, and nonmodern; and,…the Hindu middle-class male as the normative citizen-subject of the emergent nation" (24). Formulated in these terms—that is, of the production of categories of normative nation-subjects and their Others—the absence of Muslim women from the foundational national narratives of India can be seen as a strategic discursive move rather than as a natural consequence of inherent communal differences that allowed for the representation of elite Hindu women as progressive, enlightened and emblematic of the New India, and Muslim women as oppressed victims of their own community unable to contribute to the grand project of nation-making due to sociocultural practices specific to

Islam. Although this strategic construction of hierarchised identities can be framed as an exercise in drafting limits on the nation, which is a process that should invite sustained critical inquiry, the discursively produced invisibility of Muslim women, Sarkar observes, has been overlooked to such an extent that "the existing scholarship…typically *fails to as much as register* Muslim women's invisibility as something that might need explaining," and, moreover, "by routinely conflating the terms *Hindu upper caste/middle class* with *Indian…,* some of these studies directly contribute to the occlusion of Muslim women from even the middle class—a class that historically has been the protagonist of the nation story" (7-8; emphasis original). Thus, Muslim women do not appear as major figures in studies concerned with the position of women in relation to the discursive structures of nationalism and colonialism in late colonial India. Relatedly, in studies of the conceptual terrain at the intersection of ideas about gender and nation in early twentieth century India, Muslim women do not occupy a central position, but images of their assumed backwardness and victimization remain uninterrogated even as they are used as the foil against which the modernity of elite Hindu women is inscribed.

At the same time, Sarkar finds that even feminist scholarship on South Asia, centred as much of it is on women's agency, neglects Muslim women due to a disproportionate focus on women's activities in the public sphere as an indicator of modern political subjecthood. On the whole, this scholarship tends to privilege narratives of the emergence of women from domestic seclusion into the public domain as unified, autonomous and freely choosing subjects, while disregarding other less visible forms of women's self-fashioning and resistance. The "wholesale acceptance of post-Enlightenment notions of visibility and voice in the public sphere as the only legitimate

markers of subjecthood, and the automatic equation of such visibility/voice with a feminist subject position" constrains the understanding of women's agency and feminism in such a way that "what might be a rich and complex history of negotiation and resistance becomes an exercise in the service of producing sameness," that is, some women's resistance to varying degrees of unequal and unjust social and political practices is not recognized as such unless it is mounted in the same form as has been by others, elsewhere (Sarkar 18, 13). Thus, not only are Muslim women marginalized in nation-centric histories and related studies, feminist histories of the region also neglect them as "they did not engage in *acceptable* forms of public activities" (Sarkar 199, emphasis mine).

In this discussion of the nature of agency and its relationship to visibility and participation in civil society, it is also important to bear in mind "the pull and pressure of different and contradictory ideals of personhood" current during the early twentieth century, which sometimes materialized as "a tussle between a modern, liberal idea of the individual as a bearer of interest and an *equally modern* romanticization of the sentiments of the extended family" (Majumdar 20, emphasis mine). The emergence into visibility in the public sphere, especially for 'respectable women,' was often legitimized through participation in anticolonial nationalist movements—and then too, often as proxies of fathers, husbands and brothers, or with the explicit approval of their families. Decisions to leave the seclusion of home to participate in political activity and civil society were often made with the support of male family members, as "dutiful daughters," rather than as "political or social rebels" who defied familial authority and social conventions outright (Minault, "Coming Out: Decisions to Leave Purdah" 100). Women like Jahan

Ara Begum, Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, Fatima Jinnah, and Aruna Asaf Ali were introduced to public life through their politically active families, and rose to occupy positions of prominence due, in part, to their exceptional circumstances as unusually well-educated and articulate participants in anti-colonial and social-reform activism sanctioned by their families. Here we find a conjunction of ideas of women as interest-bearing modern individuals who are simultaneously self-sacrificing enough to throw themselves into the good work of social reform and anti-colonial activism while respecting the sentiments of their families. At the same time, women like Rashid Jahan, Ismat Chughtai and Qurratulain Hyder are remembered as fiercely iconoclastic authors who, through their literary radicalism, "offer[ed] nuanced insights about female bodies and subjectivities in relation to colonial, modern, traditional, and national institutions" which "[could] not be reduced to mere allegories of gender oppression" (Gopal, "Sex, space, and modernity in the work of Rashid Jahan" 153; Asaduddin xxi). Their treatment of subjects considered taboo caused such a scandal that their work was banned by the British government and they were catapulted into the public eye as dangerously subversive feminists, rather than as 'daughters of reform' negotiating the tension between filial duty and liberal conceptualizations of the autonomous, unified, self-determining, modern female citizen-subject. Both sets of women exemplify different kinds of public visibility, as well as the range of circumstances that enabled and/or were manipulated by some Muslim women in late colonial India to gain visibility and voice in the public sphere.

Another shortcoming of the existing scholarship on women's histories in South Asia that Sarkar points out is that the label feminist itself remains somewhat

uninterrogated and unproblematised in much of the writing. It appears to "[function] as a common denominator that allows comparison between different women but itself remains remarkably underspecified" (Sarkar 16). As a corrective, then, it is important to interrogate which attitudes and self-representational strategies of women in colonial India were—contemporaneously, and subsequently—(re)-conceived as feminist, and which practices and modes of expression fell short of the label of feminism, especially given the range of interventions possible and the relative disregard elicited by Muslim women's exercise of agency. For instance, the begums of Bhopal have been studied as rulers committed to the patronage of various reformist projects targeted toward Muslim women—from girls' education to the professionalization of women health practitioners and establishment of women's organizations—which are seen to constitute "early efforts by a particular group of Indian Muslim women to increase their social and educational rights and opportunities within their society by carving out a role in a kind of public space" (Lambert-Hurley, *Muslim Women, Reform and Princely Patronage* 10). While this kind of work can be subsumed under the label of feminism—both "by certain contemporary Western and Westernised authors, as well as by some early Muslim female activists"—the begums themselves did not use a comparable term to describe their efforts, and relied instead on "employing less emotive words such as *tahzib* (reform) and *tarbiyat* (cultivation)," and constructing an image of a "cajoling maternal figure within the women's movement of the early twentieth century" in order to realize their programs (Lamburt-Hurley *Muslim Women, Reform and Princely Patronage* 10). These examples of early twentieth century South Asian Muslim women's visible public participation—through political engagement, as radical literary figures, and as heads of princely states—

behoves a "conception of agency which is not limited to issues of 'consent' or 'coercion', 'transgression' or 'subversion' which reduce autonomy to mere resistance essentially reactive to the interventions of the colonial state or Indian men" (Anagol 80).

Recalibrating Scholarly Enquiry

From the foregoing discussion, it can be seen that interlocking discourses of liberal feminism, nationalism and modernity exclude South Asian Muslim women from official as well as feminist recuperative histories to such an extent that many scholars in the field relate similar anecdotes of facing skepticism about the viability of their research: in *Secluded Scholars* (1998), Gail Minault recounts how, at the beginning of her research into the history of education and social reform among Indian Muslims, a British colleague wondered if at all such a history could indeed exist, let alone be recuperable (1). Writing more than a decade after Minault, Siobhan Lambert-Hurley too records a general skepticism regarding the availability of primary material for her project to create a life history archive to study Muslim women in South Asia, which would include personal narratives and varied forms of autobiographical writing. The prevailing attitude among her colleagues—scholars of women's history no less—was "that these silent and secluded creatures would not deign, or perhaps dare, to participate in a genre that required them, in popular parlance, to "lift the veil," revealing something of their inner self or even the "private" world of the zenana, or women's quarters" ("Life/History/Archive" 62).

Similarly, there is a corresponding exclusion of Muslim women from South Asian literary histories as well. While several anthologies of Urdu and Bengali short fiction

have been published in English translation since the late 1990s, there is no sustained genealogy of South Asian Muslim women's writing in English. Susie Tharu and K. Lalita's recuperative two-volume anthology, *Women Writing in India: 600 BC to the Present* (1993), for example, includes few Muslim women authors writing in the twentieth century, and none writing in English, since the authors believe that Anglophone writers are already overexposed. Furthermore, Tharu and Lalita write that "[i]in most languages, the literary canons had been established in the early 1950s, shortly after Independence," and thus were "charged with constructing an imagined community and sculpting the new citizen" (xvii). Recalibrating the focus of critical enquiry into the nature of South Asian Muslim women's relation to reform movements, to emerging nationalisms, to literature and life-writing, and to discourses on correct conduct, citizenship, solidarity and communal difference can thus yield new insights unconstrained by narrow definitions of women's agency.

This dissertation aims to undertake just such a recalibration. However, rather than focusing on the historical figure of the South Asian Muslim woman, and questioning the circumstances of her emergence and disappearance in foundational narratives of the nation, I propose reading early Anglophone novels by South Asian Muslim women as a literary corpus that, when seen together as a constellation of texts part of a genealogy of Muslim women's writing in the region—rather than, for example, as somewhat unsuccessful experiments in the indigenization of the novel form or idiosyncratic representations and critiques of prevailing social norms and ideologies—yields new insights not only into the formation of a literary canon and its constituent exclusions, but also reveals multivalent strategies of Muslim women's self-representation speaking to

transgressive desires, affective attachments, and formulations of autonomy that cannot fully be ordered under the sign of nation, modernity or feminism. While conventional feminist recuperative histories of difference might seek to restore Muslim women to South Asian historiography by excavating hitherto silenced voices, my aim here is not so much to rehabilitate early Anglophone novels by South Asian Muslim women in the genealogy of Indian writing in English as it is to examine how and why they were excluded from literary histories, and in gains that might be made by reading them in the context of the current scholarly conversation on Muslim women's writing across the world. As Tahera Aftab puts it in her introduction to *Inscribing South Asian Muslim Women* (2008), arguably the most comprehensive source book to date on the subject, "there is a need to document and collate sources for the study of Muslim women of South Asia," because "Muslim women and gender issues in Muslim societies have once again, after hundreds of years of colonial-Christian-missionary driven inquisitiveness, emerged as the focal point for the actions of western warlords and in the discourses of global power brokers" (xxix). Early Anglophone novels by South Asian Muslim women can be read as such 'sources' that historicise and re-contextualize prevalent images associated with Muslim women.

The novels deploy certain similar strategies in assaying these multiple strands of political thought. In all four, the particular familial structure of elite Muslim families forms the backbone of the narrative. In this hierarchical structure, all family members defer to the patriarch—the grandfather in *The Heart Divided* and *Sunlight*, and the father in *Zohra* and the husband—who represents traditional feudal values and whose death or removal signals the transition into the vexed anxieties of modernity for the household.

These anxieties are played out in the new configuration of the household, in which the role of the patriarch passes to an England-returned, English-educated figure who himself is represented to have an ambivalent relationship with the tradition/modernity dichotomy, conceding some hitherto disallowed freedoms to the women under his care, while denying others.

Furthermore, each novel uses the large cast of characters provided by the traditional household, including extended family members and inherited domestic servants, to create a polyphonic representation of contemporary ideologies. Each novel foregrounds the entire household, rather than individual members, as the ground on which these ideologies are debated. Finally, each of these novels construct romantic coupling as a vehicle of self-determination, both through consent and through refusal, and not only for elite Muslim women, but also men who were obligated by familial and kinship codes to defer to others in the choice of their partners. *Sunlight* tells the story of its protagonist's decision to marry a man deemed unsuitable by her family, while *The Heart Divided* proceeds through several couplings, inter-religious and otherwise, consummated and unconsummated, successful and failed. Marriage is represented, in each novel, as a central preoccupation in elite Muslim women's lives, and the ways in which the protagonists defer, refuse and manage it become markers of their agency. Thus, taken together, these novels offer variations on the theme of elite and bourgeois Muslim women's agency, desires and choice of affiliations—whether national, ethnic, religious, class, gender or ideological. As such, they merit close examination as a unit, rather than separately as partition novels or novels of domesticity and gender, as Priyamvada Gopal has done in *The Indian English Novel.* Gopal includes a brief analysis of both *Sunlight*

and *The Heart Divided* in her survey of the Indian novel in English, but she reads *The Heart Divided* under a chapter on "Writing Partition," where it is grouped with Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956), Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* (1991), Sorayya Khan's *Noor* (2004), Salman Rushdie's *Shame* (1983) and Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* (1988), while *Sunlight* appears in a chapter on domesticity, gender and the family story.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to lay out the literary landscape of early twentieth century South Asian literature and situate *The Heart Divided, Zohra* and *Sunlight on a Broken Column* within the same. I included the publication history of the novels, and examined some strands of their critical reception, in order to parse why they escaped scholarly attention and why it is necessary to re-examine them. I want to conclude here with a few remarks about the contemporary literary scene with regard to Muslim women's writing. Muslim women's narratives have steadily attracted fierce and divided critical attention since 9/11, and given the current geopolitical climate, the interpretation of voices from Muslim majority states as well as from areas where Muslims constitute a significant minority continues to remain a relevant and timely avenue of scholarly inquiry—if anything, to counter rising Islamophobia by providing much needed correctives to prevalent negative and misinformed stereotypes. However, as scholars like Lila Abu-Lughod, Hamid Dabashi and Saba Mahmood have shown, the Anglo-American literary market has been particularly receptive towards only a certain kind of narrative. Abu-Lughod in 2013's *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* uses Dora Ahmad's term "pulp

non-fiction" to refer to these narratives, which constitute what she calls "a lurid genre of writing on abused women..[which] exploded onto the scene in the 1990s and took off after 9/11" (87). Abu-Lughod unpacks the popularity of Muslim women's misery memoirs among female Western leaders and shows how Western feminism and human rights discourses accrue legitimacy by the confirmation of the absence of rights for women within Islamic societies provided by these narratives. Saba Mahmood also focuses on this popular literature to show how it renews old colonial tropes that "indelibly linked the problem of Islam to the "Woman Question"... [through] its ethnographic first person mode of writing...that presents a Muslim woman's eye-witness account...of how Islam and it various customs are the essential source of women's oppression" (119). Saadia Toor[102] and Deepa Kumar[103] have also written about imperialist feminism and the "meme" of the oppressed Muslim woman in need of urgent rescue from an inherently misogynist Islam. Hamid Dabashi's fiercely critical review of Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003) charged the author with being a comprador intellectual whose success in the world literary market owed much to the reinforcement of facile notions of gender oppression under an Islamic authoritarian regime that her fictionalised memoirs offered. Nafisi's lack of nuance and political consciousness in representing life under Islamic authoritarianism, coupled with her pronounced Anglophilia, led Dabashi to regard *Reading Lolita in Tehran* as one of those literary texts of the early 2000s that served to prepare the cultural acceptance of US military interventionism in the Middle-East.

[102] See: Toor, Saadia. "Imperialist feminism redux." *Dialectical Anthropology* 36.3/4 (2012): 147-160.

[103] See: Kumar, Deepa. *Islamophobia and thePolitics of Empire.* Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2012.

This critical reception of contemporary Muslim women's self-representation overlays decades of studies that have examined widely disseminated Orientalist representations of Muslim women produced by European colonists and travellers. However, despite the enduring stereotype of their incarceration within the harem, few studies have focused on the ways in which Muslim women have articulated their relationship to the built environment. The next chapter of my dissertation examines three Anglophone novels of late colonial (i.e. early twentieth century) South Asian Muslim women to map the ways in which vernacular domestic architecture shaped their conception of self and their relation to the spatial order of the city and of the nation. I examine how, for elite Muslim women coming of age in the mid-twentieth century, even the representation of memories—of rapid social change, political upheaval, fragmentation of families and expatriation—was ordered by and anchored to the ancestral house and to the monumental landscape of the Islamicate city. Rather than evaluating these texts as evidential or testimonial and questioning the veracity of their representations, I approach them as instances of autoethnographic communication, which sometimes accommodates and at other times resists dominant narratives of harem-bound Muslim women, and provides a useful theoretical tool to examine the centrality of the introverted courtyard house—and the spatial practices it generated—to Muslim women's self-fashioning. The value of these narratives, I contend, is not related to the extent to which they represent how real women inhabited real late-colonial homes in real Islamicate cities, but rather inheres in how they represent what *possibilities* of movement and spatial transgressions were available to elite *purdahnasheen* women, what relations to public space, heritage and tourism sites were possible and desired, and how these narratives participate in

monumentalizing pre-colonial historical sites, as much as they monumentalize the vanishing domestic sites of the minor aristocracy and feudal elite.

Chapter 3 The Monumentalised House and the Privatised Monumental Landscape

In chapter 1, we encountered some of the representational strategies used in the autobiographical and ethnographical writing of one late colonial elite Muslim woman, and how these strategies involved scripting domestic interiors, material culture and residential forms as important markers of class, communal and national identity. We saw how Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah imbued family heirlooms with informational value, which she then interpreted in the context of her vision of the collective ancestral history of South Asian Muslims. We also saw how she was able to authorise secluded Muslim women as producers of authentic knowledge with regard to domestic architecture, spatial practices and material culture. Finally, through a discussion of Ikramullah's representation of the traditional courtyard house vis-à-vis the 'modern' bungalow of the Civil Lines, it became clear that residential forms were crucial to Ikramullah's self-fashioning as an exceptional member of the reconstituted postcolonial Muslim elite milieu of Pakistan. Ikramullah used her command over ceremonial and material culture to articulate a hybrid identity that incorporated the seemingly incommensurable inheritance of Islamicate cultural traditions as well as the learned codes of colonial modernity.

In this chapter, I want to focus on the literary representations of segregated domestic space and unsegregated historical sites in the novels of three of Ikramullah's contemporaries: Mumtaz Shah Nawaz (1912-1948), Zeenuth Futehally (1904-1992) and Attia Hosain (1913-1998). Their respective novels, *The Heart* Divided (1957), *Zohra* (1951) and *Sunlight on a Broken* Column (1961), display strong elements of autoethnography as well as an engagement with historical events and processes. The

thick description of domestic interiors in these novels recalls both autoethnographic expression as well as the sumptuous plenitude of the material imagination[104] evident in the nineteenth century European realist novel, which as Georg Lukacs has argued in the classic "Narrate or Describe," was organised around "the varied manifestations of a complex of objects," inaugurating a "new style [that] developed out of the need to adapt fiction to provide an adequate representation of new social phenomena" (134, 117). The Victorian novel has often been characterised as "notorious for being packed with things—from natural curiosities to expensive commodities, and everything in between: heirlooms, outfits, instruments, fetishes, furniture, gems, exotic species, foodstuffs, antiquities, and even limbs," perhaps because "novelists valued things as part of a dense description of the social world, understanding material objects as an integral part of lived experience" (Levine 93). In the past decade, following the material turn[105] in the field, Victorianists have increasingly brought into focus the numerous—and often seemingly trivial or superfluous—objects that appear in the novels of the period, suggesting that this profusion "speaks insistently not simply of a history of taste, but also of the interconnected forces of the industrial revolution, which changed the modes of the production of things, and the imperial project, which changed the modes of the circulation of material objects and their owners" (Goldhill 1).

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[104] I use this phrase from Gaston Bachelard, for whom the material imagination is an "amazing need for penetration which, going beyond the attraction of the imagination of forms, thinks matter, dreams in it, lives in it, or, in other words, materializes the imaginary" (37). See: Bachelard, Gaston. *On Poetic Imagination and Reverie.* Ed. Colette Gaudin. CT: Spring Publications, 2005.

[105] Lyn Pykett identified a 'material turn' in Victorian Studies in an article published in 2004, however, historian Asa Briggs' *Victorian Things*, which appeared nearly two decades earlier in 1988, had already attempted to reconstruct the intelligible universes of the Victorians through objects that were collectibles, commodities, or meant for 'common use.' See: Pykett, Lyn. "The Material Turn in Victorian Studies." *Literature Compass* 1.1 (2004): 1-5; Briggs, Asa. *Victorian Things.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

The three early Anglophone novels by South Asian Muslim women under consideration in this chapter also offer a similarly dense description of domestic interiors, which captures the incremental shift from tradition to colonial modernity. In other words, as Lukacs had said of the late nineteenth century European realist novel, these novels also "[depict] a bourgeois society consolidating itself after severe crises…and the tortuous transitions from the old society in decay to the new society in birth" (118). However, unlike cultures of collection and display that rose in the imperial centres of Europe[106], and that found expression in the presence of teeming objects in the Victorian novel as though declaiming the authenticity of the narrative and the plenitude of the real, the descriptions of material culture in the novels under consideration are charged with the definite knowledge of impending loss and ruination. The objects that appear in the novels under consideration are described not in terms of intentional acts of acquisition, but rather in terms of imminent dispossession, ruination and/or obsolescence. They anchor and activate memories, yet these are not restorative but rather fragmentary, indicating the necessarily incomplete and tentative nature of memory-work, however well furnished by the material remains of home.

In these novels, the narrative voice adopts the position of participant-observer, at once native ethnographer and self-conscious chronicler of sweeping socio-political change. The novels describe domestic interiors, traditional furniture, customs and habits

[106] Tim Barringer's study of the South Kensington museum, now the Victoria and Albert museum in London, succinctly periodises trends in institutionalised practices of collection and display into three phases of didacticism, academic imperialism and popular imperialist triumphalism. Barringer treats the museum as a cultural formation, and argues that it functioned as an imperial archive that housed "the procession of objects from peripheries to centre [which] symbolically enacted the idea of London as the heart of empire" (11). See: Barringer, Tim. "The South Kensington Museum and the colonial project." *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum.* Eds. Barringer, Tim and Tom Flynn. NY: Routledge, 1998.

just as closely as Ikramullah's memoirs and ethnographic essays. I propose that instead of reading this thick description as something of an extraliterary excess that needs to be overlooked in order to get to the heart of what the novels are trying to convey about national history, modernity, and/or domesticity, we examine how the appurtenances that propped up a certain class are represented in the novels as indices of dramatic social transformation, repositories of the ancestral past and sites of complex negotiations between late colonial and postcolonial modernity. Furthermore, I argue that while the private residence is conceptually monumentalised in *Sunlight*, the autoethnographic spatial discourse of *The Heart Divided* and *Zohra* privatises historical architectural spaces as sites of transgressive love and folds them within the domain of interiority and erotic excess. In other words, the novels are engaged in creating narratives of place that attempt to shape its meanings in public memory. The traditional residential form is abstracted as a symbol of all that is incompatible with postcolonial urban life, its spatial organisation particularly alienating for women, and yet the material aspects of traditional domestic interiors are monumentalised as part of a vanishing and minoritised cultural heritage. Meanwhile publicly accessible material remains of the civilisational past—be they extant examples of gardens, palaces or monastery complexes—generate provisional histories that destabilise the totalising myth of the nation in addition to sheltering lovers, and enable both solitary contemplation as well as possibilities of contact between the sexes unavailable elsewhere.

Accommodating the Ethnographic Excess

The cross-pollination of discourses of anthropology and literature has been discussed in some detail. In the introduction to the landmark *Writing Culture* (1986), for instance, James Clifford emphasises the textual practice inherent in the generation and interpretation of highly situated ethnographic data. The appropriation of strategies of literary representation is often necessary to structure the description of life-worlds. "Literary processes—metaphor, figuration, narrative—affect the ways cultural phenomena are registered," writes Clifford, "from the first jotted 'observations,' to the completed book, to the ways these configurations 'make sense' in determined acts of reading" (3). In his comparative study of Conrad and Malinowski in *The Predicament of Culture* (1988), Clifford further states that the writing experience of both self-reflexive ethnographies as well as novels, "in an important general way,... enact[s] the process of fictional self-fashioning" (110). For Clifford, "the acute sense of the fashioned, contingent status of all cultural descriptions (and of all cultural describers)" was common to both authors of great literature as well as "self-conscious, dialogical, hermeneutic ethnographers" (113). It is this line of thinking, which foregrounds the necessarily partial and constructed nature of *all* cultural description, and thus allows for the interpenetration of ethnographic expression in literature and literary elements in ethnographic description, that I want to pursue further in relation to the novels I discuss.

In chapter 1, we saw how Ikramullah enacted the process of self-fashioning through cultural description. Although not a professional ethnologist, Ikramullah writes about South Asian Muslim cultural practices and artefacts with assured authority, located not in her educational training or her status as a government official, but her 'insider'

status as the member of a Muslim native elite family with deep connections to the past and a commitment to preserving these connections. Ikramullah's autobiographical writing in *From Purdah to Parliament* seamlessly melds self-narration with a certain vision of the ancestral past as well as a particular narrative of national cultural heritage. When a similar degree of assured cultural description occurs in a novel from the same period, it risks being labelled "a long, often rambling text," which is what Priyamvada Gopal has called *Sunlight on a Broken Column* in her critical survey of the Anglophone novel in India (140). Gopal also finds *The Heart Divided* to be similarly encumbered and "weakened by…a tendency to provide ethnographic accounts of Muslim women's lives, rather like the early domestic fiction" of Christian women authors like Pandita Ramabai, Krupabai Satthianadhan and Cornelia Sorabji, who wrote during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (73). Gopal points out that early Anglophone fiction by women "had roots in ethnographic fictions where the author often functioned as a kind of 'native informant' for an assumed European or American reader" while at the same time also "bear[ing] imprints of the autobiographical mode, emphasizing personal relations, love, sexuality, family tensions and the drama of everyday life" (140).

However, Gopal's brief treatment of *Sunlight* does not allow for an extended analysis of the nature of the interpenetration of the ethnographic, autobiographical and novelistic modes[107]. She only states that "*Sunlight* is an important document of its time,

[107] Gopal includes *Sunlight* in a chapter on domesticity, gender and the family story, and treats it as part of the domestic fiction that emerged in India towards the end of the nineteenth century. Other novels discussed along with *Sunlight* include Ahmad Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* (1940), Esther David's *The Walled City* (1997), Arundhati Roy's *God of Small Things* (1997), Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* (1998), and Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters* (2002). Incidentally, Gopal's survey of the Indian novel in English is one of the few that does discuss *The Heart Divided*, (even though it is very much a *Pakistani* novel) albeit not alongside *Sunlight*, but in a different chapter on "Writing Partition," where it is grouped with Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956), Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* (1991), Sorayya Khan's

one marked by profound changes in family, community, and political life," and that "the first two thirds of the narrative are relayed in ethnographic mode, as a series of almost—but not quite—timeless vignettes of household practices, family tensions, wedding dramas, eccentric relatives, and sombre funerals" (141). At the same time, Gopal also cautions against reading the cultural descriptions present in *Sunlight* as "authoritative ethnographic monuments rather than narrative constructs with their own selections and omissions" (142). Thus, the generic conventions of the novel form undermine the ethnographic content of *Sunlight* by exposing the mediation of the novelist and her context. As for *The Heart Divided*, Gopal treats it as a Partition novel—it is for Gopal, "that rare specimen, a contemporaneous account of the politically and emotionally fraught two decades that culminated in the partition of the subcontinent and the formation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan" (72).

The terms used for the novels by Gopal—account, document, specimen—point to their somewhat diminished literary value, as if literariness and ethnographic description are at odds, or that a surfeit of ethnographic description harkens backs to a previous period in the evolution of the Anglophone novel. Furthermore, while the ethnographic content of *Sunlight* and *The Heart Divided* detracts from their literary value, they cannot, being pieces of fiction, be read as authentic and authoritative ethnographic accounts either. Perhaps reading these novels as instances of autoethnographic expression can resolve the issue of excessive cultural description and historical contextualisation. If we take autoethnography as a hybrid mode of narrating both self and community, that is, one

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Noor (2004), Salman Rushdie's *Shame* (1983) and Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* (1988). See: Gopal, Priyamvada. *The Indian English Novel: Nation, History, Narration.* NY: Oxford University Press, 2009.

which incorporates both the *ethnos* of ethnography and the *bios* of autobiography, then we can begin to unpack the wealth of detail regarding the material culture, domestic interiors, ceremonial and everyday practices of late colonial elite Muslim households present in the novels. The "series of almost—but not quite—timeless vignettes of household practices" can then be seen in a different light, one that affirms an increasingly minoritised communal identity while also serving as one of the indices of the transitional moment of late colonial modernity (Gopal 141). The notion of the timelessness of these 'vignettes' is also imploded under such an autoethnographic reading, as it allows us to approach the wealth of cultural description as a symptom of the highly situated nature of autoethnographic communication. The novels can be read, as I argue in this chapter, as representing Muslim girls/women as historical subjects. Their fictional life-worlds are populated with appurtenances that embody immense symbolic weight.

Before delving into my readings of the novels and returning to the concept of autoethnographic spatial discourse I developed in chapter 1, I want to mention a few studies that have sought to accommodate the ethnographic content of literary texts, or more generally, have probed the relation between literature and ethnography. These are useful signposts toward an underdeveloped but productive vein of transdisciplinary literary study. In *Between Anthropology and Literature* (2002), for instance, editor Rose De Angelis brought together a number of essays that probed "the ways in which the language of social science fuses with that of the literary imagination" (i). In one of these essays, Janet Tallman defines the ethnographic novel using a reading of Brazilian author Antonio Olinto's *A Casa de Agua* (1969). She positions the novel as a "culturally rich ethnographic novel...written by a complex insider" that "can serve as the foundation for a

sociolinguistic study of languages and cultural patterns" (14-15). Such an argument can readily be made about *Sunlight* and *Zohra*: both were authored by complex insiders to the elite Lakhnavi and Hyderabadi society within which the novels are respectively set, and both novels evidence an attempt to capture the nuances of the particular sociolect of upper class Muslim women. Tallman posits that the defining feature of an ethnographic novel is that it "conveys significant information about the culture or cultures from which the novel originates" (12). The author's "insiderness" is not a deciding factor in whether or not a text can be approached as an ethnographic novel, and s/he need not even adopt a "self-consciously anthropological" stance in the text (12). The novelist who fulfils Tallman's criteria for the ethnographic novel is "a special sort of writer [who] intuitively weaves into the story, character, theme, setting, and style details of the culture from which the book emerges" (12). All these criteria are easily met by the three novels I consider here: although not self-consciously anthropological in nature, each of the novels contains ample cultural information about the late colonial elite Muslim milieu of Lahore, Lucknow and Hyderabad.

Tallman's reading of Olinto, however, is premised on the cultural field data it might provide—albeit without the use of anthropological techniques or the ethnographic interview—"from which anthropologists can build the theories and explanations that are the focus of ethnography" (21). Tallman thus essentially views the ethnographic novel as a complement to the "systematic and disciplined method and account" of the ethnography (20). While this approach might yield productive interdisciplinary work and bridge the disciplines of anthropology and literary studies, in my readings of Shah Nawaz, Hosain and Futehally in this chapter, I do not position them as mere complements to history or

ethnography. My intention here is not to read the novels 'anthropologically,' that is, as cultural field data about a certain class of South Asian Muslims at a particular moment in history. Rather, I want to probe the meanings of the wealth of ethnographic description present in the novels, which have so far been treated as tantalising but glancing asides. My discussion of the novels is centred on their thick, situated cultural description, and especially on representations of the built environment. Like Tallman's example of Olinto, Shah Nawaz, Hosain and Futehally are 'complex insiders' who 'convey significant information' about the cultures within which they wrote. But interpreting this encoded cultural information, I argue, becomes further fruitful when we read the novels together as a constellation along with Ikramullah's memoirs and ethnographic essays. This enables us to bear in mind the discursive field within which the novels first appeared, and also the context within which they were republished. As I have demonstrated in chapter 1, colonial discourses on space and reified notions of the harem were overwritten by Ikramullah as she fashioned an autoethnographic spatial discourse that constructed secluded Muslim women as legitimate authorities on traditional domestic architecture and material culture. Here too Futehally, Shah Nawaz and Hosain painstakingly re-create the life-worlds of their late-colonial protagonists through thick descriptions of the built environment, social relations, habits, customs, and ceremonies specific to the Islamicate culture within which the novelistic universe is embedded. This move can be seen as a problematic attempt to shore up and textually preserve traces of a civilizational moment coming to a swift and violent conclusion, which is the logic also of salvage ethnography: the cultural practice or artefact, to paraphrase James Clifford, is lost in the present-becoming-past, "in disintegrating time and space, but saved in text" (112).

The particular valence of this salvage-work is open to infinitesimal reorientations depending on other texts within the constellation: placing Ikramullah's memoirs next to *Sunlight on a Broken Column* draws attention to the ways in which the novel deals with the spatial crisis of colonial modernity and the relation of formally educated Muslim girls/women to the built environment of the traditional segregated house and the Islamicate city. Furthermore, as Ikramullah charts the progress of her life from a childhood spent in the set-piece drawing rooms of the bungalows in pseudo-English railway colonies and the convivial *takhat* lined courtyard of her maternal grandfather's traditional house, to her marital homes in a bungalow reappropriated as a traditional courtyard house, in Lutyens' official bungalows in Delhi and in a flat in Chelsea, she also charts her incremental steps toward giving up the practice of *purdah.* She accomplishes fashioning herself as a formerly *purdahnasheen* woman without vilifying the practice of gender segregation as uncommonly harsh and oppressive—at least among those native elite families already embedded within the colonial state apparatus due to the professional education of male members, who in turn introduced their daughters to formal education. The system of *purdah* Ikramullah describes in *From Purdah to Parliament* and *Behind the Veil* is simply a social and spatial institution of its time, one within which women dwelled in convivial homosociality. Similarly, *The Heart Divided, Zohra* and *Sunlight* chart the incremental transgressions of their respective protagonists that remake the familial unit in such a form as to obviate the social institution of *purdah,* which is represented as a relic of a social order about to be dismantled by the new political formation of the postcolonial state.

However, unlike Ikramullah's memoirs and even her ethnographic essays, the novels deny the triumphalist culmination of literary, social and material formations of the late colonial-modern in the postcolonial state wherein culture is brought under the official purview of ethnography. Here it is important to recall that Ikramullah wrote the essays collected in *Behind the Veil* on the invitation of Fatima Jinnah as an attempt to consolidate the narrative of Pakistani culture while serving the Pakistani state. In contrast, the novels do not evidence an investment in this official sort of ethnographic formulation of national culture. Even in *The Heart Divided,* which is explicitly invested in the Pakistan movement, the ethnographic description of customs, furniture, dress, modes of social intercourse between men and women, etc. are highly situated within the upper class Muslim milieu of Lahore. With narratives poised at the edge of nationalised formulations of culture and history, the ethnographic content of these novels is unwieldy precisely because they resist being subsumed by smooth categories of postcolonial national cultures. In such a situation, autoethnography becomes a useful framework from within which to productively discuss the ethnographical and historical content of these novels. Autoethnography, with its focus on "collectivised and situated life writing," offers a triangulation between author or participant-observer, self-narration and culture that simultaneously underscores the historical consciousness inherent in these novels as well as the fabricated nature of fictional life-worlds (Smith and Watson 258).

A recent study that appropriates autoethnography as a viable concept within literary studies is James Buzard's *Disorienting Fiction: The Autoethnographic Work of Nineteenth Century British Novels* (2005). Here Buzard makes an ambitious argument about reading Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot and William

Morris as proto-autoethnographers who anticipated the anthropological definition of culture and ethnographic methods of describing cultures that crystallised in the early twentieth century. From Lukacs to Raymond Williams to Fredric Jameson, Homi Bhabha and Benedict Anderson, Buzard points out that "critics across the ideological spectrum" have gestured toward "a view of the novel as performing holistic social analysis and as presenting...protoethnographic conceptualizations of the relationship between totality and detail" (38). However, this view remains underdeveloped, and Buzard explores how understanding nineteenth century British novelists as native proto-ethnographers of British culture can supply a new and different explanation than the one offered by Said in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), of the perceived disengagement of the literature of this period with the colonial space even as it became increasingly essential to maintaining the idea of Britishness. Responding to Christopher Herbert's *Culture and Anomie: Ethnographic Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (1991), which traces the antecedents of the idea of culture across several nineteenth century discourses before it came to be crystallised as the object of study of disciplinary anthropology, and which positions Anthony Trollope as a lone example of a nineteenth century novelist who integrated proto-ethnographic detail in his work, Buzard reads other prominent British novelists of the period as providing the proving ground for the "nineteenth-century prehistory of the modern ethnographic imagination" (37). Buzard situates the rise of the modern ethnographic imagination within coalescing ideas about "Participant Observer and the correspondingly plural and spatialized conception of culture," which drove the professionalisation of modern anthropology as a scholarly discipline at the beginning of the twentieth century (11). With the publication of the fourth edition of *Notes and*

Queries on Anthropology in 1912, Buzard writes, ethnography "becomes definable...as the discourse in which 'a culture' and a Participant Observer reciprocally define one another" and culture comes to be configured as "that which it takes a Participant Observer to find" (9). In the narrative strategies of the nineteenth century British novel, Buzard finds "signs of an incipient *autoethnographic* imagination cutting against the grain of the self-universalizing mentality which critics have often imputed to elements of mainstream culture during Britain's long era of imperial expansion and consolidation" (11, emphasis original). Buzard argues that instead of espousing a self-universalising viewpoint, the novels of Scott, Dickens, Bronte, Eliot and Morris were self-delimiting and deployed a self-interrupting narrative mode whereby the impression of intimacy with the culture described was disrupted by frequent exegeses from an assumed distance that evoked "controlled self-alienation" (10). The self-interrupting nature of these nineteenth century novels "activate[d] a British autoethnographic consciousness through regular and resourceful manipulation of the boundary between narrative's 'outside' and 'inside,' its discourse- and story-spaces" (279). These manipulations underscored "the unstable relationship between insideness and outsideness that brings a culture into view" (39). Buzard coins the term "metropolitan autoethnography" in contradistinction to Pratt's notion of autoethnography, which is based on the transculturated articulation specific to colonial relations, to refer to "the production, narratable as the *recovery,* of an Anglocentric cultural identity during a phase of intensive imperial, industrial, and commercial expansion…[a]t a time when the designation *English* or *British* might have seemed drained of specific cultural content in becoming synonymous with imperial statehood" (107).

Thus, in Buzard's formulation, the nineteenth-century novel's autoethnographic mode of narrative and cultural description arose from an urgent need to articulate a consolidated and delimited British identity that could not be collapsed into that of imperial statehood. The basic premise of this argument remains that the labour of cultural description intensifies in times of increasing cultural contact, and that literary forms evidence the anxiety of negotiating transculturation not only in colonial contact zones but even within the imperial metropole. Furthermore, Buzard's use of 'metropolitan autoethnography' shows the elasticity of the concept of autoethnographic expression. What Buzard identifies as an autoethnographic mode of cultural description is the narrative strategy of oscillating intimacy and estrangement that allows the realist novel to construct life-worlds that consolidate British identity. This oscillation between intimacy with and estrangement from cultural practices can also be observed in *The Heart Divided, Zohra,* and *Sunlight on a Broken Column,* as I show in my readings in this chapter. "I felt I lived in two worlds; an observer in an outside world, and solitary in my own," says Laila in *Sunlight,* for instance, articulating a degree of alienation that enables an autoethnographic mode of narration (124).

Although Buzard's readings can appear to be, as one reviewer puts it, "a clever apologia for the nineteenth-century British novel," his identification of the imbrication of the narrative strategies of the novel within other forms of cultural description is particularly useful, and perhaps more valid, in other contexts than nineteenth century England (Hanssen 186). Buzard's juxtaposition of the narrative techniques of nineteenth century British novels with anthropology's participant-observer also generates a viable model of approaching cultural thick description in other contexts. Carey Snyder, for

example, "extends and complicates" Buzard's claims by exploring their viability in the context of British modernist novels, and finds that "British modernists were more deeply engaged with ethnographic writings and practices than has been previously assumed, whether as armchair generalists...or as travelers investigating specific cultures" (16, 6). Looking at novels which appeared during the period of professionalization of the discipline of anthropology, a time when "academic ethnography was instituting the persona of the confident, authoritative fieldworker--a unified 'I' who transformed a myriad of impressions into the linear, coherent ethnographic monograph," Snyder's readings reveal how in contrast "modernist fiction explored the unraveling of that observer" (191). While Buzard positions nineteenth century British novels as anticipating the Participant Observer of early twentieth century anthropology, Snyder positions Conrad, Woolf, Forster, and D. H. Lawrence as literary modernists whose deployment of disorientation, incoherent identities, multiple perspectives and self-reflexivity anticipated that of postmodern anthropologists anxious to reinvent the discipline in the 1970s and 80s.

In the context of the literatures produced from the transculturated colonial contact zone, Eleni Coundouriotis's *Claiming History: Colonialism, Ethnography and the Novel* (1999), too finds that modes of cultural description which came to be consolidated as ethnographic in the early twentieth century exerted a certain kind of influence on African literatures. Coundouriotis argues that colonial discourses of historiography and ethnography significantly shaped the early Anglophone and Francophone novel in Africa, which she views as having been, "from its very inception in the languages of colonial powers...a literature of response: importing and subverting conventions, mixing styles

and expressions, and…narrating and enacting a history of transcultural contact" (169). The styles, expressions and conventions that constituted the discursive field within which the Anglophone/Francophone African novel was embedded, were not limited only to literary forms but also included those that could be found in the human sciences. Coundouriotis's examination of a selection of twentieth century African novels, including *Things Fall Apart* (1958), which have each been received as "inaugural works,"[108] reveals how historiography, ethnography and the novel were mutually constitutive genres (4). Through her readings, she shows:

> ...how the features of each discourse establish the necessity for the others. History requires realistic description that evokes the ethnographic. Narrativity emerges in resistance to the ethnographic. Fiction becomes the grounds for a double history: the history of the demise of intact traditional societies and the history of the invention of the myth of tradition (in which the novels themselves participate) as a strategy of cultural survival during colonialism (15)

Here Coundouriotis draws attention to the imbrication of the realist novel in the colonies within a discursive field populated by essentializing ethnographic descriptions of native cultures and totalising histories of native societies preoccupied with the description of a culture in its entirety in order to de-contextually classify and hierarchise a racialised set of behaviours and cultural practices along a plane of evolution. "Ethnographic description," writes Coundouriotis, "has often repressed historical context in the effort to re-create whole cultures," but the inaugural African novel countered this essentialization with narrative strategies that emphasised the complexity of the cultural context and

[108] Coundouriotis defines inaugural works as those that are paradigmatic and articulate an inaugural gesture—an attempt to "lay claim to and explain a particular history against various covert or covert acts of narrative repression," that is perceived as new and authentic (4).

articulated a ‘historical consciousness’ that sought “to recover repressed narratives of cultural loss and fragmentation" (23).

Coundouritis’s analysis suggests that early/inaugural novels from colonial contact zones written in non-native languages often re-inscribe ethnographic and historical narrative modes in such a way as to destabilise the authority and coherence of colonial discourse. “The insistence,” writes Neil Lazarus in *The Postcolonial Unconscious* (2011), “that ‘it was not like that’—that the colonial record is false, indeed, systematically distorted,” fuelled the preoccupation with providing a “corrective exposition” that is evident in many works of postcolonial literatures (116). In the context of African literature, these corrective expositions tended to “challenge the tendentiousness of colonial discourse by demonstrating the sophistication of African social existence, *contemporaneously and in the past*” (Lazarus 116; emphasis mine). This assertion of contemporaneity is an important break from the allochronic discourse of colonialist ethnography “according to which the other never occupies the same historical time as the Western observer" (11). While colonialist ethnographies tended to represent African cultures as timeless and static, suppressing their temporal coevalness with the West, Condouriotis reads inaugural novels like *Things Fall Apart* as affirming the “continuous history” of specific traditions and life-worlds (38). Coundouriotis argues that:

> unlike the ‘salvage ethnography’ of European ethnographers who sought, as Clifford has explained, to preserve what was already lost, Achebe’s autoethnography aims at affirming the contemporaneity of native cultures with those of the West. Ibo culture is decidedly not a finished thing looked at nostalgically at the moment of the novel’s composition but the very perspective from which an Ibo writer of the late 1950s is looking at his own continuous history. Achebe shows the persistence of African ways of life during the colonial period and the incomplete, gradual, and painstaking inroads of European culture (38).

This reading of Achebe's approach to the description of Ibo culture is particularly generative because it differentiates literary uses of autoethnography from anthropological methodology. It draws attention to a kind of literary representation of culture/ways of life that emphasises flux and becoming rather than culmination. In this chapter I read *The Heart Divided, Zohra* and *Sunlight on a Broken Column* too as novels that vivify 1930s and 1940s elite South Asian Muslim culture in Lahore, Hyderabad and Lucknow as part of a continuous living history. It is my contention that the novels do not narrate the catastrophic erasure of pre-Partition South Asian Islamicate cultures in an elegiac mode, but rather gesture firmly toward their persistence in postcolonial Pakistan and, despite minoritisation, in postcolonial India as well.

While Coundouriotis's readings do a fine job of explicating the historical consciousness inherent in inaugural African novels, they give autoethnography a short shrift as an analytical tool with which to engage literatures of tranculturation. Coundouriotis uses the term autoethnography to refer to Achebe's mode of cultural description in *Things Fall Apart* and distinguishes it from salvage ethnography, which is focused on the ethnographic interview and the collection of data to document traditions on the verge of extinction. According to Coundouriotis, "the autoethnographer is still engaged in the genre of ethnographic description that systematically represses historical causality" (96). Coundouriotis engages in an extended critique of early twentieth century ethnography—a time "when ethnography had reached the height of its authority"—as inherently ahistorical, in order to posit that ethnographic description was fully historically contextualised only in literature, at least in the case of Francophone and Anglophone African literatures. Her discussion of autoethnographic expression in *Things Fall Apart*

thus occurs in relation to the narrative strategies through which the novel historicizes Ibo culture.

Furthermore, Coundouriotis finds that the African novels received as autoethnographic were yoked to authenticity in such a way as to obscure their interventions in colonial historiography. Coundouriotis argues that critics who are invested in establishing the inauguration of the African novel anew by proclaiming a particular work's authentic Africanness especially seize upon "those novels that engage history in ambitious and resistant ways" and that the "unstated purpose of this manner of reception is to diminish the historical ambitions of these novels and distract their readers by highlighting instead the novels' description of everyday life in an African community" (3). A similar concern has been identified by M. Keith Booker, who finds that "anthropological readings...have sometimes prevented African novels from receiving serious critical attention as literature rather than simply as documentation of cultural practices" (65). This brings us back to the comments of Priyamvada Gopal in relation to *Sunlight on a Broken Column* and *The Heart Divided*, which too might have been prevented from receiving serious critical attention because of their excessive ethnographic detail.

In the limited scholarship available on the novels I discuss, some critics have also gestured toward their incorporation of an autoethnographic mode of representation. However, it has remained only a gesture, as critics have overwhelmingly chosen to comment on the novels' preoccupation with history instead. As Prasenjit Duara puts it, "Historical consciousness in modern society… [is] overwhelmingly framed by the nation-state" (qtd. in Sarkar 81). This means that for late colonial Muslim authors, "the very

condition of visibility and voice in subsequent historical accounts is anachronistically determined even more specifcally by a single episode in the linear history of the nation-state—the story of the Partition" (Sarkar 81). For instance, Ambreen Hai mentions that *Zohra* fulfils the conventions of autoethnography as well as bildungsroman. However, while Hai describes *Zohra* as "a semi-autobiographical story," she does not probe the autoethnographic aspects of *Zohra,* offering instead a reading influenced by Lukacs' ideas of the historical novel, which "emerged in a moment of national and 'social transformation' and constituted an effort to understand the present as formed by the past, to link the formation of the nation to its history, and to understand 'the individuality of characters' as constituted by 'the historical peculiarities of their age'" (Hai 321). Hai's reading of *Zohra* posits two central concerns for the novel. Firstly, Hai argues that *Zohra* evidences a "critique of purdah culture and the promise of systemic change that may be wrought by a modern democratic secular nation that would abolish the feudal order and subscribe to alternative gender ideologies" (334). Secondly, Hai reads *Zohra* as a narrative that articulates the desires of the minoritised Muslim public in India for national belonging. Hai claims that *Zohra* represents an "argument for belonging to the Indian nation of Indian Muslims who rejected communalism to join the anticolonial struggle for Indian independence...claiming belonging based less on heritage than on self-sacrifice and involvement in the independence struggle as well as a history of harmonious coexistence" (317). Since Hai positions *Zohra* as a Partition novel based on the timeline of its completion and publication despite its setting in the 1920s and 1930s and despite the absence of any references to the events surrounding partition, Lukacs is useful for her

argument that the novel "show[s] how certain histories must be remembered in order to reshape national narratives and reestablish national belonging" (321).

Antoinette Burton also treats *Sunlight in a Broken Column* as a "'partition' novel that can be counterread as history" (106). What is implicit in Burton's statement is that *Sunlight* becomes admissible to history *because* of its status as a 'partition novel.' It is because of the singular nature of the partition as a historical event that fiction has been legitimised as a way of approaching its narrativisation. Burton cites Mushirul Hasan as a prominent historian of the partition who has endorsed *Sunlight* as such a 'historical text' that can help access certain aspects of the partition that are not or cannot be conveyed in 'magisterial' histories. But Burton argues that Hasan's accommodation of *Sunlight* within the historiography of Partition still "casts the novel as evidence of implicitly small histories—family histories—that supplement the extant magisterial histories, nuancing dominant discourses about partition without necessarily challenging the politics of traditional archival readings" (106). In contrast, Burton proposes that *Sunlight* "be understood, in the first instance, as an attempt to account for the past by producing the history of one family dwelling—literally *materializing* one community's experience of terror and political violence," and secondly, "as an effort to lay claim to home as a legitimate, persuasive, and ultimately irrefutable partition archive: evidence of the desire to dwell in history when house and home have become uninhabitable" (106). Although she pays special attention to the carefully detailed representation of the domestic spaces of Ashiana, Burton's reading of *Sunlight* is overdetermined by the historical shadow of Partition, and the violence and displacement it engendered. She casts the novel "[a]s an alternative archive of partition," which "[offers] a modest corrective to local and in turn

to national history … by obscuring the actual violence of partition and focusing instead on its architectural ravages" (136). Burton even reads the very first action in the novel—Aunt Abida's move from the *zenana*, the women's wing of Ashiana, to a guest room in order to be within hearing distance to the dying patriarch, Baba Jan—as "[a]nticipating the legacy of mourning and loss occasioned by partition …with a presentiment of death that is announced through a change in the usual spatial arrangements in the house" (118-19). For Burton, the shadow of Partition is visible in the theme of the death of the patriarch. Yet Baba Jan's illness is a device used to set the tone of impending instability—young and fatherless cousins Laila and Zahra return again and again to anxious conversations about their uncertain futures after Baba Jan's inevitable death. "The choreography of the grandfather's death," writes Burton, "is subsequently traced through the corridors and doorways of the house in part 1, staging Laila as the nostalgic narrator and Ashiana as the recurrent idiom of history" (119). Thus Burton neatly introduces her overarching argument about *Sunlight* being an alternate historical archive of Partition.

Spatial Crises

Unlike Burton, I argue that *Sunlight,* as well as *Zohra,* and *The Heart Divided* all open with the description of a moment of *spatial crisis*, which anticipates the incremental trespasses and improvisational transgressions that shaped elite Muslim households' accommodation of colonial modernity. Thinking about the incidents with which the novels open in terms of a spatial crisis instead of the catchall umbrella of partition enables us to foreground the ways in which the novels deal with space in the nation-in-

progress, and the ways in which they represent young elite Muslim women's relationship with the built environment. Moving away from the macro-level lens of the nation and national history, a close regard on domestic spatial representation allows us to see the incremental changes in the appurtenances and furniture that form receptacles for the body, and how regimes of the body are affected by modernity. Baba Jan's sickness occasions the disarray of the normative domestic configuration that takes Aunt Abida from "the walled zenana, self-contained with its lawns, courtyards and veranda'd rooms" and installs her in a guest room which leads to the outer portion of the house (18). Aunt Abida now no longer conforms to the very strict demarcations of interior space in an elite feudal household. The timeless interiority of the self-contained *zenana*, which forms the refuge of Laila's childhood, soon functions as refuge no longer as Laila begins to be torn between traditional gender roles and her own desires.

Futehally's Zohra is inadvertently spied upon by a neighbour's son in the walled garden outside the *zenana*. *Zohra* opens with the admonishment of the old nurse Unnie: "What can we do with these girls of today?" (1). This we discover is in response to "Zohra swinging heedlessly, eyes aglow and hair disheveled, her lithe body moving rhythmically with the swing" (1). Zohra's play is cut short when Unnie discovers the young "man-child" neighbour in a tree, ostensibly plucking fruit. However, Unnie is convinced that by neglecting to give warning of his presence, as is customary when there might be a chance of ladies or girls in purdah being present, he has indeed been surreptitiously observing Zohra indulging in a moment of playfulness (3). This is a grave enough transgression of the codes of purdah that even when the neighbour has scampered off defiantly claiming his innocence, it is Zohra who must retire within the *zenana* to

demonstrate her propriety. The episode establishes the precarity of respectability and the infinitesimal transgressions that can jeopardise the sanctity of purdah. Furthermore, Unnie is established as the voice and keeper of conservative elite tradition. It is she who reminds Zohra—and along with her, the readers as well—that even a generation earlier, during Zohra's mother Zubaida Begum's girlhood, it was not customary for young girls to venture outside the *zenana* courtyard even into the outer garden, even if it was protected from the gaze of outsiders by high walls. Zohra's heedless playfulness is disciplined, but unlike her elder sister Mehrunnissa, whom we find scattering grain for pigeons at the central fountain in the *zenana*, Zohra is portrayed as spirited and poised for transgression.

Similarly, Shah Nawaz's Zohra is about to take her first step towards discarding the purdah. *The Heart Divided* opens with the lines:

> In later years Zohra often wondered when the change in her life began. The change, that had led her, a young Muslim girl, born and bred behind the purdah to a life of independence and adventure. It was not easy to define when it began, for the lives of all the girls of her generation had changed so much and they were woven together in such a manner, like many-coloured threads of an intricate pattern, that it was difficult to decide when the change in her particular life began. Perhaps it started on a quiet November evening in 1930 (1).

The narrative opens on a scene of domestic bliss "in the little sitting-room in the ladies' part of the house," where Sheikh Jamaluddin enjoys his daily cup of tea in the company of his wife and daughters (1). Sughra, the elder daughter is engaged in housework—"giving orders to the maids and passing the sweets and savouries to her father and mother"—and Zohra is represented as restlessly turning over the pages of a newspaper. Into this scene of "quiet comfort," arrives the intimation of change— "a life of independence and adventure" outside purdah (1). Zohra goes out shopping with friends and forgets the top half of her burqah, which includes the veil. She decides that she will

stay in the curtained car and have things brought to her to be displayed. But the car breaks down and her friends persuade her to take a tonga to the shops with her face uncovered, reasoning that no one would recognize her. Zohra hesitates, feeling apprehensive about her family's censure at appearing in public without being properly veiled, and her uncertainty is represented thus:

> Zohra did not know what to do. On the one hand, she knew that she would incur the severe displeasure of her family, and on the other, she did not wish to appear timid and full of fear before the girls…It would be great fun going along the Mall in a tonga with no cumbersome veil to hamper her. She would feel free as a bird. Surely no one would know (9).

Zohra's fears about being discovered violating the rules of visibility strictly enforced by her family so far do come true. An aunt embellishes the account with further insinuations of an assignation with boys and humiliates Zohra's mother, who in turn takes her rage out at Zohra. A scene ensues in which Zohra's mother finally learns the truth and is so relieved at the story of the boys being false that she forgets to be angry with Zohra for going off in a tonga. When Zohra mentions her being in public without a veil, her father does not censure her, which she takes as tacit permission to discard the veil in her future outings with her girlfriends. "Next time…she folded away the burqah, went gaily into the shops, spent a pleasant hour, and only put on the burqah when…they entered the drive that led to Nishat Manzil. Thus she took her first step towards a free and independent life, but she did not know it then" (17). This episode narrativises the incremental and improvisational accommodations through which Zohra approaches the free and independent life of adventure promised in the opening lines. Vindicated of committing the graver transgression of conducting assignations with unfamilial men in public, Zohra manages to turn the relatively minor issue of going about without being veiled into a non-issue. Leaving behind the portable seclusion of the curtained car, Zohra steps gaily into

shops unencumbered by the burqah, or by fears of the severe displeasure of her family. The juxtaposition of the static sitting room scene of the *zenana*, where "[t]he furniture was perhaps a little too ornate and there were too many pictures on the walls, but a cheerful log-fire was burning on the grate, and there were deep, cushioned seats into which one could sink comfortably," with the image of Zohra gaily accessing the shops without her burqah indicates the broadening of the kinds of spaces and built environments Zohra can inhabit comfortably. Furthermore, the change in Zohra's life, with the intimation of which novel opens, is represented not as a singular event in the life of an exceptional character. Instead, Shah Nawaz represents Zohra's life as intricately woven together with other girls of her generation. This indicates Shah Nawaz's commitment to an autoethnographic mode of representation, wherein Zohra stands for a community of Muslim women coming of age in late colonial South Asia.

Ashiana and Nishat Manzil: Conceptual Monumentalisation and its Absence

Both *Sunlight* and *The Heart Divided* include named family residences in the city, and these residences, as Antoinette Burton argues, "even and especially in their ruinous state, …have the power not simply to conjure the past but to retrieve it from and for memory" (133). In *Sunlight,* Ashiana is represented as belonging to an older urban fabric, part of an urban complex to which "[a]n aura of romance still clung," through its association with true aristocracy even "though they were now merely the town houses of *Taluqdars* whereas they had once sheltered the beauties of the Royal harem, and the King was said to have walked across their roofs shaded by a flight of pigeons" (146). The democratisation of power, the minoritisation of Muslims in India, the politics of refugee

rehabilitation, the abolition of *zamindari* all combine to re-work this urban fabric into "[t]attered settlements for refugees" and "[u]gly buildings…conceived by ill-digested modernity and the hasty needs of a growing city" (270). While Ashiana had once been adjacent to the palace and gardens of the Raja of Bhimnagar, imbued with mystery due to stories of haunting by the ghost of the allegedly murdered English architect who had dared to court the mistress of a nawab, and surrounded by lawns and orchards with marble pavilions and miniature lakes, it is eventually replaced with "three-storeyed cement blocks of cheap flats…with washing hung across the balconies, and shrill voices call[ing] for the start of another day" (270).

Writing several decades after Hosain, scholar Veena Talwar Oldenburg too describes the casualties of "those mindless decades of ill-planned and unlovely development" in strikingly similar terms in her preface to the volume *Shaam-e-Awadh* (2007), an anthology of writings on Lucknow (xii). One of these casualties Oldenburg describes in some detail is her ancestral residence and "its once extensive gardens, orchards and fields," which "were destroyed over a period of two decades to accommodate such architectural wonders as the Talkatora Power House, shoe-box-shaped grain storehouses of the Food Corporation of India, and…a huge housing colony…for Lucknow's teeming underclass" (xi, xii). Another is the heritage building which Oldenburg describes as her "second home and family business, where [her] fondest memories reside" (xiii). Carlton Hotel was built by the British to accommodate visitors and participants in the Durbar of 1877 to receive the Prince of Wales, who was on a seventeen-week tour of India. Oldenburg describes Carlton hotel as having been an "arcaded and elegant building, set amid gardens and a eucalyptus grove, with a nawabi

façade and Victorian interiors," which now stands "aggrieved and incongruous like a large mammal whose limbs have been hacked off" to be replaced by "[a] shiny steel-and-glass shopping mall…the harbinger of a virile, modern, glossy future that will banish the ghosts of the past" (xiii, xiv). Oldenburg's representation of the replacement of orchards with unseemly, "dank and ugly inhabitations," and of heritage buildings with disharmonious chrome and steel structures echoes Hosain's indictment of the mismanagement that produced the postcolonial urban sprawl of Lucknow, which cannot match up to the visual appeal of the colonial or nawabi city (xii). The jarring and disharmonious effect produced by the overlain and partially overwritten nawabi, colonial and postcolonial spatial orders is expressed by both Oldenburg and Hosain in terms of *seeing* or visually experiencing the city. Or, in other words, because they both overlay the visual aesthetic regimes of nawabi and colonial Lucknow on its postcolonial urban sprawl, a pronounced jarring and disharmonious representation of space is produced.

Sunlight not only represents the reversal of the privileges of the *taluqdars* through the changes wrought in the intimate spaces of the family home, it also charts the passage of the aesthetic regime that governed urban spaces—a visual regime that is clearly associated in the novel with nawabi Lucknow, even though the era of the nawabs had ended with the exile of Wajid Ali Shah to a suburb of Calcutta in 1856 and the exodus of the royal household in the aftermath of the mutiny of 1857. In *The Making of Colonial Lucknow, 1856*-1877 (1884), Veena Talwar Oldenburg writes that "Lucknow was truncated and pruned" after the exile of the last nawab, as the "new masters, whose needs inspired a differently built environment, grafted onto it a new urban species to create a hybrid city that was both peculiar to and typical of the colonial era" (5). While nawabi

Lucknow, with its nucleus in the royal palace complex was "consistently described as 'splendid, 'fairy-like,'[and] 'luxurious," and "[f]or the native elite the nawabi city represented the special environment of the Indo-Mughal cultural epoch," colonial Lucknow, following its recapture in 1858, was reorganised through the implementation of several proposals designed by the military engineer Robert Napier to contain further rebellion (Oldenburg 12). This reorganisation manifested in the creation of wide boulevards through the densest parts of the urban agglomeration for the ease of moving an army with a clear line of fire about the city, thus disrupting the traditional urban spatial order which had thwarted the swift quelling of the Mutiny through its labyrinthine streets, its crowded opacity, and its rebellious citizens. As Jyoti Pandey Sharma puts it, this re-organisation constituted "urban disciplining," and entailed "the overlay of the metropolitan ideal of urban space on an existing spatial order by resorting to architectural destruction *as a retributive strategy* to punish the indigenous population" (133; emphasis mine). This retributive strategy reconstituted the "traditional spatial ensemble of the *Qila-Masjid-Bagh-Haveli* (Palace-fort-Mosque-Garden-Mansion)" into the "military urbanism of the Barrack-Battery-Magazine-Mess-Parade Ground ensemble" through "demolition, coercive seizure and rapid reconstruction" (134). Colonial Lucknow thus bore the imprint of reprisal in the aesthetic regime of its urban plan in a way that Lahore and Hyderabad did not, because they were not sites of dramatic sieges and spectacular massacres.

In *Sunlight* Hosain writes that "[T]he heart of the old city with its crumbling houses of impoverished nobles, its crowded bazaars, its filth, its noise, its beauty, its skill, its craftsmen and artisans, its narrow streets and the honey-tongued people who walked them," is invisible behind the beautiful skyline of early twentieth century Lucknow as

glimpsed from one of the bridges over the river Gomti as one leaves the city, which is dominated by "the mosque of Aurangzeb in the foreground[,]…the Imambara of the Nawab-Viziers and the distant clock tower piercing through the trees of its surrounding park" (92). The dense old city and its pedestrian traffic is hidden from view for *Sunlight*'s protagonist and narrator Laila on the one memorable occasion she surveys the city from a curtained car on the way to the ancestral village to attend the funerary rites of her grandfather. It is important to remember that Laila does not live in one of the decaying houses of the old nobility but rather in a town house in the shadow of Bhimnagar palace built by an Englishman during the short reign of Wajid Ali Shah, which lasted all of nine years between 1847 and 1856. The environs in which Hosain sets Ashiana are thus precisely dated and distinct from the true heart of the old city, as are *taluqdars* distinct from the true nobility who accrued their privilege from the palace, which during the time of the novel has already been converted to an English club—its golden dome stripped of the pure gold that adorned it during the nawabate, conveying the scale of colonial appropriation. But accompanying this sense of loss and erosion is also the hint of obscured, subterranean persistence of royal grandeur, when Hakiman Bua tells Laila, "There is treasure hidden in this city, gold and priceless jewels, buried when the nobles fled from the white soldiers. There are tunnels leading from one old palace to another where it is hidden but no one can find it because of the evil spirits that strangle whoever enters" (90-91).

The *taluqdars* occupy an uneasy position as a class of land owners that came into prominence after the Mutiny which decimated the wealth of the city and evacuated those architectural domains within which sovereign power resided, and which emanated a grace

that seemed to fold the entire city within it. Now this royal grace was forever inaccessible, not only for further colonial plunder, but even to the *taluqdars*. It is in this Lucknow already somewhat denuded of enchantment, of "ruined, shell-holed walls that had once guarded the private gardens of the king's favourite wife," of "tree-shaded roads…leading towards the fashionable shopping centre with its clean, wide pavements, its colonnaded, veranda'd shops, offices, restaurants and cinemas," of "buildings [that] stopped respectfully on either side of…small roadside temple[s]" and of "palaces that were now clubs and courts, official residences and museums," that Hosain places Ashiana as a literary counterpart of a carefully curated house-museum that through the display of its collections evokes an authentic picture of the life-worlds of past inhabitants (89, 90).

Antoinette Burton goes as far as to say that *Sunlight* takes the form of a biography of the house, and that Ashiana is not just a backdrop signifying interiority, but rather "emerges as the central character" (118). For Burton, this emergence is due to the dramatic vivisectioning of the house due to the policies that accompanied the partition. The short fourth and last part of the novel, when Laila returns to Ashiana after an absence of fourteen years, most strongly probes the nature of domestic architecture and embodied memory. The partitioned house can be read as a metonym of postcolonial Partitioned India, where the minoritised Muslim public is compelled to sever ties to the narrative of distinctive identity Ikramullah describes, which is comprised of claims to precolonial Mughal imperial antecedents, colonial modernity and postcolonial citizenship, and, instead, assimilate in the new national body politic. Ashiana is partitioned on account of one of Laila's cousins, Saleem, moving to Pakistan. Under provisions of evacuee property laws, parts of the house were allotted to refugees, "strangers who were names in

Government files balancing Saleem's name against theirs—he labelled 'evacuee', they 'refugees'," writes Hosain (272). Laila sees the house as "a living symbol" in its postcolonial-urban decrepitude when she returns to it four years after independence (273). This symbol is feminised as a "once beautiful woman struck with leprosy" (271).

The terror of the 'population transfer' of Hindus and Muslims between India and Pakistan was exacerbated by bureaucratic provisions made only for refugees from the partitioned provinces of Punjab and Bengal. The minoritisation of non-Muslims in Pakistan and non-Hindus in India, together with the ideological representation of Pakistan as the safe spiritual homeland of South Asian Muslims, meant that many people from all over the subcontinent, and not only Punjab and Bengal, felt compelled to move across uncertain borders, to relief camps, to families living in places that were not 'sensitive' areas with expected flare-ups of communal violence, or even to other countries altogether. Familial networks were disrupted due to this movement—whether voluntary, forced, or contingent—which resulted in a sense of permanent involuntary exile due to the ensuing difficulties of traversing the Indo-Pak border, pithily captured by Hosain's narrator Laila when she says of her cousins, Saleem and Zahra that "[l]ess than two months later [they] left for Pakistan and it was easier for them thereafter to visit the whole wide world than the home which had once been theirs" (289).

Partition's displacements created what Vazira Zamindar calls "resettled geographies" which significantly altered the demographics, urban culture and landscape of cities like Delhi, Lucknow, Lahore, Karachi, which saw acute housing crises, forcible occupation of evacuee property and ghettoisation (6). In Delhi, 'Muslim Zones' were created by the Indian state to stem the Muslim exodus effected by the threat of violence

in the neighbourhood and/or socioeconomic boycott at the workplace. These zones, meant to be 'safe' for the Muslims of Delhi, were provided police protection so that 'vacant' or 'abandoned' houses could not be forcibly occupied and could be used to rehabilitate Muslims from 'unsafe' 'mixed areas'. Yet these 'vacant' houses became visible sites of contention for refugees clamouring for housing and contributed to the ghettoisation of Delhi's Muslims as once they were 'rehabilitated' to the relative 'safety' of Muslim zones from 'mixed areas,' or to camps and religious sites, they were unable to return to or reclaim their own homes which had likely by then been occupied by refugees or declared 'Evacuee Property' and taken over by the state.

Accounts like Anis Kidwai's *Azadi ki chhaon mein* (1974) (translated in English as *In Freedom's Shade* and published in 2011) detail the failure of state machinery in Delhi between 1947-1949, when volunteering at the relief camps, visiting hospitals to locate missing women and children, creating opportunities for education and employment of unsettled people, liaising between the displaced and representatives of the government, and generally working to keep the peace as a Shanti Dal[109] activist, she witnessed the complicity and corruption of members of police and local administration resulting in

[109] Anis Kidwai describes the Shanti Dal, literally Peace Corps, as a collective of progressive citizens "[d]ominated by socialists…[which] used all means—baton, gun, impassioned appeal—to preserve amity," which started operating, in January 1948, out of a building owned by the Rehmaniya School in Bara Hindu Rao, one of the Muslim zones (107). Although the state had created a Central Peace Committee headed by Dr Rajendra Prasad, Kidwai asserts that it was partisan and that "ordinary people had no access to this committee," and "were entirely unaware of its existence or any work it was supposed to have done" (209). The Shanti Dal, on the other hand, while "formally a Congress organization, in truth and in practice,…was not affiliated to any party" (211). Between April-May, 1948, the Shanti Dal was reorganised as an autonomous peace initiative under the Central Peace Committee so as to avail of its resources in anticipation of riots in June with Subhadra Joshi as party convener and Mridula Sarabhai as overall in-charge. In fact, Kidwai credits Sarabhai with "the conception and intellect that defined the group" (214). However, the Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation charged the Shanti Dal with harbouring Congree defectees while Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel called for its immediate dismantlement, accusing it of "virtually [aiming] at a parallel local administration" (*Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents Vol 10* 155-156).

gross irregularities in the process of disbursing permits to travel between India and Pakistan, and in the process of housing and land allotment, despite the institution of Muslim zones and the office of the Custodian of Evacuee Property. She writes how "[t]he assurance of a police guard was no guarantee" and how "in most cases, if a neighbourhood came under police watch, it was bound to become uninhabited very shortly," indicating the apathy displayed by the police in the endeavour to retain the Muslim population of Delhi while she and other members of the Shanti Dal had realised that it was imperative to prevent people from leaving their homes if the camps were ever to be wound up (127).

Kidwai convincingly argues that Muslims were terrorised into leaving Delhi with no possibility of return since, in addition to "the making of a bureaucratic discourse which was repeatedly constructing Muslims as a problem of governance" in India, as Zamindar shows in *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia* (2007), Muslims with homes in Indian territory had to contend with being imbued with "aggressive and invasive intent," charged with being "belligerent agents of the Pakistani state" and suspected of "enemy espionage" as illegal infiltrators rather than returning refugees so that "their claims to homes in the city were made transgressive and illegitimate" (Zamindar 91-94). These homes, declared 'vacant' 'evacuee' properties, then became sites of contention in the process of 'refugee' rehabilitation, where the official designation of 'refugee' could only apply to displaced Hindus and Sikhs but not displaced Muslims, who could only be designated as 'evacuees' or 'intending evacuees.'

Furthermore, evacuee property laws came to be misapplied and abused swiftly "such that people who were considered legally Indian citizens became at the same time

"evacuees," [which] made the institution an instrument of internal displacement and dispossession" (Zamindar 121). Between 1947 and 1950, when the language in evacuee property legislation was amended, the term 'evacuee' was applied to "any person displaced from his usual place of habitation" even if this displacement was internal, that is, even to "persons who had not migrated to Pakistan or who had not received any allotment of evacuee or abandoned property in Pakistan" (Zamindar 127). Another designation, 'intending evacuee,' was even more slippery and prone to abuse as through this, the government could take over the property of people merely "seen as making a preparation for…migration" and reclaiming this property from the Custodian was an extraordinarily long, exhausting and litigious process wherein "the burden of proof lay on [designees] to establish that they had not gone or did not have any future intention of going to Pakistan" (Zamindar 127, 145).

In *Imagining the Turkish House* (2008), Carel Bertram draws attention to the ways in which the Ottoman style Turkish house was "imagined poetically" in and through the collective memory of those former Ottoman subjects who became Turkish citizens following the creation of the new state of Turkey in 1923, which immediately sought to manage, revise and regulate the Ottoman past contained within its territorial boundaries (1). In other words, just as Ottoman subjects became Turkish citizens post-1923, old wooden Ottoman-period houses, which were "already coded with a rich and complex set of meanings," were appropriated into the new cultural vocabulary and they too began to be described as Turkish houses (104). Thus, Bertram makes explicit the iterations and representationally mediated replications of the Turkish house type through its passage into what she calls the "Turkish imaginary," where it "evolve[s] as part of a

collective repertoire of images" that refer to a form long since fallen out of circulation of lived everyday practice, and whose "meaning…could only be imagined through representations of it" (9, 6). So, the Turkish house becomes a musealised private residence: one of the material manifestations of the efforts and desires of the newly established Turkish republic to synthesise and update Turkishness by selectively refiguring meanings invested in the markers of Ottoman culture. Thus, the "disappearing Ottoman house began to emerge and take on symbolic meaning and aesthetic value…[that] did not develop in a consistent way," and it is these inconsistencies and non-uniformities of assignments of meaning and value that drive the story of negotiations between a historical past and its revival and strategic revision through memory-work (15).

Sunlight is particularly preoccupied with nostalgic evocations of and affective investments in the interior spaces of the houses of the Muslim elite in late-colonial India. The novel serves as a literary musealisation, or, in Bertram's terms, a "conceptual monumentalization" of a particular type of house, undertaken to shore up its traces in the archive provided by literary representation, against the destructive forces of sweeping regime changes and the violent incursions of modernity, which were already causing the gradual disappearance of not just a certain genteel lifestyle but also the forms of housing that sheltered it (15). *Sunlight*, like the memoirs and essays of Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, provides a detailed description of the material culture, domestic practices and lived spaces of the last gasp of a feudal social order before various factors associated with the regime change from a colony to a newly independent state—land reforms instituted by the new regime, the costs of the inexpertly managed population exchange that

disintegrated into an orgy of gendered violence, and the politics of assigning property rights in the wake of incoming refugees and outgoing evacuees—rendered the traditional courtyard house type unsustainable.

Now, while the Ottoman-period house type had accrued symbolic value through sustained scholarly work, and "its use as an icon of [Turkish architectural past] was encouraged and rewarded," no such sustained and widely disseminated studies have been undertaken for the feudal houses of the Indian subcontinent, and no special incentives were offered for the material reproduction of these outmoded private residences (Bertram 18). Architects like Geoffrey Bawa in Sri Lanka and Charles Correa in India have incorporated the traditional Indian courtyard into many of their designs, but here I am thinking of preservation and monumentalisation efforts that have given rise to the house museum elsewhere. The lack of interest in the private residential courtyard house form is in stark contrast to the scholarly attention received by colonial forms of housing—the bungalow, in particular, but also buildings and monuments erected by the colonial administration[110]. Sources focused primarily on vernacular architecture are relatively few. Swati Chattopadhyay offers studies of the vernacular mansions of Calcutta[111] and the *baganbari* or the garden houses maintained as a separate residence in rural Bengal by the wealthy, and Jyoti Hosagrahar focuses on the courtyard houses or *haveli* of Delhi,[112]

[110] See: Anthony D. King, *The Bungalow: The production of a global culture.* London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984; Thomas Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian architecture and Britain's Raj*. Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press, 1989.

[111] See: Swati Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, nationalism, and the colonial uncanny*. London/New York: Routledge, 2005.

[112] See: Jyoti Hosagrahar, *Indigenous Modernities: Negotiating architecture and urbanism*. NY/London: Routledge, 2005.

while Sarah Tillotson provides a sociological study of the lived spaces of the *haveli* in Rajasthan[113].

Thus, in the face of the disappearance of this particular style of house, variously called the Indian mansion, the *haveli* and the courtyard house, its monumentalised representations in literature and film gain even more significance. For instance, in a recent anthology of essays on colonial and vernacular architecture in British India, the editors introduce their frames of analysis by drawing on the literary representation of the old vernacular mansion in Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995). It is in fact the "fleeting description of the syncretistic building style" in a literary text that opens their inquiry into the ways in which architecture ""performed"…in the process of colonial-modern cultural construction," and enables them to posit that the old colonial mansion was a hybrid dwelling "rich in both texture and meaning but irreducible to either," that "embodies a "space" of everyday life in which different worlds can intersect," producing "a place of cultural and historical in-betweenness" (Scriver & Prakash 7, 8).

As Laila moves through each room of the part of the house she can still enter, now no longer occupied by family members, each object of furniture serves as a locus of memory. Hosain writes: "My most private emotions were contained by this house, as much a part of its structure as its every brick and beam. Its memories condensed my life as in a summary" (272). However, this activation of memory is not only due to the special horror of Ashiana's vivisection. Early on in the novel, Laila searches for

[113] See: Sarah Tillotson. *Indian Mansions: A Social History of the Haveli.* Cambridge: Oleander Press, 1994.

reassurance from the echoes of her deceased parents' lives in their apartments after a distressing conversation with Aunt Abida, and after even Hakiman Bua, to whom she habitually turns to vivify her deceased parents' lives, and whose "dark bulk…embodied the abundance of comforting love," cannot comfort her and set her mind at ease:

> The tidy, empty bed, the space-holding armchairs, the blank mirrors of the dressing-table all waited; I would find the other rooms the same if I passed through the motionless curtains into their silence. No trace now of those transient visitors who were permitted to stay a while in these rooms after the passing years had softened the shock of their sudden emptiness.
>
> In my desperation of longing I tried to fill them again so as to make their stillness breathe. It only needed intensity of faith, concentration of desire. If the mind and spirit were emptied of all else they could receive the burning message (42).

Already here we see Laila's desire to project upon the articles and furniture the traces of the absent. The bed, armchairs, mirror and dressing table are figured as receptacles of the body and, in the absence of users, are represented as waiting silently in stillness, communicating no pageant of parental warmth. Yet in part four of the novel, Laila narrates that the silence she encounters in Ashiana "was not the peaceful silence of emptiness, but as if sounds lurked everywhere, waiting for the physical presence of those who had made them audible" and that "[t]here was a sense of arrested movement in the few pieces of furniture that had not been removed" (275). While earlier, Laila is represented as trying her hardest to conjure the shades of her parents, her absence from Ashiana and its uninhabited decrepitude has somehow made the space itself more alive. *Sunlight's* narrative is replete with, and articulates Laila's desire to access what Paul Ricoeur has described as "the trace" in *Time and Narrative* (1988) "a physical 'mark' capable of guiding a return" to "a passed past that nevertheless remains preserved in its vestiges" (78, 120).

In the first part of the novel, Hosain describes Ashiana under the "unchallenged tyranny" of Baba Jan (34). Baba Jan's long illness soon becomes routine and the world of Ashiana is described as a "patterned smoothness…cushioning the mind and heart against the outside world," which is only "indirectly sensed and known" (59). Despite riots in the streets of the city, at Ashiana "[t]he days passed, one like another with at first a degree of wonder that the intensity of some moments should be so smoothly absorbed into others, and then even the awareness of wonder was lost" (58). Baba Jan's will permeates Ashiana despite his illness even though the narrative affords only one encounter between him and Laila, which is described as a ritual audience. Instead of the man himself, Laila describes Baba Jan through his possessions and through photographs hanging on the wall of his room:

> Baba Jan, his brothers and cousins, black-bearded, dressed in embroidered *achkans* and caps, with jeweled swords held in their hands, sitting stiffly in high carved chairs, with uniformed retainers holding steel-tipped spears standing behind them. Baba Jan alone, beardless, with a thick moustache curled up to piercing points, dressed in a suit, with shining pointed boots and spats. Baba Jan with a group of strained pompous Englishmen standing behind Englishwomen in long, laced, ruffled dresses with boned, laced collars that held up heavy heads of piled-up hair under wide hats (32).

Laila wonders if Baba Jan, remote in life as he is in his photographs, could ever have been "tender and gay," and if he could have "doubted and wondered" in his youth (32). More even than his dress—traditional in one photograph, and Western in another—the articles his displays in his drawing room define Baba Jan as a certain kind of personality. Laila describes the drawing room as "gloomy and grotesquely rich," with "china and crystal, ivory and jade, marble and metal, prints and paintings…crowded together regardless of beauty or genuineness" (120). These items Baba Jan had acquired in his old age while frequenting auctions with his friends, "in much the same spirit as had once

made them big-game hunters" (120). The jumble of articles were thus trophies of a kind and propped up an idiosyncratic order that emanated from Baba Jan himself, and reflect the jostling of spatial orders and the incomplete assimilation of aesthetic regimes in flux.

Under Baba Jan's regime, the interiority and timelessness of Ashiana is complete, after his death "it was as if tight hands had loosened which had tied together those who had lived under the power of his will and authority" (112). On the first night Laila spends at Ashiana after returning from the ancestral village of Hasanpur, where the household had moved to inter Baba Jan after his death, she notices the lack of traditional appurtenances that had hitherto defined the *zenana*. "No water-jars garlanded with jasmine resting on wooden stands. No wooden *takhts,* stripped for the night of their white sheets and carpets and bolsters for Aunt Abida and Aunt Majida and visitors" (119). Uncle Hamid, the new patriarch, disposes of Baba Jan's auction-house finds and the old-fashioned furniture of the drawing room. "The rejuvenated rooms," says Laila, "reminded me of English homes I had visited with Mrs. Martin, yet they were as different as copies of a painting from the original" (121). Like Ikramullah, who writes of a childhood spent in replica-English drawing rooms and who prefers the conviviality of communal living in a traditional household, Laila experiences, for a time, a longing for the form of life that is disrupted when after Baba Jan's death her purdah observing aunts no longer reside at Ashiana. "No longer did relations, and relations of relations come to stay whenever they wished, and for as long as they pleased" (122). For Laila, the colonial-modern order imposed by Uncle Hamid feels as if she is "playing a part in a ritual" (121).

Laila's upbringing passes from the control of Aunt Abida to Uncle Hamid. At Ashiana, her inhabitation leaves no trace of its own. Laila has no control over the

furnishings of the house, and yet she forms an attachment to the material culture of Ashiana, which activates particular memories when she walks through each room upon her return in the final part of the novel. In Uncle Hamid's office, his chair triggers her memories and orders the narrative of the intervening fourteen years that Laila has spent away from Ashiana. "In that chair Uncle Hamid had sat," recalls Laila, "when he exercised authority. He had been sitting in it when our wills clashed for the last time" (280). The dining table anchors the memory of the final argument among the family, before its fragmentation.

In *Material Memories* (1999), Kwint et al write that "[a]ll museums have the power to unlock the personal (and indeed the real) from the epic" (8). Hosain's writing does the work of unlocking the personal from the epic history of the nation and its vivisection, as well as the transformation of social classes and of the urban forms of Lucknow. In this sense, it also serves as a museum of lived experience of the early to mid-twentieth century feudal household where each item anchors memory and bears mention, whether they be the "wooden cones placed at each corner of the *takht* to weight the white sheet stretched across it," or the "silver-handled fly-whisk" wielded by Aunt Majida as she waited upon the dying Baba Jan, or the large copper basin and silver *lota* with which the family washed up when they took their meals in the traditional fashion, sitting around a table cloth spread on the *takht* (19, 30, 37).

Like Ashiana in *Sunlight,* Nishat Manzil in *The Heart Divided* too is inextricably linked to its patriarch, Sheikh Nizamuddin. The house is described as having been built by Sheikh Nizamuddin's father in an "old garden that had belonged to the Sheikh family for many generations" (9). Old trees and flowerbeds gave the garden "all the charm of the

woods" and "just as the roots of the trees had sunk deeper into the soil with each passing year so had the ties that bound the family to the city of Lahore grown stronger and closer" (10). Like Baba Jan and his cohort of friends, who "loved the city to which they belonged, and they lived and behaved as if the city belonged to them," Zohra, Sughra and Habib, the three siblings who serve as protagonists of *The Heart Divided* are also represented as belonging to a family that has a deep connection to Lahore, which is associated with the antiquity of their residence (35). Of the exterior of Nishat Manzil, we are told that it "was a curious architectural mixture with Moghul arches and flat roofs, but it was a mixture that was pleasing to the eye" (10). However, after Sheikh Nizamuddin's death, the house is described as having diminished somehow overnight. Returning from her marital home in Multan, Sughra finds Nishat Manzil particularly changed. She was the closest to her grandfather, having been enthralled by his tales of legendary heroes of Islam. To Sughra, "[i]t seemed as if it had lost some of its dignity and the many rooms lacked coherence. It reminded Sughra of these painted camel-skin Multan lamps upon which, when lighted, the designs and colours stand out in exquisite tracery yet, when the light is extinguished, they seem to be drab and uninteresting" (123). Although Sheikh Nizamuddin, like Baba Jan, functions in the narrative not so much as a character as a presence whose displeasure the younger generation seek to avoid at all cost, his death profoundly alters the character of Nishat Manzil. Shah Nawaz transparently sets Sheikh Nizamuddin up as embodying "the spirit of an age that was dying" (123). In the absence of Sheikh Nizamuddin's aura of authority,

> Suddenly Nishat Manzil seemed out of place. Where was the old-world charm for which it had been famed? The vaulted roofs were still in their appointed place. The Persian carpets still covered the floors, and old pictures adorned the walls. Yet now, it was merely an old-fashioned house. In the days to come, visitors

> would compare it with disadvantage with the modern houses near the canal and deplore the lack of sanitary fittings. The house was still there, but the Nishat Manzil that she had known and loved had also faded with him, leaving behind empty walls, a memory of a way of life that was passing away (123).

Here Nishat Manzil is anchored very much in the past, materializing an older order that is rapidly losing relevance. Soon after, Sheikh Nizamuddin's son and Sughra's father Jamaluddin loses Nishat Manzil to his elder brother during the division of the ancestral estate. Jamaluddin builds a "very modern and elegant" house near the canal (253). Unlike *Sunlight*, where Ashiana becomes a repository of memories for Laila, none of the Sheikh siblings mourn the loss of their childhood home. When her friend Rajinder visits Zohra in the new house and says that she misses Nishat Manzil, Zohra replies: "I don't. I like it here. We've done away with all that zenana business" (253). The new house is liberating for Zohra who has always dreamt of a life of adventure and independence, and for whom the veil was an encumbrance easily discarded. In contrast to *Sunlight*, there is no elegy for Nishat Manzil, even from Sughra. Nishat Manzil's *zenana* too is described as more permeable than Ashiana's womb-like interiority, a "private refuge" that for Laila "remained in readiness for withdrawal" (173). Nishat Manzil's *zenana* is described from the very beginning of the novel as having been "disturbed by a flood of ideas from the surging world outside, a flood that could no longer be held back by its old walls and ancient traditions" (11).

In *Giving Voice to Stones: Place and Identity in Palestinian Literature* (1994), geographer Barbara Parmenter examines the evolution of a "land rhetoric" in Palestinian literature since World War I to the Intifada, as she finds the degree of articulation about the significance of place to be uniquely charged with regard to land, territorial possession and nationhood. Parmenter further finds that post-1948 Palestinian literature abounds in

motifs that evoke sensual unification with the land and in images of precisely delineanated and bounded environmental features like the house and garden. This preoccupation with the contours of the private residence—often a specific vernacular dwelling type and garden also emplacing a particular landscape—appears in a significant number of South Asian partition testimonies, memoirs and literatures as well. Antoinette Burton writes that "[t]he memory of place, and specifically of the physical layout and material culture of home, is a common feature of partition narratives—a phenomenon that reminds us of how intimately connected spatial relations are to social relations, as well as of how influential architectural idioms can be of the practice of remembering" (103). Burton suggests that writing about memories of the interiors of the house lost due to partition serves as an important discursive form through which the meanings of partition are processed. The stark difference between the ways in which Ashiana is eulogized as a repository of memories and Nishat Manzil is identified with an older generation and an older social order, readily given up for a home that does not materialize the institution of purdah, points to each author's articulation of the position of the South Asian Muslim community relative to the new postcolonial national order.

While *Sunlight* articulates the anxieties of minoritisation of Muslims in postcolonial India, the narrative of *The Heart Divided* operates within the context of the assured stake of South Asian Muslims in the nation in Pakistan. While it seems, for a time, that Habib, Sughra and Zohra would not find happiness in their personal lives, *The Heart Divided* concludes with the Sheikh family accepting Habib's marriage to the divorced Najma and Zohra's to Ahmad, a young socialist of modest means, thus making a powerful statement about the internal cohesion of the urban, educated South Asian

Muslim community. This is especially important given the failed romance between Habib and Mohini, a Kashmiri Hindu neighbour of the Sheikh family, who is also an ardent nationalist and supporter of the Congress. Through Mohini's statements on her decision to unite her life with Habib's, *The Heart Divided* represents love as a political act, and is symptomatic of the narrative strategy of the novel, which constantly situates the narrative of the individual and personal lives of its protagonists within a larger historical, social, and political context. Mohini says:

> If we are to be a free country, we must break down these walls that divide our people. So many communities inhabit this land of ours and each has its own creed and way of life, but that should not lead to disunity. Yet we are disunited, because we don't mix and mingle together as we should. Now, we must build a nation…and young people like us, must have the courage to break down such customs and traditions as come in the way of unity. You are not merely you, and I'm not just I. We represent two parts of a great people…that must harmonize and pull together, if we are to gain freedom (177).

In the light of Mohini's declaration, the narrative's resolution of the tension caused by the prospect of interreligious marriage through her death from pleurisy gains wider implications. Later on in the novel, Zohra explicitly frames the failed Habib-Mohini romance as a reflection of the "national tragedy" of the disunity of Hindus and Muslims. *The Heart Divided* constructs interreligious marriage as an impossibility in order to strengthen its claim of the cultural difference of elite Muslim families. At the same time, the narrative highlights the internal social cohesion among Muslims, and the commitment of the younger generation to progressive ideals, through the union of Habib and Najma on the one hand, and Zohra and Ahmad on the other. Sughra too goes back to her husband after a long estrangement due to the death of her son during which she comes out of purdah, becomes an activist, joins the Muslim league, and briefly falls in love with a charismatic but married Muslim League speaker. Unlike *Sunlight*, which details the

fragmentation of family and cultural inheritance through the device of the partitioned Ashiana, in *The Heart Divided*, the violence of partition appears only as a portent that decides Sughra to return to her husband Mansur:

> Straight to the open window of the room she came and looked out upon the Western sky to see high up on the horizon the crescent moon with its accompanying star sailing in a sea of pale green, and she drew a breath of gladness and she whispered "the herald of Pakistan!" But her eyes dropped lower and the sunset surged into them in a flood of crimson and she shuddered and turned away.
>
> Then suddenly she knew what she must do and pulling out a suitcase from under the bed she began to pack (505).

Seeing the bloody omen engulfing her beloved herald, Sughra goes to her marital home in Multan and finally reconciles with her husband. The novel ends with Sughra and Mansur resolving to "go forward hand in hand" towards Pakistan (506).

A room of her own: Furniture and Dwelling

The Heart Divided does not take the 'discursive form' of interring memories of social and political transformation in the ancestral house, which occurs, as Antoinette Burton observes, "especially where remembering is a kind of defensive posture, designed as much to keep the past in place as to bring it forth into the present" (106). However, this does not mean that the novel eschews a close focus on the changing life-worlds of young, urban Muslim women, or that it is any less attuned to the relation of women to the built environment. *The Heart Divided* drives home the complex relationship of women with the objects of their homes in an episode where Sughra is unable to exercise her own choice in furnishing her marital apartments in her husband's house in Multan.

In the chapters dealing with the description of preparations for Sughra's wedding, which are a prime example of the excess of ethnographic cultural description, Shah

Nawaz writes that Sughra "was to have enough furniture to furnish a whole house, together with all the household silver and linen and kitchen utensils," and that "Sheikh Jamaluddin had ordered smart modern furniture for her drawing-room, her dining room and her bedrooms, and carpets for these rooms were being woven on the looms of the carpet factories of Amritsar" (75-76). The significance of these furnishings acquired by Jamaluddin for Sughra's marital home is further underscored in the chapters describing the material aspects of Sughra's wedding ceremonies. The bride's furniture and trousseau are displayed for the benefit of guests. The narrative informs us that three rooms in Nishat Manzil have been vacated and turned into what would be Sughra's drawing-room, dining-room and bedroom. The display is completed with cabinets exhibiting Sughra's kitchen utensils and linen. This display ensures that Sughra, in addition to the guests to her wedding, has a fair idea about the shape of her marital apartments.

However, when Sughra returns to Multan after her grandfather's death, resolved to think of it as her home, and school herself out of her initial disaffection with her married life, she finds that she has little control over her furnishings. Unlike Nishat Manzil, which sits in its own garden and has a curious architectural mixture that is nonetheless pleasing to the eye, Sughra's marital home is described as lying on the outer fringes of Multan,

> large and solid towering above the other houses around it, as though the builders had sought to impress the wealth and prominence of the family…It had grown with the years, just as the family had grown each succeeding generation, adding a room or two according to its own taste, and now its three stories sprawled in a haphazardly fashion (118).

When Sughra first arrives at this house, she is unable to feel at home due to the lack of comradeship and friendship she had expected from her husband Mansur. Sughra recalls, brooding by the window that on her wedding night "he had showered his ardour upon

her, while he was still a stranger and she had turned her face to the wall and her heart had been cold within her" (117). The disarray of her emotions is transposed on the haphazard construction of the house in Multan, within which Sughra feels confined, but is unable to dwell without recourse to legendary landscapes and heroes. The domestic order is markedly different from that of Nishat Manzil, and the narrative dwells in great detail on Sughra's struggles to become the embodiment of the ideal Muslim woman. In the "slow days the followed…Multan and this house seemed to close around her shutting the world away…while she ached for the cool solitude of the garden at home" (117). Sughra, we learn, was used to the "large garden at home and the comforts of Nishat Manzil, with its many electric fans," but her marital home in Multan had neither of these (158).

The contrast offered by the narrative between Nishat Manzil and the house in Multan underscores the unhomeliness of the latter, and lays the foundation for Sughra's eventual disaffection with domesticity and intense affective investment in urban neighbourhoods and historical sites. In the beginning of the novel, Sughra aspires to be:

> A dutiful daughter, a loving wife, and a devoted mother…Her menfolk would go into the world to do deeds of valour and daring, and she would be there in the background to encourage and to inspire. Her name would not figure in history books, nor appear on the pages of the newspapers, but her life would have its own significance and a quiet beauty that the turbulent might well envy (7).

However, as the narrative progresses, Sughra's understanding of ideal Muslim womanhood develops considerably from this patriarchal formulation that emphasizes self-effacement for women, and constructs men as rightful actors in the public sphere. Her initial disaffection with domestic life in the household in Multan culminates in her violent rejection of her husband and mother-in-law after her son's death from typhoid—a death for which she holds her mother-in-law culpable, and which unmoors her from Mansur. This unmooring from traditional patriarchal ideas about gender roles allows the

narrative to place Sughra in the dirt and squalor of urban Lahore, far removed from her privileged milieu. Sughra's personal tragedy eventuates a discomfiting confrontation with the enormity of the tragedy of colonial and feudal domination, and she is shown coping with the former by applying herself to the problems of the latter, much like Futehally's Zohra and Hamid, and Hosain's Asad, who copes with the rejection of Laila's cousin Zahra by becoming a committed anti-colonial activist. *Sunlight* best articulates this trope of characters maturing into political beings through the experience of personal anguish, which appears in all three novels, through Asad, who says: "As an individual, alone, I am vulnerable. When I am part of a cause I am as indestructible as the cause. When I live for myself I am weak and afraid, when I work with others I have their strength" (318).

When Sughra returns to Nishat Manzil to attend the funerary rites of her grandfather, she is galvanised into action after overhearing some relations commenting that her marriage is a failure. This is when she determines that she will honour her grandfather's last blessing to go happily to her marital home. She returns to Multan and tries to make it into her home by unpacking and arranging the furniture her father had sent with her. However, while she is arranging her sitting-room, her mother-in-law Karima objects because she was not consulted. She censures Sughra for removing the furniture that had been used for the room since her husband's time. The following scene ensues:

> "Bring the furniture back," said Karima to the maids.
>
> "But Auntie…where shall I put all my furniture? If it remains in the crates and cases, it will rot."
>
> "You can bring hat here as well, there's plenty of room."
>
> "This room is already crowded."

"Nonsense" (156).

Sughra is finally only allowed to redecorate her bedroom, and "[w]hat little pleasure, she had tried to find in arranging her rooms as gone, but she did not wish to offend her mother-in-law and she did as she was told" (157). Her mother-in-law categorically states that her father wasted money on things when he could have given her more cash. "I don't know, what to do with your dining-room table and chairs and other things!" she exclaims. "We don't use them. We prefer to have our meals in the old-fashioned way. It's so much cleaner. However, have it sent to the men's part of the house it can be used in the dining-room there" (156-57). Here we see clearly the competing regimes of tradition and modernity materialized through furniture in the *zenana*. Like the meals taken by members of the household in *Sunlight* before the advent of Uncle Hamid, who makes a ritual out of eating at the dining table while being waited upon by liveried servants, Sughra's mother-in-law prefers the *takht* spread with tablecloth. Residing in a provincial city, she is uncomfortable with the 'modern' furniture sent with Sughra from Lahore. The dining-room table and chairs are alien to her, while the traditional way of consuming meals seems cleaner. Sughra comes from a family where taste in furnishings is of paramount importance, as is reflected in the rooms inhabited by her father and brother Habib, whose sitting room is described as "small but tastefully furnished" with sofas and "two good paintings on the walls" (81). Sheikh Jamaluddin's office is described as a:

> "businesslike, but, comfortable room. The walls were lined with almirahs full of legal books. On one side there was a large knee-hole desk, and several leather-covered arm-chairs were neatly arranged round a small table in the centre. Behind the desk was a wide fire-place with a mantle-shelf on the wall, above this, was a large portrait of Sheikh Amiruddin, the grandfather of Sheikh Jamaluddin" (61).

For Sughra, Mansur's inability to distinguish the overcrowded disharmony of the furniture in the sitting room, once Sughra inserts some of her own furniture there but is

forbidden by her mother-in-law to remove any of the old furniture, is further evidence of their incompatibility as a couple. When Sughra shows Mansur their bedroom, "which she had arranged according to her own taste," her expectations about Mansur's approval of her loving labour that also served as an exteriorisation of her personality are thwarted by her realisation of his lack of taste (157).

> "Very nice, very nice indeed," he said glancing casually around. "Only a little empty, don't you think? What about a few more pictures on the wall. Where is that picture of the two girls, let's hang it on this wall here."
>
> "What? That awful—I mean that copy of some painting? No, I don't think we'll have it here. It looks better in the spare room. Look, don't you like this lovely painting by Chaghtai?" (157).

Yet Sughra is firm in her refusal to indulge Mansur's decorative ideas, having realised his lack of discernment, and is able to furnish her bedroom the way she likes it. Sughra's choice of a painting by A.R. Chughtai reflects her appreciation of indigenous art. Although influenced by the Bengal School style, Chughtai created water-colours that evoked Mughal miniatures as well as elements of Art Noveau. Chughtai's subjects were drawn from legends of the Islamic world as well as Hindu deities. For Sughra, whose interior landscape is shaped by tales of adventure of past heroes of Islam narrated to her by her grandfather, Chughtai is a natural choice.

It is this sense of the Islamic past, of adventure, and of heroism that pervades Sughra's understanding of art as well as architecture and historical sites. *The Heart Divided* first introduces Sughra as her grandfather's favourite, who had been thrilled by his stories when:

> he had related the live of Omar and Ali, and told her about the victories of Khalid, Tariq and Babar, and even today, she felt a thrill, when she thought of the past glories of Islam, and of the many heroes who lived in the annals of history. She would be true to her heritage, she, who was a proud daughter of a proud race (7).

For Sughra, these ideas about her cultural heritage conjure an ancestral past which sustain her in the unbearable present. When she is unable to come to terms with her marital life in Multan, she withdraws into an inner world where:

> She could see the armies of Salahuddin marching across the desert, drums beating and banners flying, with row upon row of knights and heroes mounted on restless chargers ready to die for the greater glory of Islam. And in front of them…the unknown knight with the crescent banner. Nearer they came a nearer, and the beat of their drums echoed the beating of her heart. And now they had entered the city and were marching through the streets, and as they passed below her window, she bent down, and flung the leader a deep red rose and he raised his head and smiled (119).

Sughra's youthful romantic notions about the glorious Islamic past is not only reflected in her choice of an A.R. Chughtai painting in her boudoir, but later crystallise in her ideas about Islamic heritage and its place in the future postcolonial state of Pakistan. Sughra's attraction for Kamal is sparked by his speech at a Muslim League meeting in Delhi where he taps into some of the very themes of the legendary Islamic past that Sughra has internalised over the years as part of the private landscape of her mind.

> Have you forgotten your past? Cannot the walls of the Red Fort and the minarets of the Shahi Mosque remind you of the glory that once was yours? Oh sons of Islam, who have learnt to be slaves! What if your enemies be many and your arms be weak? Have you forgotten how Tariq landed on the shores of Spain and burnt his boats behind him, and told his men to conquer and perish? Does not the blood of Tariq and Ghazni and Babar flow in your veins? Awake! Arise, unite and break your chains for no Muslim can be a slave and live! For us there are but two ways, to live the lives of free men and heroes or to die the death of martyrs: there is no third (354).

To Sughra, it seems as if Kamal is "voicing her thoughts… He was Tariq himself, who had torn the veil of the past to stand there before her. He was Babar with his Moghul features and his flashing eyes, he was Zafar the poet-king as the liquid Urdu flowed from his lips like a fountain" (354). The narrative represents Sughra as conflating Kamal with the imaginary heroes of old that have long since populated her innermost ideas about her

sense of self, race and cultural heritage. In Kamal's speech, the legendary tales of heroes gain force and substance through his mobilisation of the architectural traces of the Islamic imperial past of Delhi, and it is this twinning of legend with historical site that I explore in greater detail in the next section of this chapter.

Unlike Ashiana, Nishat Manzil is not figured as emblematic of the violent incursion of the national order within the private residence of the Muslim elite. It is represented instead as a casualty of the changing times, and passes out of the Jamaluddin family due to a family feud. Its interiors do not anchor cultural inheritance and memory as do each room of Ashiana. In *The Heart Divided* it is the landscape of the city, with its Mughal gardens, lakes and monumental architecture, which is instead privatised as the scene of remembrance, romance and affective attachment.

The Monumental Space Privatised

In *The Heart Divided* and *Zohra*, the most revelatory scenes of romance occur in historical sites. Sughra's imagined landscape of Multan takes on elements of the fantastic and remote, when as a young bride she finds it difficult to adjust to the circumscriptions of married life in purdah. While at Lahore, "she had become used to the company of her college friends, to drives and picnics and shopping expeditions and to occasional visits to the cinema houses, where they sat in a purdah box," however, she knew that "[t]here would be none of these things at Multan," where "[l]ife would be confined to the four walls of her husband's house with occasional visits to relatives thrown in" (6). When she requests Mansur to take her on a drive to take the fresh air and alleviate her sense of confinement, her mother-in-law expresses displeasure at a bride who insists on making

the inappropriate demand of being seen in public thrice in the same month. Sughra withdraws within her world of medieval pageantry and enfolds the landscape of Multan within an imaginative transnational Pan-Islamic geography that extends from India in the east to the Mediterranean in the west. From her vantage point in the house at Multan, she imagines the urban landscape as contiguous with the mythopoeic landscape of the past, as well as new political formations in the light of anti-colonial Pan-Islamism:

> To the right the outlines of the jumbled houses formed a crazy pattern against the sky and here and there the inhabitants moved across the windows gay with light. To the left were more houses and streets, but in front of her, the houses were few, and ended in a sea of darkness, studded with infrequent lights. Beyond the darkness lay the desert, and beyond the desert, strange cities that she had not visited, while hundreds of miles away throbbed the sea that she had never seen. Across the sea was far Arabia and further still Syria and Palestine and Turkey. Would she never see these lands, whose very history beat in her blood? The glorious past was so different than the drab present. So different that she longed to escape into it, to retreat from dull reality and to lose herself in dreams (119).

Given Sughra's sensitivity to the overlaying of a mythopoeic landscape of legend and high adventure on her current surroundings, when she visits Delhi and Agra, it is as if her visions of past Islamic grandeur are materialised and vindicated. Sughra tells her cousin Fahmida, in whose well-appointed "smart modern bungalow" she is being hosted that, "when I was in Agra, I had a strange feeling as if I had come to my real home, that feeling persisted when this morning I saw the tombs of Humayun and Nizamuddin and other old buildings from the train…I seem to have seen it all before, to have lived here and laughed and loved and wept in some former life" (352). Fahmida, who has a "Moghul room" in her smart modern bungalow, appointed with "comfortable divans, richly-coloured carpets and hangings and an antique light suspended from the ceiling" which work together to create "an old-world atmosphere," explains that Sughra's affective attachment to Agra is not strange, but rather because "Agra and Delhi are

essentially Muslim" and materialise such a complete expression of Muslim history and culture that it is but natural that Sughra should feel as if she "were a part of them and they of [her]" (352).

In *Monumental Matters* (2011), Santhi Kavuri-Bauer has demonstrated "how its distinctive qualities and history order the Mughal monument as an ambivalent site" and "how the underlying ambivalence of these spaces shaped the subjectivity and desires of visitors (4). Drawing on Lacan, Kavuri-Bauer further provides a three-level scheme of cognitive registers between which any encounter with a Mughal monument is split. These are the visual-imaginary, the ideological-symbolic and the unconscious-Real. "In the first order of an encounter," argues Kavuri-Bauer, "the monument serves as a mirror, reflecting back to us an ideal and objectivized image of ourselves as complete and unified subjects" (8). This completion and unity is what Sughra experiences upon her first encounter with the Mughal architectural remains in Agra and Delhi. For Sughra, as for Kamal, the "smart houses" of Lutyens' New Delhi "don't fit in with the ancient soil and atmosphere of Delhi" (359). Instead, they are both enraptured by the aura of Delhi's landscape of ruins, which unites them with the splendours of the legendary Islamic past:

> Brick by brick and stone by stone, the story of the past was unfolded before her eyes and she gazed as one fascinated and said not a word: and to Kamal, who watched the flitting phantom in her eyes, she seemed to be a being remote and withdrawn, living in a world of her own. A world where no other could enter (360).

It is Kamal who finally intuits Sughra's special susceptibility to the sticky patina of legendary past that adheres to the ruins of Delhi. He notices the "rapt look that sometimes transfigured" Sughra's face as she gazed upon the architectural splendours of Delhi, especially the "dainty Pearl Mosque" and the "marble Chamber of Private Audience with its delicate pillars and arches, its beautiful throne and carved ceiling" at the Red Fort

(363-64). Shah Nawaz deftly describes how the architectural evidence of the legends of the rise and fall and rise again of the city, which are recapitulated by Kamal as they both enjoy an aerial view of the city from atop the Qutab Minar, capture Sughra and she experiences the auratic pull of Delhi's monuments and ruins so strongly that she feels as if she is "bound to [the city] with bands of steel" (363). After an unsettling encounter with Kamal's *purdahnasheen* wife, when Sughra realises that her initial contempt for and anger at Kamal for keeping his wife in purdah while freely interacting with other women himself is misplaced and unjust, Kamal secures a promise from Sughra to take her to Hauz-i-Khas alone. After having taken Sughra to the Qutab Minar, the tombs of Humayun and Nizamuddin, the Shahi Mosque, and the Red Fort, Kamal intends for the trip to be a treat. "I've been hoarding it up," he says, and tells Sughra that the place has an atmosphere that someone of her susceptibilities will be able to experience quite palpably (373). Hauz-i-Khas becomes the scene of their rapprochement as well as their first encounter not in the company of Fahmida and her husband.

When Sughra first sees the site, she does not find it as pretty as the Mughal buildings, but is nonetheless struck by its atmosphere, which Kamal describes thus: "One feels as if sometime, long ago, people had been happy here, and laughed and sung, and children had played in the gardens" (375). Instead of associating the site with events of great import and personages whose exploits could serve a glorious history of Islamic empire, Kamal focuses on everyday rituals of inhabitation that vivify the ruins. Shah Nawaz writes of Hauz-i-Khas:

> Sughra saw that they were in a small garden dotted with pavilions that were a strange architectural mixture, with pillars like old Hindu temples and massive domes of the early Muslim type. Further down, in front of them, was a large

> rambling structure, part building part ruin, constructed of huge grey blocks of stone in the same style as the pavilions (374).

It is here, while picnicking with Kamal, that Sughra's inner world of dreams becomes overlaid on the built environment of the ruins. In Lefebvre's terms, Hauz-i-Khas becomes representational space, which "overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects" (39). A peacock appears on the dome of a pavilion to complete the tableau of the past emerging on the present like partially obscured ink on a palimpsest, "and then it seemed to her that she had seen it all before, the garden and the peacock, the building and the lake and Kamal. Yes, Kamal, who was no stranger, who had never been a stranger (376). Sughra's interior landscape, populated with traces of her youthful dreams about the legendary heroes of Islam, is here materialised as a site which syncretises Islamic and Hindu styles of architecture, and she sees Kamal as part of the heroic pageant of the past. Sughra and Kamal meet at Hauz-i-Khas once more before Sughra realises the impossibility of any future with Kamal, despite their enchantment with each other, which is inextricably linked in the narrative with the enchantment of the ruins of Delhi. Unable to bear Kamal's proximity once she has decided that she cannot pursue him further, Sughra boards a train to return to Lahore and her last glimpses of Delhi are again represented as inextricably linked with Kamal:

> Delhi passed before her mind's eye, a panorama of ruins and palaces and towers city upon city—all that she must leave, to which she would never return….[The train] crawled out of the platform and then passd by the walls of the Red Fort and she thought of the Hall of Special Audience, and the Pearl Mosque that she had seen with Kamal (408).

Upon her return to Lahore, Sughra throws herself into her social activism with renewed vigour to mourn the loss of her enchantment with Delhi and with Kamal, just as she had learned to do after the death of her son from the typhoid. Her presence is announced by

the traces she leaves upon the house, which are observed keenly by Jamaluddin, for whom Zohra, rather than Sughra, was always the favourite: "Gentle and quiet and wistful, she went unobtrusively about the house, but the touch of her hands could be seen in the arrangement of the flowers in the vases, or in the shifting of the drawing-room pictures that were now displayed to greater advantage" (411). Sughra's keen aesthetic sense emerges as a marker of her personality in her natal home, as it had been in Multan when she insisted on hanging a painting by A.R. Chughtai instead of an unnamed copy favoured by Mansur.

Furthermore, Sughra, who had once been dependent on Mansur to take her out on drives buys herself a car and learns to drive it, taking full control of her mobility. This is how she comes across Habib at the Shalimar gardens, which Sughra views as "a fragment of Delhi flung into the Punjab" (412). For Habib too, the gardens provide solace and the promise of mystical union with his deceased Hindu love Mohini:

> there was a repose in the gardens, a repose that the slow centuries had lent them. They had seen so much of greatness and disaster, of pomp and show and ceremony and of solitude and silence. The old walls and towers had heard music and the clash of arms, songs and laughter had echoed through them and tears had mingled with the fountains. Men and women had come and gone and their restless emotions were stilled forever, but the walls, the paths and the baradaris remained mellowed by the passing years.
>
> Habib loved Shalimar, for when he was there, Mohini seemed to be close to him. She walked with him on the smooth worn paths, she mused with him under the trees, …and once he heard her voice in the gentle murmur of the waterfall. (164).

Shalimar is here represented as a space that condenses the past and retains its echoes. The enormous passions of transient human lives stain the physical structures of Shalimar, providing both succour as well as historical context to Habib's mourning for Mohini. In the beginning of their romance, Mohini represents Shalimar in terms of her vision of 'Hindustan' as a syncretic space, and the homeland of diverse cultures: "Is it not perfect,"

she asks, "like a pearl in a delicate setting? It is Muslim, as Muslim as you are Habib, yet how well it fits in with the setting of Hindustan around it. They don't clash, they merge and mingle together each lending the other a great beauty and a deeper significance" (144-45). Yet this vision of Shalimar as an embodiment of the harmonious coexistence of Islamicate architectural traditions within the new imaginary of India is overshadowed by Mohini's reference to the mournful Sufi poetry of Zaibunnissa, eldest daughter of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, who wrote about the secret grief of separation from the beloved. Shalimar thus emerges as a site in which affective investment can take different forms. From a space that conveys the ideal syncretism of South Asia, to a site of refuge and mourning, Shalimar is folded into the private landscape of desire and loss.

The monumental landscape of Delhi and Lahore thus becomes the scene of transgressive love and is privatised as representational space in *The Heart Divided.* As Nishat Manzil recedes from view, it is the landscape of the Mughal gardens and ruins that become encoded with the rhetoric of loss of cultural inheritance. While in *Sunlight* it is the private residence, Ashiana, that functions as what Pierre Nora has called *lieux de memoire,* in *The Heart Divided*, it is the monumental landscape of the Islamicate city, folded within the ambit of transgressive romance, which conveys the endurance of certain memories. As Nora states, "A lieu de memoire is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community" (xvii). In *Sunlight*, Ashiana is constructed as the casualty not only of social and economic transformation from a feudal-colonial to a democratic-postcolonial society, but also of the imposition of a new national spatial order that minoritised Muslims. Aamir Mufti considers the

partitions in India/Pakistan and Israel/Palestine his *Enlightenment in the Colony* (2007) and focuses on the "comparative minoritizations" of the new partitioned nation-states with regard to "the pressures exerted on language, literature, culture, and identity" that define the minoritization process (12). He writes:

> nationalism has historically been a great *disrupter* of social and cultural relations...the great "accomplishment," we might say, of nationalism as a distinctly modern form of political and cultural identity is not that it is a great settling of peoples— "*this* place for *this* people." Rather, its distinguishing mark has been precisely that it makes large numbers of people eminently unsettled. More simply put, whenever a population is minoritized—a process inherent in the nationalization of peoples and cultural practices—it is also rendered potentially *movable* (emphases original, 13).

The link between minoritisation and movability of populations that Mufti points out is crucial in thinking about the ways in which the private residences of colonial Muslims became sites of contention for the postcolonial nation-states of India and Pakistan, which through policies of refugee rehabilitation and urbanization effected the near erasure of the traditional residences of the Muslim native elite. Defining and fixing discrete populations as majorities and minorities was crucial to determine who could enjoy the protection of the state and the full rights of citizenship, and who could not be assimilated into the newly born state. Minorities and majorities thus emerged as "the products of a distinctly modern world of statistics, censuses, population maps, and other tools of state created…in the process of developing ideas of number, representation, and electoral franchise" (Appadurai 41-42). These tools of classification and processes of democratic representation helped to bring about the demographic and territorial reorganization necessary to achieve many twentieth century nation-states, including India and Pakistan.

However, they failed to account for place-bound affective attachments, not just to immovable individual property, but also to an equally immovable cultural heritage

embodied in private residences, monuments, historical sites, shrines and other public places imbued with sentimental significance left behind during the horror and trauma of the 'population transfer.' This failure is addressed in *Zohra*, *The Heart Divided* and *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, which highlight the significance of Islamicate cultural centres like Hyderabad, Lahore, Delhi, and Lucknow. These texts dramatise attempts to reconcile place-bound affective attachments with the new order of the nation-state, and vivify the terror inherent in the loss of 'place identity'[114]. *Zohra* and *The Heart Divided* reinterpret the meanings and the symbolic value attached to Islamicate historical sites, monuments, memorials and other public spaces like the Mughal gardens, and mobilize these as markers of identity for the South Asian Muslim public. These reinterpretations emphasise a shared and syncretic cultural heritage as well as cultural difference in addition to traditional notions of monumentalisation—the idea that "the seemingly land-anchored permanence [of monuments] could also guarantee the permanence of a particular idea or memory attached to it" (Young 3).

"The leveling of buildings and cities has always been an inevitable part of conducting hostilities," writes architect Robert Bevan in *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War* (2006), "[b]ut there has always been another war against architecture going on—the destruction of the cultural artifacts of an enemy people or nation as a

[114] I use 'place identity' here from Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff's (1983) formulation that defines it as "a sub-structure of the self-identity of the person consisting of… cognitions about the physical world in which the individual lives," such as "memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values, preferences, meanings, and conceptions of behavior and experience which relate to the variety and complexity of physical settings that define the day-to-day existence of every human being," which constitute "the 'environmental past' of the person; a past consisting of places, spaces and their properties which have served instrumentally in the satisfaction of the person's biological, psychological, social, and cultural needs" (59).

means of dominating, terrorizing, dividing or eradicating it altogether" (7, 8). Bevan argues that the destruction of religious symbols serves as a means of coding a new spatial order. In the initiation of this remapping, "architecture takes on a totemic quality," he explains, because "a mosque… is not simply a mosque: it represents to its enemies the presence of a community marked for erasure" (8). We can here substitute Bevan's obvious example of the mosque with that of the private residences of the displaced South Asian Muslims in India, and of Hindus in Pakistan. The conceptual monumentalisation of Ashiana in *Sunlight* speaks to the fact that private residences bore the brunt of architectural erasure pursuant to the new postcolonial national order in India and Pakistan. In *The Heart Divided* however, this anxiety of minoritisation is absent. Instead, anxieties about the loss of cultural inheritance are represented through the association of Islamicate architectural sites and public spaces with transgressive, failed romance. While Ashiana is discursively constructed as a public monument to the effects of the evacuee property laws, Delhi's monumental landscape is privatised as the site of lost, transgressive love in *The Heart Divided*.

In Zeenuth Futehally's *Zohra* too the Qutb Shahi tombs and the caves at Ajanta and Ellora form the scene of the eponymous protagonist's unconsummated, and for much of the novel, unstated adulterous love for her brother-in-law Hamid, who is represented as much closer to her in age, temperament, ideals and political commitments than her husband Bashir. While Bashir speaks of the landscape in terms of resource extraction, Zohra and Hamid are sensitive to the aesthetic appeal of the built environment and the restorative properties of nature. It is at the Qutb Shahi tombs that Hamid begins to have an inkling of the nature of his affection toward Zohra: "He had wished to develop a

brotherly attitude towards her, but perhaps these purely fraternal feelings only came through the long companionship of a shared childhood; and anyway, there was something in Zohra that made this feeling impossible for him" (157). At the public, but representationally privatised space of the Qutb Shahi tombs, which like Hauz-i-Khas in *The Heart Divided* convey "no sense of tragedy or comedy…but only of blessed peace," Zohra discovers a "craving for precarious living" (150, 152). "The mausoleums, each erected in the centre of a raised platform and crowned with a dome, were scattered about in a fairly well-tended garden," describes the narrative, and Hamid characterises the complex as giving Hyderabad its "romantic background" and "seem[ing] to provide the balance between the old and the new Hyderabad" (150). It is in this picturesque setting outside the confines of the *zenana* that Hamid and Zohra have the opportunity to observe each other as persons rather than relatives. The gardens of the mausoleum complex convey fecundity: a pomegranate tree is described in full bloom, laden with fruit and deep-orange buds. "The rind of some of the fruit had cracked open, displaying tantalizing ruby seeds" (151). In this landscape symbolically charged with erotic excess, Hamid observes Zohra's body but reads her privilege and genealogy in her "dainty feet" (151). "Hamid discreetly marked their shape and hue. This was evidence of the leisurely life of a long line of ancestors, he thought" (151-152). Despite their descent from feudal families, both Zohra and Hamid share an "unworldly idealism" that is curbed by the restrictions of purdah (154). It is in the privatised, romanticised space of the Qutb Shahi mausoleums that Zohra can articulate her disaffection with the institution of purdah and her duty-bound marriage to Bashir.

Unlike *The Heart Divided,* which focuses solely on Islamicate sites conveying great (past) architectural splendour, *Zohra* contains a pivotal episode that features the Buddhist frescoes of the Ajanta caves. Zohra and Hamid visit the caves with Zohra's sister-in-law Safia and her husband Yusuf. While Safia's affective investment in the frescoes is limited is to the ways in which the motifs have been commodified in sari designs, Zohra and Hamid are more susceptible to the aesthetic aura of the frescoes, especially as they are associated with renunciation and Divine Love. The Ajanta caves were part of a Buddhist monastic settlement and the frescoes were created by monks, depicting episodes from the life of Gautama Buddha, and from the Jataka tales, which describe the incarnations of the Buddha. Hamid and Zohra are particularly moved by a painting depicting the return of the Buddha, having achieved enlightenment, to the wife and child he had renounced. Hamid and Zohra are captured by "the full glory of that great renunciation," agreeing that the "painting seemed to possess the power to impart to the beholder its depth of emotion" (170). Under the enchantment of the image, Zohra confides to Hamid her most secret thwarted youthful ambition to study art at Shantiniketan, where Tagore had established a school she deems to be "centre of the revival of national culture" (35). The frescoes reawaken her "girlhood dreams, the study of art, the desire for a different kind of marriage," and, as in the case of Sughra's recognition of Kamal as a figure of legend and romance in *The Heart Divided*, Hamid too "seem[s] to [zohra] the very embodiment of romance" (174).

This recognition both thrills and alarms Zohra, and is represented as inextricably linked with the experience of being in the presence of, and interpreting, site-specific art and architecture. For Zohra, the representation of Gautama Buddha's renunciation is

"unique" and "inspiring," especially when contrasted with the rapacious commodity culture she recoils from, as is evident from the difference in her approach to the art and architecture of the Ajanta and Ellora caves from that of Safia's, who is only interested in its commodified reproductions (171). Influenced by Tagorean ideas about renunciation—Tagore writes that "in the realm of power, we grow by aggrandizement; but, in the realm of love, we grow by renunciation"—Zohra's illicit but unconsummated love for Hamid functions in the novel as both the representation of the civilizational ideal of renunciation as well as a critique of traditional elite Muslim practices of gender segregation (Tagore 49). The narrative of the novel establishes that being in the presence of the frescoes of Ajanta activates Zohra's earlier beliefs in the rejuvenation of national culture through the cultivation of indigenous arts—beliefs which were worn down by her overbearing husband Bashir, who would dispel any enchantment Zohra experienced in art or scenes of natural beauty. In an episode from their honeymoon, for example, Zohra is represented as "spellbound" by a spectacular sunset in Mussoorie. But Bashir immediately dissipates the spell by saying, "It is a gorgeous sunset, but, of course, dust and impurities are responsible for that," and then, going further to speak of the landscape in terms of resource extraction (75). While Zohra resents and is frightened by her sense that Bashir "would place beauty itself on a dissecting table and not feel it a desecration," she is consigned to what Ambreen Hai has perceptively called his "autocratic caretaking" until her encounter with the symbolically loaded sites of Ajanta and Ellora reawakens her "desire for a nobler life" (Futehally 76; Hai 330).

Although Zeenuth Futehally dedicates *Zohra* to her sisters and to the happy memory of their home in Hyderabad, the novel does not eulogise domestic space in quite

the tone and detail *Sunlight* achieves. Instead, in *Zohra*, monumental spaces are imbued with a certain kind of liberatory sexual potential absent in the privacy of the *zenana*. The portrayal of the *zenana* as an alienating place is signalled in the beginning of the novel when the space of the school is figured as a refuge for Zohra. It "provided her respite from the ever-recurring refrain" of her impending nuptials while she is still in her natal home (40). In her marital home, Zohra is initially disconcerted by the unfamiliar regime of domesticity and the new formality that constrains her differently than the *zenana* in her natal home. So greatly is she discombobulated that she "look[s] forward to the freedom of her room, as a thirsty stranger to the oasis" (65). In the novelistic universe of *Zohra*, the "stifling atmosphere of formality" in the *zenana* inhibits even the sanctioned erotic desire between husband and wife, and recognising this, Bashir arranges to take Zohra to Mussoorie for a honeymoon where she could "be natural with him" away from the "prying eyes" of the household (71). 'Natural' relations between men and women could only be observed beyond the multiply surveiled and codified space of the *zenana*. Both *Zohra* and *The Heart Divided*, include representations of socially unsanctioned romantic entanglements, which take place beyond the zenana and undermine the late colonial elite Muslim home as a space that could encompass all aspects of Muslim girlhood and the experience of becoming-modern.

Zohra's and Sughra's unfulfilling marital homes are contrasted with the unfettered play of imagination activated by encounters with historical sites. In the presence of material cultural heritage, our protagonists themselves as historical subjects and recuperate a sense of collective identity eroded within their marital homes. While Sughra feels an imaginative connection from the legends of antiquity that speak of the Islamic

conquest of the Andalus to the Islamic conquest of South Asia materialised in the architecture of Delhi and Lahore, Zohra positions herself as part of a South Asian Muslim milieu which can "achieve that unity of East and West—that much desired synthesis" (173). After her encounter with Ajanta and Ellora, she says that "we Muslims possess the proud heritage of three different cultures—Indian, Arabic, and Persian—flowing through our veins in one tumultuous stream" (173). This moment in the novel signals a process of re-enchantment activated by the built environment of the historical site, which helps Zohra recover her own identity—both as an individual through her articulation of her desire to gain an education in indigenous art, and as part of a collective of South Asian Muslims privileged with the heritage of Indian, Arabic and Persianate cultures.

Unlike *Sunlight*, the narratives of both *Zohra* and *The Heart Divided* conclude before 1947—*Zohra* ends with the death of its eponymous heroine from the plague in 1935, and *The Heart Divided* ends in 1942, with the twinned images of the "sea of blood and tears" and the herald of the crescent moon and its accompanying star (505). The lack of the explicit acknowledgement of the violence and unnarratable horror of Partition in *Zohra* and *The Heart Divided* is tempered by a spatial discourse that overlays privacy and interiority upon the public space of the historical site or monument, thus domesticating them. While *Sunlight* delves into the monumentality of the elite Muslim private residence, *Zohra* and *The Heart Divided* deploy an autoethnographic spatial discourse that imagines a monumental landscape that provides an alternative to dwelling comfortably in the musealized home ordered by feudal relations. The intimacies guaranteed by the private space of the home are sought for in the public spaces of the historical ruin. What does this shift between the earlier novels—*Zohra* and *The Heart*

Divided—and the later *Sunlight* tell us about the nature of spatial relations and the ways in which the built environment finds representation in the early Anglophone novels of the late colonial period? If we return to Partition—and "it is to Partition that we often turn, even today, as an evocative repository of the meanings, metaphors and conceptions of contemporary ethnic belonging in South Asia," as Kavita Daiya says in *Violent Belongings* (2008)—we can perhaps read this shift in the representation of home and monumental landscape as a manifestation of what Suvir Kaul has called "the often despairing desire to make *sense* of all that happened, and to articulate compensatory, supplementary, explanations that will make easier the psychic and material struggles of communities to come to terms with altered lives" (Daiya 2; Kaul 13). However, as I have attempted to show, the alienation of Laila, Zohra and Sughra within domestic spaces is symptomatic of the conflicting processes of late colonial modernity that pressured elite Muslim women to mould themselves according to contradictory ideals of modernity, domesticity, and citizenship. The home which Laila enshrines in her memory reveals itself, at the conclusion of the novel, as an imprisoning site. Returning to the partitioned house fourteen years later and encountering shades of her irretrievable past in the dusty mirror of her old room, Laila says, "I began to cry without volition and seeing myself crying in this room to which I would never return, knew I was my own prisoner and could release myself" (319).

Conclusion

> In *The Production of Space* (1991), Lefebvre writes that:
>
> A monumental work…does not have a "signified" (or "signifieds"); rather it has a *horizon of meaning*: a specific or indefinite multiplicity of meanings, a shifting

> hierarchy in which now one, now another meaning comes momentarily to the fore, by means of—and for the sake of—a particular action. To the degree that there are traces of violence and death, negativity and aggressiveness in social practice, the monumental work erases them and replaces them with a tranquil power and certitude which can encompass violence and terror (222).

In *Sunlight,* Ashiana functions as the monumentalized site which encompasses and embodies the violence and terror of the social transformation wrought by decolonization and partition. The tranquil power and certitude of Ashiana as a sign of feudal magnificence is explored in the first three parts of the novel. However, this tranquility and certitude is represented as increasingly precarious, following Baba Jan's demise. Ashiana is already tending toward ruination, no matter how resourcefully Uncle Hamid attempts to secure it as the seat and legacy of the family's feudal past. Laila's investment in Ashiana is also not directed towards its construction as a monument to the feudal past, but rather oriented towards its ruination. Her oscillating autoethnographic gaze does not allow complete identification with the household regime of upper-class respectability, and, as narrator, Laila is fashioned as extremely sensitive to her own difference vis-à-vis her cousin Zahra, who does not appear to be torn in between tradition and modernity like Laila. Without having been sent abroad to complete her education, Laila's narratorial voice embodies the diasporic double consciousness of her cousins Kemal and Saleem (sons of Uncle Hamid), who have spent several years in England. In a conversation with Kemal, Laila says, "without having gone away physically as you did I have never lived completely with the others" (179). It is this articulation of dissociation with other residents of Ashiana that makes Laila's narratorial voice ideal for capturing the complex and ambivalent horizon of meanings associated with the house—at once the "detritus of history," as Antoinette Burton puts it, but also one of the indices of the upheavals of decolonization, modernization and Partition (133). Despite the unhomeliness of the

ancestral home, Laila's memories are anchored in Ashiana, and the narrative revolves around the ways in which the house shapes and activates her memories of the past.

In *Zohra* and *The Heart Divided*, the "suggestive, unstable semantic potential" of ruins, as Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle put it in *Ruins of Modernity* (2010), is applied not to the private residence, but to the monumental landscape of Delhi, Lahore and Hyderabad (6). The 'tranquil power and certitude' of the monument appears in the repose of the Shalimar gardens, which provide succour for Habib as he grieves the death of Mohini. The home is not a site of intimacy for Shah Nawaz's Sughra or Futehally's Zohra. Instead, the ruins of Hauz-i-khas, the mausoleums of the Qutb Shahi dynasty, and the caves of Ajanta and Ellora are scripted as intimate spaces. While the home becomes increasingly penetrated by political and historical events, causing fissures between members of the family, the historical site is availed of as a space of immense possibility wherein different temporalities can be accessed, spatial segregation can be surmounted, and mixed gender interactions can take place without immediately attracting censure.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have tried to cleave away from the grand narratives of nation, in a set of texts produced precisely during a time when the nation seemed to have become an overarching theme in literature, in order to focus on those stories that deal with memories of inhabitation, and of its material traces. By focusing on Muslim women's early Anglophone writing in India and Pakistan, I was able to investigate the ways in which notions of cultural heritage bear upon self-fashioning, and how strategies of self-narration incorporate the built environment to such an extent that the literary form is strained. I identified this strain as autoethnographic spatial discourse, and traced its emergence in all four of the texts examined.

In examining Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah's autobiographical and ethnographic writing, I sought answers to two broad questions: how did elite Muslim women articulate their relation to the built environment and what role did this articulation play in their self-fashioning? While the site of the *zenana* had been thoroughly pathologised as unhygienic, Ikramullah's writing rescripted the segregated domestic space as convivial, sophisticated and abundant. Ikramullah conveyed the convivial sophistication of the typical elite segregated household through her descriptions of the various codes, customs and ceremonies that marked time and ordered social relationships in the *zenana.* At the same time, Ikramullah also took great care to address the abundance of the pre-modern domestic material culture of typical elite Muslim households. In her narrative of Islamicate culture in South Asia, this abundant pre-modern domestic material culture played a significant role in establishing the greatness of the past, the losses

incurred by the partition, the reconstitution of the Muslim elite as a suspect minority in India, the accommodation of modernity, the impending obsolescence of traditional life-worlds and their paraphernalia, and the construction of Pakistan as the true legatee of this cultural heritage.

Writing against colonial discourses of gender and space, Ikramullah deploys an autoethnographic mode to shore up the ways in which Muslim women shaped and were shaped by the built environment of the traditional introverted courtyard house and the abundance of objects it sheltered. Her autoethnographic spatial discourse reappears in the novels of Attia Hosain, Zeenuth Futehally and Mumtaz Shah Nawaz, as they too struggle to encode vast amounts of cultural information in the novel form. The novels provide an excellent substrate to explore the reciprocal relationships between material culture, domestic interiors, monumental spaces, commemoration, and the writing of self and community. *Zohra, The Heart Divided* and *Sunlight on a Broken* Column show that for elite Muslim women coming of age in the mid-twentieth century, the representation of memories—of rapid social change, political upheaval, fragmentation of families and expatriation—was ordered by and anchored to the ancestral house and to the monumental landscape of the Islamicate city.

In these novels, domestic interiors, material culture, residential forms and monumental spaces figure greatly in the re-construction of narratives about the past, self, community and late colonial modernity. However, unlike representations of the English country house in twentieth century literature, which have been thoroughly investigated with respect to the construction of Englishness and of English heritage, there are no comparable studies examining the literary representation of traditional Indian houses. In

this dissertation, thus, I have attempted to map the ways in which vernacular domestic architecture shaped the conception of the self and its relation to the spatial order of the Old city and of the nation in a set of early Anglophone novels, which address the inaugural moment of the nation before identities—and especially South Asian Muslim identity—were locked into their postcolonial iterations.

Poised between architectural and literary history, this work has been principally concerned with assembling a compelling corpus of hitherto overlooked texts and offering avenues of literary analysis that probe beyond the evaluation of Muslim women's novels in terms of social reform, feminism, or national allegory. In doing so, I have engaged with the appearance of forms of autobiographical and anthropological writing in the novel, and shown how Attia Hosain, Zeenuth Futehally, and Mumtaz Shah Nawaz grappled with the problem of accommodating ethnographic detail in their first and only novels. The simultaneously documentary as well as sentimental style of the novels, which led literary scholars to dismiss the novels, was born of the urgency to commit into the published literary archive the rapidly vanishing late colonial Islamicate culture of Lahore, Delhi, Hyderabad and Lucknow.

However, the novels, when read together, and juxtaposed with Ikramullah's autobiographical and ethnographic writing, offer more than polyphonic testimonials to the halcyon life-worlds of bygone traditional households. On the one hand, as different instances of autoethnographic communication, which sometimes accommodates and at other times resists dominant narratives of harem-bound Muslim women, the novels emphasise the centrality of the introverted courtyard house—and the spatial practices it generated—to Muslim women's self-fashioning. They reveal what possibilities of

movement and spatial transgressions were available to elite *purdahnasheen* women, and what relations to public space, heritage and tourism sites were possible and desired. In these novels, we can also observe how objects and spaces are imbued with a memorial charge as a bulwark against future re-conceptualisations of Muslim identity and cultural heritage.

Just as the material conditions of this Islamicate material heritage prompts and shapes the narratives of these texts, the material conditions of their publication and circulation also provide insights into the ways in the which extra-literary afterlives of texts shape their reception. Just as Thatcherite Raj nostalgia re-energised the literary afterlives of English country house fiction, the recent material and spatial turn in the humanities has enabled me to construct much of the theoretical scaffolding supporting my claims in this dissertation. Several strands of enquiry have coalesced in the arguments I have made in this dissertation, but those that followed questions about the initial reception, subsequent disregard, and eventual re-discovery of the texts under consideration have been particularly helpful in understanding the need to recalibrate the prevalent frames of literary criticism regarding the South Asian Anglophone novel. Frames of nation, partition, domesticity, and feminist agency enable us to see parts of the story, but a focus on materiality and space provides insights into and complicates the monolithic understanding of elite Muslim women's experience of late-colonial modernity.

By highlighting the publication histories of each of these texts, and calling for a recalibration of its prevalent frames, this dissertation intervenes in the field of literary history in general, and South Asian literary history in particular. At the same time, it

furnishes an understudied area of Islamicate cultural history in South Asia by assembling a corpus of texts which offers insights that are neither available in the official archives nor in the current scholarship on the architectural history of the region. This dissertation will thus be of interest to those intending to undertake comparative studies of the contribution of Muslim women to global Anglophone literatures, as well as to those interested in Islamicate cultures in general. What I want to stress here that this dissertation has only opened up a generative field of further scholarly enquiry, which can consist of comparative literary-historical, anthropological, and architectural studies of twentieth century Muslim women's literatures from other regions such as the Middle-East and North Africa.

Furthermore, grounds for analysis also exist for the comparative study of the texts I have assembled here, which each address the inaugural moment of the state, and of the current Muslim women's writing in the region and in the diaspora. For instance, Pakistani-American author Sorayya Khan's *Five Queen's Road* (2009) extends the story of the partitioned house in Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column.* Dina Lal, a wealthy Hindu merchant of Lahore refuses to leave the city as violence engulfs it. Instead, he purchases the colonial bungalow of the British Chief of North West Railways, complete with sprawling and precisely maintained gardens, a heavy billiards table, crockery bearing the insignia of the Railways, and even a giant model of the Raj. The Englishman leaves Dina Lal with precise instructions on how to maintain the house, and even writes to enquire about the health of his garden, mirroring the complex and enduring attachment of British officials who had resided in the colonies and participated in the great experiments of spatial control that has shaped many South Asian cities. It is this

complex attachment that also finds echoes in the Thatcherite Raj nostalgia of the 1980s and the burgeoning interest in the English country house, which is the double of the colonial bungalow. The regal bungalow at Five Queen's Road is then partitioned like Ashiana, except unlike in *Sunlight*, this is not a consequence of the evacuee property laws. Instead, Dina Lal undertakes the partitioning himself, so that he can rent out the front portion of the bungalow to a Muslim family, and himself retire to the rear of the house. His strategy is aimed at mitigating the depredations on Hindus in the wake of the partition. Of these he suffers many—his sons disappear in the ensuing chaos of their flight, having decided to abandon Lahore unlike their father, and, in a particularly chilling scene, the novel describes the abduction of his wife from her own front lawn. The divided house in *Five Queen's Road* arises no less as a result of the constitutive violence of Partition, state formation and modernisation as the ruination of Ashiana in *Sunlight*. The dislocation of Dina Lal, surrounded by absurd and incongruous pieces of furniture in his own home is as acute as the dislocation of exile which Ikramullah mitigates through her careful literary reconstruction of the domestic interiors and material culture of the Muslim elite from those Islamicate cities that remained in India. The image of the violable homes of those who refused expulsion, and the disorientation of exile for those who had to leave, have an enduring and universal charge, which transcends the parameters of this study and invites connections with other stories of homes and forms of traditional residential architecture and material culture interrupted by modernity in other places.

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