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The Bazaar and the Bari: Calcutta, Marwaris, and the World of Hindi Letters

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The *Bazaar* and the *Bari*:

Calcutta, Marwaris, and the World of Hindi Letters

by

Rahul Bjørn Parson

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

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in

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University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Vasudha Dalmia, Chair

Professor Munis Faruqui

Professor Harsha Ram

Professor Raka Ray

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Abstract

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The Hindi literati of Calcutta will always boast that Bengal was the starting point of the various paths taken by Hindi prose and publishing. The admixture of colonial, orientalist, missionary, compradore, and nationalist forces gave rise to a lively Calcuttan Hindi press from the mid-nineteenth century well into the twentieth century. It remained in constant dialogue with the Hindi-speaking publics beyond Bengal, while staying grounded in the socio-economic world of Calcutta's Barabazar. However, toward the end of the twentieth century, Calcutta's Hindi legacy was by most accounts moribund; scholars lamented that the lack of institutional support and interest had desiccated Hindi literary production in Calcutta. But then, along with other upheavals and ruptures that attended the liberalization of the Indian economy beginning in 1991, a spate of Hindi novels emerged on the scene; they came from an unexpected portion of Calcutta's demographic – Marwari women. This dissertation discusses the 200 year tradition of Hindi in Calcutta, exploring the continuities from the inaugural phase to contemporary novels, and how Marwaris, who had their own language and script, and as a merchant community from Rajasthan not previously known to produce literature, had come to make the language their own and publish in it.

The first part of the dissertation (chapters 1-3) acknowledges the overlooked contribution Calcutta (Kolkata after 2001) and its diverse population made regarding the development of modern Hindi. The majority of scholarship regards Calcutta as squarely Bengali in terms of literary activity. I give special attention to the cultural and material conditions that gave rise to a confident Hindi print community. This process would play a

major role in the promotion of Hindi as a national language. Print Hindi required, for its survival, the establishment of bonhomie with Marwaris and other upcountry merchants. Therefore the press called merchants to tie their fortunes to the Hindi movement for numerous reasons. It was the language of the market, the new technology of knowledge, and in time became implicated in nationalist projects to which Marwaris were summoned. The press extolled the religious virtues of switching to Nāgarī since Jain and Hindu scriptures (Prakrit and Sanskrit) were often in that script. Lastly, Marwaris could also identify with the supralocal character of Hindi, as they were themselves a diaspora with all-India ambitions.

In the first three chapters of this dissertation I explore the politico-historical and social forces that shape the Marwari community and summon its literature into existence. Part two (chapters 4-6) discusses a new wave of Hindi writing. It engages with the novels of Alka Saraogi (b. 1960), Prabha Khetan (1942-2008), and Madhu Kankaria (b. 1957), three Calcutta-based Marwari women writers. The proliferation of Hindi novels from Marwari women signals a historical and political liminality as they confront issues of identity, belonging, gender, and class in a patriarchal social and literary milieu. This spate of Hindi prose literature coincides with neoliberal economic reforms in the Indian state, compelling writers to reflect on the consequences of globalization and late-capitalism in Calcutta at the close of the twentieth century. The writing is decidedly Calcuttan and urban in themes and influences, acknowledging a shared cultural space with Bengali while presenting a sensibility of Hindi-speaking migrants. This dissertation undertakes to contextualize the significance of this writing in the broader scope of one hundred years of social reform movements, women's issues in particular, and reconciling tradition with modernity. The novels circumvent the mainstream and majoritarian narrative of Calcutta and its history, yet are nourished in the concrete environment and cultural richness of the city.

Contents:

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Introduction

इस संसार में बीता हुआ कुछ भी खोता नहीं हैं। कैसे खो सकता है जब हम हैं अभी तक? ज्यादा-से-ज्यादा वह हमारे अन्दर भीतर कहीं दूर पुराने उजड़े शहरों की तरह ऊपर की परतों की तह में दफ़न हो जाता है...[1]

Nothing from the past ever gets lost in this world. How can it get lost so long as we remain? At most, like old ruined cities, it lies buried under many layers deep within us…

The *Bazaar* and the *Bari*: Calcutta, Marwaris, and the World of Hindi Letters

Bari (বাড়ি) means home in Bengali, and *bazaar* is Persian for market, a term current across North India and around the world. For the Marwaris, the merchant-traders hailing from Rajasthan, living in Bengal meant living in a different geoculture. Their longing for, and anxiety about *desh* (homeland) and strong bonds of kinship, informed the category of home in the new land. I use the Bengali word for home because the Marwari home in Calcutta was defined appositionally to Bengaliness. The term also recalls the loss of another home. The Calcutta Marwari *bari*, then, sought to reproduce the *desh* within its walls. This reproduction of *desh* was reinforced by the difference, even hostility, of the strong Bengali culture surrounding them. It increased the insulation of the domestic sphere – isolating the women who back home in Rajasthan had been part of more complex social networks. As literary examples have shown, the progressive Bengali culture and the ubiquitous image of the *Bhadro Mahila* (genteel women) left the Marwari home largely untouched; in fact, as a geoculture, Bengal produced a reactionary tendency in Marwari culture that became more inward looking and traditional. Again, literary evidence suggests that for many Marwari women the situation was one of intense loneliness and isolation, compounded by restrictive customs regulating their personal lives. Thus, it was not Bengali, but Hindi that made inroads, so to speak, and instigated social reform and nationalist consciousness in the Marwari community. And Hindi it was, that came and to be continues to be a liberating medium for the Marwari women who took to the pen in the late twentieth century.

Most Marwari homes were, until relatively recently, situated in the North Indian bazaar. The very architecture of the traditional Barabazar house was a shop in front and the home at that back, so that public and private lives were adjacent if not overlapping. There was a familial quality to any business enterprise and family firms were the norm rather than the exception. The Bazaar, then, was where Marwaris were literally and figuratively at home. The overlap of the economic and domestic spheres, or the bazaar and the *bari*, has been a theme throughout Marwari history. These spheres had great reciprocal impact on one another. The merchant idiom of credibility, known as *sākh*, is equal parts piety and probity, social and economic. The high

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[1] Alaka Saravagi, *Kali-katha, vaya baipasa* (Pañcakula, Hariyana: Adhara Prakasana, 1998), 13–14.

premium on *sākh* asks for stern internal regulation of the activities of family members, particularly women, in the Marwari community.

The connection of the spheres was in some ways an advantage, no doubt, but also a vulnerability, as detractors tended to critique one sphere to provoke change in the other. Colonial proponents of anti-rain gambling legislation (1890s), that is, speculative betting on daily rain volume, made the case that native speculative activities caused the ruin of native women and families; the allegation trespassed on the hitherto sacrosanct private sphere of Marwari life. The community hastened to clean up the public image in the first three decades of the twentieth century, not least because aspersions had been cast on the private sphere, and they attempted to hold the spheres apart in strategic ways. As Ritu Birla has noted, "[Marwaris] at once appropriated and resisted the central modernizing protocol of capitalism: the distinction between community/capital or culture/economics or private/public exchange."[2] But industrialization and economic nationalism required credibility in a new idiom, that of modern citizenship. And modern citizenship required social reform in terms of women's education and emancipation. But three decades of social reform and efforts to establish credibility in a modern capitalist idiom brought only slow change. The Hindi journal *Chand's* 1929 *Marwari Ank* hit on a vulnerable spot when it drew a strong link between the abusive and benighted situation in the Marwari home and sharp and unethical business practices in the market. This bazaar-bari thematic, in its home/street or inside/outside manifestations, remains a sustained object of meditation in late 20th century Marwari literature. It re-emerged with new significance in the logic of late capitalism, as the novels suggest linkages between changes in the Indian economy and the nature of patriarchy.

At the end of the twentieth century, Calcutta's Hindi legacy was by most accounts moribund; scholars lamented that the lack of support and interest in Hindi had desiccated Hindi literary production in Calcutta.[3] But then, along with other upheavals and ruptures that attended the liberalization of the Indian economy beginning in 1991, a spate of Hindi novels emerged on the scene, they came from an unexpected portion of Calcutta's demographic – Marwari women. It was one of these novels, *Kalikathā: Vāyā Bāīpās* (Saraogi, 1998), that brought my attention to the existence of a Hindi tradition in Calcutta, and the role the city had played in the life of Hindi language and literature. The novel was a great success and was lauded by some in the Hindi world as the best debut novel since Phanishwar Nath Renu's 1954 classic *Melā Āñcal*.[4] The author, Alka Saraogi, and the novel's protagonist, Kishore Bābū, are Calcutta Marwaris, hitherto unlikely subjects or producers of literature. Initial research revealed that *Kalikathā* was not a lone piece, rather there were other Calcutta-based authors publishing novels in Hindi, including Prabha Khetan and Madhu Kankaria, who are also, as it happens, Marwari women. This discovery presented several questions about the lineage of Hindi literature in Calcutta, about the continuities from the inaugural phase to the contemporary novels, and how Marwaris, who had their own language and script, as a merchant community from Rajasthan not previously known to produce literature, had come to make the language their own and produce literature in it. This dissertation engages with the literature of Alka Saraogi (b. 1960), Prabha Khetan (1942-2008), and Madhu Kankaria (b. 1957), three Calcutta-based Marwari women writers, by first historically contextualizing the presence of the Marwari community in Bengal and the life of

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[2] Ritu Birla, *Hedging Bets: The Politics of Commercial Ethics in Late Colonial India*, 1999, 241.

[3] Kṛṣṇabihārī Miśra ed., *Hindī Sāhitya : Baṅgīya Bhūmikā*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Kalakattā: Maṇimaya, 1983).

[4] Harish Trivedi, "Kali-Kathā : Vāyā Bāipās: Ruśdī Ke Nahale Par Hindī Kā Dahlā," in *Ādhunika Hindī Upanyāsa*, ed. Bhisham Sahni et al., 2. saṃskaraṇa. (Nayī Dillī: Rājakamala Prakāśana, 2010), 424.

Hindi in Calcutta. Their work finally adds a Marwari/Hindi sensibility to an otherwise saturated Bengali cultural terrain. By some estimates half the population of Calcutta considers itself Hindi or Urdu speaking, and yet there has been a dearth of scholarly interest in the topic, due largely to the immense cultural footprint made by Bengali and English language writers in the city. This dissertations seeks to fill that gap.

Given the decades old Marwari presence in the city, what accounts for this proliferation of Hindi novels from Marwari women and why has this taken so long to happen? As I was to find, the historical forces that summoned this literature into existence dated far back, to the beginnings of print Hindi, which had its start in Bengal at the opening of the nineteenth century. The growth of literatures in North India was also connected with merchants as patrons and as inspiration for writers, i.e. the first novel of note in Hindi, *Parikshaguru* by Srinivasdas in 1882.[5] Looking even further back one can think of the Braj Bhasha autobiography *Ardhakathanaka* by the Jain businessman Banarasidas (1586-1643). This pioneering seventeenth century work is remarkable for many reasons, not least because Banarasidas considers a humble merchant's story worth telling, a motif that three centuries later the Calcutta Hindi writers repeat. But now they offer a women's perspective of the merchant cosmos and the migrant's condition of deterritorialization.

The experience of Marwari deterritorialization and reterritorialization has never been adequately considered from their perspective and accounts – particularly in terms of literary production. Indeed, as Meenakshi Mukherjee has pointed out, there has been very little work on displaced and migrant communities in India.[6] Marwaris are the chief 'other' in Bengal, after Muslims, and they have suffered the stigmas and stereotypes of so many entrepreneurial minorities – like the Jews of Europe or the overseas Chinese of Southeast Asia for instance – due to their strong bonds, communal ties, and adherence to 'tradition.' The novels discussed here reevaluate what the journey from 'tradition' to 'modernity' has meant for Marwaris through the two centuries of their presence in Bengal and Calcutta. This study, then, is an effort to understand a period of dynamic community formation, identities, and politics with a view toward contextualizing a literature that is deeply self-conscious of being Marwari in Calcutta.

Calcutta and the Marwaris: **Accounting for Merchants**

A case has been made recently for returning the merchant to South Asian history and reconsidering the role and contribution of business groups to cultural, historical, and political processes.[7] According to the historian Claude Markovits, Indian merchants and business communities have lacked in scholarly attention because they were perceived to have failed in their *historic* role to create a national bourgeoisie and a capitalist society in India.[8] But beginning in the 1970s, a school of historians, particularly Bipan Chandra and Thomas Timberg, advanced

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[5] Vasudha Dalmia, "Merchant Tales and the Emergence of the Novel in Hindi," *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 34 (2008): 43–60.

[6] Meenakshi Mukherjee, *Elusive Terrain: Culture and Literary Memory* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

[7] Claude Markovits, *Merchants, Traders, Entrepreneurs: Indian Business in the Colonial Period* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[8] Ibid., 254. Markovits explains that the stricture of the colonial administrators railing against the greed of banias resonated powerfully with anti-colonial historians who saw them as auxiliaries of the colonial semi-feudal exploitation of the peasantry, and were unaware of or indifferent to the fact that the anti-*bania* (trader) discourse of the administrators largely reflected the anti-Semitic prejudices of the squirearchy transplanted into an Indian context.

the notion that the Indian capitalist class was in fact a progressive and anti-imperialist 'national bourgeoisie,' which was an essential component of the broad 'anti-feudal' and 'anti-imperialist' front constituted under the leadership of Gandhi and the Congress Party. In other words, this new perspective acknowledges that vernacular merchants were a more complicated category than simply compradore. Chandra celebrated the emergence of what he considered to be a fresh anti-colonial, anti-feudal, highly liberal and modern bourgeoisie that was able to create a "bourgeois ideological, political and organizational hegemony over the vast mass of peasants, workers, and lower middle classes."[9] Chandra's detractors accuse him of overlooking the vacillations, inconsistency, timidity, and compromising character of bourgeois nationalism.[10] While they acknowledged the dynamic and ambitious character of indigenous capital, they saw the extreme heterogeneity, fractiousness, and internal tensions of the business community as making it impossible to treat it as a homogenous whole. For merchants themselves were not an undifferentiated community with a unity of purpose. Thus, though the present study focuses squarely on the Marwari community of Calcutta, it does so as a heuristic device recognizing that it is not an undifferentiated bloc.

The arid, drought-prone lands of Rajasthan are often credited with instilling its *banias* with practicality and perseverance. But it is the lush, riverine geoculture of Bengal that made this heterogeneous group into *Marwaris* in the colonial era. The way the community constitutes itself was historically determined by interactions with existing regimes (Mughal, colonial) as well as interactions with other communities. Calcutta became the site of numerous antagonisms with Europeans, Bengalis, Muslim merchants and artisans, and reformers/nationalists, all of whom in their turn participated in the evolution of the modern polity of Marwaris. Chapter one discusses the history of merchant migration out of Rajasthan in the last two centuries and the resulting South Asia wide distribution of caste-based resource networks and communal institutions. Already in the early nineteenth century the term Marwari as an ethnonym was known to extend far beyond the geographical referent of Marwar in Western Rajasthan. In his *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, James Tod has noted, "The wealthy bankers and merchants of these regions scattered throughout India, are all known under one denomination, *Marwarí*, which is erroneously supposed to apply to the Jodpoor territory."[11] The ethnonym was also applied externally by local communities (Bengali, Bihari, etc.) to give a name to the upcountry merchant phenomenon. As various upcountry *banias* (mercantile castes) moved towards colonial seaports and North Indian towns, the ethnonym Marwari came to be extended to include all merchants from the greater Rajasthan area, rather than just *banias* from the Marwar-Jodhpur region proper. The broadening of commercial kinship solidarity, which enabled Marwari pre-eminence in native banking and trade, was predicated thus on key shared traits amongst Hindu and Jain *banias* such as religion, diet, customs, dress, language, *jati*, and most of all, *sākh* or social and fiscal credibility. The modern polity of Marwari, then, necessarily comes into being *outside* and independent of Marwar and indeed Rajasthan as a whole.

As Pradip Sinha has noted, the Bengali stereotype of the Marwari as arriving from Rajasthan with only a "brasspot and a blanket" is naturally oversimplified, like all stereotypes. Marwaris in Bengal were not rural moneylenders. Some of the earliest Rajasthani merchants

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[9] Bipan Chandra, *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India* (Orient Longman, 1981), 136.

[10] N. Ram, "Studies in the Development of Indian Capitalism," *Social Scientist* 3, no. 11 (June 1975): 6–10.

[11] James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han*, Popular ed. (New York: Routledge, [1832] 1914), Vol II, 234.

accompanied Raja Man Singh during his Bengal campaigns at the end of the seventeenth century. Additionally, Oswal Jain merchants of Marwar, who came to be known as Jagat Seths, were powerful bankers to the Nawabs of Murshidabad in the first half of the eighteenth century. They would come to represent a legitimizing tenure in Bengal for Marwaris. In the nineteenth century, subsequent waves of Marwari migrants settled in the marketing centers of Bengal with Calcutta's Barabazar at the apex of a pyramid.[12] They moved toward the new opportunities offered by the exportable surplus in opium, jute, cotton, and wool, leading Marwaris to the major British controlled ports in India (Calcutta and Bombay), where their 'capture of pre-eminence', as Thomas Timberg puts it, was due to their superior banking connections, availability of resource groups, and poorly organized competition. From the middle of the nineteenth century, they were in intense competition, but also engaged in collaboration and exchange, with other trading communities and European merchants. This process produced and reified the communal structure and solidarity of the Marwaris, as much as that of their rivals. The history of this heterogeneous community is one of several subcastes of merchant traders that gradually congealed into a modern polity with a shared ethnonym as a result of politics and power struggles in the capital of British India.

Throughout nineteenth century Calcutta, Marwaris supplanted Bengalis and Punjabi Khatri merchants as agents to European firms. These existing merchant communities could not adequately compete with the formidable all-India resource networks commanded by Marwaris. Membership and good standing (*sākh*) in the Marwari community enabled ready access to capital and the ability to command resources throughout the subcontinent. As a shrewd and tightly-knit merchant community, and as outsiders in the port cities and medium sized towns of the North Indian hinterland, Marwaris attracted a fair amount of resentment. The insular nature of their networks and the community contributed to the stigma of clannishness that was compounded with a host of other stereotypes that attend moneylenders. In Calcutta, urban space became an analog for the cohesiveness of the community; commercial and residential area of Barabazar in the heart of the city came to be synonymous with the Marwari position on political and commercial concerns, just as Manchester was for piece-good manufacturers.

The other source of antagonism was the comprador status Marwaris enjoyed with European firms and colonial authorities in Calcutta. The privilege was achieved in the mid-nineteenth century by gradually ousting Bengalis from the *banian* or agent comprador role. Therefore, Marwaris were resented first as upstarts and usurpers, and later, by nationalist circles, as traitors and collaborators. The mutually advantageous comprador relationship showed its first cracks in the 1890s when colonial legislation sought to outlaw a form of indigenous betting known as 'rain gambling.' The reasoning for the legislation, following a precedent in Bombay, was that 'rain gambling' was a fixed game to dupe the uninitiated and also caused congestion, crime, and destitution in Barabazar vicinity. Implicated in the allegedly illicit activity, Marwaris felt undeservingly maligned and moved quickly to defend themselves as a polity and rain gambling as a legitimate activity that was no worse than European leisure betting on horse races. Though anti-rain gambling legislation passed (1897), a new political and communal consciousness had been forged among Marwaris that resulted in the immediate establishment of institutions for Marwari empowerment, Hindi medium schools for boys (and later girls too), and support for Hindi papers with nationalist, anti-colonial inclinations. Further legislation restricting

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[12] Pradip Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History*, 1st ed. (Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1978), 260–261.

commodity speculation appeared in the first two decades of the twentieth century and pushed a segment of the community towards nationalist causes and social reform, particularly economic nationalism that called for self-reliance and industrial development. Fortunes made from the First World War enabled a gradual shift to industry, which was also encouraged by the permeation of nationalist *Swadeshi* ideology into the community. This shift meant a change in the social character of the Marwaris vis-à-vis education and social reform, technical training, and surplus capital with which to enter politics. It was ultimately Gandhi who propelled the bulk of the Marwari community into a nationalist trajectory and in return the community contributed upwards of 100,000,000 rupees to the Indian National Congress in the years prior to independence in 1947.[13]

Print Hindi: Merchants and the Technology of Knowledge

Chapter two discusses the way in which the Hindi language in the Devnagari script became an integral part of Marwari identity and language politics. Marwari adoption of Hindi was never a foregone conclusion; for one thing, all Rajasthanis have their own regional languages with rich literary traditions. One need only think of Mirabai or the bardic poetry of the charans in Western Rajasthan. Additionally, Nagari was not used in business transactions as Marwari merchants were trained from boyhood in *muḍiya*, a cursive shorthand used in commercial ledgers, communiqués, and bills of exchange called *hundis*. The Hindi press and proponents of Nagari, however, saw *muḍiya* as secretive, insular, and inaccurate. *Muḍiya* training was for boys, they complained, it offered little chance for literacy among Marwari women. Though the local language of Calcutta, Bengali, was an option that could boast a prestigious literary and nationalist pedigree by the end of the nineteenth century, ultimately, it was Hindi that prevailed because a simplified variant of it was more or less already the language of the market. To that end, the Hindi press presented itself as the bearer of the new technology of knowledge and courted merchants with the promise of commercial intelligence on par with the English papers. The Hindi movement, centered in Uttar Pradesh, was led by Hindu groups to promote the status of Khari Boli Hindi in the Nagari script for official state use, and, as Christopher King notes, the essence of it was to differentiate Hindi from Urdu and make Hindi a symbol of Hindu culture.[14] But the press in Calcutta called merchants to tie their fortunes to the Hindi movement for different reasons. It was the language of the market, which in time became implicated in nationalist projects to which they similarly summoned Marwaris. One paper even extolled the religious virtues of switching to Nagari since Jain and Hindu scriptures (Prakrit and Sanskrit) were often in that script. Lastly, Marwaris could also come to identify with the supralocal character of Hindi, as they were themselves a diaspora with all-India ambitions.

The Hindi press in Calcutta shared cultural and geographic space with the Marwari community. All the papers and presses were located in Barabazar, the neighborhood associated with Marwaris, and therefore functioned as a public forum for local concerns and reforms. The celebrated Hindi writer and editor Balmukund Gupta (1865-1907) addressed Marwaris directly in the pages of *Bharātmitra* (1878-1935), rallying the community to embrace Hindi as a matter of national pride and discard *muḍiya* as foolishly divisive. Gupta was so significant to Marwari consciousness and nationalism that he and his daily *Bharātmitra* figure in Alka Saraogi's

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[13] Thomas A. Timberg, *The Marwaris, from Traders to Industrialists* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1978), 78.
[14] Christopher King, *One Language, Two Scripts* (Oxford University Press MD, 1999), 8–13.

Kalikatha nearly a century later.[15] In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Marwari patronage for Hindi journals increased massively, not least because the emergence of conservative and reformist camps in the community required print organs to propagate their respective programs. By the 1920s, debates within the Marwari community regarding widow remarriage, child marriage, women's education and emancipation, inter-caste marriage, and overseas travel regularly appeared in the pages of the most prominent Hindi journals in Calcutta. Marwaris were consistently the targets of these reform agendas due to the conservative position a major portion of the community took on women's issues. But they also participated in it and their discussion occurred in journals sympathetic with reformist or orthodox sectors of the Marwari community, with some measured intervention from outside the community.

In November 1929, at the close of a decade of intense debate on reform and the appropriate role of the Marwari community in nationalist programs, *Chand* (Allahabad 1922-1941?), the most popular Hindi women's journal of its day, brought out a special issue focused on the Marwari community, the so-called *Marwari Ank*. It was a 400-page colorfully illustrated ethnographic diatribe against the community. Chapter three is entirely devoted to this one issue of the journal because it encapsulates all the negative associations of Marwariness. It is in this sense the high-water mark of the discursive formation of the community for non-Marwaris. All subsequent literary endeavors from Marwaris engage with the tropes that the *Marwari Ank* crystalized: clannishness, conservatism, backwardness, hypocrisy, greed, licentiousness, misogyny, and colonial collusion.

But the 1929 *Marwari Ank* operated on the curiously uncritical acceptance of the Marwari origin story, which claims descent from Rajputs, and is a key part of modern Marwari identity. The basic argument made was that Marwari tradition comes from a glorious past that now wallows in a stagnant and benighted present, comparable to the native rulers of Rajasthan. The *ank* contains numerous short stories, sketches, cartoons, and 'ethnographic' studies illustrating the horrors of Marwari customs, particularly regarding women and marriage. Ostensibly, the journal's aim was to promote reform in the community, for the betterment of women and therefore the nation, eradicating child-marriage, enabling widow remarriage, and discouraging wasteful and cruel traditions in general. The undercurrent, however, was to check the ascending political and economic power Marwaris had begun to accumulate by the end of the 1920s. The 50-page editorial article warned of a regressive plutocracy determined to establish monopolies and undermine the goals of the independence struggle. In this dissertation, this third chapter is meant to provide some sense of the hostility towards and interest in the Marwari community – and also to provide a frame for novels by Marwari women that would appear half a century later – for the *Marwari Ank* made a deep impression on the consciousness of the community. In the 1930s and 1940s several Marwari journals and two book length studies appeared offering a Marwari response to the allegations made in the special number. The public outcry against the *ank* included Gandhi, Premchand, and *Vishal Bharat* editor Banarasidas Chaturvedi. As we will see in the second section of the dissertation, Khetan, Kankaria, and Saraogi each confront the legacy of these stereotypes in their work.

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[15] Alka Saraogi, *Kalikatha via Bypass.* (Rupa, 2002), 48.

Hindi Novels and Bengali Backdrop

The outpouring of Hindi literature from Calcutta that appears at the end of the twentieth century coincides with a sea change in the Indian economy in the early 1990s. Almost precisely at the moment of economic liberalization, Prabha Khetan makes a permanent switch from poetry to prose and Alka Saraogi publishes her first short story. These simultaneous developments are not coincidental: the 1991 initiation of neoliberal policies meant that entrepreneurial communities were both seen in a different light and also ceased to stand so alone as exemplars of capitalist activity. Consumerist culture became the norm and began to soften some communal distinction. The cultural and economic changes caught the attention of Marwari writers precisely because it had always been their community that had stood at the forefront of commercial activity, domestic and international. The prose literature of Khetan and Saraogi—particularly the former's *Tālā Bandī* (1991) and *Pīlī Āndhī* (1996) and the latter's *Kalikathā:Via Bypass* (1998)—reflects on over a century of economic practice while offering a cautionary tale about globalization.

It was, in fact, a previous stage of economic and material globalization that brought the Marwaris to Bengal: "The Marwar area encompasses ancient trade routes across northern India, the economic impact of British rule impoverished that area…forcing emigration, since the nineteenth century."[16] In short, their history had made them sensitive to currents of global trade and migration. Khetan and Saraogi concern themselves with what was culturally and ethically at stake for a community and nation in the shifting political economy of India. Khetan's *Pīlī Āndhī* (1996) was the first novel to deal with Marwaris as a migrant community; it is a story that spans three generations of a Marwari family tracing their journey from the desert to the Gangetic delta, as they acquire identities in the diaspora as modern Marwaris, capitalists, citizens, and residents of British Bengal and subsequently of independent India. Khetan's writing explores the theme of belonging in Bengal, and how that process of making Calcutta home was different for men and women. Her writing brings out the fact that in Calcutta, Marwari homes were very insulated, and that this isolation was most profoundly visited upon women, though not only. The longing for *desh* (homeland) is a strong theme in the work, and while not necessarily culminating in a desire to return, it is the acknowledgement of something lost. The desire to recover or conserve can but also mean a stifling conservatism emerges. The characters only find their way home when they venture out into the plurality of Calcutta and make it their own. Prabha Khetan's last novel appeared in 1997, one year before Alka Saraogi's award winning *Kalikathā : Via Bypass* took similar themes into the mainstream of Hindi letters.

The multiple entendre title of Alka Saraogi's *Kalikathā:Via Bypass* (1998) suggests a story, or *kathā*, which is simultaneously about the metropolis of Calcutta and the *kaliyuga* (the end-time), but also, as the subtitle suggests, about marginal perspectives, and short cuts. The key word to the novel is 'bypass.' It refers at once to a surgical procedure, a road diverging from and re-entering a main road (e.g. Calcutta's Eastern Metropolitan Bypass), and the prevailing narrative structure of the book. The protagonist of the story is Kishore Babu, an elderly Marwari businessman who sustains a mysterious head injury in the hospital after a successful bypass surgery. Upon recovering from his head injury, Kishore Bābū emerges as a flâneur, exploring the streets and the history of Calcutta. The narrative interrogates differing layers of history and uses

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[16] Surjit Mansingh, *Historical Dictionary of India*, 2nd ed. (The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2006).

of the past by juxtaposing the representation of time and space on the street and in the home, and the historical tensions and incongruities between the 1940s and the 1990s. By holding these moments (and spaces) side by side, the narrative highlights the plurality of people and ideas in the early part of the twentieth century that have become homogenized in the 1990s, though the threads of this former diversity remain defiantly available to the urban flâneur. *Kalikathā*, via its narrative structure of bypasses, shows that history and progress are non-linear, and that these sea changes and reforms often contain as many regressive positions as they propose to undue. The narratives place a high premium on texts and streets as dialogical spaces of plurality and sites of resistance against the homogenizing juggernaut of late-capitalist consumer culture.

Madhu Kankaria's novel, *Khule Gagan ke Lāl Sitāre* (*Red Stars in the open Sky*, 2000) is a sustained and intense engagement with the Naxalbari legacy from the perspective of a young Marwari Jain woman during and after her college years at Presidency College, Calcutta. In *Khule Gagan*, the consciousness of the protagonist becomes an analog of this market of voices, which thinks in diverse registers and accents about issues of Marwari identity, otherness, and deterritorialization in Bengal. The poles of Bengaliness and Marwariness, Naxalism and Jainism, begin to dissolve in the first person narrator, Maṇi, in a move towards a synthesis of Calcutta's extreme heterogeneity. Thereby a highly plural voice of the Marwari-Jain Calcuttan emerges that seems to have been previously drowned out. The narrative achieves this by examining the Naxalite legacy through a Jain consciousness and treating Jain practice through a Marxist lens. The consciousness of the novel becomes an analog of Jain epistemology known as *anekāntatva*. *Khule Gagan*, then, not only tells a marginal story of Calcutta, a *Via Bypass* story, as it were, but it attempts to offer another way of looking at it. Jain and Naxalite perspectives represent philosophical diversity to the texture of the city's intellectual consciousness. The first person narrator gradually absorbs and adopts the Jain epistemology, *anekāntatva*, after she is deeply moved (and confused) by her sister's initiation as a Jain nun.[17] In Jain philosophy, *anekāntatva* acknowledges the internal logic and intelligence of competing philosophical systems.[18] It is a willingness to benefit from truthful insights of other philosophical traditions; for to deny another some claim on the truth is to make pretensions towards omniscience. The multiple positions of *anekāntatva* become the cognitive strategy to hold several opposing positions at once – Gandhism, Maoism, Jainism, and so much between. Ultimately, it is a critique of the profit driven, consumptive single-mindedness of late-twentieth century and the willful amnesia that there can be and were other forms of resistance.

Existing Scholarship on Marwaris and Hindi in Calcutta

The existing work on Marwaris is not voluminous, but there are a few seminal texts I wish to acknowledge here. Thomas Timberg's pioneering work *The Marwaris: From Traders to Industrialists* (1978) is a classic; it offers a comprehensive study of the community from its origins in Rajasthan to the great industrialist families in contemporary India. His insights regarding the advantages Marwaris enjoyed are especially compelling. He notes that their resource networks and kinship solidarity made capital and labor available, enabling enterprise. His findings overturn many assumptions about the nature of capitalistic development,

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[17] For a moving account of a Jain Nun's life see 'The Nun's Tale' in William Dalrymple, *Nine Lives: In Search of the Sacred in Modern India* (Knopf, 2010).

[18] John E. Cort, "'Intellectual Ahiṃsā' Revisited: Jain Tolerance and Intolerance of Others," *Philosophy East and West* 50, no. 3 (July 1, 2000): 324–347.

beginning with Weber's 'unsuitability' theories regarding Hindus. Timberg demonstrates that the Marwaris, although in many ways favorably predisposed for modern capitalism, were also shaped by the tide of western modes of production. He traces how as entrepreneurs Marwaris were 'recruited' by certain historically determined material conditions, but also that they were the harbingers and agents of the new era of the Indian economy that they were to shape. Timberg's scope was of an all India Marwari phenomenon; a more recent study narrows the focus squarely on Calcutta. In her recent study of the Marwaris of Calcutta, Anne Hardgrove interrogates the common misconception of community as primordial. She privileges the central role of "performed claims on identity" in order to draw upon "naturalized sentiments of lineage, gender, kinship and loyalty to an imagined homeland."[19] Hardgrove's intervention on community formation blends historical and anthropological data, while a yet more recent study of the Marwaris approaches the community by combing economic history and cultural studies. Ritu Birla's *Stages of Capital: Law, Culture, and Market Governance in Late Colonial India* (Duke, 2009) examines the colonial project of instituting rational market practices and how these affected Marwari capitalists who always combined business practices with ties of caste, community, and communal corporate conventions. The effort on the part of the 'vernacular capitalists' to accommodate new idioms of business and credibility resulted in the formation of the modern Indian economic subject. I am indebted to Birla for her work has suggested to me many of the bazaar and *bari* insights that I see in the literature of Marwaris.

Of the Hindi resources I have examined, Calcutta-based journals geared toward the Marwari community and social reform have been most instructive: *Viśwamitra* (1916-present, in various forms), *Mārwāṛī Sudhār* (1921-1923), *Mārwāṛī Agrawāl* (1921-1925), *Mārwāṛī* (1936), *Rājasthān* (1936), and *Rajasthani* (1937). There is also some book-length Hindi language scholarship on the history and identity of the Marwari community. Bālchand Modī's *Deś ke itihās meṃ Mārvāṛī jāti kā sthān* offers a comprehensive study of the Marwaris that includes detailed information about various subcastes, origin stories, and customs. It was published in 1939 and I believe that it was a scholarly corrective meant to systematically disabuse the public of every allegation made by the *Marwari Ank* a decade earlier. Bhīmasen Kediyā's *Bhārat meṃ Māravāṛī samāj* (1947) is a similarly thorough sweep of Marwari history, which approaches hagiography in its praise for the community. More recently D. K. Taknet's work on Marwaris attempts to account for the unprecedented commercial success of the community. He has written six books on the subject of Marwari enterprise, the most important of which is *Māravāṛī samāj* (1987).

Regarding the legacy of Hindi in Calcutta, Kṛshṇabihārī Miśra has written encyclopedically; his edited volume *Hindī Sāhitya: Baṅgīya Bhūmikā* (1983) gives one the sense that Hindi has a remarkable history in Calcutta, worthy of much scholarly attention, which yet has gone off the radar. Shyamsundar Sharma's *Hindī Prakāśan Kā Itihās: Bangīya Khaṇḍ* (1998) and the edited volume *Hindī Navajāgaraṇ : Baṅgiya Virāsat*, (ed. Shambhunath and Dwivedi, 1993) are similarly broad surveys of Hindi's astonishing tenure in Bengal. I supplement this material by way of interviews with Khetan, Saraogi, and Kankaria as well as scholars and

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[19] Anne Hardgrove, *Community and Public Culture: The Marwaris in Calcutta, C.1897-1997* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

librarians based in Calcutta, all of whom were generous with their time and vast knowledge, for they readily acknowledge there has been a paucity of work on Hindi in Calcutta.

Thomas Timberg, similarly, has noted that there has not been sufficient work accounting for Marwari contributions to all India Hindi literature, social reform, or how the community is implicated in Calcutta politics.[20] My work attempts to address some of these issues and show how Calcutta, as a rich and diverse geoculture, has contributed to Hindi's development. I survey the journey Hindi takes in Bengal, beginning with the missionaries, who first cast the Nagari font, and then turn to Hindi papers to focus on the massive role played by Marwari merchants from the earliest times. I discuss the historical constellation of institutions, schools, papers, and personalities that laid the foundation for a new literature. This is where the Marwaris come into the picture and Hindi comes into their world. This is the history of the vital role Hindi has played in community identity formation.

The present wealth and cosmopolitanism of the Marwari community has to some degree undermined the previous collective identity and placed a wedge between the once adjacent bazaar and *bari*. Additionally, hostilities towards pioneers of capitalist activity naturally erode as a shared consumerist culture becomes generalized.[21] This dissertation discusses what this lightened burden has made possible in terms of literary production, how the writers account for what has been gained and lost in the present for the nation and community, and in what ways the political economy of the market continues to inform the patriarchal milieu of the Marwari home. For all their individuality, there remains something radically collective about the novels discussed here; they call for broader solidarities within an embrace of diversity.

Every literary act is embedded in networks of material practices; literary and nonliterary 'texts' interact and are dialogic. These novels treat the chronotopes of the bazaar, the *bari*, the streets, and memories of Calcutta as layered, but legible 'texts.' This very legibility renders minor histories retrievable, at least in a limited sense. The city is the archive, as the flâneur knows, and so is the internally circulating anecdote. The physical city and the personal anecdote function as prominent literary devices in Marwari Hindi fiction and they represent forms of knowledge available in the bazaar and the *bari*, they are the loci of their histories. The personal and collective anecdotes and oral histories of the Marwaris become social and historical discourses that flow into literary discourses. For Stephen Greenblat, the anecdote is "in compressed form the ways in which elements of lived experience enter into literature, the ways in which everyday institutions and bodies get recorded."[22] As Greenblatt has pointed out, the anecdote

> satisfied the desire for something outside the literary, something that would challenge the boundaries of the literary … the sphere of practice that even in its more awkward and inept articulations makes claim on the

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[20] Thomas Timberg, "H-ASIA E-book Review: Timberg on Hardgrove," *H-asia* (February 10, 2003), http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx.

[21] Anthony Reid, "Entrepreneurial Minorities and the State," in *Essential Outsiders : Chinese and Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe*, ed. Daniel Chirot and Anthony Reid (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 59.

[22] Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 30.

truth that is denied to the most eloquent of literary texts. Or rather, the anecdote was a way into the "contact zone," the charmed space where the *genius literarius* could be conjured into existence.[23]

The novels considered here are all based on personal anecdotes, lived experience, and diaries. Thus, the novels themselves have suggested the historical approach in this dissertation. And like these novels, I have attempted to reconstruct a past in order to account for the present. The "contact zone" in these novels provides a window to view cultural history through literature.

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[23] Ibid., 48.

Chapter One:

The Consciousness of a Polity:

Merchanthood, Modernity, and the Marwaris of Calcutta

राह बदलनी है तो बदलो, संशोधन करो, मगर भटको मत। [1]
If you have to change your path, change it and amend, but don't go astray.

The line above, taken from Prabha Khetan's 1996 novel, refers to the central tenet of Calcutta Marwaris, embodying an equal and opposite impulse to change, yet stay the same. The ability to adapt to historical and geocultural changes, while vehemently preserving the core characteristics that bind the various Bania groups together, is precisely what allowed Marwaris to weather various hostilities and prosper in consecutive epochs of Rajput, Mughal, British, and independent Indian rule.

The emergence of a nationalist consciousness in the Marwari community builds upon their pre-colonial all-India trade networks and kinship solidarities. These had insulated families and castes until encounters with late colonial, liberal humanist jurisprudence, and nascent nationalism made them represent themselves as *Marwaris* in the late nineteenth century public sphere. The birth of the Marwari modern polity thus emerged with new legal disciplinary processes which were quickly internalized and reconstituted via new communal associations, such as legislation curtailing commodity speculation. While this required a degree of conformity with British rule, it also served to advance the community's nationalist aspirations as they increasingly claimed the rights of modern citizenship. Additionally, the deterritorialization of the community made them place their hopes on national rather than local political leadership, which would have meant recognizing Bengali dominance. By the early twentieth century, the only locus for various sub-elites (emerging groups other than English speaking colonial functionaries) to see their interests represented was the Congress Party, and before long, Marwaris and a growing capitalist solidarity with other merchant groups began to heavily influence Congress policy on development, business, and labor issues. In this chapter, I trace the transformation of idioms of credibility, respectability, and citizenship, as a part of the process by which the Indian business community attempted to align patriotism with commercial interests.

The final half century of the colonial era can be regarded as a liminal period for this largely tradition-bound business community. The shifting idiom of merchant credibility (*sākh*), which enabled and transformed available types of solidarity (caste-based, linguistic, and nationalist), offers signposts in tracing the transformation from 'traditional' to 'modern.' *Sākh*, as it changes, reflects the modernizing and acclimatizing *weltanschauung* of the Marwaris as they increasingly turn towards social reform and economic nationalism in the decades before independence. Yet *sākh* never dissolves as a

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[1] Prabhā Khetāna, *Pīlī Āndhī*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Ilāhābāda: Lokabhāratī Prakāśana, 1996), 26.

category, acquiring fresh connotations as it negotiates between conservative and progressive forces, and consistently redefines what being Marwari means.

The arid, drought-prone lands of Rajasthan are often credited with instilling its *banias* with practicality and perseverance. But it is the lush, riverine geoculture of Bengal that made this heterogeneous group into *Marwaris* in the colonial era. And it was in Calcutta that urban space became an analog for the cohesiveness of the community and the commercial and residential area of Barabazar in the heart of the city became perforce a stage for social and political activities. The neighborhood came to be synonymous with the Marwari position on political and commercial concerns, as Manchester was for piece-good manufacturers. Calcutta, however, was also the site of numerous antagonisms: Europeans, Bengalis, Muslims, and reformers/nationalists all in their turn participated in the evolution of the modern polity of Marwaris.

Part I: Early Solidarities and Tensions[2]

It is difficult to precisely define Marwari, as the term itself is multifarious and does not refer exclusively (or socio-linguistically) to people from Marwar in Western Rajasthan. Claude Markovits refers to the community as the "so-called 'Marwaris'" to acknowledge the amorphousness and loose use of the term. For over three hundred years, merchant-traders from present day Rajasthan and adjacent areas have migrated to all regions of South Asia as well as parts of Central Asia and Russia,[3] in search of new trade and mercantile opportunities. Over time, these merchant traders came to be known as Marwari, a name derived from the erstwhile princely state of Jodhpur (Marwar). In his *Rajasthan*, James Tod suggests that "Marwar is a corruption of *Maroo-wār*, classically *Maroost'hali* or *Maroost'han*, 'region of death'" and therefore is applied to the desert region of Western India as a whole.[4] With time, Marwari has indeed come to include merchants from all over Rajasthan, especially Jaipur, Bikaner, and Shekhawati.

Present day Marwaris tend to be *banias*[5] or merchants of the Hindu or Jain faith. Tod catalogues eighty-four mercantile groups that constitute the bania fold, enummerating the major subcastes of the community: Agarwāl, Oswāl, Srimāl,

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[2] Though much of my information on Marwari migration and history comes from Thomas Timberg's classic study, *The Marwaris* (1978) and his article "A Note on the Arrival of Calcutta's Marwaris" (1988), I add information gleaned from Medha Kudaisya, *The life and times of G.D. Birla* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003); Anne Hardgrove, *Community and public culture: the Marwaris in Calcutta, c.1897-1997* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Harry Millman, *Marwari*, 1931; and Girijāśaṅkara, *Māravāṛī vyāpārī* (Bīkānera: Kṛshṇa Janasevī, 1988).

[3] Scott Levi, "The Indian Merchant Diaspora in Early Modern Central Asia and Iran," *Iranian Studies* 32, no. 4 (October 1, 1999): 483–512.

[4] Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han*, ii, 1.

[5] R.V. Russell and R.B.H. Lal, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1916), 111–162. **"**The name Bania is derived from the Sanskrit *vanij*, a merchant. In western India the Banias are often called Vānia or Vāni. Mahājan literally means a great man, and being applied to successful Banias as an honorific title has now come to signify a banker or moneylender; Seth signifies a great merchant or capitalist, and is applied to Banias as an honorific prefix. The words *Sāhu*, *Sao* and *Sāhukār* mean upright or honest, and have also, curiously enough, come to signify a moneylender." 112.

Khandelwāl, Maheshwari.[6] Despite substantial differences in status between these subcastes, the differences are not so great as to prevent them from recognizing a common relationship by taking food and water from each other. Their dietary rules are exceptionally strict and are equally observed by Vaishnav-Hindu and Jain segments of the community. This adherence to vegetarianism and non-injury to all animals creates a shared cultural bond amongst the various groups.

Over time, other Rajasthanis and Hindi speaking merchants with Marwari-like cultures have been assimilated into the Marwari diaspora, that is, those living outside of Rajasthan. As historian Prodip Chand Dugar points out, "The *credibility* attached to Marwari businessmen influenced other Rajasthani traders and merchants to introduce themselves as Marwaris. In the social and trade parlance of Calcutta and Dhaka of the British period, all traders from North India passed for Marwaris."[7] It is not clear from Dugar's statement whether or not 'Marwaris' were simply subject to this 'trade parlance' applied to all North Indian merchants, or if they actually saw themselves as 'Marwari' and not as a bania sub-group. Prajnananda Banerjee maintains that before the decline of the Jagat Seth (literally Banker of the World, financier to the Nawab of Bengal), most Marwaris in Bengal were in fact from the Jodhpur-Marwar region: "Since then the Marwaris of Burrabazar got divided into two classes viz., Kaniya (Jodhpur, Marwar) and Churnwale (Churn, Sokhabati [Shekhawati], and Bikaneer)."[8] This second group, although not from Marwar proper, would come to represent the majority of people known as Marwaris. And finally, Pradeep Sinha asserts that "the groups that emerged into greatest prominence were members of Maheshwari and Aggarwal (the latter in a large majority) trading castes from the Shekhavati region, north of Jaipur."[9] Thus the solidarity seems in many ways imposed by non-Marwaris who have perhaps anachronistically considered the various upcountry banias under a blanket term. Claude Markovits' point on 'ethnic' solidarity makes this clearer:

> Among the Marwaris, it appears that communal institutions such as the *basa*, or communal kitchen, or the *dharamshala*, or communal hostel, were managed on the basis of specific castes or regions: there were thus Agarwal Shekawati *basas* and *dharamshalas* rather than 'Marwari' ones,

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[6] Ibid., 2:116. Russell records that several of the subcastes have legends of Rājpūt descent: The Agarwāls say that their first ancestor was a Kshatriya king, who married a Nāga or snake princess: The Agarwālas took their name from the ancient city of Agroha or possibly from Agra. The Oswāls say that their ancestor was the Rājpūt king of Osnagar in Mārwār, who with his followers was converted by a Jain mendicant. The Nemas state that their ancestors were fourteen young Rājpūt princes who escaped the vengeance of Parasurāma by abandoning the profession of arms and taking to trade. The Khandelwāls take their name from the town of Khandela in Jaipur State of Rājputāna. The name of the Maheshris is held to be derived from Maheshwar, an ancient town on the Nerbudda, near Indore, which is traditionally supposed to have been the earliest settlement of the Yādava Rājpūts. The home of the Srimālis was the old town of Srimāl, now Bhinmāl in Mārwār. The Palliwāl Banias were from the well-known trading town of Pāli in Mārwār. The Jaiswāl are said to take their name from Jaisalmer State, which was their native country. The above are no doubt only a fraction of the Bania subcastes, but they include nearly all the most important and representative ones, from whom the caste takes its status and character.
[7] Prodip Chand Dugar, "Marwaris," in *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, ed. Sirajul Islam, 1ST ed. (Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2003).
[8] Prajnananda Banerjee, *Calcutta and Its Hinterland : a Study in Economic History of India, 1833-1900* (Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1975), 121.
[9] Pradip Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History* (Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1978), 259.

and it is only at a later stage, in the 1920s and 1930s that all-Marwari institutions took root, mostly due to political reasons.[10]

Thus, while banias may have been able to share meals and recognize a degree of fraternity, it is ahistorical to imagine the pre-colonial and early colonial Rajasthani merchants under the blanket term Marwari. The term Marwari first takes its modern form in Bengal. Dipesh Chakrabarty tells us that *merua* came to be used as "a derogatory Bengali term for any native speaker of Hindi; derived from Marwari."[11]

According to Anne Hardgrove, Marwaris legitimized their tenure in Bengal by claiming Oswal Jains and the Jagat Seths as Marwaris. The first wave of Rajasthani merchants in Bengal were Oswal Jains, who came to be known as śaharwāle (city dwellers, because they lived in Azimganj, the urban center of Murshidabad). With the decline of Murshidabad, after Clive defeated Siraj-ud-daula (1757), the Oswal Jains, śaharwāle, began to move to Calcutta. Apparently, it was important for later Marwaris to claim this group as part of a "legitimizing connection with Bengal."[12] This older group of Marwaris in Murshidabad was significantly different in terms of its integration into the erstwhile economy and society. This early group had substantially assimilated into Bengali culture and there seems to have been no real tension with Bengali merchants such as Setts and Basaks.[13] The contest with local Bengali merchants emerged in the colonial period:

> Tension began to grow with the arrival of new groups of Marwari traders and bankers from the early decades of the nineteenth century. These new groups were not interested in striking social roots in the Bengali milieu. They soon became busy in forming their own island-worlds inside the Burrabazar area of Calcutta. These Marwaris were quick to grasp the changing patterns of colonial trade and commerce … and gradually secured a sound hold on the inter-regional money circulations and the flow of imported cloth and spices.[14]

The symbiotic relationship between Marwari and Bengali traders seemed to have existed in the post-Plassey decades while Calcutta was still overshadowed by Murshidabad and Dacca. However, the situation changed significantly when Calcutta became the new center of trade and Europeans become the chief trading partners. In this contest for European contracts and commissions, Marwaris prevailed, though local resentments tarnished their image. Early in the nineteenth century, the Bengali journal *Samachar Darpan* (March 24th, 1827) had already begun to discuss this emerging conflict.

Tensions with other groups have contributed to a body of negative stereotypes about Marwaris. Hardgrove suggests that by the late 19th century 'Marwari' became an 'unwanted' ethnic tag because of the stereotype that they were clannish, socially

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[10] Claude Markovits, Jacques Pouchepadass, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Society and Circulation: Mobile People and Itinerant Cultures in South Asia, 1750-1950* (Anthem Press, 2006), 154.
[11] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Rethinking Working-Class History* (Princeton University Press, 2000), 232.
[12] Hardgrove, *Community and Public Culture*, 2.
[13] Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History*, 54–58.
[14] Atis Dasgupta and Subhas Ranjan Chakraborti, "The Growth of Calcutta: A Profile of Social Dislocations in the Early Colonial Period," *Social Scientist* 20, no. 3/4 (March 1, 1992) 41–42.

conservative, religiously orthodox, and materialistic.[15] However, Marwari historian Bhimsen Kedia defines a Marwari as:

> One who is a follower of the *Sanatan Dharma* and *Ahimsa* in the Jain style, one who wears his native dress and follows the life-style, a follower of the old culture, a staunch believer in God, one who cares for the poor and homeless, one who builds *dharamshalas* wherever he goes, and one who is known among all the *jatis* for his trading abilities and his business acumen.[16]

We see that from a merchant's perspective, this brief definition also covers the key ingredients for a high *sākh* (credibility) rating: frugality ('poor and homeless'), religious piety, tradition, religion again, charity, and business reputation. These values enabled a high coefficient of trust amongst the Marwaris, which in turn facilitated massive networks of overland commerce and communication. But the very aspects of the features that Marwaris hold to be intrinsic to their self and social worth, also carry the negative associations that have congealed into stereotypes. It is again a question of image, perception, and local tensions: if Marwaris had perceived the 'ethnic tag' as unwanted, surely they would not have affixed the term to all their most important associations. These associations, in effect, also worked to recover the name from its negative connotations.

What held vast all-India solidarities together thus was not so much ethnicity, as an earnest investment in communal trust known as *sākh*. The networks served as the conduits of reputation. Markovits writes that "information circulated widely through their channel: one did not have to rely purely on bazaar gossip to know whether one could trust so-and-so, but one could easily check a record of his transactions."[17] Thus *sākh* was an item of commercial intelligence that travelled across vast tracts, though bazaar gossip also played its role.

Sākh

> Nothing so cements and holds together all the parts of a society as faith or credit, which can never be kept up unless men are under some force or necessity of honestly paying what they owe to one another. –Cicero

The pivotal concept for understanding what motivates and sustains North Indian merchant culture and enables vast networks is *sākh*. The best translation of the term is 'credit,' in the sense that it is a combination of solvency and probity. *Sākh* then is both commercial and social; it means evidence (of a witness), testimony; credibility; credit,

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[15] Hardgrove, *Community and Public Culture*. Despite the extended historical presence of Marwaris in Bengal, they continue to be seen as an Other. Much of the animosity stems from (or is rationalized by) the perception that Marwaris colluded with the British in the colonial era. In addition to this, Hardgrove suggests that the Marwaris are associated with "conservatism and intolerance inimical to the values of modern citizenship." 30.

[16] Bhimsen Keria, *Bhārata Meṃ Māravāṛī Samāja. Lekhaka: Bhīmasena Keṛiyā.* (Kalakattā: Neśenala Iṇḍiyā Pablikesans, 2004). 4. (My translation).

[17] Markovits, Pouchepadass, and Subrahmanyam, *Society and Circulation*, 154–155.

trust; name, reputation, honorable character.[18] The high premium on sākh accounts for stern internal regulation of the activities of family members, particularly women, in the Marwari community. It is the nexus of piety and entrepreneurship; to compromise any kind of *sākh* (social, moral, commercial) would necessarily jeopardize the totality of a family's *sākh*, resulting in both social alienation and economic stagnation. The economic consequences result from access to capital that almost always originates from the community. Therefore social and commercial credits are inseparable since business depends on one's standing in the community: "[T]he determinants of credit are to be found in adherence to a particular status ... derived from relationships with others of the community. These relationships are inextricably related to the phenomenon of social credit."[19] Below I explore how *sākh*, in all its manifestations, informs a mercantile community's social, cultural, and commercial practices, and how such a notion can, if at all, be reconciled with rational market practice.

Historian Medha Kudaisya defines *sākh* as 'credit worthiness' and 'business integrity,' but it also represents a moral dimension which was acquired through personal conduct: "There could be several indices of this, such as keeping regular account books, being frugal and displaying high personal conduct and integrity. There were ways of acquiring *sākh*: keeping one's financial and market obligations, extending patronage to communitarian and religious activities and showing generosity in the philanthropic work which the community undertook."[20] *Sākh* was then the internally circulated image or reputation of an individual or family. Access to everything commercially advantageous within a given resource network was predicated on an individual's *sākh*. When a young merchant left Rajputana to make his commercial debut in colonial Calcutta, he would undoubtedly rely on his fellow caste-men to aid him in the precarious early period of any business venture.[21] Most newcomers stayed at *basas* (communal mess halls) established by other Marwaris who had arrived earlier in the metropolis. One needed good standing to make use of these resources. Later, one could establish a *basa* and further improve one's *sākh* within the communal solidarity.

According to C. A. Bayly, in differing ways, both Marx and Weber (among other theorists) implied that pre-colonial Indian society frustrated the formation of solidarities, with the exception of the despotic state itself. Yet this view overlooks the intense alliances of *banias*. As Bayly argues, the weakening of the central state in the 18th century increased the significance of these solidarities. Merchants always maintained better networks than the petty successor states within which they operated. The rooted service gentry and a homogenous merchant class operating around small town centers (although modified in later colonial periods) thus formed the basis of commerce and political life. But economic organization was inseparable from the family firm's identity as a body of pious, creditworthy Hindus. The emphasis here is again on the centrality of the family's (or the family firm's) *sākh*.

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[18] R. S. McGregor, *The Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary* (New York: OUP, 1993), 1002; John T. Platts, *A Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi, and English* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974) 626.

[19] Leighton W. Hazelhurst, "Caste and Merchant Communities," in *Structure and Change in Indian Society*, ed. Milton Singer (Chicago: Aldine, 1968), 285–298.

[20] Medha Kudaisya, *The Life and Times of G.D. Birla* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 9.

[21] Ibid., 8.

Thus, for North Indian merchants, the social was also an economic enterprise. The proper field for entrepreneurship was society as a whole, and it was the cautious, pious, and thus the creditworthy, who would succeed here.[22] There is ample anecdotal evidence of community leaders penalizing members of the community for failure to make good on debts. Furthermore, suspect moral behavior (as in unworthy marriages) resulted in the depletion of credit. Bayly claims that commercial spies were used to ascertain the level of decadence or heterodoxy in a would-be borrower:

> ... the basis of mercantile society was the family 'firm', its credit *(sakh)* and the totality of its relations with gods and men, creditors and debtors ... And credit or reputation was not simply a residual category of financial benefit like 'goodwill' in a modern European firm ... Sharp practice and unorthodox behavior reflected both on the social and economic stains of the group...[23]

Generous and conspicuous spending at strategic moments such as weddings and funerals would be a socially embedded economic enterprise, resulting in favorable alliances and improved *sākh*. But over-spending otherwise, personal or familial, would be regarded as tarnishing *sākh*. Intelligence regarding an individual's (and his relations') *sākh* would circulate through networks and facilitate easy mobility of the credit-worthy.

Migration and Networks

The all-India and eventually nationalist consciousness of the Marwaris points back to the expansive pre-colonial trade networks. Networks integrate South Asia in terms of its own internal diversity and into various world systems. Merchants operated in multiple material networks such as trade, transportation, and correspondence, as well as discursive networks of law (*lex mercatoria*), information, diplomacy, and culture. These distinct yet overlapping networks existed simultaneously as paths of circulation for people, goods, and information.

We see an early example of these resource and trade networks in the *Ardhakathanaka*, the high Mughal-era 17th century autobiography of a Jain Merchant called Banarasidas.[24] The text offers rich primary source material on business rules and ethics and gives us a sense of the centrality of community and kinship in all commercial dealings of the time. *Ardhakathanaka* depicts a sophisticated system of credit, promissory notes (*hundis*) and other forms of commercial and financial activities.[25] Banarasidas, as a Bania, relies on his kinsmen for capital, shelter, and protection in every town he enters. The other striking feature of the work is the distances merchants travelled in search of opportunities and trade. From the author's own itinerancy, it is not hard to imagine how North Indian merchants managed to migrate to every part of South Asia.

A fair amount of scholarship credits the arrival of the British for the expansion of merchant networks, but it must be emphasized that nearly pan-Indian (save South India)

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[22] C. A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*, 1988, 374–377.
[23] Ibid., 375.
[24] Banārasīdāsa, *Half a Tale : a Study in the Interrelationship Between Autobiography and History the Ardhakathanaka* (Jaipur: Prakṛit Bharati, 1981).
[25] Eugenia Vanina, "The 'Ardhakathanaka' by Banarasi Das: A Socio-Cultural Study," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 5, no. 2, Third Series (July 1995): 211–224.

networks existed before the Raj.[26] Much of the early mobilization was in the capacity of military contractors to the Rajputs, Mughals, and Marathas. Thus these pre-colonial historical forces played a decisive role in moving merchants in the wake of military campaigns and routine troop movements. Marwaris accompanied Raja Man Singh (Akbar's general) during his Bengal campaigns.[27] Several merchant families claim descent from commissary officers of Rajasthani origin who were attached to Rajput units in Mughal armies.[28] With the decline of central Mughal power and the rise of regional regimes, merchant bankers forged powerful alliances with emerging dynasties of Nawabs (provincial governors), the most famous example being the House of Jagat Seth of Murshidabad in Bengal.[29]

The general migration and spread of the people who would become known as Marwaris has occurred in a couple of different stages and for different reasons. Successive famines, plagues, wars, and a general dearth of opportunity in the native land caused regular emigrations; this is particularly true of the Shekhawati region.[30] Claude Markovits' 'dry zone theory' offers some insights regarding merchant migration from arid parts of northwest India and the advantages these groups enjoyed. Markovits identifies the 'push factor,' which drove merchants to move from impoverished drought prone areas to seek the wealthy regions of riverine agriculture. The advantages that merchants from 'dry zones' enjoyed over others had to do with experience gained from their position on major land routes to central Asia and the sea routes to the Middle East, through which a massive portion of India's pre-19th century foreign trade passed.[31] Because of the paucity of investment opportunity in land in Rajasthan, merchants were left with surplus capital that would find its application as finance capital in the existing regimes. This gave rise to the *hundi*, a sophisticated financial instrument and bill of exchange believed to have been developed in this region, which was used to transfer revenue within the Mughal Empire in the 17th century and led to the rise of merchant bankers.[32] Consequently, powerful political connections emerged, particularly with Rajput rulers, many of whom, in the 17th and 18th centuries, placed merchants in control of state finances and revenue collection. This political experience and mobility pre-figures collaborations with the available forms of political power in the colonial period. By the mid-nineteenth century, the importance of Rajasthani trade routes had declined and merchants had begun to move toward the new opportunities offered by the exportable surplus in opium, jute, cotton, and wool.

Traders and bankers became the 'oil' in the Indian state and remained central in the creation of the British Raj. This was largely due to the shifting nature of the Indian economy from payment of tax in kind to payment in cash and the commercialization of

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[26] A I. Levkovsky, *Capitalism in India: Basic Trends in Its Development.* (Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1966) 3. Levkovsky and other soviet scholars uncovered many colonial documents from the early 19th century attesting to the pan-North Indian nature of the merchant networks.

[27] Bālacanda Modī, *Deśa Ke Itihāsa Meṃ Māravāṛī Jāti Kā Sthāna* (Kalakattā: Raghunāthaprasāda Siṃhāniyā, 1996), 258–259.

[28] Timberg, *The Marwaris, from Traders to Industrialists*, 42.

[29] J. H. Little, *House of Jagatseth* (Calcutta: Calcutta Historical Society, 1967).

[30] Kudaisya, *The Life and Times of G.D. Birla*.

[31] Markovits, Pouchepadass, and Subrahmanyam, *Society and Circulation*, 134.

[32] Ibid., 135.

agriculture, which increased the importance of the Marwari banking network. The slow imposition of cash revenue demand made money an essential ingredient in agrarian politics. The post-Mughal regimes' need for cash and legitimacy made the merchant corporation, gentry, and service people more important. The development of the *ganj* (grain market) had a lot to do with the conversion of agrarian wealth into commercial and military resources. Increasingly, merchant capital was applied directly to agriculture in the form of advances and seed, the construction of tanks, wells, and groves. This period was one of shifting social relations, where men of humble birth were rising to power and men of wealth were entering into "the realm of kingly prerogative." [33] The decline in some areas, particularly Mughal centers of power, was offset by economic growth in other regions. This was due to the increased mobility of capital and labor towards more favorable conditions. In addition, the trade of luxury and agricultural commodities strengthened an active network across northern India.

Old Calcutta

Customs barriers in British India caused Marwaris to move in huge numbers to the 'port side' of these barriers, the twin metropolitan centers of Calcutta and Bombay. They were quick to see the advantages of *Pax Britannica* in terms of the relative security of property, a key link between imperialism and capitalism. [34] The Marwari firms in Calcutta date from the early nineteenth century. In the period from 1810 – 1860, Marwari money-lenders and traders had reached all parts of India, except the south. The next stage in migration, from 1860 – 1914, was an overwhelmingly eastward shift towards Bengal, Bihar, and Assam, where the Marwaris established clear dominance over regional trade and finance. [35] Colonialism caused the destabilization of existing orders of power and commerce. This had advantages for Marwaris who made inroads into what would have been otherwise saturated and entrenched markets.

By virtue of their kinship-based resource networks, the Marwaris came to control and out-compete other groups in the vital flows of credit and goods. [36] After 1860, they achieved dominance in indigenous banking and began to gradually replace Khatris and Bengalis as *banians* (brokers) to the major British jute, opium, and cotton concerns. This is the decidedly compradore phase of the relationship between Marwari and European merchants. According to N. K. Sinha, the main reasons for decline in commercial activities among Bengalis (and therefore the subsequent rise of the Marwaris) were:

> the litigious and extravagant nature of the heirs of the first generation of Bengali businessmen; the effect of various frauds perpetrated by Englishmen in the early nineteenth century which played a part in disenchanting the Bengalis from joint ventures; and finally, the existence of easy and

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[33] Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*, 255.
[34] Kudaisya, *The Life and Times of G.D. Birla*.
[35] Markovits, Pouchepadass, and Subrahmanyam, *Society and Circulation*, 147.
[36] Kudaisya, *The Life and Times of G.D. Birla*, 6.

lucrative avenues for investment in permanently-settled zamindaris and the lack of an up-country network. [37]

The key advantage of Marwaris was that they could command resources over much larger areas than local rulers and merchant groups, thus making them extremely useful to these new regimes. A long history of political connections with Rajput clans, in various financial capacities, enabled a certain political acumen for these merchants from the "dry zone."[38] The deterritorialization of Marwaris, generations living outside of Rajasthan, lent strategic mobility to the community and capital, giving them an advantage over Bengalis who were increasingly fixed in land investments. When Marwaris began to invest in land, it was more often than not confined to the dense, urban commercial center of the city.

Barabazar

> Burrabazar has no beginning, no middle and no end. It is the ever-chaotic, over-abundant heart of Calcutta that keeps expanding within itself the way a cell divides. As one trader puts it, Burrabazar spreads from Posta in the north to Canning Street in the south, and from Strand Road in the west to Chitpur in the east. Within this rough boundary it is a world in itself.[39]

Barabazar is the beating heart of North Indian and Marwari commercial and political life in Calcutta. No discussion of the Marwaris would be complete without an examination of the Barabazar (Great Bazaar). British historian Robert Orme traces the bazaar back to 1738 and confirms that it was the same bazaar which was burned down by Siraj-ud-Duala's soldiers. Orme, among others, maintains that the bazaar was initially named after Shiva, thence 'Buro,' as he is sometimes called by devotees.[40] P. Thankappan Nair writes that once upcountry merchants ousted the Bengali merchants they changed the name to 'Barabazar.'[41] This 'ousting' of Bengali merchants has been, perhaps more accurately, characterized as a "withdrawal of the Bengali merchant from the macro-Indian bazaar."[42] From the early nineteenth century, Barabazar became the chief domicile of North Indian merchant communities in Calcutta, and the staging ground of all their cultural, political, and commercial activities. All Marwari caste-based institutions such as *basas* and *dharamshalas* were located in this neighborhood, as well as numerous hugely important publishers of Hindi papers. Barabazar was also literally a market of ideas and a springboard for various nationalist and reformist projects.

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[37] Narendra Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal, from Plassey to the Permanent Settlement.* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1965). Despite the extended historical presence of Marwaris in Bengal, they continue to be seen as an Other. Much of the animosity stems from (or is rationalized by) the perception that Marwaris colluded with the British in the colonial era. In addition to this, Hardgrove suggests that the Marwaris are associated with "conservatism and intolerance inimical to the values of modern citizenship." Hardgrove, *Community and Public Culture,* 26.

[38] Markovits, Pouchepadass, and Subrahmanyam, *Society and Circulation*, 132–140.

[39] Subhajoy Roy, "We Didn't Start the Fire," *The Telegraph* (Calcutta, February 7, 2008). Barabazar, like most place names in Bengal, has two or more spellings derived from Hindi, Bengali, or English. I have selected Barabazar because I feel it is closest to what the inhabitants of the neighborhood call it.

[40] Evan Cotton, *Calcutta, Old and New : a Historical and Descriptive Handbook to the City*, Rev. ed. /. (Calcutta: General Printers & Publishers, 1980), 346.

[41] P. Thankappan Nair, "The Growth and Development of Old Calcutta," in *Calcutta, the Living City*, ed. Sukanta Chaudhuri (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 17.

[42] Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, in *Calcutta, the Living City*, ed. Sukanta Chaudhuri (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 205.

Barabazar is a conglomeration of bazaars, each specializing in a specific commodity.[43] It was and remains the heart of commercial activity in Eastern India. By the mid-nineteenth century, Barabazar had become the center of indigenous banking and internal trade, both dominated by Marwaris. Increasingly, Manchester factories needed agents and networks to distribute piece-goods from Calcutta to the hinterland, and Marwaris were predisposed to undertake this activity. Trade in agricultural commodities from inland (jute, cotton, opium, etc.) also flowed via these networks through Barabazar. Thus Barabazar became the principle market for both incoming Manchester goods as well as a resource clearing house for export commodities. Furthermore, as the principle distributors of cotton textiles, Marwaris were aware that advances paid under forward contracts financed the acquisition of raw materials elsewhere in India. Thus they became instrumental to European business not only as distributors, but also for being able to advance capital for resources and for obtaining those resources. This intense concentration of commerce, largely in the hands of one community, meant that as a geoculture, Barabazar gained tremendous political power.

Given the highly congested nature of Barabazar it was also, of course, the locus of various communal tensions. Bengali merchants regarded Marwaris increasingly as intruders in Calcutta's business and commerce. Yet the divergent paths of Bengali and Marwari enterprise meant that most of the direct competition was with deeply entrenched European capital. However, Urdu-speaking Muslims merchants and artisans were also regularly at odds with the Marwari inhabitants of Barabazar:

> Below bigger merchants of Bengali and Marwari origin there was a large and violently disposed body of Muslim petty merchants, traders, artisans, shopkeepers, and small money-lenders (Kabulis), who were not integrated into Calcutta's civic life through any formal associations. They were, in the main, Urdu-speaking immigrants from North India and bitterly antagonistic towards Marwaris, a factor which led to sporadic communal riots in 1912, 1918 and 1926.[44]

Marwari solidarity was occasionally used to boycott Muslim artisans, such as weavers and tailors. This resulted in increased communal tension between two fairly conservative communities which had a great many things in common, amongst others, that both their languages could be seen to derive from Hindusthani. Like the Marwaris, the Muslim merchants of Calcutta, were by and large North Indian, and supported the central organization of Muslim politicians of India against local political groups. Rajat Ray writes that "just as [Marwaris] had their lines of communication with the Congress High Command, the Ispahanis [non-Bengali, Muslim merchants] acquired their own direct access to the central leadership of the Muslim League."[45] This tension between Muslims and Marwaris is a rarely mentioned impetus for Marwari patronage of Hindu organizations and Hindi print institutions.

Barabazar has a long history of institutions and associations. The financing, promotion and publication of Hindi in Calcutta was almost entirely done in Barabazar. The first Hindi paper, *Udant Mārtaṇḍ*, was published from Barabazar in 1826, as were all

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[43] Ibid., 204–205.

[44] Rajat Ray, *Urban Roots of Indian Nationalism : Pressure Groups and Conflict of Interests in Calcutta City Politics, 1875-1939* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1979), 9.

[45] Ibid., 105.

the other important Hindi papers. The close proximity of the community fostered immense solidarity and capital resources. Other institutions benefited from the massive available capital: cow shelters, communal boarding houses, hospitals, temples, river *ghāts*, schools, libraries, and other religious, political, and cultural associations.[46] The bazaar was, in effect, already always a public meeting in which information and politics rapidly congealed into action. It was Barabazar, then, that facilitated a geocultural solidarity that made it possible for Marwaris to challenge entrenched European commercial and imperial interests.

Part II: New Solidarities: From All-India to Nationalist Idioms

The essential commodity of the market was in fact information, of which the merchant communities were particularly efficient procurers and transmitters.[47] Markets in colonial India were one of the main threads connecting society and dispersing information. Networks and markets are important sites for building upon pre-existing systems and transforming them from all-India to national (geographic to geo-political). Markovits argues that discursive formations, such as nationalist discourse, gained added potency from being connected with a cash and *hundi* (promissory note) nexus. Gandhi's charisma was largely financially underwritten by the weight and reach of powerful all-India merchant communities, mostly Gujarati and Marwari. The merchant groups reciprocally benefited from the nationalist credibility attached to Gandhi and Congress.

One way of understanding the merchants' place in South Asian historiography is to stress the role, as Bayly does, in the emerging informational order as well as their participation in wider cultural processes, such as vernacularization. The powerful agency of pan-Indian merchant networks played a particularly important role in the growth of what Benedict Anderson calls 'print-capitalism,' without which it is difficult to understand the spread of Indian Nationalism. This high premium on information ultimately drew the business community to the Hindi press. Starting in the mid-nineteenth century Hindi papers began to appeal directly to Marwaris to switch to the Hindi *Devnāgarī* script and recognize the newspaper as the emergent and dominant technology of knowledge. The papers, colonial pressure, and newly formed associations discursively developed a consciousness amongst Marwaris, as a cohesive modern community and as an integral part of an imagined nation.

The press brought to mind new ways to think about commerce and what could be at stake in trading with Europeans. In this period, from 1880 – 1905, an 'Indian' and nationalist view of the Indian economy under colonialism had begun to develop with the writings of Dadabhai Naoroji, R. C. Dutt, and M. G. Ranade, among others.[48] The press was instrumental in circulating these ideas and advancing a nascent economic nationalism. However, before the Swadeshi movement of 1904 – 1907, most businessmen seemed to be cautiously apolitical. During the Swadeshi movements, links

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[46] Radhakrishna Nevatiya, ed., *Baṛābāzār Ke Kāryakarttā – Smaraṇ Evam Abhinandan* (Calcutta: Jawāhir Press, 1982), 10.
[47] Markovits, *Merchants, Traders, Entrepreneurs*, 263.
[48] Bipan Chandra, *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India*, 1981.

began to emerge between a nationalist freedom struggle and indigenous enterprise, thus introducing economic nationalism as a fixed component of nationalist programs. Indian capitalists came to be perceived in a new light; it was thought that by keeping some of their investment capital in the country, they served to reduce the colonial 'drain of wealth,' thus reinforcing an ideology of self-reliance that would inform nationalist economic policy.[49]

It was indeed Gandhi, after 1917, who established permanent links between Congress and Indian capitalists. This affiliation was not institutionalized; rather it was a nexus of several personal relationships with Gandhi. Under Gandhi's leadership Marwaris were encouraged to reform themselves, so as to appear as 'trustees' rather than 'owners' of their enterprises; they had to take interest in charities, *khādī*, and social reform. By doing what Gandhi prescribed, they could maintain a public face despite the emergence of a viable labor movement and socialist opposition. Additionally, two of Gandhi's most influential economic advisors were Marwaris: G.D. Birla and Jamnalal Bajaj, the latter was Congress' treasurer from 1920 to 1940. It is well known that the nexus eventually paid rich dividends to many of the great business houses of post-colonial India.

A Modern Polity and Debates around 'Rain Gambling*'*

From 1895-1914, the barrage of legislation concerning gambling and indigenous hedging and speculation (previously unregulated) ultimately consolidated the Marwaris as a political unit. Rain gambling, or *barsāt kā saṭṭā*, opened the debate regarding gambling, futures markets, and speculation in general. If rain gambling was a form of wagering on pure chance, was the futures market also such a system that was based on pure chance and not a rational system? The colonial position held that gambling required no skill, while betting on horses demanded a keen awareness of pedigree and odds. In 1894, the Police Commissioner's Report alleged that rain gambling had existed in Bengal for 20 years and that it was the result of the Marwari presence. The following year, 1895, the question of rain gambling was introduced to the Bengal Legislative Council by Surendranath Banerji, the prominent Congress leader. Banerji represented a portion of the English speaking Indian elite that had begun to focus on the Marwari community as a target for social reform, particularly in the English language paper he founded, *The Bengalee*. He alleged that rain gambling was a serious social nuisance and should be legislated against in the interest of a moral sanitation of Barabazar.

Through 1895 and 1896, arguments for and against legislation restricting gambling raged in the English, Bengali, and Hindi papers. The opponents framed the activity as common gambling and implied that it harmed the public and brought ruin on native women. Marwaris, standing as the accused, appealed to the Bengal Legislative Council for support. It was in this capacity that the first major civic performance of any Marwari community in India occurred. On February 9th, 1897, in a petition to the new

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[49] Tirthankar Roy, "Economic History and Modern India: Redefining the Link," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 16, no. 3 (Summer 2002): 109–130.

lieutenant-governor by 1,290 persons, they identified themselves as follows: "The humble Memorial of the Undersigned Citizens and Residents of Calcutta, Members of the Marwari community."[50] Firstly, the petition objected to the allegation that rain-gambling had caused ruin in the commercial world and to native women. This had seriously humiliated the community and gave them the impetus to close ranks and defend themselves in English. Secondly, the petition discussed commercial ethics and speculation in general, making a case for speculative practices as an instrument in risk management.[51] Thirdly, they protested that they were merely indulging in meteorology. *The Statesman* (a British owned, liberal newspaper) reported that on March 26, 1897, the Marwaris held a meeting regarding the anti-gambling initiative. This was the second significant public meeting in which Marwaris organized as a polity and declared their collective interests. This new solidarity went beyond all subcaste divisions, since each group felt the slander and harm to their respective images. In the meeting, the Marwaris resolved to strike on opium speculation because they knew that this activity was favored by the British as it kept opium prices inflated.

Scholarly representations of the events surrounding the Rain Gambling Act portray Marwaris on one side and Bengalis and Europeans on the other, or Calcutta vs. Barabazar. Ritu Birla's rigorous analysis of the Rain Gambling Act and public outcry however has missed one point. She suggests that the prominent Hindi daily *Bhāratmitra* opposed the Act, while four prominent Bengali dailies supported it.[52] But in fact, even though *Bhāratmitra* stressed the hypocrisy of permitting European leisure gambling such as horse racing, whilst decrying indigenous forms of gaming, the paper was decidedly against rain gambling. To this end, Chotulal Mishra, the editor of *Bhāratmitra* during the Rain Gambling agitation, recalled that the paper had been established with the dual purpose of advancing Hindi and informing people (largely Marwaris) on useful (business and social) issues:

> भारतमित्र कलकत्ते के बड़ेबाज़ार का पत्र है। इससे बड़ेबाज़ार की सेवा वह जन्म-दिन से करता आया है। पानी का जुआ उठवा देने में उसने बड़ेबाज़ार की अच्छी सेवा की। उसके बाद दूसरा काम रात का भुगतान उठवा देना है। पहले बड़ेबाज़ार के मारवाड़ियों में दस्तूर था कि वह हुण्डियों के रुपये का भुगतान रात को किया करते थे।

> *Bhāratmitra* was a Barabazar paper and it served the interests of this bazaar and neighborhood from the beginning. By getting rid of 'rain-gambling', the paper did a great service to the community. After this, the next task was to get rid of the late night remittance of *hundis*. This was considered a nuisance since the trading went on until two in the morning. Earlier it was the custom and commission of the Marwaris of Barabazar to pay *hundis* at night. But this system has been ended and anyone who comes with a *hundi* at night will have to wait and give it the next day.[53]

Bhāratmitra literally takes credit for getting rid of rain *gambling* (*juā*), as opposed to speculation (*saṭṭā*). Mishra maintained that the paper also curtailed the banking hours for the most important type of indigenous financial transaction: the remittance of *hundis*.

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[50] Ritu Birla, *Stages of Capital: Law, Culture, and Market Governance in Late Colonial India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), fn 298.
[51] Birla, *Hedging Bets*, 21.
[52] Birla, *Stages of Capital*, 171, 172, 290.
[53] Kṛṣṇabihārī Miśra, *Patrakāritā, Itihāsa Aura Praśna*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Nayī Dillī: Vāṇī Prakāśana, 1993), 47.

Thus the process of self-discipline and modernization against hitherto acceptable modes of business appeared in the print world of Burrabazar well before the Act passed.

In spite of Marwari protests and the strike on opium trading and speculation, on April 3, 1897, the Bengal Rain Gambling Act was passed. The act criminalized rain gambling as public gambling and the baras (speculation offices) in which it occurred as common gaming houses. In the words of the Legislative Council: "All that [the bill] insists upon is that if the Marwaris choose to indulge in gambling, they shall not be permitted to do so in houses where the public is invited."[54] The hitherto internal world of sākh had been turned inside-out and was now part of its public image and reputation. The inter-subcaste solidarity and collective outrage that emerged from the anti-rain gambling debates informed a new public face of the community.

In the following year, 1898, one of the first and most important voluntary associations emerged, the Marwari Association. Previously, organizations were established for traditional sākh-improving causes like cow protection, such as the Calcutta Pinjrapole Society founded in 1885. Yet it was after the rain gambling fiasco that the community began to affix the Marwari name to its institutions. The Marwari Association, as opposed to the Pinjrapole Society, was founded "for the gradual betterment of the moral and material wellbeing of the community."[55] While the linking of moral and material continued to be embedded in the logic of sākh, the causes undertaken by the Marwari Association decidedly aimed to improve the community's standing in a broader colonial public. By 1900, answering this call to respectability involved opening the Burrabazar Library and the Vishuddhananda Saraswati Vidyalaya to teach boys Hindi, Sanskrit, and English. The Marwari Association focused on cultural and political concerns, but the lack of earnest representation for trade issues called for the creation of another body to arbitrate disputes with Manchester.

The delivery of the piece-goods (paid for in advance in forward contracts) often resulted in disputes which were rarely settled to the satisfaction of the Marwari merchants. Similarly, when they turned to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce for arbitration, the European-controlled Chamber tended to disappoint them. Consequently, the Marwari Chamber of Commerce was formed (out of the Marwari Association) in 1900, with early reformist Seth Hafaram Khemka as president and Riddhikaran Surana as secretary. The solidarity which the Chamber inspired made it possible to deploy political pressure on the Government and Manchester firms. At the Chamber's behest, Marwari importers joined the boycott in the Swadeshi movement of 1905. The Chamber would also be instrumental in blocking British goods during subsequent non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements.[56] Through these various chambers, Barabazar was able to largely act as a unit and curtail British imports.

Long after rain gambling was illegalized, other forms of speculation persisted and even new ones emerged. Speculation on commodities such as jute and cotton (known as

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[54] Extract for the Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Council, Mar. 20, 1897, quoted in Birla, *Stages of Capital*, 170.
[55] Hardgrove, *Community and Public Culture*, 189.
[56] Ray, *Urban Roots of Indian Nationalism*, 44–45.

cotton numbers gambling) were attacked by European business interests from 1905 up until the passing of legislation restricting these activities in 1913. The complaint was that futures markets, in the Marwari case, was really just gambling because commodities were never delivered and profits or losses were based on commodity price fluctuation.[57] By 1910, merchants, nationalists, and reformists were all criticizing the hypocrisy of permitting European leisure gambling like horse racing while banning indigenous forms of gambling. From 1911-12, cotton numbers gambling, like rain gambling, came under the gaze of the colonial courts, as it was considered a fixed game to dupe the uninitiated. In an effort to distance themselves from the stigma caused by the Rain Gambling Act, bolstered by the insistence of the Hindi daily Bhāratmitra (September 8, 1912), the Marwari Association condemned cotton numbers gambling in November of 1912. This furthered a trend to represent respectability in the modern, rational milieu. Yet the speculative activities continued, but were concealed in the private arena. In addition to publicly condemning their own past practices, the various Burrabazar associations and papers began to critique the activities of the government, thus consolidating their new nationalist aspirations.

In the second decade of the twentieth century, several new Marwari associations emerged with a nationalist and reformist hue. In 1913, the Marwari Sahayak Samiti was founded in response to the issues of Indian emigrant indentured labor as well as the lack of medical facilities in Barabazar. This gave the community another chance to criticize the colonial government and promote its own image in the pages of the Hindi press. In October and November of 1913, the daily *Bhāratmitra* reported the stories of fourteen illegally recruited indentured workers who were rescued by the Marwaris and released from bondage.[58] Within the 'Hindu Club' extension of the Marwari Sahayak Samiti was the Sahitya Sambandhini Shala (literary wing), which aimed to publish quality Hindi literature at low rates and promote religion as a means to further social reform and nationalist awareness.[59] By 1914, the Maheshwari Sabha was founded, which within two years had a school (Maheshwari Vidyalaya)[60] and library to help promote Hindi. The Sabha and the Samiti established a political link between the Marwaris and major political figures like Malaviya and Gandhi, who were guests at the 1915 and 1916 annual functions of the Sabha, respectively. In 1916, Gandhi toured through the streets of Barabazaar until in the center of the crowded business district, a young G. D. Birla and Jamnalal Bajaj unyoked the horses from his carriage and pulled it themselves, symbolizing the beginning of strong bonds of support and patronage that Gandhi would forge with the Marwari community.[61] Four years later, Bajaj founded the Bara Bazaar

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[57] Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*, 418–420. Bayly describes this system of *teji mandi* (rise and fall) of commodity speculation. He asserts that in grain markets it was a way of reducing risk in a manner resembling joint-stock companies.

[58] Hardgrove, *Community and Public Culture*, 193.

[59] Kudaisya, *The Life and Times of G.D. Birla*, 33.. The police actually raided the club in 1914 after linking its publication of the *Tikawali Gita* with revolutionary terrorists.

[60] Ibid., 34.. The schools principal, Babu Moolchand Agarwal, was the editor and publisher of the Hindi paper *Aaj* and *Viśwamitra*; other celebrities of the Hindi print world were also invited to participate in the community.

[61] Ibid., 39.

Congress Committee with prominent reformers like Sitaram Seksaria.[62] Yet these developments were restricted to a short period of adventurism and terrorism that appealed to the younger members of the community around the time of the First World War.

The involvement of many leading Marwaris in the Rodda conspiracy case of 1914[63] and later the 1919 Rowlatt Satyagraha spear-headed by Gandhi, persuaded the older conservative faction of the community to reassert control over the Marwari institutions and protect them from the ignominy of its young radical members. The Marwari Sahayak Samiti's name was changed to the Marwari Relief Society, lest it become associated with such revolutionary organizations as the Yugantar Samiti and the Anushilan Samiti. While more radical Marwaris enthusiastically supported the Rowlatt Satyagraha, the Marwari Association and the Marwari Chamber of Commerce passed resolutions affirming their loyalty to the government. Their sycophancy was rewarded with a belittling reprimand (causing uproar in the Hindi press) from the governor who reminded them that they had a precarious 'immigrant' status in Bengal and they were collectively responsible for the actions of the community members. This moment began in earnest the split between conservatives and reformers that would characterize the community in the 1920s.

Two camps formed in Calcutta of this period: the religiously orthodox, reactionary, anti-nationalist camp dominated by traders (the *Sanatani)*, and the nationalist/reformist camp dominated by industrialists (led by G.D. Birla amongst others).[64] This division in the community was naturally not as clean or reliable as the nomenclature suggests. Yet the naming of camps provides a frame in which to consider the historical antagonisms and debates that trace the advance of modernization and social reform in the community. Those involved in industry felt that they were making a productive contribution to the nation and its wealth. They also began reform movements against child marriage and oceanic travel restrictions while promoting widow remarriage and inter-caste marriage.[65] In the 1920s reformer began to open Hindi medium Marwari girls' schools, which improved the image of the community in nationalist circles and the press.[66]

Although the divide was in many ways political, disciplinary measures were often meted out socially. In November of 1921, the Maheshwari Panchayat excommunicated

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[62] Hardgrove, *Community and Public Culture*, 199–203. Sitaram Seksaria, along with Bhagirath Kanoria, established the Marwari Balika Vidyalaya in 1920, the first Marwari girls' school. The school taught Sanskrit and English and had a Bengali headmistress. Seksaria had to walk door to door and beg conservative parents to let their daughters attend. He stayed deeply committed to the freedom movement and women's education and uplift. He was ostracized and left Bara Bazaar in the early 1930s for his support of widow remarriage.

[63] David M Laushey, *Bengal Terrorism & the Marxist Left: Aspects of Regional Nationalism in India, 1905-1942*, 1st ed. (Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1975), 8–11. Ten cases containing 50 Mauser pistols and 46,000 rounds of ammunition went missing in transport to the Rodda and Company warehouse in Calcutta on August 26, 1914. The weapons were distributed to various revolutionary groups in Bengal and suspected to be used in up to 54 cases of revolutionary activity. Some of the arms found their way to the storehouses of prominent traders in Bara Bazaar.

[64] Timberg, *The Marwaris, from Traders to Industrialists*, 68.

[65] Ibid., 69.

[66] Nevatiya, *Baṛābāzār Ke Kāryakarttā – Smaraṇ Evam Abhinandan*, 1–14.

the Birlas because of a questionable inter-sub-caste marriage. In this period, the Birlas and their reformist allies proceeded to take control of Maheshwari Mahasabha, the local Hindi papers, *Maheshwari* and *Marwari*, and the English papers, *Empire* (later *New Empire*), *Commerce*, and *Bengalee*. The members of the conservative camp felt their fortunes were tied to the favor of the government. Therefore they exercised traditional caste discipline to distance and weaken the increasingly nationalist reformist camp. This alienation only gave the reformers broader national appeal, but breaking wholesale from the community was not a viable business option, as capital remained difficult and expensive to obtain without caste resources.

The Struggle against European Monopoly and Imperial Privilege

Calcutta offers a unique site of analysis because of the particularly polarized structure of the economy vis-à-vis its racial and political make-up. It can generally be said that the contest in Calcutta was eventually between Marwaris and Scots. This is not to say that other Indians and Europeans played no role whatsoever; rather it is to set Calcutta apart from the other major center of economic power, Bombay. In Bombay, the Parsis and Europeans, as well as other business communities, were more given to mutual cooperation in the establishment of an oligarchy rather than competition. Scholars have argued that this helped Bombay to avoid the period of unabashed exploitation experienced by indigenous merchants in Bengal.[67] The situation in Bengal resulted in an entrenchment and precedent of extreme privilege in favor of European businessmen, what Sumit Sarkar calls a white "collective monopoly" which was most pronounced in eastern India. Racial discrimination thus drove much of what would evolve into an economic-nationalist struggle in Calcutta.[68] The fact that Indian businessmen in Calcutta operated only as brokers and agents and were denied real partnership resulted in a growing anti-colonial ethos in the Marwari community. It was in the context of this paucity of opportunity for advancement that Marwaris continued to promote indigenous forms of capital accumulation, including *phāṭkā* (speculation), *saṭṭā* (futures), and 'gambling.'

It was not for lack of trying that Marwaris found it difficult to legitimize their speculative activities in the colonial milieu. In the early 20th century, Marwari speculation in the phāṭkā market in Barabazar was starting to form the basis for commodity pricing, which upset the financing of the European mill owners, as much as supply and demand. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, the various Chambers of Commerce and Marwari associations petitioned the Government for the establishment of legitimate futures markets. The dynamic social reformer Devi Prasad Khetan[69] introduced two bills to

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[67] Chakrabarty, *Rethinking Working-Class History*, 55.
[68] G. D. Birla, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma: a Personal Memoir* (Bombay: Vakils Feffer and Simons, 1968), xv. Birla recalls in his memoir, "When I was 16 [1908] I started an independent business of my own as a broker, and thus began my contact with Englishmen who were my patrons and clients. During my association with them I began to see their superiority in business methods, their organizing capacity and their many other virtues. But their racial arrogance could not be concealed. I was not allowed to use the lift to their offices, nor their benches while waiting to see them. I smarted under these insults, and this created within me a political interest which from 1912 until today I have fully maintained."
[69] Nevatiya, *Baṛābāzār Ke Kāryakarttā – Smaraṇ Evam Abhinandan*, ka 43–44. Devi Prasad Khetan was a Presidency College graduate and member of the Bengal Legislative Council. He was a co-founder of

regulate "wagering associations" in 1924 and 1926. Yet the government would not acknowledge these markets as anything more than common gambling houses. In 1927, the reformist Marwari Trades Association (est. 1920) introduced a bill similar to Khetan's called the Futures Markets Bill. This bill, while ultimately ignored, attempted to establish scientifically the capitalist utility of legitimate indigenous speculation in terms of risk management. From the beginning of the Rain Gambling debates in 1896 to the Futures Markets Bill, Marwaris appear first as objects of, then appropriators of, colonial regulations.[70] They were trying to establish the compatibility of indigenous trading and modern, rational procedures. Markovits has referred to this as a "symbiosis…between traditional and modern techniques of business organization."[71] The Marwaris' appropriation of the discourse of colonial political economy and their complicity with colonial capitalism as an ethical and disciplinary process enabled them to legitimate, adapt, and further their practices.[72] Further, Marwaris sought to unmask and articulate the hypocrisy of imperial privilege such as artificial currency de-valuation in the rupee-sterling debate, shipping monopolies, and protective tariffs. The frustration of appealing to the government for concessions, which always came too little and too late, resulted in the majority of Marwaris placing their hopes in the Congress and all-India solidarities like the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (hereafter FICCI).[73]

The shift towards nationalist politics was thus driven by a frustration with the government and the contest with the entrenched European business interests in Calcutta. Dipesh Chakrabarty examines the correspondence among the major European firms in order to situate the European perspective on these native upstarts. As Chakrabarty shows, the racial conflict between the Europeans and the Marwaris had to do with the historical situation of the early twentieth century. While the management of the mills (mostly jute) was overwhelmingly in Scottish hands, Indians (mostly Marwari) controlled over 60% of the capital and shares. It is not surprising that the Europeans did a great deal to ossify the

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FICCI, the founder of the Anti-indentured Aggregation League, and a vocal advocate for widow remarriage.

[70] Birla, *Stages of Capital*, 193. Debi Prosad Khaitan (Birla chooses to use a Bengali spelling of his name) authored the two bills to protect informal futures markets. All the major Marwari associations were signatories to these bills. The goal of these bills was to differentiate between what Khetan and his supporters considered gambling and what they considered productive speculation. The latter offered the possibility of the delivery of the actually commodity of speculation.

[71] Claude Markovits, *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931-39: The Indigenous Capitalist Class and the Rise of the Congress Party* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 14. After the first Indian Companies Act there was a steady growth of the corporate sector in the form of joint-stock companies. This was fuelled also by the emergence, after 1875, of stock exchanges. Yet the family firm continued to be relevant as it itself functioned as a holding company with various branches.

[72] Birla, *Hedging Bets*, 20.

[73] Markovits, *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931-39*, 21. FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry), founded by G. D. Birla and Purshottamdas Thakurdas, enabled the capitalist class to finally speak with what approached a united all-India voice. Gandhi's remarks at FICCI's 4th Annual Session on 7th April, 1931, vindicated the capitalists' effort thus far and reasserts his own capital-labor policy of businessmen as trustees rather than owners of their enterprises. Gandhi remarked, "I cannot forget the services rendered by the commercial class, but I want you to make Congress your own and we would willingly surrender the reins to you. The work can be better done by you. But if you decide to assume the reins, you can do so only on one condition. You should regard yourselves as trustees and servants of the poor. Your commerce must be regulated for the benefit of the toiling millions."

negative image of Marwaris. In addition to a barrage of legislation against Marwari futures and speculation practices, the European business community and press (*Commerce* and *Capital*) constantly accused the Marwaris of illicit activities and prejudices. As evidence, Chakrabarty cites many examples from the writings and letters of Sir Edward Benthall and M. P. Thomas, two of the most powerful jute managing agents: "[Marwaris are] our undesired competitors ... These people are hopeless gamblers, it will be to the good of India if they retire from the scene."[74] Elsewhere, Benthall claims that the Marwaris (often referred to as the Birla party) are trying to "get us out by unfair competition."[75] Chakrabarty exposes the irony of this statement by reporting from Benthall's personal diary: "It may be necessary to form a combine against him [Birla]… [we are] considering a means of giving the Birla party a slap in the jute market."[76] Adding to the stigma of Marwari clannishness, Benthall writes, "These people [the Marwaris] carry racial hatred to [an] extreme."[77] Omkar Goswami, reporting from largely the same sources, quotes a string of common slurs associated with Marwaris as they entered European controlled industries, "mugs with money, pirates, outsiders, corner boys, unfair competition."[78] These images would also permeate the larger public sphere, cementing the stereotypes already in circulation.

Chakrabarty and Goswami give us a sense of the façade of laissez faire economic liberalism. Organizations like FICCI provided scientific studies to show how laissez faire clearly favored colonial powers and exploited the resources of their colonies. Additionally, British firms inflated stock prices by paying artificially high dividends so that European stockholders would not sell out to Marwaris. This practice would bankrupt many European firms between the two World Wars. Ultimately the European firms were the losers in the contest of monopolies, cartels, and ententes – a late stage of capitalism in which indigenous businessmen already knew how to operate. This latter stage represents a move towards a synthesis of corporate family firms and capitalism that dominate the scene in post-colonial India.

Industrial Capitalism and Social Reform

Massive capital was accumulated by an emerging Indian business class during the First World War. Since many countries involved in the war found it difficult to export to India, the war also created a de facto protectionism. This opportunity enabled Indian firms to meet demands and fill military contracts as well as mint fortunes via speculation on the many commodities required by the war effort. Jute, in particular, was required in large quantities to provide for what has been referred to as a 'sand-bag war.' Both the Raj and the emerging mass-based nationalist movement sought an alliance with this new indigenous economic force. British rulers sought to offer concessions to Indian businessmen with a view to preventing them from joining the nationalist camp, yet not so

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[74] Chakrabarty, *Rethinking Working-Class History*, 55.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., 56.
[77] Ibid., 57.
[78] Omkar Goswami, "Sahibs, Babus, and Banias: Changes in Industrial Control in Eastern India, 1918-50," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 48, no. 2 (May 1989): 290.

much as to destabilize the advantages enjoyed by European firms. Thus allowances were made for a measure of industrial development provided that the British market share and interests were not threatened.[79]

As Birla and Hardgrove point out, it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that the Marwaris began to represent themselves as *Marwaris* in the colonial public sphere. The *public* Marwari image was initially a response to the scrutiny of traditional speculation and leisure gambling, but then turned to a critique of the home. The Marwari business and home were often in the same building: the office and shop in the front, and family and home in the back. As these structures intersected physically, they also overlapped culturally. It follows that scrutiny of business practices were soon followed by a critique of the domestic sphere from both colonial and Indian sectors. Birla writes of "[s]ocial reform as the birth pangs of a modernist consciousness coincident with the merchant group's entry into industrial capitalism."[80]

Following the First World War, merchant groups entered the public debates on social reform on a large scale, mostly concerning the position of women in the Hindu Undivided Family. For example, in the 1920s there was fierce debate in court and amongst conservative and progressive Marwaris about raising the age of consent to 14. Finally in 1925, the government recalibrated the age of consent to 13 within and 14 outside of marriage. Hardgrove writes, "Social reform for the Marwari community, and especially Marwari women, has always been entangled in the web of the group's negative associations, dating back to the early nineteenth century."[81] This situation is exacerbated "in Bengal, home to India's supposedly most emancipated women, the Bengali *bhadramahila*."[82] For intellectual debates over widow remarriage, female education, women's seclusion, and dowry appeared nearly a century after these debates began amongst Bengalis.[83] This isn't entirely true. While social reform began in earnest in the 1920s, the Barabazar Hindi daily, *Samācār Sudhāvarṣaṇ*, wrote in support of widow remarriage as early as 1855.[84]

But the critique of the community came increasingly from Indian sectors of colonial society, from outside the community as well as in the Marwari reformist and conservative camps. Several Marwari funded Hindi journals, spanning the period between the end of the First World War through the 1930s, largely concern themselves with Marwari social reform and the women's question.[85] In fact, the journals shaped the community discourse regarding social reforms at a rate that outpaced legislation.[86] These

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[79] Markovits, *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931-39*, 11.

[80] Birla, *Hedging Bets*, 250.

[81] Hardgrove, *Community and Public Culture*, 181.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid., 182.

[84] Alka Saraogi, "Samācār Sudhāvarṣaṇ," in *Hindī Navajāgaraṇ : Baṅgiya Virāsat*, ed. Shambhunath and Dwivedi, 1 vols. (Kolkata: Coal India Limited, 1993).

[85] Birla, *Hedging Bets*, 264. Several of these journals will be discussed in the next chapter, particularly *Bhāratmitra, Viśvamitra, Matwālā,* and *Viśāl Bhārat*.

[86] Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History*, 262. The *Marwari* was published in Fatepur in the Shekawati region during 1907 and 1908, afterwards in Bara Bazaar. *Maheshwari* was published from 1909-1920s in Bara Bazaar and from 1918-1931 the *Marwari Hitkarak* (Marwari Welfare-Advocate). The *Marwari Sudhar*

reform movements were closely linked with a sector of the community, the so-called reformist camp referred to above, that was shifting to industry. For it was this sector, most exposed to public scrutiny, which required respectability in a modern, nationalist idiom.

What occurred subsequently in Calcutta, which could not have happened in Rajasthan, was the erosion of precise caste distinction, e.g. Maheshwari, Agarwal, or Oswal Jain. This is not to say that these distinctions disappeared, but they relaxed enough to allow for a new level of solidarity, partnership, and occasionally a marriage. This process also emerged from the undifferentiated manner in which Marwaris were perceived in Bengal, as a bloc. By the mid to late 1920s, sub-caste authority had diminished to the point that censure from caste panchayats could be disregarded. In 1927, G.D. Birla travelled with Lajpat Rai to England, against the wishes of his Maheshwari panchayat with which he had been reconciled following an earlier ex-communication. By following Gandhi's simple diet and reading list (*Gita* and *Ramayana*), Birla could travel across the black seas while maintaining broader *sākh* at the expense of narrower sub-caste *sākh*. Birla had successfully struck the balance. Eating a simple vegetarian Bania diet, reading Hindu scriptures, traveling abroad, and commanding massive industries had thus become a viable Marwari public image. This was the image of the modern Hindu merchant-industrialist, no longer the dubious gambler and benighted patriarch. It was this new patriotic image that Marwaris sought to project as worthy stewards of the nation's economy.

Conclusions:

The fact that capitalism pressed Marwaris into a cohesive polity runs counter to sociological theories of Marx, Weber, and Simmel: namely, the claim that any capitalist transformation entails (as cause, consequence, or both) a form of commodity fetishism and objectification of labor that brings about the dissolution of social groups and the creation of alienated individuals.[87] By 1930, both conservatives and reformers began to see the need for political realignment and solidarity, reconciling the two opposing camps. The All India Marwari Federation or the *Akhil Bharatvarshiya Marwari Sammelan* managed a sort of reconciliation amongst Marwaris everywhere in light of new attacks from the outside such as *Chānd's Marwari Ank*. The Sammelan invited participation from "such persons who represent the way of life, language, and culture of Rajasthan, Haryana, and Malwa and the adjoining areas and who or their ancestors have settled in part of India or any foreign country."[88] Thus the community definition became wider and more inclusive as a result of outside pressures and the anticipation of independence.

The versatility of Marwaris enables not only their ability to adapt to new

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(Marwari Reform), among several others, was a reformist journal concentrating on women's issues in the 1920s.[86] This was a shift from business or economic journals that had come before, i.e. *Marwari Bapari* and *Burrabazar Gazette*.

[87] David West Rudner, *Caste and Capitalism in Colonial India: The Nattukottai Chettiars* (University of California Press, 1994), 15.

[88] Hardgrove, *Community and Public Culture*, 264.

requirements of political economy, but also to remain cohesive despite internal divisions and external pressures. While Marwaris had internalized strategic aspects of western commerce, those which advanced a nationalist agenda, they continued to preserve and insulate traditional practice within the home and community. For example, they almost never took each other to court. Disputes between businessmen still remained in the community and were arbitrated by caste organizations, thus enforcing, internally, their own *lex mercatoria*. Additionally, as I will show later, literary accounts and memoirs suggest that, while girls could go to school, a restrictive patriarchal milieu prevailed in many Marwari homes even half a century after independence.

What I have referred to as Marwari solidarity has been also called clannishness, which is among the most common aspersions cast on Marwaris. Historical forces have driven Marwaris to rely on one another: from the scarcity of the desert to the precarious status of immigrants in new lands, and also the obvious advantages offered by powerful resource networks. It must be recalled that finance capital was expensive and largely unavailable to non-Europeans in the colonial economy; capitalism had few avenues other than the existing kinship networks. The modernization of the community resulted in the development of bourgeois consciousness and as necessary corollaries, nationalism and social reform.

The motif of tensions and image returned with new force in mid twentieth-century Calcutta when an emergent Marxist consciousness began to frame the Marwaris as class enemies. The Marwaris remain today the chief 'other' in Calcutta after Muslims. They still represent an exploitative capitalist class. Raka Ray writes that Marwaris are the "nonindigenous elite against whom all Bengalis could unite, lending a regionalist cast to anticapitalist sentiment."[89] Thus it is, that some four hundred years after Rajasthani merchants arrived in Bengal with Raja Man Singh, Marwaris continue to negotiate issues of belonging and deterritorialization felt by migrants.

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[89] Raka Ray, *Fields of Protest : Women's Movements in India* (Minneapolis Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 50. Prof. Ray suggested to me that Marwaris comprise the chief 'other' after Muslims, at least from the Bengali perspective.

Chapter Two:

Hindi in Calcutta, the Business Community, and the Technology of Knowledge

Calcutta of the nineteenth century was a polyglot constellation of cultural and material conditions that saw the birth of several vernacular print languages; among these, Hindi may have been the most dynamic new idiom put to print, as it shaped the consciousness and identity of millions of north Indians. The admixture of colonial, orientalist, missionary, compradore, and nationalist forces gave rise to a lively Calcuttan Hindi press in the mid-nineteenth century, which remained in constant dialogue with the Hindi speaking publics beyond Bengal well into the twentieth century, while staying grounded in the socio-economic world of Calcutta's Barabazar.

The Hindi literati of Calcutta will always proudly boast that Bengal was the starting point of the various paths taken by Hindi prose and publishing. The first printed material in Hindi, including newspapers and journals, appeared in Bengal. This chapter will reconsider the largely unacknowledged contribution writers and publishers operating in Calcutta (and occasionally elsewhere in Bengal) have made in the development of Hindi as a literary and national language, as Hindi speakers and well-wishers, often inspired by Bengali examples, collaborated to produce journals and newspapers in the new idiom. But financing and patronage was always a problem, therefore throughout the nineteenth century the initial task of Hindi publications was to attract the business community by first persuading them to prefer Hindi over other regional languages and scripts, and second, to accept that the technology of knowledge had shifted from bazaar intelligence to print. To this end, editorials asked their readership to look at the example provided by European, Jewish, Parsi, and Bengali merchants and the advantages they enjoyed from a well-informed press in their respective languages. Print Hindi required, for its survival, the establishment of bonhomie with Marwaris and other upcountry merchants. Since there was no other viable middle-class or elite readership to patronize Hindi, the press sought to cultivate such a class from the Marwaris. The affiliation resulted in the modernization and nationalization of the community through numerous reform programs mobilized via the Hindi press. Further, the process caused the Marwaris to eventually regard and revere Hindi as their own language and as an integral part of their cultural identity.

This chapter highlights the nexus of vernacular capitalism and the nationalist movement, an alliance that was also summoned from within the Hindi movement. The Hindi language papers promised to perform a function similar to the socially purposive and commercially advantageous Bengali and English papers. In this way Hindi, as a print language, cultivated a symbiotic relationship with Marwaris – suggesting that both parties depend on one another to survive and prosper. The nationalist consciousness of the Hindi Press in Calcutta, among other factors, served to erode the compradore bonds the Marwaris had with the Raj and eventually turned the community toward nationalist politics. But it was never a foregone conclusion that Marwaris would take up Hindi or even the Nāgarī script.

The first publishers of printed material, missionaries and the East India Company, meant for print Hindi to appeal precisely to North Indian Hindus. Thus the first phase of printed Hindi was mobilized to facilitate effective communication with North Indians, and to impart to them knowledge and commandments, sacred and profane.

Fort Williams College and the Serampore Press: Technologies of Knowledge, Divine and Profane

After Calcutta was established by the East India Company in 1690, a steady influx of people from the upcountry (North India) began arriving mostly in search of economic opportunities afforded by the Company. The need for effective communication and administration in vernacular languages led to the establishment of Fort Williams College in 1800 as an academy to instruct newly recruited British officials in native languages. The early British linguist Sir George Grierson (1851-1941) recalled that the first half of the 19th century was

> the period of the birth of that wonderful hybrid language known to Europeans as Hindi and invented by them. In 1803, under Gilchrist's tuition, Lalluji Lal wrote the *Prem Sagar* in the mixed Urdu language of Akbar's camp-followers and of the *market where men of all nations congregated*, with this peculiarity, that he used only nouns and particles of Indian, instead of those of Arabic or Persian, origin. The result was practically a newly-invented speech; for though the grammar was the same as that of the prototype, the vocabulary was almost entirely changed. This new language, called by Europeans Hindi, has been adopted all over Hindustan as the lingua franca of Hindus, for a want existed which it fulfilled. It has become the recognised medium of literary prose throughout Northern India, but as it was nowhere a vernacular it has never been successfully used for poetry.[1]

As Grierson notes, Hindi was already the language of the market, and as this form came expunged of much of its Perso-Arabic heritage, it duly appealed to Marwaris and other North Indian Hindu merchants. The broad appeal of this new idiom "captured the sympathies of the then under-privileged Hindu majority… [and] was to become an important factor in the communal conflict which led to the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947."[2] Additionally, North Indian Hindu merchants shared a kindred deterritorialization with this new idiom. Hindi was not from any one place; they identified with the supra-local, cultural, and religious aspects of the languages. Since it was largely derived from the *Verkehrssprache*, or market language of North India, they were not to be at a disadvantage in this new idiom, as they might be in chaste Urdu or Bengali. However, Stuart McGregor has indicated that the distinctive features of Hindi, such as script, Sanskrit loan words, literary traditions, and the base of the language, already existed when the British arrived:

> When, therefore, in 1800, the British started promotion *(*alongside Urdu) of a de-Persianised style of language based on Urdu, they were reacting appropriately to the socio-linguistic situation they encountered in the interest of developing effective communication with north Indian communities. From an Indian point of view, however, no need arose immediately for the 'Hinduī' the British promoted, and soon called 'Hindi.' If the impact of English is disregarded, the British appearance

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[1] George Grierson, *The Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1889), 107.
[2] Christopher Shackle and Rupert Snell, *Hindi and Urdu Since 1800 : a Common Reader* (New Delhi: Heritage Publishers, 1990), 7.

on the north Indian scene brought little immediate change in language use, except through their all-important promotion of a Hindi print culture with its various consequences.[3]

It is the introduction of Hindi as a print language that is the crucial contribution of the College of Fort Williams.

Although it is was John Gilchrist's (1759 – 1842) intention to promote Hindustani as a language for both Hindus and Muslims, the Gujarati Brahman Lallūjīlāl (ca. 1747-1824) as 'Bhākā Munśī' took pains to leave out the Perso-Arabic words.[4] Lallūjīlāl's language was that of the Delhi-Agra region, known as *Khaṛī Bolī*, meaning upright (standard) speech. Thus in the first few years of the Fort William College several *Khaṛī Bolī* works in Nāgarī emerged (expunged of the last few *Kaithī* letters): LallujīLāl's *Premsāgar* (1803), Gilchrist's 'The Hindi Story Teller' (Vol II, 1803), and Sadal Mishra's *Nāsiket Kathā* (1805).[5] The missionary tracts and school books became similarly instrumental in the propagation of printed Hindi.

The other early impetus for print Hindi (and several other Indian languages) came from the Baptist Christian missionary community in India. Because the East India Company was initially hostile to missionary work, the early missionaries were compelled to operate in the Danish India colony at Serampore (Śrirāmpur) approximately 25 kilometers up the Hugli River from Calcutta. To enforce the Company's monopoly, an act of Parliament was passed which proclaimed that every subject of the King going to or found in the East Indies without a license from the Company was guilty of a high crime and misdemeanor and liable to a fine and imprisonment. Company directors felt that interference with the religious and social customs of the people would be detrimental to the Company's commercial interests.[6] Therefore, when the zealous missionary William Carey was denied passage on a British ship, he secured a passage on board the Danish Indiaman *Kron Princessa Maria*, bound from Copenhagen to Serampore.[7] Since Governor General Lord Wellesley objected to the establishment of presses and missionary work in British territory, Carey, along with William Ward and Joshua Marshman, established their press in Serampore in 1800 under the protection of the Danish Government.[8] Before long, however, Wellesley was convinced that the evangelical texts published in native languages would be useful for the students of the newly established Fort William College (1800), where Carey was appointed Professor of Sanskrit. Thus the relationship between the Serampore Mission and Fort Williams College was firmly established. From 1801 to 1831 more than 212,000 books in 40

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[3] Stuart McGregor, "On the Evolution of Hindi as a Language of Literature," *South Asia Research* 21, no. 2 (2001): 214–215.

[4] Vasudha Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bhāratendu Hariśhchandra and Nineteenth-century Banaras* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1999), 166.

[5] Shardadevi Vedalankar, *The Development of Hindi Prose Literature in the Early Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Lokbharti Publications, 1977), 44–47.

[6] Ibid., 82–83.

[7] George Smith, *Life of William Carey* (London: Murray, 1885), chap. 2. The Danish nationality of the ship and crew enabled the missionary party to enter Bengal.

[8] Ole Feldbæk, "Den Danske Asienhandel 1616-1807 Værdi Og Volumen," *Historisk Tidsskrift* 15, no. 5 (1990): 104–115. While the Danish East India Company was also concerned chiefly with commerce, an intensifying rivalry with the British may have compelled them to allow missionary activities that the British had forbidden.

different languages were issued from the Serampore Press.[9] The missionary tracts were instrumental in the propagation and standardization of printed Hindi and literacy.

While Carey's concentration had been on Bengali, Marathi, and Sanskrit, John Chamberlain was the real proponent of Hinduī (the 'Hindu' colloquial counterpart to the more urban, 'Muslim' Hindustani). It was Chamberlain who recognized the potential of preaching to Hindus in *their* vernacular, as well as printing missionary tracts in Nāgarī.[10] Missionaries observed that the usage of Nāgarī was widely spread amongst the literate Hindus in North India and that it "would greatly facilitate the progress of knowledge if it could have that extension given to it in India which the Roman alphabet has obtained in Europe."[11] Chamberlain's Hindi translation of the New Testament (1818) was favored by the Serampore Mission Press and replaced their own translation with 2000 copies in Nāgarī and 3000 in 'Kyt'hee' (*Kaithī*, Kayastha script).[12] But the Nāgarī had a wider appeal; it didn't belong to any one place or people and therefore it had greater mobility. In their *Sixth Memoir of the Serampore Press* (1920), Carey, Ward, and Marshman refer to the unique homelessness of Hindi: "The fact is, indeed, the Hindi has no country which it can exclusively claim as its own… [but] it is not always understood at the distance of only twenty miles from the great towns in which it is spoken." The missionaries had conducted what Grierson characterizes as the first systematic attempt at a survey of Indian languages. They had learned that Hindi derived from the towns was not always intelligible as a vernacular in the countryside. Consequently, they favored Chamberlain's New Testament, which recognized the discrepancies between rural, urban, Hindu and Muslim registers, and sought to make the language accessible to the broadest stratum of Hindu society.

In addition to a flood of printed material emerging from missionary presses, the Calcutta School Book Society (est. 1817) began to produce elementary school books as well as grammars, primers, and spelling books in Hindi. The Society aimed to maintain religious neutrality, which set it apart from the missionary print activities. The aggregate of these published works resulted in increased literacy in the new idiom as well as the availability of print technology. The foundation had been laid for the beginning of print capitalism and thus onward to the stirrings of national consciousness in the Andersonian model.[13] The print standardization had taken hold and within a decade the first Hindi newspaper appeared in the new idiom.

The First Hindi Newspapers: Regionalism and Readership

हिन्दुस्तानियों के हित के हेतु - For the benefit of the Hindustanis

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[9] George Grierson, "The Early Publications of the Serampore Missionaries," *Indian Antiquary* XXXII (1903): 241.

[10] Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions*, 169–171.

[11] Shardadevi Vedalankar, *The Development of Hindi Prose Literature in the Early Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Lokbharti Publications, 1977), 96, quoted in Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions*.

[12] Grierson, "The Early Publications of the Serampore Missionaries," 246.

[13] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, New ed. (Verso, 2006), 44–45.

Pandit Yugalkishor Shukla obtained a license from the government in Calcutta to start a Hindi paper on February 16th, 1826. He launched the first Hindi paper *Udant Mārtaṇḍ* on May 30th of the same year. According to the *Hindī Sāhitya Koś*, there had been no previous Hindi paper.[14] The stated goal of the paper was to propagate knowledge on various subjects to Hindi speakers. There were notices on government employment, commercial and legal information, shipping news and arrival times, travelogues, and general public notices. Shukla recognized the novelty of his enterprise, which he stated clearly in the first issue:

> यह उदन्त मार्तण्ड अब पहले पहल हिन्दुस्तानियोंके हितके हेतु जो आज तक किसीने नहीं चलाया पर अंगरेजी ओ पारसी ओ बंगलेमें जो समाचारका कागज छपता है उसका सुख उन बोलियों के जानने ओ पढ़ने वालों को ही होता है। इससे सत्यसमाचार हिन्दुस्तानी लोग देखकर आप पढ ओ समझ लें ओ पराई अपेक्षा न करें ओ अपने भाषे की उपज न छोड़ें, इसलिये बड़े दयावान करुणा और गुणनि के निधान सब के कल्याण के विषय गवरनर जेनेरल बहादुर कि आयस से ऐसे साहस में चित्त लगाय के एक प्रकार से यह नया ठाट ठाटा।[15]

> This *Udant Mārtaṇḍ* now for the first time publishes for the benefit of the Hindustanis, which no one has managed before, even though there are papers printed in English, Farsi, and Bengali for the pleasure of the speakers of those languages. So that Hindustani people can read and understand the real news, without the mediation of others, and that they don't abandon the development of their own language, permission has been obtained from the kind, gracious, and virtuous Governor-General to introduce a paper in a new style.

The paper referred to its own language as *Madhyadeśīya*, or of the central lands. It was a mixture of *Khari Boli* and *Braj Bhāṣā*, and though not completely standardized, was abundantly clear. *Udant Mārtaṇḍ* was produced for the benefit of the Hindustanis, i.e. North Indians (as there were already papers for the English and Bengalis) in Calcutta. Hindustani speakers, mostly interested in trade, had been migrating from the northern and western parts of India. Therefore, the demographic that was predisposed to take an interest in Hindi was already largely made up of merchants. Pandit Yugalkishor Shukla had to shut down the *Udant Mārtaṇḍ* in December of 1827 because circulation and sales were not sufficient to cover the costs of the paper. He lamented that the readership simply did not exist: the Kāyasthas learn Persian and Urdu, the merchants learn their script just to keep accounts (*bahī-khātā karte*), and the Brahmins were sunk in the *kaliyug*, i.e not reading or studying: so who would buy and read the Hindi paper?[16] Thus the exclusively Hindi paper, that is monolingual, would need to give way to the multi-lingual paper.

On May 9th, 1829 Raja Ram Mohan Roy launched his *Bangdut*, a weekly with columns in Farsi, Bengali, and Hindi. Ramchandra Shukla noted that in Raja Sahib's language, one certainly met with a Bengali-ness half the time; nonetheless it was a language that would mostly be familiar to scholars classically trained in the *shastras*. It was a testament to the foresightedness of Ram Mohan Roy that Hindi came to be

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[14] Dhīrendra Varmā, ed., *Hindī Sāhitya Kośa*, vol. 2 (Vārāṇasī: Jñānamaṇḍala, 1985), 49.

[15] Ambikaprasad Vajpeyi, *Samācāra Patroṃkā Itihāsa*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Banārasa: Jñānamaṇḍala, 1953), 17–18.

[16] Vedalankar, *The Development of Hindi Prose Literature in the Early Nineteenth Century*, 179. This is my paraphrasis of an editorial quoted in Vedalankar's work.

included in such an important journal.[17] The influence of Braj Bhāṣā is perceptible in Roy's Hindi, but the language of the journal remains quite clear even today. Even at this early date, this journal attempted to court the business community with information as a commodity and knowledge as a virtue. This was the pattern that was to prevail in the Hindi print culture of Calcutta. The first Hindi daily deployed a similar tactic and added emphasis to the commercial and spiritual benefits not only of Hindi, but of the Devnāgarī script.

Continuities and Expansion: The First Hindi Daily and the Bengal 'Renaissance'

In her introduction to a collection of excerpts from *Samācār Sudhāvarṣaṇ*, Alka Saraogi notes that the early Hindi press had great support from Bengalis like Ram Mohan Roy and Shyamsundar Sen. The latter founded and edited the first Hindi daily, *Samācār Sudhāvarṣaṇ*, which began publication in June of 1854 in Barabazar, Calcutta. It was a bilingual paper with the slightly larger portion in Hindi and the remainder in Bengali. The Hindi section came first and contained most of the news and editorials, the Bengali section contained shipping news, commodity prices, and advertisements. Given the paper's location and readership, it naturally tried to appeal to the local demographic, which in the midcentury was predominantly various Hindi-speaking Banias and increasingly Marwaris. Since an informal type of Hindustani was already the language of the north Indian bazaar, sometimes called *bāzārū Hindī* in Calcutta, the question naturally arose as to the appropriate standard script for commerce. Merchant literacy and education was generally in one of the so-called merchant scripts, *Mahājanī*, *Muṛiyā*, *Moḍī*; if they were going to be patrons of Hindi, merchants would have to be convinced of the virtues of *Nāgarī*. The editor championed *Nāgarī* as the most important script because of its broad application and simplicity, but also because of its religious association with Sanskrit and Prakrit scriptures. Therefore, the editor speaks of Devnāgarī, instead of the other common name Nāgarī, to reinforce the sacred affiliation. The editor begins with a comic anecdote about merchants struggling to decipher another merchant's missive:

यिह सत्य हम लोग अपने आंखोंसे प्रत्यक्ष महाजनोंको कोठियों में देखते है कि एककी लिखी हुई चिट्ठी दूसरा जल्दी बांच सकता नहीं। चार-पांच आदमी लोग एकट्ठा बैठके ममा टटा काका घधा डडा कहिके फेर ढडा - मिट्टी का घड़ा - बोलके निश्चय करते हैं। क्या दुःखकी बात है... सब अक्षरोंसे देवनागर अक्षर अति उत्तम सहज ओ सर्वदेश में प्रचलित हैं। इसको प्रथम सीखना, अनंतर अपने उपजीविका के लिए महाजनी अक्षरका अभ्यास कर लेना, तिसके बाद जिस देशमें बास करना उसके अक्षरको भी पहिचान रखना यिह तीनों हिन्दुस्थानियोंके अति आवश्यक है। इसका इतना फल है कि देवनागर अक्षर का अभ्यास रहने से अनेक प्रकार के संस्कृत प्राकृत गय के ग्रंथों को देखने में आवेगा ओ नाना प्रकार के पुराण ओ स्तोत्रों का पाठ करके मनको पवित्र कर सकेगा। बिना देवनागर अक्षरोंके अभ्यासके वाणी स्पष्ट निक्से ही नहीं। इसलिए देवनागरी अक्षरका परिचय ओ नाना प्रकारके देश-विदेशके समाचारका ज्ञान हम लोगों को *समाचार सुधावर्षण* पत्रिका देखनेसे सहजहीमें संपादन होगा ओ इस पत्रिकासे बहुत उपकार देख पड़ेगा। ... आप लोगोंकी कीर्ति लक्ष्मी

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[17] Alka Saraogi, *Baṅgdut : Paricay*, in Shambhunath and Dwivedi, eds., *Hindī Navajāgaraṇ : Baṅgiya Virāsat* (Kolkata: Coal India Limited, 1993), 39.

विद्या बढ़ती होनेके लिए ईश्वरके निकट निसि दिन सोते-जागते हम लोग प्रार्थना करते हैं। (१३ अप्रैलड १८५५)

> This truth we have clearly seen with our own eyes amongst the merchants in their chambers: the letters written by one cannot be quickly deciphered by another. Four or five men must assemble and sound out each letter: *ma ma ta ta ka ka gadha* to finally pronounce *miṭṭī kā ghaḍā* or 'earthen vessel' aloud. What a sorry state … Of all the scripts *Devnāgarī* is the absolute simplest and prevalent throughout the land. Learn it first, subsequently practice the *Mahājanī* script for the sake of your livelihood, and lastly be familiar with the local script where you reside: these three things are obligatory for the Hindustani. It [*Devnāgarī*] is so rewarding that one will be able to quickly access prose works in Sanskrit and Prakrit and make the mind holy by reading various ancient texts and hymns. Without familiarity with *Devnāgarī*, one's speech is not clear. Therefore we must introduce the *Devnāgarī* letters and deliver the knowledge and news from here and abroad in the simply edited *Samācār Sudhāvarṣaṇ*…We pray night and day that your glory, wealth, and knowledge ever expand. (13 April, 1855)

In sum, the order of importance is: Devnāgarī, followed by Mahajani (merchant scripts), and finally the local script, Bengali in this case. The editorial appeals to its readership to learn *Devnāgarī* as the first and most important script, even though nearly half the paper appeared in Bengali. But Bengali is relegated to a *local* script and ranks third after *Devnāgarī* and *Mahājanī*. The merchant script is not abandoned yet, but confined to record keeping. *Devnāgarī* is presented as a time-tested and prestigious vehicle of knowledge – linked as it is with Sankrit and Prakrit – and yet it is as practical and common as the *miṭṭī kā ghaḍā*, or earthen vessel, referred to in the passage, that the merchants eventually manage to read. The editor is careful to include Prakrit as one of the benefits of *Devnāgarī* so as to directly appeal to the Jains, whose religious texts usually exist in Apabhraṃśa, Ardhamāgadhī, or some other variant of Prakrit.[18] It is also suggested that the script will unify the Hindustanis across the land and facilitate easy communication since knowledge of the script is a prerequisite for proper pronunciation. The Marwaris would clearly benefit from this as their community could be found in every part of the subcontinent. The daily newspaper promised news of these regions and beyond.

In its first year, 1855, the paper carried a broad swathe of news from around the globe: reports of various wars around the world, *Markin Desh ke Khabar* (American news), gold prices in Calcutta, and railway revenue, etc. The paper also brought issues of social and political importance to the consciousness of its readership. More than a year before the passage of the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act (enacted on 25 July, 1856) *Samācār Sudhāvarṣaṇ* ran an article entitled *vidhvā vivāh viṣay* (the widow marriage issue). The article cited the Bengali scholar Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's campaign to prove to the Bengali people that there was no restriction against widow remarriage in the scriptures.[19] This apprised the non-Bengali residents of Barabazar of the radical social reform debates coming out of the Bengali 'renaissance,' such as *sati*, widow-remarriage, women's emancipation, *kulin* polygamy, age of consent, and the sinfulness of sea-

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[18] Paul Dundas, *The Jains*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2002), 65–70.
[19] *Samācār Sudhācarṣaṇ*, 12 July 1855, in Shambhunath and Dwivedi, *Hindī Navajāgaraṇ : Baṅgiya Virāsat*, 53–54.

voyages.[20] Hindi experienced its own 'navjagaran' or 'renaissance' after the 1857 Uprising, not necessarily because of the uprising, but at least in the regions affected by it.[21] The developments of Hindi, particularly in Banaras, fed back into Calcutta and reinvigorated the Hindi movement.

The Calcutta Hindi Movement: *Navjagaran***, Khariboli, Bhāratmitra et al**

In post 1857 India, three papers stood out in Calcutta as early nationalist efforts modeled on the pioneering work of Bhāratendu Hariścandra of Banaras (1850-1885). These papers were *Bhāratmitra* (1878), *Sārsudhānidhi* (1879), and *Uchitvaktā* (1880). Shyamsundar Sharma, a historian of Hindi, refers to this period as the beginning of a Hindi movement in Calcutta.[22] This second wave of the Hindi press appeared in the late 1870s after what had been a lapse in activity. As Pandit Ambika Prasad Vajpeyi noted, when *Bhāratmitra* appeared there had been no new Hindi papers in Calcutta for about 6 years.[23] This relative inactivity stemmed from the vexed climate for the vernacular press under the scrutiny of colonial authorities. Just three days before the first issue of *Bhāratmitra*, the Vernacular Press Act (14 March, 1878) had been enacted to curtail the activities of the Indian language press. In 1879, Durga Prasad Mishra, at the request of P. Sadanand Mishra, started the journal *Sarsudhanidhi*. It lasted one year after which he launched *Ucitvakta* (1880), it was highly political, satirical, and quite popular in its time. *Bhāratmitra*, however, endured and remained the most important of all these papers, running for 57 years. Durga Prasad Mishra's articles were especially popular. Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi considers Mishra to be the birth-giver of the Hindi press in Calcutta and its great propagator.[24] This role came at great personal cost as he never made any money from publishing and, according to his contemporaries, it was his addiction and he melted the family jewelry to pursue it.[25]

Durga Prasad Mishra, a Saraswat Brahman, was born in Sanjan Nagar, Kashmir. His father and grandfather were well respected Pandits because of their Sanskrit proficiency. It was in this capacity that Punjabi Khatris from Calcutta (a prominent merchant community) requested that Mishra's father move with the family to Calcutta. Mishra and his two brothers went into business as trading agents in a large firm. At home they spoke Dogri, Hindi, and Bengali. He went to Banaras to study Sanskrit and English in the Normal School, and then, according to the wishes of his family, went into business

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[20] Sumit Sarkar, in *Calcutta, the Living City*, ed. Sukanta Chaudhuri (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 101. Sarkar suggests that the 'Bengal Renaissance,' while already a problematic term, was confined mostly to the urban middle class and left Marwari merchants virtually untouched. Yet there is ample evidence in the Hindi press that at least an awareness of reform activities existed and gained momentum through the second half of the nineteenth century.

[21] Ramesh Rawat, "1857 and the 'Renaissance' in Hindi Literature," *Social Scientist* 26, no. 1/4 (January 1, 1998): 95–112.

[22] Shyamsundar Sharma, *Hindī Prakāśan Kā Itihās: Bangīya Khaṅḍ* (Varanasi: Pracharak Granthavali Pariyojna, 1998), 35–36.

[23] Mṛtyuñjay, "Bhāratmitra : Paricay," in *Hindī Navajāgaraṇ : Baṅgiya Virāsat*, ed. Shambhunath and Dwivedi (Kolkata: Coal India Limited, 1993), 58.

[24] Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, *Pandit Durga Prasad Mishra*, in Miśra, *Hindī Sāhitya*, 60.

[25] Ibid.

as an agent. He did this with great skill and earned a lot of money, but he found the work unsatisfying and was attracted to the Bengali press.

From his student days, Durga Prasad Mishra loved reading Bengali papers. He was profoundly influenced by Vidyasagar's educationalist and reformist ethic, and he considered Babu Shishir Kumar Ghosh, editor and publisher of the *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, to be his political guru.[26] Ghosh's resistance to the Press Act inspired Mishra to enter the print world. Additionally, the Bengali reformist paper *Somprakash*[27] served as a model on which Chotulal Mishra and Durga Prasad Mishra based *Bhāratmitra*. In this way, the spirit of the Bengal renaissance manifested in Calcutta's Hindi letters as well.

The editorial of the first issue of *Bhāratmitra* reminds the readers that to understand the benefit of a newspaper one need only look to Bombay and Bengal. Furthermore, it suggests a political role for the press as representative of the people and their grievances. It follows then, that if North Indians, and particularly men who must do business with those in power, wish to be represented, they require a media outlet in their language:

> यदि समाचार पत्र नहीं होय तो राजा को अपने प्रजा का कुछ हाल नहीं मालुम हो सक्का... राजा तक अपना कष्ट और अभाव के निवेदन करने का मख्य उपाय...समाचार पत्र प्रजा का प्रतिनिधि स्वरूप होता है...[28]

> If the newspaper did not exist then how is the king to know the condition of his subjects…the paper is the chief vehicle for proclaiming their pain and privation to the king. The paper shall act as the natural representative of the people.

Immediately after voicing this high-minded ambition, the article makes an appeal directly to the business community:

> प्रथम तो समाचारपत्र राज्य का प्रधान मन्त्री और मध्यस्थ होता है, दूसरे वाणिज्य का तो जीवनस्वरूप है, जो कुछ वाणिज्य की उन्नति और बढ़ती दिखाई देती है वो इसी के प्रसाद से है, क्योंकि आजकल हिन्दुस्तान में सबसे बढ़कर वाणिज्य की उन्नति बम्बईवालों ने करी है, यद्यपि कलकत्ता राजधानी है, और वाणिज्य भी होता है तो भी नफा और लाभ उन्हीं लोगों को है जिनकी भाषा में समाचार पत्र प्रचलित है। यहाँ के वनज व्योपार में जितना लाभ अंगरेज यहूदी पारसी लोगों को होता है, इस्का क्या कारण है? हमारी समझ में तो खबर का कागज ही इस्का प्रधान कारण है। क्योंकि इस द्वारा देश देशांतर के मालका भाव और आमदनी रफतनी की खबरों से माल

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[26] Dhirendra Varma et al (eds.), *Hindi Sahitya Kosh, Vol. II* (Varanasi: Gyanmandal, 1963), 254.

[27] Nihil Sarkar, "Printing and the Spirit of Calcutta," in *Calcutta, the Living City*, ed. Sukanta Chaudhuri, vol. I (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). The original idea for *Somprakash* came from Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. The paper dealt with political issues and women's issues such as child marriage, widow remarriage, and women's education.

[28] Bālamukunda Gupta, *Urdū-Hindī Samācara Patroṃ Kā Itihāsa*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Naī Dillī: Svarāja Prakāśana, 2010), 122. The contents of this book are taken from the serialized history of the Hindi and Urdu press which Gupta published in *Bhāratmitra*.

की स्थिति और (इसटाक) जानने से और सब देश और समय की घटना मालुम होने से वाणिज्य का भविष्यत अनुमान होय है, और तदनुसार काम करने से विशेष लाभ होना संभव है।[29]

> Firstly, then, the newspaper is the state's prime minister and intermediary. Secondly, it is the living structure of commerce, which shows that the growth and progress of commerce is from the offering of the newspaper. In India, these days, the greatest advances in commerce have been achieved by the Bombay folks. Although Calcutta is the capital, it is still a commercial city, and likewise the advantages and profits go to those in whose language there are newspapers. Why is it so that in business here so much profit goes to the English, the Jews, and the Parsis? As far as we can tell the main cause is the newspaper. Because from the paper one can know the price of foreign and domestic commodities, and the condition and stocks of any goods, income and losses, and time and place of events, and thereby make future predictions, and accordingly enable unique profits.

The process of democratization and increased visibility with regard to state power is clearly a great advantage of having a Hindi Press, but the emphasis here is on the commercial sphere. The paper was printed in Barabazar, Calcutta, and was written in a language that was to be easily understood by Hindustanis and Marwaris, as the paper itself proclaims. An announcement circulated in the neighborhood informed the community that a minimum of 500 subscriptions were needed to keep the paper alive, thereby involving the community in the venture of a Hindi newspaper. It was also the practice of the paper to publish its accounts, informing the public how much it cost to run the paper, how much they had taken in, and also how much they had gone out of pocket to provide the service.[30] The gesture of literally opening their books to their readership in Barabazar would have meant something symbolically intimate and familial; a merchant would recognize this bonhomie and would be more likely to trust the paper since it established *sākh* (credibility) in the merchant idiom.

Bhāratmitra, and the educationalist zeal it partially inherited from *Somprakāś*, was one of the earliest stirrings of politicization, nationalization, and reform of the Marwari community. In 1884, *Bhāratmitra* began to demand a Hindi medium school for boys, the likes of which would not appear until 15 years later with the establishment of the Vishudhanad Saraswati Vidyalay. As Anilkumar Shukla suggests, "The goal of the paper was to develop the nation's political and commercial language, and the total national consciousness."[31] The paper even ran articles on issues such as child marriage, arguing that anti-sati legislation had not been initially popular either. After the death of *Khaṛī Bolī's* acknowledged leader, Bhāratendu Hariśchandra, *Bhāratmitra* launched a campaign to take up his work in propagating the idiom.[32] But the full force of *Bhāratmitra's* Hindi advocacy and nationalism was only realized when its most charismatic editor, Balmukund Gupta, joined the staff.

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[29] Ibid., 122–123.
[30] Mṛtyuñjay, "Bhāratmitra : Paricay," 62.
[31] Anilkumār Śukla, "Bhāratmitra," in *Hindī Sāhitya : Baṅgīya Bhūmikā*, ed. Kṛṣṇabihārī Miśra, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Kalakattā: Maṇimaya, 1983), 262.
[32] Ibid., 261.

Balmukund Gupta: The Nationalist Turn and Hindi as a National Language

The most important editor and celebrated prose stylist in the *Bhāratmitra* family is Balmukund Gupta, who is considered the link between Bhāratendu and the Dwivedi eras.[33] He was born in the Rohtak district of Haryana in 1865, not far from the Shekavati region of Rajasthan. In his village Guṛiyānā Grām, he was the first of the Mahajan (merchant) community to attend madrasa (school), in which he excelled in Persian and Urdu. He began his writing career publishing in various Urdu journals, becoming most famous for articles he contributed to the pioneering *Avadh Punch*. It was there that he honed his skill as a subtle humorist and satirist.[34] He edited the Urdu journals *Akhbar-e-Cunār* (1886-1888) and *Kohinūr* (1888-1889). In 1888 Madan Mohan Malviya persuaded Gupta to switch to Hindi and join his daily *Hindosthan*. Gupta was reluctant but ultimately went to work at *Hindosthan* from 1889-1891. Once he had made the switch to Hindi, Gupta never turned back, he began reading other Hindi papers carefully and scrutinizing the language.

Gupta admired the Calcutta paper *Hindi Baṅgvasī* for its excellent articles, timely news items, illustrations, and touch of satire. It was modeled on its Bengali sister journal, *Baṅgbasī*. But he found one problem with the paper: given the entirely Bengali editorial staff led by Amritlal Chakravarti, the Hindi was heavily influenced by Bengali.[35] Gupta wrote a letter in 1892 to the *Hindi Baṅgvasī* to complain about the badly written Hindi translation of a Bengali novel. The clarity and eloquence of his letter landed him the position of assistant editor. This brought him to Calcutta and within two years *Hindi Baṅgvasī* had a readership of 2,000, surpassing the previous record held by *Ucitvaktā* (1880-1894) at 1,500. Gupta led *Hindi Bangvāsī* from 1893-1898. The paper was historically significant particularly because a generation of Hindi editors trained in its editorial department: Amritlal Chakravarti, Balmukund Gupta, Baburav Vishnu Paradkar, Ambika Prasad Vajpayi, and Lakshman Narayan Garde. To this end Ambika Prasad Vajpeyi wrote that it was like the first university for Hindi journalism. Eventually all these editors in turn came to work for *Bhāratmitra*, as though it were their postgraduate training, to extend Vajpeyi's metaphor.

Balmukund Gupta resigned from *Hindī Baṅgvāsī* in January of 1898 because of a disagreement with the proprietors. He believed that they were attempting to decry the preacher Din Dayalu Sharma (his personal friend and popular *Sanātanī* preacher in Bara Bazaar) in order to divert Marwari money towards their own philanthropic endeavors.[36] Allegedly, the management of *Hindī Baṅgvāsī* was attempting to collect money from Marwaris for the construction of a *Dharmbhavan*, but Gupta protested that they were actually planning to build a grand new office for their paper. Meanwhile, *Bhāratmitra* began to incur heavy losses and nearly closed down. It was subsequently rescued by a wealthy silver merchant called Jagannath Das, who wired Gupta in his village Guṛiyānā and ultimately persuaded him to return to Calcutta and join as editor of *Bhāratmitra*.

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[33] Dhirendra Varma et al (eds.), *Hindi Sahitya Kosh, Vol. II*, 382.
[34] Mushirul Hasan, *Wit and Humour in Colonial North India* (Niyogi Books, 2007); Madan Gopal, *Balmukund Gupta* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1986), 7–12.
[35] Vajpeyi, *Samācāra Patroṃkā Itihāsa*, 212.
[36] Gopal, *Balmukund Gupta*, 34.

Gupta's final and most important move was thus to *Bhāratmitra* (1899-1907). The paper already figured among the leading nationalist papers such as Tilak's *Marathi Kesari*, and the Bengali papers *Vandemataram*, *Sandhya*, and *Yugantar*. Gupta took pains to make sure that the paper remained relevant and that it made timely interventions concerning developments in nationalist politics. Everyday, Gupta read several papers in Urdu, Bengali, and English. The aggregate of these current events would go into his paper as well as pieces on language, grammar, literature, satire, religion, journalism, and the script question. In the well known grammar debates between Balmukund Gupta and Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, though the rivals exhibit a deep respect for one another, but ever true to the cause of a simple and easily intelligible Hindi, Gupta frequently chastises Dwivedi for the difficulty of his language and his excessive Sanskritization.[37]

For Gupta supported a clear and simple Hindi, particularly so as not to drive off the powerful Marwari community in Calcutta with excessively complex language. In Balmukund Gupta, the Marwaris thus found a friend, but also an earnest and constant critic. He identified with the community in many ways: Gupta was a devout *Vaishnav*; he bathed in the Ganges everyday and performed his prayers, and often visited temples. He had frequent contact with Marwaris in this religio-social capacity. Ramvilas Sharma has noted that Gupta had a deep affinity with the business classes (*Vyāpārī-varg se ghaniṣṭh sambandh*).[38] Sharma also provides anecdotal accounts of Marwaris trying to influence the powerful editor in various ways, but with no success. The Hindi scholar Madan Gopal has also written extensively about Gupta's connection to the Marwari community:

> Some people may lay the charge of parochialism against Balmukund Gupta for the attention he devoted to the Marwari community in Calcutta. They were perhaps the principal clientele of *Bharatmitra,* and also because Balmukund Gupta was himself a part of the Marwari community…He was closely associated with the workings of the Marwari Association, the Vishudhanand Saraswati Vidyalaya, The Marwari Chamber of Commerce, the Vaishya Sabha, the Savitri Kanya Pathshala, Sri Krishna Goshala, and the Burra Bazar Library.[39]

Bhāratmitra provided Gupta a public forum to address the Marwari community regarding social reform, political consciousness, and business practice and modernization. Among other causes, Gupta took merchants to task for 'foolishly' continuing to employ their traditional scripts. A constant preoccupation for the Hindi press in general, and Gupta in particular, was the defense and propagation of the *Devnāgarī* script, against all other scripts such as *Muḍiyā* (a merchant script):

> निसंदेह हिन्दोस्तान के महाजन और वणिक आदि अपने बही खाते नागरी में नहीं रखते, परन्तु इसका कारण यह नहीं कि नागरी अक्षर बही-खाते या कारोबार के काम के नहीं हैं। वरंच यथार्थ बात यह है कि ये मारवाड़ी बनिये आदि रुपये में पौने सोलह आना मूर्ख होते चले आये हैं। उन्होंने इनके बाप दादों ने, न कभी सात पीढ़ी से फारसी पढ़ी न नागरी या और किसी भाषा का अक्षर ही सीखे। नागरी से ही बिगड़े एक प्रकार के टूटे-टाटे अक्षर यह लोग सीखते चले जाते हैं और उन्हीं से बही-खाते का काम निकाम लेते हैं। यह अक्षर इतने खराब होते हैं कि सिवाय बही-

[37] Bālamukunda Gupta, *Bālamukunda Gupta Granthāvalī* (Caṇḍīgaṛha: Hariyānā Sāhitya Akādemī, 1993).
[38] Ramvilas Sharma, "Śailīkār Bālmukund Gupta," in *Hindī Sāhitya : Baṅgīya Bhūmikā*, ed. Kṛṣṇabihārī Miśra, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Kalakattā: Maṇimaya, 1983), 65.
[39] Gopal, *Balmukund Gupta*, 37–38.

खाते के चिट्ठी-पत्री आदि उसमें कुछ भी नहीं लिखी जा सकती और वह अक्षर मूर्खों के चलाये हुए हैं। (भारतमित्र, 21 मई 1900)[40]

No doubt merchants and traders et cetera don't use Nāgarī in their account books, but the reason is not that Nāgarī is not suitable for the purpose of accounting. Rather, the fact of the matter is that the Marwari Banias have been three-fourths of a rupee idiotic for a while. Together with their fathers and grandfathers, going back seven generations, they never learned Farsi (Nastaʿlīq) or Nāgarī or any other language's script. They've been learning a corrupted, piecemeal form of Nāgarī itself, with which they gladly manage the work of keeping account books. This alphabet is so lousy that, aside from the ledgers of the account books, absolutely nothing else can be written with it, and it is propagated by fools. (*Bhāratmita* 21 May 1900)

While the tone of the passage seems excessively harsh towards *Muḍiyā* and Marwaris, Gupta was known to use this style in a whimsical (albeit didactic) manner. Nonetheless, Marwaris had begun a process of modernization by 1900, and Gupta's reprimand was a call to redouble these efforts. One can sense the frustration in Gupta's words; it is clear that this is not the first time Marwaris have been asked to abandon their traditional *Muḍiyā* and throw their weight behind Nāgarī. And since the utility of Nāgarī (even in accountancy) cannot be denied, the only explanation is that Marwaris are and have been for generations illiterate fools. Also, *Muḍiyā* had the advantage of secrecy, a fact that Gupta does not mention but knew well. But Gupta's aim was to pull Marwaris into a nationalist fold, and away from their insular and inward looking tradition. Script represented a cultural solidarity and *Muḍiyā* was an intolerable fracture in that solidarity. Gupta was a master of social pressure. This editorial appeared at a moment when Marwaris had become acutely aware of the importance of public image: in the wake of debates surrounding the passage of the Rain Gambling Act (1897). Gupta's tone and handling of the Marwaris, however, was meant as friendly persuasion. It must be viewed in comparison to his vitriolic treatment of Viceroy Lord Curzon.

Gupta's most far reaching and popular creations were his satirical open letters to Lord Curzon published by *Bhāratmitra* (and *Zamana* in Urdu) from 1903-1905. The letters were called *śivśambhu ke ciṭṭhe* and featured remonstrations from *śivśambhu*, the old *bhang* drinking Brahmin, against the decadently unproductive and heartless tenure of Lord Curzon. The old man reprimands Curzon for building the Victoria Memorial and the Delhi Durbar in a time of such acute poverty and starvation. In his fifth letter, Gupta tells Curzon that the people of India don't love him and he doesn't love the people either, but just the same he has returned to rule them a second time. And the thought of this has ruined, for the old *bhang* drinker, the pleasure of cannabis.[41] The letters were hugely popular and have come to be regarded as classics of political satire.[42] Bengal was the nerve center of Indian nationalism in this period, and for this reason Curzon decided to partition the state, which in turn led to the Swadeshi movement from 1905-1908. Gupta was one of the few journalists to be invited to the Delhi Durbar, and yet the spectacle only made him more critical of Curzon and his policies. Gupta died in Delhi in 1907, but

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[40] Gupta, *Bālamukunda Gupta Granthāvalī*, 321.
[41] Bālamukunda Gupta, *Śivaśambhu Ke Ciṭṭhe*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Naī Dillī: Ṛshabhacaraṇa Jaina, 1985), 39.
[42] Ulrika Stark and Jason Grunebaum, "Shivshambhu's Letters to Lord Curzon," in *Nationalism in the Vernacular: Hindi, Urdu, and the Literature of Indian Freedom*, ed. Shobna Nijhawan (Orient Blackswan, 2010), 178–179.

the prestige he had brought to the paper attracted the most talented writers and editors for the next two decades. Ambika Prasad Vajpeyi's tenure is also noteworthy; he served as editor until 1919, and endeavored to uphold its tradition of ridding Barabazar of its perceived social ills such as gambling. This tradition created antagonism between the paper and the orthodox wing of an increasingly polarized Marwari community. But the reformist and progressive portion of the community was quite sympathetic to the paper and continued to support and patronize it.

Marwaris, Hindi editors knew, had to be unequivocally recruited into the cause of Hindi and the nation, and there was a constant effort in the press to get their attention. Rādhākṛṣṇa Tībaṛewālā's *Mārwāṛī Gazette* (1890-1898) was the earliest attempt to cater exclusively to Marwaris. The paper enthusiastically encouraged education and Hindi literacy amongst Marwaris. But as Vajpeyi has indicated, it received little patronage from the community and therefore didn't last through the decade.[43] Durga Prasad Mishra was also well acquainted with the rhythms of merchant life in Barabazar. Later in his career he published *Marwari Bandhu* (with Rudmal Goenka) particularly to benefit men of commerce during the Swadeshi movement. However gradual, a Marwari affiliation or intimate connection with Hindi had begun to gather momentum in associations and schools, and in the following decades Marwaris began to champion the cause of Hindi in Calcutta's press.

Turbulent Years: Bengal's Partition, Swadeshi, Marwari Revolutionaries

From the time of the Swadeshi movement (1905) to the outbreak of the First World War, several papers emerged in Calcutta to advise the business community of commercial and political developments. A paper called *Vaishyopkarak*, started in 1904 by Shivchandra Bharatiya, would occasionally carry political and Swadeshi movement issues. The main objective of these journals was to deal with the bad stigma that had attached to the business community. *Marwari Bandhu* (ed. Durga Prasad Mishra 1904 - 1907) and *Nrsingh* (ed. Ambika Prasad Vajpeyi 1906 -1907) also targeted the business community directly with the intention of persuading merchants to boycott foreign goods. The papers informed the public on the annual drain of 45 Crore Rupees from India to England, setting the stage as it were, for the celebration of the indigenous capitalists as a counter measure to the colonial drain of wealth. But before economic nationalism became the fixed party line of the progressive Marwaris, there was a brief period of revolutionary adventurism.

Marwari youth could not remain unaffected by the Bengal partition (1905) and the Swadeshi protests. For the first crop of well educated young men had begun to emerge from the Vishudanand Saraswati Vidyalay and other Hindi medium schools. They were politically aware, patriotic, and they were Hindi supporters. Young Marwaris formed a secret (gupta) organization in which there were four sub-committees: the first was the *Samāj Sudhār Samiti*, of which Omkarmal Sarāf, Hanuman Prasad Poddar, and G.D. Birla were members. The second committee was the nationalist committee, the third was

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[43] Vajpeyi, *Samācāra Patroṃkā Itihāsa*, 236.

a political action committee, and the fourth made contact with revolutionaries. This last committee had members such as Prabhudayal Himmatsinghka, Banarasidas Jhunjhunuwala, Jwalaprasad Kanoria, Kanhaiyalal Chitlania. Marwari youth also set up an institute in Kalighat to train for revolution, including using fire arms. Their other radical activity was printing and acquiring books in Hindi to be made available to the members to cultivate a taste for literature and patriotism. The Samiti published a translation of the *Gita* (1914) in Calcutta by Bābūrāo Viṣṇu Parādkar. The unique feature of this *Gita* was its cover featuring an image of Mother India with a *Gita* in one hand and a sword in the other. The government found out that thousands of these had been distributed and took it as an open call to armed insurrection. Police raided the Samiti offices and seized their property. The *Gita* had a profound influence on Hanuman Prasad Poddar and was the impetus for the founding of the Gita Press (1926) in Gorakhpur with Jayadayal Goenka.[44] The Gita Press publications and its journal *Kalyan* would come to play a massive part in the construction of Hindu identity and Sanatan Dharm. Yet this would come at a much later stage in the Hindi careers of Poddar and Goenka.

Poddar, Jamnalal Bajaj, G.D. Birla, and Jayadayal Goenka were strong supporters of Hindi as a national language and would remain so throughout their careers. These young Marwaris tried to pull the community in a nationalist direction and form bonds with Congress and Gandhi. In 1915, Poddar welcomed Gandhi to Calcutta as the representative of the Hindu Sabha. Although Gandhi and Poddar had many differences of opinion, it is believed that personally they remained rather close. It was through Poddar's *sākh* (reputation) that Madan Mohan Malviya obtained five lakh rupees for the Banaras Hindu University out of the Marwari community. In this period, the community was going through a radical transition that inspired a conservative backlash during the war years. But by this time, both sides of the progressive and orthodox divide had come to recognize Hindi as essential to promote their interests.

The First World War and the Reformist Agendas

The demand for the rapid delivery of news grew greatly at the time of the First World War. Several weekly and monthly papers became dailies at this time. The Hindi-speaking business community, having long since accepted the paper as critical source of commercial intelligence, demanded news and developments on the war front that affected the commodity markets. *Kalkattā Samācār* (1914-1922) edited by Amritlal Chakravarty and *Viśwamitra* (1916-present, in various forms) edited by Mulchand Agrawal, were two leading papers that met the needs of the merchants. As Agrawal has noted in his autobiography, "The war was on. Calcutta is a great trading city. All the merchants were very keen to know the latest news about the war."[45] This created a great demand for timely, reliable content that Agrawal was able to deliver because of the newswire service. While both *Kalkattā Samācār* and *Viśwamitra* carried commercial and war news, their respective politics anticipated the split that was emerging amongst Marwaris. *Kalkattā*

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[44] Monika Horstmann, "Towards a Universal Dharma," in *Representing Hinduism : the Construction of Religious Traditions and National Identity*, ed. Vasudha Dalmia (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1995), 300.

[45] Mool Chand Aggarwal, *Patrakar ki Atma katha*, 53, quoted in Madan Gopal, *Freedom Movement and the Press: the Role of Hindi Newspapers* (New Delhi: Criterion Publications, 1990), 134.

Samācār was heavily influenced by the conservative sector (उस पर सनातन पंथियों का प्रभाव था) and was in regular conflict with *Bhāratmitra* and *Viśwamitra*.[46] Progressive journalist Ambika Prasad Vajpeyi used to ridicule Chakravarti for his out-dated views (*purātanpriyatā*).[47] The competitive nature of their relationship aligned with cracks forming between orthodox Marwaris and the reformists.

Ambika Prasad Vajpeyi had already angered the conservative portion of the Marwari community when he led *Bhāratmitra* to condemn cotton numbers gambling in 1911. He felt that it was the paper's tradition, since the days of the rain gambling condemnation, to rid the Marwaris and Barabazar of its gambling practices.[48] In a memoir of the period, published two decades later in *Viśāl Bhārat*, Vajpeyi wrote that the conservatives attempted to take control of *Bhāratmitra*:

> सनातनधर्मी मारवाड़ियों ने मुझे किसी प्रकार की सूचना दिए बिना ही बाबू जगन्नाथ दास से जाकर कहा - "हमें 'भारतमित्र' दे दीजिए। हम सनातन धर्म के सिद्धांतों पर इसे चलाएंगे और उन्नत करेंगे।" ये भारतमित्र डुबाना चाहते हैं। (*Viśāl Bhārat*, October, 1931)

> The orthodox Marwaris somehow sent me the request, without approaching Bābū Jagannath Das (owner), "Give us *Bhāratmitra*. We will run it according to the principles of the eternal Hindu religion and improve it." They want to sink *Bhāratmitra*.

Vajpeyi also points out that *Bhāratmitra* sought and received the assistance of progressives G.D. Birla and Devi Prasad Khetan. The latter had just returned from overseas and was consequently suffering a social boycott. Not able to take control of *Bhāratmitra*, the orthodox Marwaris rallied behind *Kalkattā Samācār*. What had become abundantly clear to all Marwaris was that the press had the power to influence their fortunes; by controlling the content, tone, and spin of information, a paper could destroy a person or firm's *sākh* and even mobilize the might of the Bengal government against speculative activities that had previously been unregulated. *Bhāratmitra's* owner Jagannath Das, was unwilling to go into partnership with the conservatives because he expected they would use the paper to attack Khetan for travelling overseas. Other reformist voices emerged, most notably Mulchandra Agrawal, whose paper was to be the counterbalance to *Kalkattā Samācār*.

Mulchandra Agrawal managed and edited *Vishwamitra* from 1916-1940 (daily, weeky, and monthly in different periods). He also worked for *Liberty*, *Illustrated India* (English Weekly), *Advance* (English daily), *Sāmyavādī*, and *Mātrī-Bhūmī* (Bengali daily) in the capacity of manager and publisher. Thus his career ranged from work in labor friendly papers to capitalist papers and back again. After passing his BA in Allahabad he came to Calcutta for the first time in 1914. Ambika Prasad Vajpeyi gave him some translation work for *Bhāratmitra* and he wrote some articles for *Svatantra Bharat*. Without experience it was difficult to get steady work as an editor, so in 1916 he took a loan of Rs. 2000 and purchased the *Kalkatiya* typeface, a Hindi press, and started

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[46] Shambhunath and Dwivedi, *Hindī Navajāgaraṇ : Baṅgiya Virāsat*, 170–170.
[47] Nevatiya, *Baṛābāzār Ke Kāryakarttā – Smaraṇ Evam Abhinandan*, 25.
[48] Ambikā Prasād Vājpeyī, "Patrakār Ke Anubhav," *Viśāl Bhārat*, no. October (1931).

Viśwamitra. Agrawal read the English news and wire service first thing in the morning and translated it for publication in *Viśwamitra* the following morning.

Very few files of the paper still exist because of a fire that occurred at the *Viśwamitra* office (approximately 1930), but there are some later issues in the Hanuman Pustakalay (Howrah) which give ample evidence of the paper's socially purposive agenda. While it also contained commercial and political news, *Viśwamitra* frequently carried articles on issues of untouchability and Dalit temple entry, communalism, Hindu-Muslim relations, and the welfare of prostitutes.[49] In 1921-1922, *Viśwamitra* featured three lead articles in support of the protest against the Prince of Wales' tour of India, including a visit to Calcutta in December 1921 and the opening of the Delhi Durbar on 16 February, 1922. The support of the boycott landed Agrawal in Alipur Central Jail along with Subhash Chandra Bose, Chitarajan Das, Mohammed Abdul Kalam Azad, Shyam Sundar Chakravarti, and other editors like Lakshmi Narayan Garde, Ambika Prasad Vaypayi, and Padmaraj Jain. He spent eleven months in jail, during which time *Viśwamitra* suffered heavy losses. When he got out, he launched a colored weekly of the same name and turned his attention to his own community by writing on such social issues as widow remarriage and child-marriage. By the first years of the 1920s, *Viśwamitra* was one of several voices attempting to lead the discussion on Marwari social reform.

Mārwāṛī Sudhār, *Matwālā*, and the Bold Reformist Tone of the 1920s

In 1920-21, in the fervor of Gandhi's civil disobedience movements, Shivpujan Sahay was swept up, as he puts it, "like a dry leaf in a storm." He was teaching Hindi at a school in Arrah, in the Bhojpur district of Bihar, when Marwari youths (Navranglal Tulsyan and Hardwar Prasad Jalan) persuaded him to edit the journal *Mārwāṛī Sudhār* (1921-1923). For the first issue of the journal he went to Calcutta, and with the help of rich Marwaris, subsequently travelled to Delhi, Jaipur, Bombay, and several other large towns spending months promoting the journal and meeting the Marwari reformist ideologues.

Mārwāṛī Sudhār was considered a 'youth' paper that specifically sought to recruit energetic, radical young Marwaris, particularly of Calcutta's Barabazar. It was printed at the Balkrishna Press in Barabazar by Mahadev Prasad Seth, who was sympathetic to its purpose. This period firmly established the relationship between the soon to be *Matwālā Maṇḍal* and the reform-oriented portion of the Marwari community.[50] The vanguards of social and commercial reform in the Marwari community were published at the Balkrishna Press in one capacity or another, either in a journal or in essay collections.[51]

[49] Avadheś Siṃha, "Viśwamitra: Paricay," in *Hindī Sāhitya : Baṅgīya Bhūmikā*, ed. Kṛṣṇabihārī Miśra, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Kalakattā: Maṇimaya, 1983), 180–184.

[50] Suresh Shaw, "Mārwāṛī Sudhār : Paricay," in *Hindī Navajāgaraṇ : Baṅgiya Virāsat*, ed. Shambhunath and Dwivedi (Kolkata: Coal India Limited, 1993), 100–101.

[51] Śivapūjana Sahāya, *Merā Jīvana*, 2. saṃskaraṇa. (Naī Dillī: Ācārya Śivapūjana Sahāya Smāraka Nyāsa ke sahayoga se prakāśita Sārāṃśa, 1996), 100. Sahāy list the names of the various Calcutta based Marwari writers who were published by the Balkrishna Press. Among them are the names of many of the leading reformists: Padmaraj Jain, Dharmchandra Khemka, Ishwardas Jalan, Kaliprasad Khetan, Gangaprasad

Massive financial support came from the community and frequently from the writers themselves. In this period, Marwaris increasingly became involved in print Hindi, as writers, publishers, and book shop owners. Sahay writes that members of the *Matwālā Maṇḍal* always kept good *sākh* with Marwari writers, book shop proprietors, and printers.

In the first issue of *Mārwāṛī Sudhār*, Shivpujan Sahay made the following declaration:

इसका प्रधान उद्देश्य केवल मारवाड़ी समाज की कुरीतियों को दूर करके उस समाज का वास्तविक परिष्कार करना ही है . . . मारवाड़ी समाज की कुप्रथाओं की तीव्र एवं निर्भीक आलोचना की जाएगी। (*Mārwāṛī Sudhār*, March 1921)

> The primary objective is to remove the debased customs of the Marwari community and concentrate on the actual refinement of the community … the Marwari community's benighted customs will be fiercely and fearlessly criticized.

This editorial warned the reader that in the interest of reform and refinement, a brutal critique would appear from time to time. This declaration set the tone for the debates for the entire decade. The journal promoted an interest not only in nationalist and reformist causes, but also in arts and literature, in order to cultivate a level of sophistication in the community, and distance from the stigma of boorishness. A sample of the article titles gives one an immediate sense of the journal: 'Women's Education,' 'Domestic Responsibilities and Women's education,' 'Women's Character and the Male Influence,' 'Girls' Schools and their Activities,' 'Marwaris and Politics,' 'The Present Duty of Marwaris,' 'The Merchant Script', 'Marwari Philanthropy,' 'A Widow's Lament,' 'Let there be Libraries in the Dharamshala,' 'A Marwari Widow's Letter for Mercy,' 'The Evil Customs in the Marwari Society,' 'What is Literature?,' 'Marriage for Sale,' 'The Spinning Wheel.'[52] Women's education and emancipation dominated the attention of reformists in the 1920s. Bhagirath Kanoria and Sitaram Seksaria, pioneers in women's education, established the Marwari Balika Vidyalaya (girls' school) in 1920. It was the first of several girls' schools and women's colleges that would cement the affiliation between Marwari women, Hindi, and women's emancipation.

In his introduction to *Mārwāṛī Sudhār*, Suresh Shaw makes an important connection between Hindi and Marwari social reform: in most cases, amongst Marwaris, social reform movements have been associated with the opening of a given library. In Assam, Bihar, Bengal, U.P., Maharashtra, etc., Marwaris opened Hindi libraries. Almost every Hindi Library in Calcutta was opened by Marwaris, such as the Barabazar Library, Kumar Sabha Library, and the Hanuman Pustakalay.[53] *Mārwāṛī Sudhār* ran columns on how to promote libraries and literary societies, suggesting that there should be grand annual festivals to attract people and raise awareness. There were also articles related directly to Hindi style and grammar, gently addressing 'deficiencies' common in

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Bhotika, Tulsiram Saraogi, Vasantlal Murarka, Ramdev Chokani, Baijnath Kedia, and Ramkumar Goenka, among others. These writers represented a shift in the community's traditional practices as Khetan was a barrister, Goenka had travelled over seas to America, and Kedia opened the Hindi Pustak Agency.
[52] Shaw, "Mārwāṛī Sudhār : Paricay," 232–233.
[53] Ibid., 233.

Barabazar speech: e.g. the lack or misuse of the perfective agent marker *ne*, the co-relatives *jab* and *tab*, and grammatical gender, etc (*Abhibhāṣāṇ*, November 1922). Marwaris were regularly reminded that Hindi was *their* language and that it was their duty to promote its use, development, and literature. At every turn, language was linked to social reform and progress:

> देखिए हमारे पड़ोसी बंगाली भाई अपनी मातृभाषा के साहित्य की श्रीवृद्धि में किस तरह जी जानसे लगे हुए हैं। बंगालियों ने अंगरेजी साहित्य के धार पर बंगला में सभी प्रकार के नवीन विषयों के ग्रन्थ भर दिए हैं … भाषाके सुधार से सभी प्रकार के सुधार होने संभव हैं। जिस जाति की भाषा उन्नत नहीं होती वह अन्य प्रकार की उन्नतियों से कोसों दूर रहती है।

> Just look at how our neighboring Bengali brothers have applied their entire being to the advancement of their mother tongue. Based on English literature, Bengalis have filled books in all the new topics…Through the refinement of language every other improvement is possible. The community, whose language does not advance, will also remain miles away from any other advancement. (November, 1922)

The other advancement referred to in the passage includes commercial and economic progress related to knowledge and technology made available through the literary and scientific development of language.

In an article called *Vyāpār* (October 1921), the Marwaris are told that they have been model merchants, honest brokers, great philanthropists, strict and pious adherents of *dharm*, the staple of commerce, but also pillars of colonialism (compradore). The new day, however, required a new leading role, one of domestic industry, symbolized by Gandhi's *carkhā* (spinning wheel), which would reduce the drain of wealth and poverty of India. They are asked to open banks, factories, and curtail usury and imported piece-good commerce. Although these issues were not new – the Swadeshi movement established this program two decades ago – this was the first time that this call to action was coming directly from a Marwari print organ and directed squarely at the community. The rhetoric was markedly economic-nationalist:

> प्यारे मारवाड़ी भाइयों भारतमाता आपकी ओर आशा भरी नज़र से टकटकी लगाए देख रही है। … क्या अब भी तुमलोगों से ऐसी आशा कि जा सकती है कि तुम धन का सदुपयोग करना सीखोगे और सात्विक दान में व्यय करके देश की गरीब तथा भूखी आत्माओं की शांति के लिए भारत की अवस्था सुधारोगे? (October 1922)

> Dear Marwari brothers, Mother India is gazing at you through eyes brimming with hope. Can it still be hoped that you will learn to use your wealth productively? And, directing expenditures towards virtuous contributions, will you mend the state of India and bring peace to the country's poor and hungry souls?

The passage plays on the pathos produced by the image of an expectant Mother India surrounded by the nation's multitudes of starving masses. The poverty of the land is connected with the complicity of compradore capitalism. The Marwaris are reminded that the fate of the nation hangs in the balance, such is their economic clout.

The reform of the commercial and public sphere was connected very closely to reform in the Marwari private sphere. *Mārwāṛī Sudhār* was the leading voice regarding women's issues in the community, and even though the journal did not last more than two years, it managed to set the agenda for the reformist camp for the rest of the decade. Playing on the commercial language of exchange, Kedārnāth Kejṛīwāl published an article entitled '*Vikray-Vivāh*' (Wedding Vending, November 1922). Leading with a quote of the celebrated nationalist poet Maithilisharan Gupt[54] (1886-1964), Kejṛīwāl outlines the customs associated with Marwari marriage that he finds reprehensible. He begins with a critique of the massive expenditure of making the match – the fees demanded by the agents (*dālāl*), the dowry price, and then wedding expenses. The entire process unfolds as a commodity transaction: *kanyā-vikray* (maiden marketing) and *kanya-māl* (maiden as commodity). He turns then to child-marriage and widow remarriage, illustrating how the two customs working in tandem result in child-widows, and in turn prostitution and infanticide. He maintains that the horrors of these 'sins' will pull the community down and ruin its public image. Kejṛīwāl closes his impassioned article with a call for a social boycott (a traditional disciplinary strategy) on all weddings that injure the community dignity: child-marriage, old man marriage (to very young girls), inappropriate and unsuitable matches, weddings with the performance of dancing girls (*veśyā-nṛtya*), forced marriage, and ostentatious expenditure, etc. Thus a clear line had been drawn and Marwaris were asked to take sides. Many of these themes of *Mārwāṛī Sudhār* reappear at the end of the decade in *Chand's Marwari Ank*, but in that case as an attack from outside the community and in an entirely hostile tone. It was decided to close *Mārwāṛī Sudhār* in 1923 because another progressive paper called *Mārwāṛī Agrawāl* had appeared in 1921 and was largely fulfilling the same function. This left Sahay without a job only momentarily because Mahadev Prasad Seth immediately enlisted him in a completely novel endeavor.

Matwālā: The return of Social and Political Satire

Matwālā appeared in the wake of *Mārwāṛī Sudhār*. It shared a progressive vision with its predecessor, but took a radically different approach. The didactic heavy-handedness of *Mārwāṛī Sudhār*, which limited its reach, compelled Shivpujan Sahay and Mahadev Prasad Seth to couch the bitter pill of social critique in a more whimsical and entertaining vehicle. In the tradition of Balmukund Gupta, *Matwālā* (1923-1930) was particularly committed to *vyangatmak*, or satirical and ironic modes, as communicative tools. *Matwālā* also introduced the poetry of Nirala (1899-1962) to the Hindi world. Orsini has noted that Nirala is the most experimental and wide-ranging of the Chāyavād poets; he is now considered one of the most prominent Hindi writers of the twentieth century.[55] The journal brought the aesthetic together with the ethical, fusing various forms and genres of discourse with the historical specificities of colonial Indian society in order to both inform and critique. The name *Matwālā* has multiple meanings: intoxicated, free-spirited, frenzied, and exhilarated. Thus their motto: "Consciousness comes at the

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[54] Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 400. Gupta was born near Jhansi into a merchant family with literary tastes. His first Khari Boli poems were published in the Calcutta journal *Vaiśyopkārak*. He literary achievements gained him the accolade *rāṣṭrakavi*.
[55] Ibid., 410–411.

extremes of intoxication, and that intelligence is also a potent intoxicant." The madness of the *Matwālā* satire seemed like the rantings of a drunk, but the political consciousness informing it promised exhilarating liberation.

The *Matwālā Maṇḍal* (Circle) provided refuge to many of the towering and occasionally controversial figures of the 1920s Hindi world, most notably Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala' and Pandey Bechan Sharma 'Ugra.' The group came together almost accidentally when Shivpujan Sahay, at the closing of *Mārwāṛī Sudhār*, found himself marooned at the Balkrishna Press on 23 Shankar Ghosh Lane. Seth lived there with his constant companion Munshi Navjadiklal Shrivastav. The soon-to-be-famous Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala' (1899-1961) lived in the upper part of the building with the monks from the Ramakrishna Mission. As avid readers of Bengali journals, the *Matwālā Maṇḍal* was formed to remedy the lack of a whimsical, satirical Hindi paper. At that time there was a Bengali paper called *Avatar*, which was a comical satirical paper that was both highly entertaining and informative. In the evenings the *Maṇḍal* members used to prepare *bhang* (cannabis) and read aloud from *Avatar*.[56] They decided that such a paper should be brought out in Hindi. Nirala, Sahay, Seth, and Shrivastav came together on August 20th 1923 to discuss the matter. Munshi Shrivastav came up with the name *Matwālā* the next day. The division of labor was as follows: Nirala would submit poetry and criticism, Shrivastav would write satire and humorous quips, and Sahay would write the lead article and edit. On August 23rd, the first issue came out and made quite a stir in the market.[57]

In addition to satirizing various aspects of British rule, *Matwala* also took aim at Hindu orthodox practices such as caste untouchability, child marriage, and restrictions on widow remarriage. The journal commented on the news of the day as it appeared in other journals and papers from around the country, often lampooning their coverage. Yet the paper also had a highly local presence as it regularly identified and ridiculed orthodox Marwaris for boycotting someone for a widow remarriage, or overseas travel, etc. *Matwālā's* critique was, however, slightly sugar-coated by the whimsical or absurd tone.

Matwālā's self introduction (*ātma paricay*) details the premise of the journal, which is itself quite funny. In short, the reader is told that Shiva and Parvati, high upon Mount Kailash, despair at the miserable state of *Bhāratvarṣ*, so they select Vīrbhadra to go on a fact finding assignment. When Ganesh summons him, Vīrbhadra is "sitting nearby drinking skull-cups full of sweet wine with a Yogini" (Sahāy, *ātma paricay*, 27 August 1923). Parvati tells him to send regular reports on every class of person. Thus, Vīrbhadra becomes a journalist and it is through his very drunken, but earnest, eyes that the news of the day and the state of the people is reported. In a clever wordplay, he asserts that only the open-minded (or similarly intoxicated) will be able to follow his reports:

जो मेरी ही तरह स्वतंत्र 'मत' वाला होगा, वही उस ढंग का समझनेवाला होगा।

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[56] Ganśyām Tivārī, "Matwālā," in *Hindī Sāhitya : Baṅgīya Bhūmikā*, ed. Kṛshṇabihārī Miśra, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Kalakattā: Maṇimaya, 1983), 271; Sahāya, *Merā Jīvana*, 92.
[57] Śivapūjana Sahāya, *Merā Jīvana*, 2. saṃskaraṇa. (Naī Dillī: Ācārya Śivapūjana Sahāya Smāraka Nyāsa ke sahayoga se prakāśita Sārāṃśa, 1996), 101–104.

Only he who is, like me, of independent opinion (or intoxicated), will understand this manner (of reportage).

The reader is thereby prepared for the satirical mode, through the nonpartisan eyes of a *vidūshak*, the witty, libertine buffoon of Sanskrit drama. The tone is also reminiscent of the *bhang* drinking *Śivśambhu*. While the paper was independent, and cast a very wide net of ridicule, it was not hard to see that it was aligned with progressive forces including social reformers and communists. *Matwālā* carried articles meant to disabuse the public regarding colonial characterization of bolshevism and communism. But the consistent target of the satire was the orthodox Hindu community.

In a section called *Matwāle kī bahak* (rantings of a drunkard), one paragraph commentaries expound the *Matwālā* position on current events. The commentaries were structured as short anecdotes with an unexpected humorous twist at the end. In one *bahak*, the author lists all that Hindus have stoically endured over time: colonialism, temple destruction, insults, and violence. But, the *bahak* claims, the Achilles' heel seems to be widow remarriage and caste-destroying overseas travel (7 December, 1924). *Matwālā* posted congratulation notes for widow remarriages as well as exposing the names of those involved in child-marriages. The journal used social pressure to ridicule the conservative camp for the social boycotts of prominent Marwaris like Jamnalal Bajaj or G.D. Birla (e.g. 25 October, 1925). According to Sahay, *Matwālā's* relentless critique of Hindu orthodoxy resulted in the latter taking a defensive stance:

> सनातनी सज्जनों का भण्डाफोड़ करने में उसने इतनी निर्भीकता से काम लिया कि सनातनी भाइयों को धर्म-रक्षिणी-सभा कायम करके *धर्म रक्षक* सासाहिक निकालना पड़ा।

> It (*Matwālā*) had so boldly exposed Sanātanī gentlemen that they were compelled to establish a religious defense committee and bring out their own journal called *Dharm Rakṣak* (defender of the faith).[58]

But before long, *Matwālā* was gaining powerful enemies amongst moderates. While the journal found cause to quarrel with several other papers, *Viśāl Bhārat* (1928) and its editor Banarasidas Chaturvedi became its chief opponent in the Hindi print world. The animosity reached its zenith as Chaturvedi launched virulent public campaigns against obscene literature (*Ghāsleṭī –Sāhitya*), singling out Ugra's *Cāklēṭ* and declaring Nirala's style abstruse.[59] *Matwālā* derided Chaturvedi in their *bahak* (rant) section, insisting that his trumped-up movement would neither benefit country nor improve literature (24 November, 1928). Nevertheless, Chaturvedi had very powerful allies, namely Gandhi and Tagore (from his tenure at Shantiniketan), and therefore *Viśāl Bhārat* ascended just at the moment *Matwālā* began to decline.

Viśāl Bhārat (1928-1964): The Apex of Hindi in Calcutta before its Decline

Vishāl Bhārat began publication in 1928 under Ramanand Chatterji, the manager of *Modern Review* and *Pravāsī*, the leading English and Bengali journals of the

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[58] Ibid., 103.
[59] Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere 1920-1940*, 390.

progressive nationalist intelligentsia. Pandit Banarasidas Chaturvedi was the journal's first editor and a staunch Gandhian.[60] *Viśāl Bhārat* was a highly sophisticated journal that attracted various contributors and had an extremely wide range of topics. Rahul Sankrityana (1893 – 1963) contributed travel writing and linguistics, Agyeya (1911 – 1987) wrote on politics and literature, Maulana Azad (1888 – 1958) contributed brilliant articles on Muslims in India, and M. N. Roy (1887 – 1954) on Marxism, to name a few. The journal took an interest in the activities and literatures of other states and parts of India. Chaturvedi cultivated a more inclusive consciousness of Indianess through studies and articles on literature of Orissa and Women Urdu writers, for example, but also by including articles concerning the global Indian Diaspora in Malaysia, Bali, Fiji, and Mauritius. Chaturvedi's declared goal was to establish for his readers precisely what was and is *Viśāl* (great, eminent, illustrious) about *Bhārat*. In the very first issue, Chaturvedi declared that "any sort of casteism or communalism was considered by *Viśāl Bhārat* to be a sin for which there is no penance" (January 1928). And even though the journal was often critical of conservative Marwaris, when Marwaris had been insulted by an unnamed journal (*Chānd*), *Viśāl Bhārat* mobilized Gandhi to rebuke the defamation in an article.

Viśāl Bhārat was never so outward looking as to ignore Calcutta, for regular attention was given to its literary and political activities. But there was also a palpable anxiety about the beginning of a decline in Calcutta's Hindi scene. Chaturvedi informed his readers that Calcutta had 693,000 Hindi (and Urdu) speakers at the time of the 1921 census, more than any other one city. To bolster the pride of Calcutta Hindi speakers, *Viśāl Bhārat* ran a serialized account of Hindi in Calcutta written by Ambika Prasad Vaypeyi (Sept., Oct., Nov. 1931). But anxiety regarding Hindi appeared in an article from October 1934 by Dharmchand Saraogi on the death of Hindi in Calcutta. Yet despite Saraogi's foreboding, *Viśāl Bhārat* maintained a high quality Hindi journal in Calcutta for three more decades. An example of the high standard of its language and content appeared in a series of open letters published in *Viśāl Bhārat* in 1937 regarding the relationship between and responsibility towards Literature and Politics. The discussants included thoughtful, eloquent voices like Chaturvedi, Agyeya, Jainedra Kumar, *inter alia*. The following year, 1938, Agyeya became editor and established that *Viśāl Bhārat's* policy (*nīti*) would not have a party line or be manipulated. Agyeya remained editor for only one year, but the paper had many other prominent editors and contributors until it closed in 1964 for financial reasons.

Conclusion: Hindi on Bengali Soil

Independence marked a severe decline of Hindi in Calcutta. In addition, the 1956 linguistic reorganization of the states did not officially recognize West Bengal as part of the Hindi belt and therefore it was not eligible for significant patronage. Rather, it was Bengali that was supported in West Bengal, thereby reifying the notion that Hindi and its speakers were outsiders. Perhaps the last important journal appeared just before independence. Hazari Prasad Dwivdedi started publishing *Vishwa Bharati* in 1942 from Shanti Niketan. Post-indepedence journals were few, but the most important were the

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[60] Mañjurānī Singh, "Viśāl Bhārat : Paricay," in *Hindī Navajāgaraṇ : Baṅgiya Virāsat*, ed. Shambhunath and Dwivedi (Kolkata: Coal India Limited, 1993), 464.

Mohan Singh Sengar edited *Nayā Samāj* and the Lakshmichandra Jain edited *Gyanoday*. As Krishna Bihari Mishra has indicated, after independence, Hindi readers began looking towards Delhi and Banaras and other cities for papers.[61] Perhaps no scholar has lamented the post-independence decline of Hindi in Calcutta as much as Krishna Bihari Mishra. He is a former student of Hazari Prasad Dwivedi (1907 – 1979), the towering Hindi literary figure who himself had a long tenure in Bengal. Krishna Bihari Mishra complains that after such a dynamic evolution and such herculean efforts, it is apathy that eventually let Hindi to wither in Bengal. While he is not wrong, there is still so much ground gained that is not lost. The Marwaris, for example, remain loyal to Hindi, and the many schools they established have continued to bear literary fruit.

From the 1930s, Marwaris began to use Hindi to represent themselves and create studies of their origins and history. Marwaris felt that they had been regularly slandered in the press and the high watermark of this slander was *Chānd's* 'Marwari Ank' (November 1929). Several responses appeared immediately in the wake of this 400-page illustrated special number. The Marwari Chatra Sangh (students' union, est.1931) began to publish their research about Marwari history, culture, and identity in a journal called *Mārwāṛī* (1936). Also in 1936, *Rājasthān* (Calcutta) and one year later *Rajasthani* (Calcutta) appeared in order to celebrate the literature and art of Rajasthan. There were several more similar journals coming out of Rajasthan itself in this period.[62]

The affiliation and intimate connection Marwaris formed with Hindi endured after independence. Marwaris continue to attend and support Hindi cultural activities, quality Hindi medium schools for girls and boys, and institutions such as libraries and literary societies. While Calcutta's Hindi print world has clearly lost the centrality it had enjoyed, the Hindi speakers and readers have never abandoned the language for Bengali. It is out of the relatively moribund state of Hindi in Bengal that Marwari women writers emerge at the end of the twentieth century, the subject of the second half of this study. What is perhaps more surprising than their loyalty to Hindi is the fact that the novels they produce continue to confront the negative stigma and a sense of otherness captured in the polemical and outrageous 1929 'Marwari Number' of *Chānd*.

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[61] Miśra, *Hindī Sāhitya*, 45.
[62] Kr̥shṇabihārī Miśra, *Hindī Patrakāritā : Rājasthānī Āyojana Kī Kr̥tī Bhūmikā*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Dillī: Akhila Bhāratīya Māravāṛī Yuvā Mañca, 1999).

Chapter Three:

The context and creation of "The Marwari": Chānd and the *Mārwārī Ank*

      "Mārwāṛ so rahā hai" (Marwar is sleeping) proclaimed the editorial of *Chānd* at the outset of the infamous Marwari special issue of November 1929. The present unconsciousness of the land and its people was juxtaposed to the imagining of a once lively and vigorous Rajput past, one in which the sons of Rajputs had been *awake* to their duties to *dharm* and *desh*. Thus began a nearly four-hundred page vividly illustrated and carefully constructed documentation of the socio-political, historical, literary, and ethnographic particularities of Marwar and its peoples. In addition to text, their issue included approximately 50 cartoons, 50 colored illustrations, and over one hundred black and white photographs. So large was the Marwari special number that it was equal to the number of pages the magazine normally published in an entire year. The circulation was similarly augmented: according to an affidavit from the government diplomaed auditor G. P. Jaiswal & Co., the circulation for the November 1929 issue of *Chānd* exceeded 15,000, a figure consistent with the records kept by *Chānd*.[1] The sales record suggests that the reading public was interested in the topic of Marwaris and amongst whom there were surely many who must have taken pleasure in the deprecating treatment of the community. That they should warrant such a thorough and vitriolic study, albeit negative, speaks to the national significance of the Marwaris at this historical juncture. The narrowly delimited critique of a small entrepreneurial community posits the *Mārwārī Ank* as a liminal moment in the process of Indian nationalism and modernization; this type of singling out of internal 'others' is a common symptom of late nationalisms, as I expore further on.[2]

      Chānd was one of the most popular journals of its time, often at the cutting edge of nationalist discourse. A women's literary journal launched by Ramrakh Singh Sahgal (1896-1942) in Allahabad in 1922, *Chānd* was a nationalist journal which put women's activities at the center of the movement. [3] The average issue was usually about 100 pages, much larger than other contemporary journals. It had gained highest readership in the province, jumping from 1000 to 8000 copies sold in 1927, up to 10,000 in 1928, and to

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[1] Hardgrove, *Community and Public Culture*, 206–210.

[2] Daniel Chirot and Anthony Reid, eds., *Essential Outsiders : Chinese and Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

[3] Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere 1920-1940*, Chapter 4. Orsini calls Sahgal an enterprising Khatri from Lahore. He spent his youth in Jaunpur and took part in the non-cooperation movement. He worked with Congress in Allahabad and accompanied the first Congress delegation that toured Avadh at the time of the peasant agitations in 1920. We know from *Phansi Ank* (special issue on political martyrs, November 1931) that he was acquainted with Bhagat Singh and Chandrasekhar Azad and his group. Sahgal launched *Chand* in 1922; it was soon to become the best seller in the province. He was ousted from *Chānd* in 1933 as he continued to get *Chānd* the journal and press in financial and legal trouble. He started a couple more publishing ventures with varying degrees of success and finally died in penury in 1942.

15,000 in 1929 with the publication of the *Mārwārī ank*. The *Mārwārī ank* was the first of the special caste based numbers and it set the trend for later thematic issues: *Kayastha-ank*, *Achut-ank*, *Rajputana-ank*, etc. The special issues were not only an important source of income; they aimed to develop a political, social, and historical consciousness in their readership.[4] As Orsini has indicated, *Chānd* broke the mould in *strī-upyogī* (useful for women) literature by going beyond political education to recognizing women's 'right to feel,' questioning their home-bound existence, and by envisaging new public roles.[5] *Chānd's* note-worthy track record accounts for some measure of shock that its caste specific *anks* produced.

The variety of sources used to create this *ank* establishes it as an unprecedented study of Rajasthan and Rajasthanis, all biases and inconsistency aside. Taken at its word, *Chānd's* representatives (प्रतिनिधि) and informants infiltrated every level of Marwari society and operated as spies within it. The staff researchers uncovered volumes of literature, poems, and stories from Marwar and elsewhere, as well as the usual census and colonial data. What resulted was the creation of knowledge about an ethnic group or caste, in a quasi-orientalist mode, which propelled *Chand's* circulation to 15,000 and served as a model for subsequent caste-specific *anks*. A virtually exhaustive compilation of all inherited wisdom, rumor, and intelligence regarding this community was tracked down and verified to the extent to which it could be done, accepting seemingly anything as empirical evidence – so long as there was at least an anonymous article or informant to support it. Even the editor, although assumed to be Sahgal, remained anonymous. The ubiquity of anonymity throughout the text heightens a sense that this community is unscrupulous and one to be feared. In fact, Sahgal was physically attacked by a Marwari youth from Calcutta after the publication of the *ank.* Most of the contributing 'Marwaris' seemed to live in fear of reprisal, and therefore identified themselves only by titles like: *Ek Marwari, ek Agrawal, ek Marwari Sudharak* (A Marwari, an Agrawal, a Marwari reformer), etc. Despite the dubious nature of its sources, the veracity of the *ank* was upheld by an allegedly collective perception and popular opinion about an enemy of the people and the nation, which has at least enough truth to warrant this exposition. That is to say, the sheer volume of anecdotal, circumstantial, and empirical evidence lends 'scientific' credibility to the stereotypes described, mitigating accusations of demagoguery. More importantly, *Chānd* seeks to demonstrate that there are real victims of this merchant culture and their plight has to be made public. The impassioned rhetoric throughout the volume betrays an ideologically motivated discourse which seeks to use social pressure to discredit this group in public opinion and in Congress.

Even prior to the *Marwari Ank*, the Calcutta Hindi press devoted intense attention to economic modernization and the reform of society for the benefit of women. Several journals had taken up issues that appeared in the Marwari Number,' but none quite in this way and with this scope. At the beginning of the decade (1920-1925) reformist journals such as *Mārwāṛī Sudhār*, *Mārwāṛī Agrawāl*, and *Matwālā*, presented many of the same themes that reappeared at the end of the decade in *Chānd's Marwari Ank*, but in an entirely different tone. These papers carried numerous articles on women's emancipation,

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[4] Ibid., 267–289.
[5] Ibid., 274.

girls' schools, widow remarriage, and the age of consent. Additionally, economic-nationalist articles asked Marwaris to reduce the drain of wealth and poverty of India by opening banks and factories, and curtailing usury and imported piece good commerce.[6] The difference was that these earlier reform impulses did not construct the 'Marwari' as an enemy of progress and the nation, but rather as a tradition-bound part of the Indian polity in need of some progressive encouragement. *Chānd*, on the other hand, truly politicized the Marwari question by consolidating the image of the Marwari as enemy, constructing a *Feindbild*, against which patriots of all hues could rally. Marwaris are discussed in the *ank* as parasitic vermin infesting the national body.

> किसी एक स्थान पर एक मारवाड़ी पहुँच गया तो बस फिर थोड़े ही दिनों में वहाँ मारवाड़ी ही मारवाड़ी दिखाई पड़ेंगे। जैसे सिर में एक भी जूँ कहीं से आ गई, बस फिर थोड़े दिनों में जुएँ ही जुएँ हो जाती हैं। उसी प्रकार मारवाड़ी भाई भी बढ़ते हैं - भगवान जाने कहाँ से आ जाते हैं।

> If a solitary Marwari turns up in any single place, then after a few days all you'll see is Marwari upon Marwari there. Like when a single louse comes from somewhere and occupies the head, before too long it's teaming with lice, just as our Marwari brothers multiply—god knows where they come from. (167)

It is perhaps telling that Marwaris are compared to lice, since the anxiety in the *ank* is that they are too close to the heads of nationalist politics in Congress.

The response to the *ank* was immediate. Praise appeared in *The Leader*, a leading English language newspaper based in Allahabad. Although this quote is from *The Leader*, appearing here in both Hindi and English, Sahgal included it immediately following the table of contents and it functioned almost as the *ank's* mission statement:

> सम्पादकीय विचार में, जो इस अंक के लगभग साठ पृष्ठों से अधिक में लिखा गया है, मारवाड़ी समाज का व्यापक निदर्शन किया गया है। यह प्रसिद्ध बात है कि मारवाड़ी लोग भारतवर्ष की सब से धनी जातियों में से एक हैं। मारवाड़ को भारतवर्ष के कुछ सर्वोत्तम सैनिक और शासक उत्पन्न करने का श्रेय है। ऐसी दशा में यह दुःख की बात है कि मारवाड़ियों के विचार बड़े ही स्थिति-पालक और उन्नति-विरोधी हैं। इस अंक में जो व्यंग-चित्र दिए गए हैं, उनसे मारवाड़ी-जीवन के उस भाग पर प्रकाश पड़ता है, जिसमें क्रान्तिकारी सुधार की आवश्यकता। … *चाँद* का यह अंक वास्तव में मारवाड़ देश, इसके निवासी, इसकी सभ्यता तथा इसके उत्थान और पतन का एक विस्तृत इतिहास। प्रत्येक भारतवासी, विशेषतः मारवाड़ी-समाज, को उत्साही सम्पादक और प्रकाशक श्रीयुत रामरखसिंह जी सहगल का कृतज्ञ होना चाहिए, जिन्होंने इस विशेषांक का सम्पादन तथा इसे प्रकाशित किया है। हम आशा करते हैं कि विशेषतः मारवाड़ी लोग इसका उसी मैत्री भाव से स्वागत करेंगे, जिस भाव से यह प्रकाशित किया गया है।[7]

> The leading article which covers over sixty pages of this issue is a comprehensive survey of the Marwari community. It is a well-known fact that Marwaris belong to one of the richest communities in India. Marwar has produced some of India's best soldiers and kings. It is sad then to find that in spite of all this, most of the Marwaris are extremely conservative and antiquated in

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[6] Miśra, *Hindī Patrakāritā*; Sharma, *Hindī Prakāśan Kā Itihās: Baṅgīya Khaṅḍ*; Miśra, *Hindī Sāhitya*; Shambhunath and Dwivedi, *Hindī Navajāgaraṇ : Baṅgiya Virāsat*.
[7] Ramrakh Sahgal, ed., "Chānd (Mārwārī Ank)", November 1929, 2., reproduced from *The Leader*, (Allahabad: Friday, October 25, 1929)

their outlook. The cartoons in the number are intended to bring out this aspect of Marwari life that needs improvement and radical change … This number of CHAND is in fact a comprehensive history of Marwar, its people, civilization, rise and fall. Every Indian, and particularly the Marwari community, should be grateful to the enterprising editor-publisher, Mr. R. Sahgal, for having brought out this special number. We hope that it (*Māwārī ank*) will be received by the Marwaris especially in the same friendly spirit in which it has been published.

– A review of an advance copy by *The Leader* – Friday, October 25, 1929

This review from *The Leader* indicates that Sahgal is, at least here, identified as the editor and publisher.[8] According to this review, the *ank* is a comprehensive historical study of the rise and fall of Rajasthani civilization. This serves as the scientific basis to consider the 'conservative' and 'antiquated' state of the contemporary Marwari, who 'needs improvement and radical change.' *The Leader* claims to have knowledge of the 'friendly spirit' in which the number was published and even goes as far as to praise the editors and the cartoonists for their 'witty' and 'penetrating' letterpresses. However, by the end of the first two pages of the lead editorial article (सम्पादकीय विचार, editorial views) there is little evidence of any friendly spirit in the pages that follow. Rather, they sound more like a diatribe against the Marwaris from the perspective of their victims, i.e. widows, child-brides, and oppressed women, and the Indian Nation at large.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold: 1) to examine the structure and rhetorical strategy of the *Mārwārī ank*, 2) to take up the dominant concerns of the *ank* to see what work the text is doing and to what end, and 3) to look at what the broader significance of such a work in the discursive production of Marwari identity. The ank begins with a sixty-page lead editorial article that contains the dominant motifs that operate in the rest of the issue. What follows is an admixture of 'ethnographies,' 'testimonials,' investigative articles, and didactic literary contributions that bring to life and reiterate the purpose of the editorial.

This special issue stands as a representative crystallization of negative associations of Marwariness. The two spheres that receive close scrutiny are the economic and domestic. Like many reformists before, *Chānd* operates on the belief that these spheres intersect like a Venn diagram, and that their respective progress or backwardness necessarily inform one another. Therefore, the rhetorical strategy is to oscillate between these poles and critique Marwari life at every juncture. Below I explore these critiques separately: first, the modernization of the economic sphere, followed by reform of the domestic sphere with its emphasis on women. The Marwaris lag behind in both spheres, harking back as they do to Rajasthani tradition and culture, thereby historically grounding the Marwari 'condition' in a feudal past inimical to nationalist progress.

Entrepreneurial minorities often come into sharper public focus at later stages of nationalization. Writing about the Jews of Central Europe and the overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, Daniel Chirot has indicated that the most common explanation for the dislike directed at these groups is that they

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[8] Hardgrove, *Community and Public Culture*, 206. Anne Hardgrove maintains that social critic Rajagopal Mohatta most likely edited this issue. The section provided here seems to contradict that information.

occupy lucrative economic positions that are coveted by the aspiring members of the majority, they are often owed money, and it seems difficult to compete with them. Their superior commercial skills may be attributed to innate traits, to their secretiveness and closed … social networks, or to their *collaboration* with political elites (colonial or domestic) who use them to oppress the people. Such widely held and popular explanations cannot be dismissed easily. Not only do they appeal to common sense but they also have been buttressed by a long tradition of *scholarship* … The rise of modern nationalism hardened attitudes toward those newly viewed as outsiders. Entrepreneurial minorities, previously seen as just one more among many specialized ethnic and religious groups that existed in most complex, premodern agrarian societies, now became, in the eyes of the new nationalists, something considerably more threatening.[9]

The *ank* presented itself as scholarship, utilizing colonial and ethnographic material to present a thorough study of the Marwaris as a matter of extreme national importance. The suspicions about closed networks and colonial collaborations, which threaten the goals of the nation, are seen throughout the *ank*.

The Marwari community, while numerically small, played a vital and innovative role in the modernization of the Indian economy. Like other entrepreneurial communities, Marwaris passed through similar historical phases: proto-capitalist (money-lending, petty trade), compradore (brokerage and piece good trade), and capitalist (modern commerce, manufacturing, and finance). It follows that like other entrepreneurial communities, they were similarly denounced at each stage by the guardians of social morality, of which *Chānd* became the prime representitve.

Chānd's nationalist rhetoric presents a committed attempt to resist what appeared to be the emergence of a regressive plutocracy that threatened to undermine the point of a national freedom struggle. But it is the crystallization of 'otherness' that went to print and caused the community to close ranks at this critical moment. As evidenced from many print sources (imperial gazetteers, dictionaries, plays, and newspapers), Marwaris had already contended with a published negative stigma that had quasi-folkloric or common sense roots. In this way, the *ank* serves as a repository of many decades of congealed majoritarian resentment. And moving forward, it throws light on almost any subsequent literary endeavor that is self-consciously Marwari.[10] The *Marwari Ank* is actually the high-water mark in a longer discursive production of the 'Marwari.' The historical structural factors played a decisive role in this peak anti-Marwari sentiment which had existed, but had never been presented as such a concerted effort. The size and reach of the community, its degree of economic (and thus political) influence, its measurable threat to nationalist goals, its speed of modernization, and its exclusiveness, made control and reform of this community seem like a nationalist priority.

Gandhi's intervention in this process was to suggest that businessmen act as *trustees* (rather than *owners*) of their industries. By 1931, Gandhi publicly offered the

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[9] Daniel Chirot, "Conflicting Identities and the Dangers of Communalism," in *Essential Outsiders : Chinese and Jews in the Modern Transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe*, ed. Daniel Chirot and Anthony Reid (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 6, 9.

[10] Miśra, *Hindī Sāhitya*. The Marwari literary self-representations that follow in the decades after never seem very far from the wounds sustained either from the *Marwari Ank* or from the stereotypes contained within it.

reins of Congress to the business class at a meeting of the FICCI.[11] But progressive elements in the nationalist movement like Sahgal saw this rhetorical device as granting absolution and carte blanche to an emerging capitalist cabal. It was in this anxious climate that *Chānd* sought to discredit the burgeoning indigenous capitalist class by taking aim at a highly visible and socially vulnerable Marwari. Although the *Mārwārī Ank* insists, like Gandhi, that industry must be for the benefit of the toiling masses, it is clear that the editors do not trust the capitalist class to fulfill this duty. There was some cause for distrust as a portion of this class led by Tata was forming an anti-labor capitalist party.[12] It was in this climate and contest in which the staff of *Chānd*, as a women's literary journal, decided to make an intervention.

Below I discuss the major sections of the *Marwari Ank* and its overarching rhetorical strategy. The *ank* begins with a 64-page editorial article that establishes the tone and purpose of the special issue. I discuss the connections this section makes between contemporary Marwaris and the purportedly benighted feudalism of Rajasthan. I draw out how the editorial targets the social vulnerability of the community and undermines their efforts to establish modern credibility. The editorial reiterates the negative tropes and stereotypes that have long been associated with the community, but suggests that now the stakes are higher because these communal characteristics threaten the goals of the national freedom struggle. I continue the discussion of these tropes in the next section, which deals with the short literary pieces in the *ank*. These literary pieces are meant to illustrate Marwari backwardness and pitiable available forms of Marwari womanhood. I present a representative sampling of the plays, sketches, and short stories that appeared in the *ank*. The use of literature for the purposes of social reform in the community anticipates the Marwari writing that appears at the end of the twentieth century. Lastly, I turn to 'ethnographic' studies that appeared in the journal. These were meant to expose the merchant cosmos to the light of day and the voyeuristic public. In the 'ethnographic' section, the *ank* forcefully links the domestic and the business life of the Marwaris, the bazaar and the *bari*. Throughout the 400-page special issue, the authors drive home the point that depravity in one sphere (the home, for example) means corruption in the other (the bazaar, and other public life) and vice versa.

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[11] Markovits, *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931-39*, 11. FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) was founded by G. D. Birla and Purshottamdas Thakurdas in 1925. Gandhi's remarks at FICCI's 4th Annual Session on 7th April, 1931, vindicates the capitalists' effort thus far and reasserts his own capital-labor policy of businessmen as trustees rather than owners of their enterprises, "I cannot forget the services rendered by the commercial class, but I want you to make Congress your own and we would willingly surrender the reins to you. The work can be better done by you. But if you decide to assume the reins, you can do so only on one condition. You should regard yourselves as trustees and servants of the poor. Your commerce must be regulated for the benefit of the toiling millions."

[12] Markovits, *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931-39*; Markovits, *Merchants, Traders, Entrepreneurs*.

The Marwari hypocrite clockwise from the top left: Praising god at the temple, disparaging the poor in the road, giving lectures in the public, and when he's alone…!

Introducing the *Ank*: Mapping Rajasthan onto its Expatriates – The Long Editorial

In the editorial of the ank, the princely state of Rajputana and its purportedly regressive condition serves only as a starting point from which to narrow the focus on the actual specimen of investigation, the increasingly powerful trade diaspora residing outside of Rajasthan.[13] The first section of the 64-page leading article focuses on Rajasthan, covering the royal houses and the literature. The most striking conceit at this early stage of the *ank* is the acceptance of the Marwari origin myth of descending from Rajputs. Indeed many of the caste names derive from ancient royal lines, for example, the 18 *gotras* of the Agrawals claim descent from the 18 sons of legendary king Agrasena. One might have expected the author to show how dubious some lineage claims were. Rather, the leading article sought to explain the present condition of Marwaris by closely linking them with the feudal culture of Rajasthan. Thus the strategy undertaken is to

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[13] There is actually a separate *Rajputana Ank* which offers a thorough engagement with the princely state.

decry the Rajputs in their current state and then logically extend this condition to Marwaris, effectively taking them on in their own terms. The first portion of the editorial is about the native rulers, their duties, and their rights. While they are shown in an increasingly negative light, quotes from English rulers and royalty appear throughout as a model of modern statecraft and as proof that efforts have been fruitlessly made to reform these Rajas. The basic rhetorical pattern is established in these first ten pages, one in which great praise is at first lavished on the object of analysis turning hastily towards an extended description of its downfall. The reader is told several stories concerning the wastefulness and sexual depravity of contemporary or recently deceased native rulers, and the victims of their indiscretions. In the next three-hundred pages this despotic image resonates with and makes recognizable the native capitalist as a petty aristocrat and financial feudalist.

Chānd offers a long treatment of the Maharajas of Marwar and the various major Rajasthani kingdoms, principalities, dominions, and रियासतें – all of which are Rajput except the one in Tonk, where a Muslim presides. Carefully collected data are presented about the income and land holdings of Udaipur, Jaiselmer, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Bundi, Kota, Bikaner, Kishangarh, Karauli, Sirohi, Kangarpur, Pratapgarh, Bansbara, Dholpur, Bharatpur, Alwar, Tonk, Jhalawar, and Shahpura (in order of importance). It seems certain that this curious section is derived from the provincial reports of the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*. In fact, the colonial caste data of Marwaris hailing from Rajputs is also confidently repeated in numerous sources from Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* to the Gazetteers.[14] The point of all this data is to illustrate that 19 men rule over a population of approximately 1.5 crore (15 million), from whom they extract Rs 20 crore (200 million) in tax, from which the Raj takes ten lakh (1 million). The reader is presented with all this data and asked if such a system should still exist in the 20th century.

The fact that the Rajas have almost no rights of a sovereign highlights their pointlessness: they cannot mint coins, form alliances or treaties, expand or separate territory, legally absolve or pardon, and in what they can do they have varying actual power, i.e. tax collection, law, rule, etc. (page 5). Some kings only have the authority of a magistrate because the British resident sits waiting 'like death' (6). The section indicates that the British intervene even in the affairs of the royal houses: Victoria, Edward VII, George V, and Chelmsford have all endeavored to reform and improve the situations of the native rulers and their subjects. Thus it appears that the British Raj is a better option than Rajasthani Rajas. The author informs us that that if native rulers cared to join the freedom struggle, if they cared to reform their subjects, they could accomplish great progress, but they are too decadent and indifferent (10). Several full page images of native rulers are included in this section with bold print below indicating that all of them are Knight Commanders of the Indian Empire (KCIE), i.e. collaborators.

The last three pages of the Raja section (10-13) shifts focus to the unmitigated depravity of recent Rajas. We are told, for example, that the recently deceased Raja of

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[14] Russell and Lal, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, 2:188. In his study of the central provinces, Russell remarks, "It would appear, then, that the Banias are an offshoot from the Rājpūts, who took to commerce and learnt to read and write for the purpose of keeping accounts."

Jaipur had 3,000 women in his harem and drank until he destroyed his liver and his limbs became like sticks (13). His best friend was his procurer who brought the Maharaja 10-15 women a day, and he only 'uses' the women once (एक बार उसका इस्तेमाल करते !). There was another Maharaja (no name given) who famously enjoyed the 'unnatural perversion' (अप्राकृत व्यभिचार के लिए प्रसिद्ध हैं) of sending men into his wives' chambers in the dark. He would shortly thereafter turn the lights on so as to reveal to the wives that they were sleeping with their brothers. One wife killed herself from shame and dejection (11). This is only one of several anecdotes about the once great heroes of Rajputana and the condition of their women. The suggestion is that Marwaris inherited the same condition.

Beginning on page 14 under the subtitle *Mārwārī Sāhitya*, the article again begins with praise for Rajasthan's huge contribution to Indian literature. The section starts with an eloquent discussion of literature as a metric in assessing a given society: "Literature is the backbone of a society. Social achievements can only go so far as literature has gone. People are moved by ideology, which goes beyond the simple needs of the body and can even be counter-productive to that effect" (14). At this point, we see the turn from the noble purpose of literature to the harm bad literature can do. "Literature is more than just the touchstone of humanity; it is the reason customs (रस्म) are the way they are. Literature can make a race virtuous or base, cruel, backward, sinful, etc. Therefore the ethical burden to keep control over literature rests on the scholars of every race and caste; they have to keep life high-minded, holy, and ideal" (15). The only record of Marwar's greatness is in the literature. Therefore a brief sampling of some Marwari poetry is offered, starting with heroic war poetry, and by page 22, 'obscene' poetry concerning promiscuity. Several examples are given, with strategic censorship, the details being too obvious to be actually spelled out. This type of literature is alleged to be very popular: "every Rajasthani city has innumerable volumes of these little obscene books which sell lakhs of copies to children, men, women, and young adults, who buy these with great enthusiasm and are plunged into darkness. They hold these little books to their chest and ingest their poison" (28). Elsewhere *Chānd* points out that Rajasthan has a 3% literacy rate with 2% limited to signatures).[15] The parallel is drawn between the decline of culture and the decline of a people. The article indicates that the decline of Urdu foretold the end of the Mughal rule, and Sanskrit's decline was the harbinger for another downfall. Likewise, the downfall of Marwar is foretold in the ignobility of its lyric.

With a heavy editorial hand and a preponderance of (often contradictory) evidence, the various articles, stories, poems, images, and anecdotes within the *ank* demonstrate that the once great Rajasthanis (particularly Marwaris) are *sleeping* through modernity. This *ank* aspires to awaken the patriotism and heroism that the forefathers of Marwar exhibited, and put it to work for the nation, the people, and women in their community. The strategy of the editors is not to undermine the veracity of the claim to descent from Rajputs, but rather to accept it wholesale and use it to explain the feudal mentality of the Marwaris. We are first presented with the heroic kings of old, but then we have the current Rajas with their lavish and depraved life styles financed by the starving masses. It is this stagnant tradition with which Marwaris get linked, not the heroic past. Once the parallel between the Rajas and the Seths is drawn, the logical

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[15] Ramrakh Sahgal, ed., "Chānd (Mārwārī Ank)," 115–116.

extension is that Marwaris have a responsibility to the people, as a king would to his subjects, and more radically, that this oligarchy of merchants must be toppled like the oligarchy of Rajputana in order to create a modern democratic nation with responsible citizens. The rest of the *ank* unfolds this general theme, pausing frequently to explore various curiosities of Rajasthan such as *sadhus*, caste data (names, how to recognize a Marwari), annual agricultural output of Rajasthan, revenue collection, etc. The function of providing this data is to show that Rajasthan is woefully backward and that Marwaris, being genetically linked with this downfall, are experiencing a parallel dissolution albeit over one thousand miles away in some cases. Further, while Marwaris proudly acknowledge their cultural and endogamous link to Rajasthan, and despite having ample means to recapitalize and industrialize Rajasthan, they put their resources into speculative (often foreign) ventures or even more depraved misadventures.

The editorial begins with short declarative statements in which the reader is told that the descendants of the heroes are naked, barefoot, and hungry, with dusty beards. Their weapons are being eaten by rust. The noble, virtuous, religious, faithful, beautiful *Gṛh-lakshmis* (ideal Hindu house wives) are left uneducated, tethered, miserable, and often kill themselves. "In the old days no one could laugh at Marwar…the Mughals couldn't … but now as Marwar sleeps will its enemies laugh?"[16] Narrowing its focus to the merchant community, the article contends that in Bombay and Calcutta, Marwaris live like feudal royalty while their native villages starve. "Millions of rupees from their various businesses feed people in Manchester, Lancashire, China, Japan, Shanghai, etc, but in the home villages children are being sold. What kind of Deshbakti is this? What kind of Dharm?" (2). Following the discussion of a fallen Rajasthan, the logical extension of this thread is that today's Rajasthanis are the modern political enemy. The depiction of a deeply historically grounded *Feindbild* sets up the modern Marwari endemic enemy.

Vernacular Capitalist versus Rational Nationalists

The economic critique is one of the most powerful motifs in the *ank*, as on the second page the reader is told that Marwar has iron, gold, silver, copper, coal, and agriculture – but reforms and capital are needed: "And yet there is no shortage of capital in Marwari hands – but they put this capital to use in *futures markets* and *speculation*, or in *foreign businesses* that pay them a brokerage fee" (2). The assault on native business resembles the colonial legislation meant to curtail speculative or gambling activities at the end of the 19th century.[17] The idea that Marwari wealth comes largely from commodity speculation (read gambling) once again pits indigenous capitalism against a western version of rational accumulation. The Marwaris attempted to shield their practices from the colonial critique by labeling them as cultural. The authors of *Chānd* bypass this strategy, because as fellow Indians they assume the imprimatur to critique Marwari culture as well.

The representation of Marwari business practices in the *ank* emphasizes their exorbitant interest rates that cripple peasants, industrial labor exploitation, poor working conditions, colonial collusion, and a generally outdated mode of production resulting

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[16] Ibid., 1–2.. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.
[17] Birla, *Stages of Capital*. See also the first chapter of this dissertation.

from ignorance. The purpose of this is to appeal to Marwaris to invest capital in the nation and the people via '*banks*' and regulated institutions as opposed to traditional and usurious methods of raising capital. Like the 'Rain-Gambling' debates of the 1890s, Marwari business is consistently linked with the exploitation or neglect of women, either from financial ruin or from family firms exchanging women (marriage alliances) to consolidate commercial alliances. This is the point where the socio-cultural is linked with the economic.

Merchant socio-economic credibility, *sākh*, is a critical component in credit markets in the North Indian bazaar. Because *sākh* is equally linked to social and economic life, it can be undermined either by insolvency or social disgrace. Using the terms and idioms of indigenous cultural-economic practice, a causal relationship is established between Marwari ignorance (under-education) and out-dated cultural practice with the viability and utility of their businesses. *Chānd's* editorial staff knew how to exploit the social vulnerability of the Marwari community, namely the shifting requirements of modern credibility and citizenship. The Marwaris themselves had spent the last three decades attempting to protect their public image through both reform movements and insulation. To this end, Marwari capital underwrote or directly owned a number of Hindi and English journals and papers, particularly in Calcutta, as shown in the previous chapter. Pro-business organs were so numerous that *Chānd* may have appeared as a dissenting or courageous voice even with its size and readership. Thus *Chānd* adopts a tone that suggests that they are definitively making public what everyone knows about the community (through rumor or legend), but few have been able or willing to expose.

Returning to the Rajput motif, the editorial makes a last plea for economic reform: "Marwaris are the sons of Rajputs, but they don't protect their land the way their forefathers did. They need to establish big industry in Rajasthan and make it a center for commerce and production" (3). What stands out, and would particularly resonate with Marwari sentiments, is the author's suggestion that the Marwari name itself required rehabilitation:

"मारवाड़ी शब्द पृथ्वी भर में आदरणीय समझा जायगा"

…the word Marwari would be considered *respectable* (again) the world over… (3)

The implication is that the word (name) Marwari is not respectable now and the only way to regain dignity is to reform according to the nationalist program that *Chānd* prescribes. Name and respectability are the social capital for all Marwari communal concerns, including commercial ones. Therefore the closing line would have struck considerably close to home.

Even so-called Marwari qualities are systematically undermined in a nearly comic fashion. As part of a 'balanced' representation, a list of Marwari virtues is offered to compliment the list of ills featured elsewhere in the *ank*. The first trait, *Dharm-Bhīrutā* (god-fearing nature), allegedly leads to a dangerous conservatism. We are told that Marwaris do not understand the essence of religion – they cling to it blindly at the expense of widows and young girls. Trait number two is magnanimity, but one that is not

particularly socially beneficial, rather more in the vein of temples and cow-shelters. The author claims that Marwaris practice charity and religion as a *cash business*, with *lump sum investments* made in this life to be collected with interest in the next. Other allegations include paying hunters or fowlers to release the birds that they catch, which just supports poaching and creates jobs for Muslims! (59). At this point *Chānd* takes some precaution to appeal to the most powerful Marwaris: "To be clear, we are not speaking of modern donors, like Birla, Bajaj, Mohta – but the old style that builds temples, tanks, and dharamshalas, which are misused" (60). All Marwari charity is dismissed as unclean, as it was won on speculation and gambling. The author suggests that the only path to absolution for the Marwaris is "to give all their wealth to the nation and burn the rest of their belongings" (61). The third and fourth 'positive' Marwari traits are communal support and ambition, respectively. Any Marwari in need, whether at home or abroad, need only find another Marwari and he will get assistance, particularly in Calcutta (62). In terms of ambition, "The rise from agent to accountant to Seth is a common event. But the meteoric rise is often the result of some unscrupulous business practices" (63). We are told many die from the lives they lead in Calcutta and other big cities. Finally, the fifth trait is a robust work ethic, in fact, twice the work ethic of the other castes (64). For this reason Marwaris are in every industry, business, and craft as they strive for economic monopoly and massive wealth.

In critiquing their traits, the form of address frequently shifts to the second person, "You are the repository of compassion for tiny creatures, bugs, dogs, etc. But even butchers don't kill cows the way you murder people, slowly and cruelly. With millions of widows howling and screaming in anguish you still sleep well at night, you are still proud of yourselves" (32). Thus Marwaris are very proud of their great compassion, but they are worse than the cruelest butcher regarding treatment of people (women mostly) (32). This is a reference, of course, to the fact that Marwaris are vegetarian and are supposed to follow a strict interpretation of *ahimsa* (non-violence, non-injury; this is particularly true of the Jain Marwaris). Further, Marwaris are told that tribals treat women better then they do and that Hindus everywhere must hang their heads in shame because of them. Marwaris, the author contends, are the reason that so many people convert to Islam and Christianity! This is particularly true of widows and orphans (33).

Hindu Woman pushed toward Christianity and Islam

An old man marrying his child-bride.

बूढ़े बाबा करें विवाह, मौत के मुँह में जाने वाले !

मियाँ मनिहार के पौवारह !

Let the old man get married, whilst in the mouth of death/ it's the good fortune of the glass-blower.

The Oppressed Women and Instructive Literature: Available types of Marwari Womanhood

The image of Marwari women oscillates between abject victims and sexually unrestrained libertines. *Chānd* does not imagine roles for Marwari women other than these powerless or fallen positions: widow, child-bride, wife in seclusion, and even seductress. Several pages of the editorial are dedicated to the illicit relationships between women and servants, resulting from the neglect they suffer since the Seth is 'always at his shop counting money or living far away in the city' (35). It is further alleged that "Purdah is just a front, the women behind these veils are not at all modest. They even sing obscene songs to entertain men" (37). Eye witness accounts from *Chānd's* representitives (प्रतिनिधि) attest to witnessing these songs performed "in Ajmer, then Pushkar, then in Mewar – thousands of women singing dirty songs and men gathering around" (37). The piece provides samples of these songs on topics such as affairs with a sister-in-law or double entendres about needles penetrating, etc. Their clothing is critiqued as being so thin that one can see right through it. Apparently, Marwari women are only modest about are their faces, which they keep covered. Furthermore, medical sources are quoted citing the health hazards related to purdah seclusion. A health officer from Calcutta, Dr. Frank, is quoted from an article in the *Modern Review*, "Women in Purdah are five times more likely to die of illness because of isolation and stale air. Marwari women are especially at risk" (49).

I will now discuss three literary pieces from the *ank*: one short story and two plays. The literary sketches occur throughout and all of them deal with the women's question. I have selected these three because they best demonstrate the type and range of original literary contributions to the *ank*. They also range from a light satire to biting and bitter social critique. It is noteworthy that the Marwari characters' speech is reported in a crude approximation of the Marwari language, while the narrative is in a pleasant chaste Hindi.

The first piece of instructive literature, called *Osar*, has to do with child-marriage, widows, and the custom of the funeral feast. It was written by Vishwambharnath Sharma 'Kaushik' (1891-1945), who was a regular contributor to *Chānd* in the column 'Dubeji ke Chiṭṭhiyāṁ', a comical-satirical assessment of current problems, which is also featured in this issue.[18] The column always included an image of an agitated older man writing feverishly and was reminiscent of Balmukund Gupta's *śivśambhu ke ciṭṭhe*.[19] *Osar* is quite different from Sharma's regular column; it is a didactic short story touching upon the vicious cycle of child-marriage and child-widowhood.

[18] Dhirendra Varma et al (eds.), *Hindi Sahitya Kosh, Vol. II*, 113–114.
[19] Gupta, *Śivaśambhu Ke Ciṭṭhe*.

The old man has come to purchase his child-bride.

The author tells us in a footnote that an *osar* is a traditional Marwari funeral feast in which the entire community is invited. The basic plot involves a sick man, Bannamal, who dies, leaving behind his wife, his widowed daughter-in-law and her child, plus his other unmarried daughter, aged 9. Upon hearing of the old man's death, the people of the village pressure Bannamal's wife (she is never named in the story) to arrange an *osar*, for to not do so would jeopardize the youngest daughter's chances of getting married. Since the widow cannot afford the feast, a wily marriage broker suggests she marry the nine-year-old daughter to Pañckauṛīmal, a fifty-year-old man who has agreed to pay for the *osar*. The widow is reluctant, unwilling to sacrifice her young daughter to a life of almost certain widowhood. But the broker insists that the family will face social ostracism if she does not agree; the widow is pressured into assent. Bannamal's wife's dilemma is moving, particularly as she looks on at the feasting Marwaris for whom she is making this sacrifice:

> जिस समय मारवाड़ी लोग भोजन कर रहे थे, उस समय बन्नामल की स्त्री खड़ी देख रही थी और अपनी कन्या के भविष्य को स्मरण करके ठण्डी साँसें भर रही थी। उसे ऐसा प्रतीत हो रहा था कि लोग लड्डू-कचौड़ी नहीं खा रहे हैं, वरन् उसकी कन्या का हाड़-मांस खा रहे हैं! उसकी कन्या के बलिदान ही से तो यह भोज हुआ है।

While the Marwaris were feasting, Bannāmal's wife was standing there and looking on. As she considered her little girl's future she sighed deeply. It seemed to her as though the people were not eating *laḍḍūs* and *kacauṛīs*, instead they were eating her little girl's flesh and bones. For it was from the sacrifice of her daughter alone, that this feast was taking place.

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The story touches upon a trope from the editorial: Marwaris will never harm or eat animals, but they do not hesitate to destroy human lives, particularly women and girls. Nevertheless, Bannāmal's wife keeps her word and the marriage takes place:

> ओसर होने के पश्चात् निश्चित समय पर बन्नामल की स्त्री ने अपनी कन्या का विवाह पँचकौड़ीमल से कर दिया। इस पर भी मारवाड़ी भाइयों ने कोई आपत्ति नहीं की। पँचकौड़ीमल के समान धनी आदमी के विरुद्ध कुछ कहने का साहस किसमें था। सबने प्रसन्नता-पूर्वक विवाह में योग दिया। (70)

> After the *osar*, at a fixed time, Bannāmal's wife married her daughter to Pañckauṛīmal. The Marwari brothers did not even object to this. Who had the courage to say anything against rich men like Pañckauṛīmal? Everyone gladly joined in the wedding.

A couple of years later, when the girl is twelve, Pañckauṛīmal dies and the daughter returns home a widow. The story closes with a few sentences about the ritual sacrifice of innocent girls:

> एक अबोध बालिका मारवाड़ी भाइयोंकी मूढ़ता, अज्ञानता, हठधर्मी तथा रूढ़ि-प्रियता की बलिवेदी पर बलिदान कर दी गई!! (70)

> An innocent girl has been sacrificed on the altar of Marwari stupidity, ignorance, fanaticism, and orthodoxy.

With this charged language of human sacrifice and fanaticism, the story comes to a severe and abrupt end. In just five pages, the story has managed to focus on the main targets of social reform in the Marwari community: eradicating child-marriage, enabling widow remarriage, and avoiding ostentatious displays such as funeral feasts. This last was a major theme of social reform throughout the 1920s. The author links women's victimhood with the wasteful and obligatory spending in Marwari moral economies. The daughter is literally exchanged to satisfy communal debts and obligations.

Osar must have seemed tame compared to the play *Parājit Pāpī* (Vanquished Sinner), a short play written by Janārdanprasad Jha 'Dwij' (1904-1964): a novelist, poet, and story writer.[20] The play has ten scenes depicting a generational struggle between a cruel Seth and his well-meaning son. This highly melodramatic or even tragic play depicts a Seth ruining the lives of his son and his fiancé, the Seth's new wife, and ultimately his own. It imparts the idea that a new day cannot dawn without ending the old ways.

At the beginning of the play we learn that Madan's mother has been dead for three months and so his father, the Seth, seeks to *buy* a new wife. The parents of his bride, Dhanvanti, had borrowed thousands of rupees from him, therefore she is exchanged and the debt forgiven. Madan unsuccessfully tries to prevent the wedding, dejected he flees from the main house to a small cottage they own elsewhere on their property. Dhanvanti sends the servant to look for the boy. She finds him at the cottage in poor health living, but cannot persuade him to come back to the main house; she only barely manages to make him accept sweets from her. Dhanvanti later arrives in a car and

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[20] Dhirendra Varma et al (eds.), *Hindi Sahitya Kosh, Vol. II*, 205.

successfully brings Madan back to the house, where they are reconciled. The Seth sees Madan touching her feet and becomes jealous. In the following scene, the Seth is getting drunk with his friends when Dhanvanti storms in and sends everyone away; the Seth threatens to XXX her (much of the *ank* is dramatically censored this way). As tensions grow between Dhanvanti and the Seth, she asks him why he is never home and why he bothered to marry her in the first place. The Seth replies:

"मेरे पास पैसे हैं, एक नहीं हज़ार शादियाँ करूँगा।" -- सेठ जी गर्दन तान कर बोले।

"तुम्हारे पास पैसे हैं, इसीलिए तुम दूसरों के जीवन को नष्ट करना अपना हक़ समझते हो?" -- धनवन्ती ने कम्पित स्वर में पूछा।...किसी बाज़ारू औरत से ही क्यों नहीं ब्याह कर लिया?" -- धनवन्ती ने क्रोध को कँपा कर पूछा।

"तुम अपने को कुछ और न समझना।" सेठ जी ने निर्लज्ज भाव से जवाब दिया। ... "तम इस तरह मेरे पैरों की बेड़ी मत बनो। मैं कहता हूँ, मेरे आगे से हट जाओ। मैं मर्द हूँ, मेरे पास पैसे हैं, जो जी में आएगा वही करूँगा। तुम मेरे बीच में पड़ने वाली कौन होती हो?"

"मैं तुम्हारी धर्मपत्नी हूँ।" ---धनवन्ती ने बड़ी दीनता से कहा।

"तुम मेरी ख़रीदी हुई बाँदी हो।" -- सेठ जी ने बड़ी निष्ठुरता से कहा!

"बाँदी ही सही, मेरे मालिक!"

"I have money, why one marriage, I'll get married a thousand times." – said the Seth tightening his throat.

"You have money, that's why you considered it your right to destroy the lives of others?" – Dhanvanti asked in a trembling voice. "Why didn't you just marry some street woman? – Dhanvanti asked shaking with rage.

"Don't think of yourself as anything more than that." – said the Seth unabashedly. "Don't become my shackles. I say, get out of my sight. I'm a man, I have money, I'll do whatever I like. Who are you to interfere?"

"I'm your lawfully wedded wife." Dhanvanti said with great humility.

"You are my purchased slave." – said the Seth with utmost cruelty!

"Well then, a slave, my master."

The Seth here and in all the other stories only understands the world in terms of money and property. Dhanvanti is of a new generation, and like Madan, she is intelligent and articulate, she has the courage to speak back to him. It seems that the days of the depraved old Seth may be numbered. But the story belabors the point further.

After the Seth throws Madan and Dhanvanti out, they go to the collector and see that their shares of the property are secure. Meanwhile, the Seth sexually assaults Madan's fiancé, Svarnlata. The young woman reappears distraught and drowns herself in

Calcutta's Hugli River. An enraged Madan tries and fails to kill his father. The Seth receives a seven year sentence for his crime. When he is released from jail he tries to make amends with Madan. After some excitement, anger, and tears, the Seth dies and Madan is left holding the corpse crying and asking for forgiveness. Dhanvanti is not mentioned again and the story ends here.

The play is a sample of the more outrageous literature included in the *ank*. The effectiveness of such absurd melodrama would be hard to gauge in isolation, but in concert with the scores of other horror stories in the *ank*, the villainous Seth is rendered commonplace. Characters are fairly stock; the innocent and ever loyal Madan asks his dead father for forgiveness, extending the contrast between the two. Interestingly, the court, and not a communal panchayat, was the instrument of meting out justice in the story, but it should be noted that the noble and sensitive Madan was prepared to kill his father (like a proper Rajput) to avenge the honor of his betrothed. While the play lacks literary merit, it does not lack the staple ingredients of sexual violence and depravity, corrupt wealthy Seths, and their victims. This would suffice for the purposes of the *ank*.

The milieu of the Calcutta Seth reappears in the play 'Pakaurimal,' by the humorist Gangaprasad Srivastav (1890-1962), a regular contributor to *Chānd*. The play is set in the merchant world of Calcutta and begins with a Seth getting into some legal trouble regarding his lumber business. In the next scene the Seth comes home to an elaborate meal lovingly prepared by his wife, the Sethani. The Seth enjoys his lunch and then sets off to his office. There he meets the bookkeeper and the two of them depart on some urgent business to the lawyer's office. But the absent-minded Seth has forgotten the petition paperwork so he rushes home to retrieve it. Since he told his driver not to return before three, he is compelled to take a taxi. But he is too frugal, so he walks, which is easy since he has new rubber-soled shoes! When he gets home he thinks about peeking at his darling wife who must be having her afternoon siesta at this time. He peeks into her room and sees that the Muslim dyer's son is in the bed with her. He steps back and thinks, what would a Rajput do, what would a proper *Rāṭhaur* do!? He decides to kill the lad, with his *Rajasthani* sword no less! But the thought of the expensive business of killing gives him pause. He would have to bribe the police, there would be legal fees for the trial that could last years, witnesses would have to be bribed, judges as well, then the likelihood of some jail time must be calculated – the jailor would have to be bribed in order to get food that would not destroy his religious standing or sentiments. Then there is the opportunity-cost of not running his business himself for a couple of years; his bookkeeper and others would surely loot him in the interim. The Seth, able to calculate losses and gains instantly in his head, concludes that killing is going to cost him far too much, so he skulks away. Ultimately, he feels rather fortunate that he was able to avoid taking any action regarding this incident, thereby avoiding a financial catastrophe. Only the Seth, Sethani, and the Muslim dyer's son know anything about this. The following day, the lawyer complains that he had waited the entire afternoon for Pakaurimal. The Seth tells him that there was trouble at home, but now everything is fine again. In the final line, the lawyer asks conspicuously about the welfare of the Sethani, suggesting perhaps another scandal.

Pakaurimal tells his wife that he is too busy to spend time with her; he has a major case pending in court. Then he finds his wife in the arms of the Muslim dyer's son and decides to do nothing about it.

Shrivastav, a talented humorist, touches on several Marwari stereotypes while remaining relatively light-hearted tone. The whimsical nature of the story may reflect that 'friendly spirit' referred to in the opening pages. The author has a talent for turning conventions around, making the Seth the victim instead of the perpetrator.[21] The Seth's frugality regarding the taxi or the cost of defending his honor is rendered in a light and playful manner, depicting the Seth as a foolish but sympathetic cuckold.[22] The Seth is pragmatic to a fault, he is quirky, he likes to eat (his name is even derived from a savory pastry), and is proud of his rubber-soled shoes. The reader knows that the Seth is deceived at home and in business. The parody of the Seth's Rajput lineage and Rajasthani sword shows the man at once privileging money over honor, abstaining from violence because of the expense and not the principle. The story may have not fully sustained Sahgal's purpose, but at least offers some comic relief in the midst of *Chānd's* diatribe.

While the play lampoons the Seth more than the Sethani, she is still depicted as the promiscuous one. The Seth's chief sin is that he values money above all other things, consistent with the Marwari stereotype. However, the literary contributions depict

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[21] Ramrakh Sahgal, ed., "Chānd (Mārwārī Ank)."

[22] Kashmiri, Agha Hashra, "Bilwa Mangal", In Anis Azmi ed., *Agha Hashra Kashmiri Ke Chuninda Drame*-2, (Delhi: National School of Drama, 2004). Agha Hashra Kashmiri's play *Bilva Mangal* (1919) which was written in Calcutta tens years before *Marwari Ank* provides two fitting examples of what the popular representation of Marwaris and merchants would have been at the time. Parsi theater (which Kashmiri was a part of) was immensely popular and attended by a wide range of people. The first archetype presented in the play is the comically greedy and nearly inarticulate Marwari sitting in a brothel. The second type in the play is a gullible *Nagar Seth* (urban merchant) who is easily persuaded to hand his wife over to a whoremonger turned Sadhu who is going astray. The Seth is so god-fearing that he does not dare to deny a Sadhu anything and this is how he presents the situation to his wife, who is compelled to go along with it. It is for this reason that I suspect that *Chand* was largely making use of well established tropes but pushing them to a crisis point and supporting them with 'scientific' evidence elsewhere in the *ank*.

Marwari women as more sinned against than sinning. They are intelligent and articulate, but need help to be freed of communal gender bondage, since they are treated as property. The home and the business world comes together again, more profoundly, in the ethnographic studies of Calcutta Marwaris that follows.

Chānd's Ethnography of the Merchant Cosmos: Calcutta and Marwari Life

Following the literary section of the *ank*, there are a couple of articles written in an investigative mode. The two "merchant life" articles offer highly detailed descriptions of Marwari migration, business methods, and home life – with the cumulative effect of demystifying the pre-eminence of the Marwari commercial status and disparaging their domestic life. The first long article, "*Kalkatta kā sāmājik jīvan*" (The social life of Calcutta) outlines business and cultural life in Bara Bazaar. This article is reinforced by the second article, "*Mārwarī jāti aur vyāpār*" (the Marwari caste and business). Both articles are written by anonymous native informants, the first by *ek Bāgri* (a Rajsthani clan) and, the second, by *ek Adhyayanshīl Mārwārī* (a studious Marwari).

The *Social life* article begins with a description of the Delhi railway station, in which hordes of Marwaris from Bikaner are waiting for the Calcutta bound train. The author muses that half the population of Bikaner must already live in Calcutta, making money and visiting home once in a great while. The author speculates on the mysterious origins of the Marwari migration to Calcutta:

> यह ठीक-ठीक पता नहीं चलता कि सबसे पहले बीकानेर जैसे दूर देश के लोग कलकते में कैसे और कब आए, परन्तु ऐसी धारणा है कि कुछ चीनी लोग बीकानेर की तरफ़ अफ़ीम ख़रीदने गए और केवल व्यापार करने के लालच से वे लोग उन चीनिओं के साथ कलकते चले आए। (152)

> It is not known for certain when or how the first people from such a far off land as Bikaner first came to Calcutta. But it is assumed that some Chinese people came to Bikaner in search of opium etc, and the Marwaris, sensing a business opportunity, came with these Chinese people to Calcutta.

All of this achieves a sinister xenophobic mood (albeit absurd) as "strange drug merchants in the company of foreigners empty their own villages to come here (Calcutta)" (152). Soon after the first Marwaris arrived, the author continues, they helped bring many more traders, and even the poorer ones became *lakhpatis* (read millionaires). He suggests that by divine providence, the First World War came along and it made them great fortunes (152). Both articles emphasize that Marwari success is due to a fair amount of luck or providence (*daivī*) and further that their luck has run out. What follows is a cataloguing of the trappings of a typical Marwari establishment or *gaddi*, i.e. various pillows and bolsters, a safe-chest, account books, and registries. We are told that goods are hardly kept at the *gaddi*, rather every day agents buy and sell in the thousands via oral contracts, and everything is recorded in the ledgers. Their main business is speculation on the price of commodities, mostly jute and hessians. Allegedly, prices fluctuate according to the American stars (US commodity markets?). The author locates the headquarters of this business on Clive Street, at the Royal Exchange Place, Calcutta. From ten until five

the streets are full of cars, agents, and peons (152). This situates the activity in and around Bara Bazaar, giving the reader a voyeuristic look at merchant life before looking in the home.

After describing the decadently massive houses built with their excess wealth, the article takes pains to describe the domestic side of this merchant life in Calcutta. We are told that the men work day and night – even eating at work. The women are at home doing idle things. Before the break of day, they are off to have a *ganga-snan* (bath in the Hulgi) or just bathe at home. Then they put on fancy clothes and go to various temples, all in all spending four hours in these activities. By day they might sew and stitch, but mostly they just waste time and then in the evening return to the temple. The article darkly warns that because the young girls do nothing but chatter, the intricacies of reform are going to be impossible to unravel for this community. The author laments that although there is a girls' school, only very young girls are allowed to attend and therefore there are no fully educated women in the community.

Scandalous stories about women and their servants appear throughout the *ank*

The articles insist, once again, that since young men are nearly always at the office, their absence results in promiscuity in the young women. The author warns that after a while "she will pick the best servant amongst the lot. She will feed him excellent food and sweets secretly and after 15-20 days of grazing him he'll be fit" (155). Using separate statements retrieved from a servant and a *khatri* friend of the journal, the article offers anecdotal evidence regarding the seduction of several Marwari women. In one anecdote the article declares that throughout a woman's affair with the servant she never removed her veil, suggesting that these women have not understood the substance of modesty, only the symbolic performance of it. Clearly this must have been one of the

most humiliating portions of the *ank*, since it is allegedly from eyewitnesses. The cultural and religious life is not spared either.

Several more pages of the 'Social Life' article are dedicated to the depravity of temple culture in Calcutta. A long section discusses the infamous Govind-Bhavan where the priest Hīralāl Goenka (a Marwari) is said to have seduced hundreds of women. He began by giving recitations of the *Gita* and later started writing Gita-related sermons for Marwari owned papers. Hīralāl started a movement to protect Marwari women from Muslims, urging them to come to his temple house. The author condemns Marwari men who continued to send their wives to him even after the scandals became public. The *Hindu Panch* had managed to expose the story and print a large picture of Hīralāl by using a photo from an amulet that many women began wearing in place of an image of Krishna. The point is to underscore that even in their fervent devotion to *dharm*, Marwaris remain depraved. Although the blame for all of these things is conspicuously returned to men, the dignity and image of Marwari women suffers equally. Finally, however, it is the community's culture and business practices that are faulted for the state of the women.

Mārwarī jāti aur vyāpār (the Marwari caste and business) is similar to the previous article, but takes a closer look at the actual business culture and its origins. Like the *Social Life* article, it begins with the migration. The reader is told that 200-300 years ago, Marwaris made an entry into trade, in the economic vacuum between the decline of Mughal rule and the assent of the British company; the resulting disorder created opportunity. On account of living in *maru-bhumi* (dead or dry-zone), claims the author, the Marwaris had little more than their Rajput-like fortitude and solidarity. They were naturally inclined toward hard work, business acumen, frugality, risk-taking, weathering hardship, and accountancy. With the aid of all these advantageous qualities, they established their businesses in every corner of India and beyond. The first part of this analysis is consistent with the work of later scholars, specifically Timberg and Markovits.[23] Next, as per the pattern, a turn comes in the article suggesting that their specific weaknesses – conservatism, blind-faith, stagnation, etc – will cost them dearly in the future. The inevitable failure of Marwari enterprise repeats often enough to suggest an authorial anxiety that the opposite may be true, that they will not fail.

The author accounts for the many reasons why Marwari business will decline: their stalwarts were buying and selling cotton, opium, ghee, silver, gold, and acting as currency exchangers. With the war long over and the advent of banks, it is assumed that they have become redundant. The days of being agents, middlemen, and brokers in the British operation have also passed. In that arrangement both groups prospered, but as the author laments, despite the variety of businesses that the Marwaris are involved in, they lack the current or modern knowledge to advance further. We are told that they consider foreign travel a sin, untouchability and caste conflicts are given far too much importance, and gambling, among many other things, hinders their progress in business. Gradually the English system will cause the decline of native businesses: currency exchange ended with one all-India imperial currency, thus native banking, hundis, and interest collection have

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[23] Timberg, *The Marwaris, from Traders to Industrialists*; Markovits, *Merchants, Traders, Entrepreneurs*; Markovits, *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931-39*.

cooled in major cities as a result of (Western) banks. The Gold-standard made world currencies cheaper – the Rupee went from 16 to 18 pence – thus trade slowed as Indian goods became more expensive. The capital that native bankers once controlled has accumulated in these Western banks, whose sole purpose is to advance European business interests. The author claims that the abundance of capital in native markets has dried up and this has in turn delivered a major blow to Marwari businesses.

The article concludes by warning the reader that Marwaris are not prepared for modern commerce and yet they hold important positions in the nation's economy. The understanding is that India will suffer from this monopoly of the ignorant. We are left with an example of good Marwaris, the few who took advantage of education and are now thriving in the international market, people like Birla, Hukumchand et al. The article insists that the best business is one in which both Marwaris and the nation benefit. The case in point is banking. The author maintains that so many Marwaris have crores and lakhs loaned out to people on interest. But if instead they opened *banks*, their prestige would grow with their profits. It is clear that the author is concerned about a looming monopoly and wishes to democratize money. It is surprising that at the close of the article the author identifies himself as 'a studious Marwari', a practically oxymoronic pseudonym by his own estimation and perhaps the reason he never uses 'we' or 'us' in making recommendations for reform. There are no clues that he is Marwari save his popular account of basic history and culture. What matters, of course, is the fact that both articles warn about letting the Marwaris control the national economy and direction of Congress. The appeal for modern education, it is hoped, would also break up traditional caste-based solidarities in favor of broader national concerns, as we see with Birla and Bajaj.

The critique of indigenous business methods bears a resemblance to the colonial critique discussed earlier. It assumes a superiority of a *modern* way of doing business, which is decidedly Western in its practice and closed to *uneducated* Marwaris. Both articles suggest that the only solution to backwardness is modern education, as opposed to an education in *mahājanī* (merchant training). The authors also assume that modern commerce is better for the nation and the worker. There is a sense that Marwari business is exploitative, and only for the benefit of the Marwaris and not the nation at large. And yet Marwaris are also victims of their business methods, particularly the women. The burden of long hours men have to work to stay competitive is borne by the family. Boredom and loneliness drive women to illicit affairs, as we have seen in Srivastav's *Pakaurimal*. In her discussion of the journals, Orsini has pointed out that Sahgal was sympathetic to women's 'right to feel' and emotional and sexual needs.[24] These articles begin with fairly generous praise for certain historically located Marwari virtues that no longer fulfill the modern requirements of the nation or the people, and have dire consequences for the women in the community.

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[24] Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere 1920-1940*, 274–276.

Reactions: The Press, the People, and Marwaris themselves

The *Marwari Ank* of *Chānd* created such outrage in the community that both reformers and conservatives felt that the issue had to be responded to, and the community's *sākh* or honor defended. According to Hardgrove, most copies of the magazine were burned. Orsini writes that the "shocking" special issue caused "an uproar and a barrage of protests from those influential sections of society and their supporters."[25] G.D. Birla asked Gandhi to write against the issue. A defamation case was raised in court and Banarasidas Chaturvedi (editor of the Calcutta Hindi monthly *Viśāl Bhārat*) condemned *Chānd* at the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. In 1930, Hindi writer and publisher Ramnaresh Tripathi wrote an article about the issue which answered the attack on Marwari culture, literature, and music.[26] The most striking critique appeared in a small note that Premchand contributed to the book review column of the Hindi journal *Mādhurī*. Premchand's critique appeared in December of 1929, only a month after the *Marwari Ank*, though he registered that even by then enough had already been said to condemn the special number. This presentation of dirty images and stories, he asserted, could not be meant to uplift women and protect them.[27]

> गन्दी चीज़ें बिकती खूब हैं, इसमें सन्देह नहीं। कोई उसे पसन्द न करे, पर एक बार पढ़ना अवश्य चाहता है। भाँड़ों की गन्दी गालियाँ सुनने और उन पर हँसने के लिए लोग बेदरेग़ रुपए ख़र्च करते हैं। यह मन की एक प्रवृत्ति है। शराब की तरफ़ क्यों मन लपकता है? हम जानते हैं कि यह अच्छी चीज़ नहीं, फिर भी शौक़ से पीते हैं। *चाँद* के सुयोग्य सम्पादक ने मन की इसी प्रवृत्ति से अपना मतलब गाँठने की तरकीब निकाली है। ... *चाँद* ने पक्के और कुशल व्यापारियों की भाँति बिक्री के सिद्धान्त को सर्वोपरि समझा है। चीज़ बिकनी चाहिए, उससे किसी की हानि होती है तो हमारी बला से! मुर्दा दोज़ख़ में जाय या बहिश्त में, हमें अपने हलवे-माँड़े से मतलब है। ... हम तो जनता से यही कहेंगे कि यदि वह स्त्री-समाज का उपकार चाहती है, तो उसे *चाँद* का बहिष्कार करना चाहिए।

> Filthy things sell well, no doubt. Nobody likes it, but everyone certainly wants to read it once. Undeniably, people pay to listen to and laugh at the dirty insults of itinerant buffoons. It is a predilection of the mind. Why does the mind spring toward alcohol? We know that it is an unhealthy thing, but we drink it gladly. The competent editor of *Chānd* hatched the idea to tie his fortunes to this same inclination of the mind. Like true and capable businessmen, *Chānd* considers the principle of sales and profit to be paramount. Things should sell! Aside from this, how is someone else's loss our concern? Let the dead go to hell or to heaven, we are only concerned with our own desserts ... All we shall say to people: if you are for women's uplift, then *Chānd* should be boycotted.

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[25] Ibid., 285.

[26] Hardgrove, *Community and Public Culture*, 209.

[27] Premchand, "Mādhurī" 1, no. 6 (December 1929): आलोचना और पुस्तक परिचय., in Premacanda, *Premacanda Kā Aprāpya Sāhitya*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Nayī Dillī: Bhāratīya Jñānapīṭha Prakāśana, 1988), 510–511.

At the end of his critique Premchand compares *Chānd* with the type of merchant that they are attempting to decry, those who put profits before ethics.[28]

The special number rallied support from various corners and reinvigorated Marwari solidarity. There is reason to believe that the *Marwari Ank* caused the Marwaris to close ranks. The reconciliatory Akhil Bharatvarshiya Marwari Sammelan (also called the All India Marwari Federation or AIMF) was established under the presidency of Ramdev Chowkany in 1935. The Sammelan brought together geographically-scattered Marwaris, defined as "such persons who represent the way of life, language and culture of Rajasthan, Haryana, Malwa and the adjoining areas and who or their ancestors have settled in part of India or any foreign country." The stated goals of the AIMF were to promote economic and social development, arbitrate disputes, and provide for social uplift. [29] It would seem that Marwaris may have taken much of what the *ank* offers to heart and that shame and humiliation proved to be effective pedagogy, though economic and social reform in the community had begun a couple decades before and continue to be so to this day. It is likely that the *ank* caused some to redouble their efforts to explore Marwari identity. Two large Hindi volumes appeared within twenty years of the *Marwari Ank*: Balchand Modi's *Desh ke itihās men Mārwārī Jāti ka Sthān* (Calcutta: Raghunathprasad Singhania, 1940) and Bhimsen Kedia's *Bhārat men Mārwārī Samāj* (Calcutta: National Publications, 1947). Both of these were massive efforts to redeem the Marwari image on the eve of independence. On one hand, they disabused the reader of whatever slander Marwaris have suffered, and on the other hand shore up the stereotype that Marwaris are gifted in economic matters.

It is not surprising that this wealthy conservative community had such fervent enemies. For as the authors of the *ank* insightfully observe, *Satta* and *Phatka* are zero sum games: 'all fortune is someone else's misfortune, falling from a brother's pocket' (259). Marwari literature, which comes after the dust settles from this spectacular special number, beyond the immediate responses, continues to bear a mark of this diatribe. Anthony Reid has suggested that in "advanced economies, hostility toward the pioneers of capitalist activity weakens as a shared consumerist culture becomes generalized."[30] While this is true for much of India, the Calcutta Marwaris came to be reframed later in the Marxist milieu of West Bengal as class enemies. Small wonder then that Marwari novels produced at the end of the twentieth century still bear a consciousness of the otherness and humiliation exemplified in the *ank*.

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[28] Premchand, "Mādhurī," आलोचना और पुस्तक परिचय, quoted in Premacanda, *Premacanda Kā Aprāpya Sāhitya*, 510–511. Premchand names Sahgal directly, even suggesting that he gained personally and financially for this endeavor while the journal continued to take losses.

[29] Akhil Bharatvarshiya Marwari Sammelan, *Memorandum and Rules and Regulations,* n.p., 1961. Quoted in Hardgrove, *Community and Public Culture: The Marwaris in Calcutta,* 242.

[30] Reid, "Entrepreneurial Minorities and the State," 59.

Chapter Four:

Becoming and Belonging: The Storm of History in Pīlī Āndhī

      This chapter marks a turning point in this dissertation from what has been largely historical and archival sources to literary primary sources: Hindi novels written by Calcutta Marwari women. These novels are the intersection of historical processes that produced Marwari identity and the rich literary milieu of Calcutta. The Marwari traditions and culture of Calcutta are also outwardly melded here with a broader Hindi tradition. As we have seen, for Marwaris, the process of making Hindi their own began in the mid-nineteenth century with the encouragement of the Hindi press, which in Calcutta absorbed much from the Bengali examples. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Marwaris had begun to promote Hindi and the Nagari script in their schools and in the journals they owned and patronized. The reforms that occurred in the community in the decades before independence – which were always linked to Hindi through journals, schools, libraries, and literary clubs – bear fruit at the end of the twentieth century as literary expression. From the middle of the twentieth century, movements in Hindi literature and also the influence of Indian feminism broadened the possibilities for the type of subjective expression available, particularly for women. These writers expand the Hindi tradition to include the subjectivities and domesticities of Marwari life, exploring and exploding origin myths and stereotypes that were featured in *Chānd's Marwari ank*, among other places. This new literature gives Marwaris a literary past in Hindi; one in which their collective history and identity can be imaginatively explored. And thus Hindi, for Marwari women, becomes a liberating medium, and as it was in the early part of the twentieth century for Marwaris (particularly women), the language is again implicated in a reform process. Previously, Marwaris had only been negative blots in any language, but now they could stake out a parcel of Hindi literary ground to call their own.

      In the last two decades of the twentieth century a spate of Hindi writing emerged in Calcutta once again claiming a literary place for Hindi in the predominantly Bengali literary milieu. As Meenakshi Mukherjee has noted, the phenomena of relocated communities has seldom been examined closely in terms of literary representations: "It is surprising that [Marwaris] have rarely figured in Bangla fiction or film – except as caricatures. Even in the three Calcutta-centered films by Satyajit Ray…the occasional Marwari character enters only to fulfill a completely predictable role of a crude moneymaker."[1] From this predicament of always being represented as threatening stereotypes and comic-figures arises a collective need for a self-representation that writes the community into a dynamic cultural and imaginative existence. While this literature maintains a dialogic engagement with popular constructions of the Marwaris as an undifferentiated mass, it seeks to also go beyond corrective or apologetic positions towards closer examination of identity as it relates to writing.

      In the first three chapters of this dissertation I have explored some of the politico-historical and social forces that shape the Marwari community and summon this literature

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[1] Mukherjee, *Elusive Terrain*, 50.

into existence. The first of these writers to come on the literary scene was Prabha Khetan (1942-2008). Her novel *Pīlī Āndhī* (1996) was the first to explicitly deal with Marwaris as a migrant community. *Pīlī Āndhī* is a story that spans three generations of a Marwari family as they acquire identities in the diaspora as modern Marwaris, capitalists, citizens, and residents of British Bengal and independent India. Khetan traces a communitas and liminality of the Marwaris, as they are at the threshold of a transition and are "simultaneously blending into the ethos of their adopted region at work while retaining their separate identity within the domestic space."[2] As in all of Khetan's work, the story is a retelling of events and anecdotes from her experiences and those of her family. Writing this type of *historical* novel calls for an act of critical fabulation in which the author has to invent a people, who are at once real but not actual. Khetan thereby confronts the negative associations of her community by generously exposing the degree to which they confirmed. At the same time, her work seeks to disabuse the public of any essentialist conclusions.

The novel examines the deterritorialization of the Marwaris from Rajasthan and their reterritorialization in Bengal. This requires a huge canvas: the spatial and temporal expanse of the novel covers North India to Bengal and from the end of the nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth. The scope makes it impossible to have one protagonist or central character. Rather, the novel is about a collective of several individuals and their individuated freedom struggles. While these struggles in the novel are often of a community, they are staged as personal histories and relationships.

A politics of desire is present in all of Khetan's work, and in *Pīlī Āndhī* it is the desire for a place, one of belonging and freedom, a home. This is clearly a collective anxiety for a migrant community, but this desire is realized differently for each individual in the novel: either as a freedom from the past and its institutions or freedom from a stereotype that has begun to reproduce itself. Khetan's writing is an expression of this desire; she declares that her impetus for writing comes from the question, "*Mērī zamīn kahāṁ*?" where is my land/place?[3] Michel de Certeau has written,

> Writing is born from and deals with the acknowledged doubt of an explicit division, in sum, the impossibility of one's own place. A subject is never authorized by a place … it remains a stranger to itself and forever deprived of an ontological ground, and therefore it always comes up short or in excess, always the debtor of a death, indebted with respect to the disappearance of a genealogical and territorial 'substance,' linked to a name that cannot be owned.[4]

For Khetan, this is what is at stake in writing about Calcutta Marwaris; it is the predicament in *Pīlī Āndhī*, the debt left with the disappearance of a genealogical and territorial "substance," linked to a name that likewise cannot be disowned. The gendered discourse of becoming, belonging, and territorialization is further nuanced when the question *Mērī zamīn kahāṁ* shifts from the male to the female voice in the second half of the novel. The new institutions, codes, and nation that accommodate modernized Marwaris remain patriarchal and fall short for women. Khetan was a committed feminist; her life's work, literary and otherwise, was a struggle against the patriarchy in the

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[2] Ibid., 48.
[3] Ushā Rāṇāvata, *Prabhā Khetāna Kā Aupanyāsika Saṃsāra* (Naī Dillī: Aruṇodaya Prakāśana, 2005), 70.
[4] Michel de Certeau and Tom Conley, *The Writing of History* (Columbia University Press, 1988), 320.

Marwari community and beyond. Her novels and nonfiction prose are a sustained meditation on gender equality, as one can glean from a glance at the titles of her oeuvre.

Prabha Khetan was born November 1st, 1942 into a Marwari business family and she died from heart failure in Kolkata on the 21st of September, 2008. Khetan was among the first wave of beneficiaries of the educational reform movements led by progressive Marwaris in the early part of the 20th century. She went to school at the Ballygunge Shiksha Sadan, founded in 1948 by Bhagwati Prasad Khetan (Founder President) and Raghunath Prasad Khetan (Founder Secretary and later President), both of the reformist Khetan family. The celebrated Hindi writer Mannu Bhandari was her Hindi teacher from fourth grade until eleventh grade.[5] Thereafter, Khetan attended Presidency College in Calcutta where she remained to complete her PhD in Western Philosophy.

Khetan's literary activities began in the 1980s with the publication of five collections of poetry as well as some nonfiction.[6] At the end of the decade she decided to switch to novels because she believed them to be a sincere and frank form of expression appropriate for her work. Her first novel, *Āo pepe ghar chalen* appeared in 1990, followed by *Tālābandī* in 1991, *Aids* and *Chinnamastā* in 1993, *Apne apne cehare* in 1994, *Pīlī Āndhī* in 1996, and *Strī–Pakś* in 1997.[7] After this decade of prolific novel writing, she turned again to nonfiction for the rest of her career.

Her work represents a large measure of her life and experiences as a Marwari woman in Calcutta.[8] For example, *Tālābandī* is a novel about a Marwari factory, labor

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[5] Rāṇāvata, *Prabhā Khetāna Kā Aupanyāsika Saṃsāra*, 175. Khetan told Rāṇāvata in an interview that Bhandari was her guru and that Rajendra Yadav encouraged her to read and translate Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*.

[6] Prabhā Khetāna, *Ahalya* (Dilli : Sarasvati Virhara, 1988); Prabhā Khetāna, *Albeyara Kāmū : Vaha Pahalā Ādamī*, 1. Vāṇī saṃskaraṇa. (Nayī Dillī: Vāṇī Prakāśana, 2009); *Eka Aura Pahacāna* (Kalakattā: Svara Samaveta, 1987); Prabhā Khetāna, *Kṛshṇadharma Maiṃ: Prabhā Khetāna Kī Lambī Kavitā* (Kalakattā: Svara Samaveta, 1987). Prabhā Khetāna, *Sāṅkaloṃ Meṃ Qaida Kśitija : Kucha Dakśiṇa Afrīkī Kavitāeṃ̇*, 1. saṃśkaraṇa. (Dillī: Sarasvatī Vihāra, 1988); Prabhā Khetāna, *Upaniveśa Meṃ Strī : Mukti-kāmanā Kī Dasa Vārtāeṃ̇*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Nayī Dillī: Rājakamala Prakāśana, 2003); Prabhā Khetāna, *Bāzāra Ke Bīca : Bāzāra Ke Khilāpha : Bhūmaṇḍalīkaraṇa Aura Strī Ke Praśna* (Naī Dilli: Vāṇī Prakāśana, 2004); Prabhā Khetāna, *Bhūmaṇḍalīkaraṇa : Brāṇḍa Saṃskṛti Aura Rāṣhṭra*, Saṃskaraṇa 1. (Naī Dillī: Sāmayika Prakāśana, 2007); Prabhā Khetāna, *Anyā Se Ananyā*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Naī Dillī: Rājakamala Prakāśana, 2007). Prabhā Khetāna, *Albeyara Kāmū : Vaha Pahalā Ādamī*, 1. Vāṇī saṃskaraṇa. (Nayī Dillī: Vāṇī Prakāśana, 2009).

[7] Prabhā Khetāna, *Āo Pepe, Ghara Caleṃ*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Dillī: Sarasvatī Vihāra, 1990); Prabhā Khetāna, *Tālābandī*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Dillī: Sarasvatī Vihāra, 1991); Prabhā Khetāna, *Chinnamastā*, 2. saṃskaraṇa. (Naī Dillī: Rājakamala Prakāśana, 1993); Prabhā Khetāna, *Apane-Apane Cehare*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Nayī Dillī: Kitāba Ghara, 1994); Khetāna, *Pīlī Āndhī*; Prabhā Khetāna, *Strī–Pakś* (Naī Dillī: Rājakamala Prakāśana, 1997).

[8] Khetāna, *Anyā Se Ananyā*. Prabha Khetan was a businesswoman before she was a published author. She started her first of various businesses in 1966. After 1976 she concentrated her business interests on leather goods, which would develop into a thriving business and grant her complete financial independence. This freedom, quite rare for Marwari woman at that time, enabled her to pursue her literary interests and blaze the trail for the writers to follow. She was the first woman to be president of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce in 1992. There she endowed the Prabha Khetan Puraskar, which annually awards one lakh rupees for a "trailblazing achievement by a woman in any field of human endeavour." The foundation she established also promotes women's empowerment and self-reliance. Her commitment to feminism is the central theme in most of her literary creations as well.

disputes, unions, and capital in independent India. The heteroglossia of this novel, that is the presence of varieties of types of speech and linguistic codes, places it squarely in Calcutta with its mix of Bengali and Hindi and various social registers. Rajkamal Choudhary's novel *Machlī marī huī* (1966) may have had some influence on this novel as it deals with the same class of industrialist in Calcutta. As against this larger social canvas, *Chinnamasthā* is an intensely personal and painful account of her youth, early womanhood, and the ultimata that career orientated-women face. The novel was criticized for its graphic accounts of rape, incest, and psychological abuse in the patriarchal social milieu of the Marwari community. This novel is by Khetan's own account, highly autobiographical, with Khetan's life providing some of the material for the horrors suffered by the protagonist. *Pili Āndhī* has elements of both these novels. In her penultimate novel, she is a more mature writer and better prepared to confront the history of Marwaris in Bengal; she is able to examine what that history and migration to this new land has meant for both men and women.

Pīlī Āndhī has three sections or books, which are unnamed and divide the narrative chronologically. The logic of the three sections traces the struggle for belonging and freedom first in bustling merchant world of the bazaar (Books 1 and 2) to the domestic world of the Marwari *bari* in Calcutta (Book 3). In this way, certain unarticulated causal relationships are established between the spheres of the *bari*-home and the bazaar, socio-cultural and economic practices, and 'tradition' and 'modernity,' emerging as a third idiom of Marwari modernity – the vernacular capitalist.[9]

Pīlī Āndhī is about storms of sand and of history, the violent forces that literally move territories and their inhabitants. The displaced must create new stories, both historical and fictional, for the home they lost and the home they seek. Below, I will examine the storm of history and sand that propels the Rūngṭā family into the predicament shared by all Marwaris in Calcutta – the paradox of adapting while staying the same, the homesickness of migrants. Lukács writes of this *Heimweh* as a component of all great novels: "The novel's normative incompleteness is a true-born form in the historico-philosophical sense and proves its legitimacy by attaining its substratum, the true condition of the contemporary spirit. The idea of becoming becomes a state, and hence its form."[10] This homelessness, anxiety of belonging, and state of becoming manifest in *Pīlī Āndhī* as a need to create fictions and metafictions, as a way to ground a people in a literary past and inscribe their story into the terrain. The metafictions in the novel, the account books and the memoirs of Marwaris, are an analogy for artistic creation and the function of fiction – literally accounting for merchants. The home is a dissonant trope in the novel, simultaneously sought and fled in a state of perpetual incompleteness. I will examine this trope as it appears variously as homeland (Heimat,

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[9] Ranajit Guha, "Dominance Without Hegemony and Its Historiography," in *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society, Vol. 6*, ed. Ranajit Guha (Oxford University Press, USA, 1996). The two idioms of the pre-colonial colonized and that of the colonizer overlapped, crossed or subverted each other, in order to flow and coalesce in the third idiom, which was the modern Indian. This third idiom could be a replica neither of the Western nor of the ancient Indian it so often invoked.
[10] György Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel; a Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature* (Cambridge, Mass: M.I.T. Press, 1971), 73.

deś), domesticity, land-*zamīn* (property), and belonging. Lastly, I will return to the theme of history and how the novel invites other forms of private discourse (gossip, anecdote, and memoir) to push back against its hegemony.

The Storm of History in Princely India and Becoming Marwari in Calcutta (Book 1)

The great yellow sandstorm, the *pīlī āndhī*, which gives the novel its name, is the event that propels the rest of the work. For the characters in the novel, the *āndhī* is the storm of history that thrusts them into colonial modernity and away from their homeland forever. The storm, and the events of the novel itself, are reminiscent of Walter Benjamin's concept of 'progress' and the Angel of History. In his ninth thesis in the essay "Theses on the Philosophy of History," Benjamin writes,

> A Klee painting named "Angelus Novus" shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.[11]

Benjamin's Angel looks back at a totality ended by one single catastrophe, a totality or paradise from which he will always be alienated, because of the wreckage historical time piles between him and the lost *Heimat*. As Lukacs has suggested, a novel's tension is the result of resonating dialectic oppositions, such as man's alienation and his urge for totality.[12] This dissonance and alienation, along with the literal loss of a homeland because of a storm, constitute the problematic of the novel.

The novel opens in the erstwhile princely state of Rajputana (Rajasthan), in the Shekawati district in the northeastern part of the state. The story begins at the end of the 19th century in a traditional Rajasthani merchant home. The Seth and patriarch of the Rūngṭā home was formerly an opium merchant, but now had become a bedridden opium addict. The *Bini* (daughter-in-law) wears *ghūnghat* and is a child-bride; the sons work in a bazaar in another town rather far away because the local market is saturated. The historical forces of the opium trade, drought, native rulers, and famines are driving merchants in every direction. A ferocious and distant yellow *āndhī* (sandstorm) is approaching. The event that propels the rest of the novel occurs when four horsemen (the sons of the Raja of Sujangarh)[13] emerge from a small fort in the midst of this terrible sand storm and intercept the two sons of the Rūngta house returning home after working far afield for three years. The four riders demand all their wealth. Rameshwar (the elder brother) draws his pistol but is shot dead by the horsemen. Kiśan (the younger brother) is

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[11] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn, first Schocken paperback ed. (Schocken, 1969), 257–258.
[12] Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel; a Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*.
[13] Rāṇāvata, *Prabhā Khetāna Kā Aupanyāsika Saṃsāra*. According to the author, Sujangarh is the ancestral village of the Khetan family, a place Prabha Khetan never visited.

spared and flees from the village with his wife, child, and Rameshwar's child Mādho. The event signifies a historical rupture in the political economy of the region, since as James Tod remarked about the Rajasthan he knew, "Commerce, in these regions, is the basis of liberty: even despotism is compelled to leave it unrestrained."[14] When this despotism turns on the merchants, they naturally seek the relative security of property offered by *Pax Britannica.* Therefore, the violence of the native rulers is the function of a new era, arriving with the great storm, it drives the merchants towards British Indian seaports. Khetan's depiction of the native rulers bears resemblance to the disparaging image of them in *Marwari Ank*. After giving away their camels, they travel by train from Churu to Delhi, and then on towards Bengal. Kiśan and family arrive in Dhanbad where an established Marwari Seth loans them the capital to open a cloth shop. They are astounded by the lush beauty of alluvial 'Bengal' (subsequently Bihar, after which Jharkand) and the ceaseless rain. Shīl Bābū, the Bengali station master and revolutionary, offers Kiśan a small piece of land on which to open his shop.

Upon arrival in Dhanbad, Kiśan recalls words of advice from his late brother Rāmeśwar, which become the novel's central problematic and the predicament of Calcutta Marwaris: "राह बदलनी है तो बदलो, संशोधन करो, मगर भटको मत" (If you have to change your path, then change and amend, but don't stray) (26). Thus an individual or a community must change with the times, but not lose itself or go astray. The possible metrics for 'going astray' refer to the Marwari codes and institutions firstly, but these as we see, collide with the colonial state and the requirements of modern citizenship. The problem in the novel involves reconciling these requirements, or apportioning change to the market and preserving sameness at home. Kiśan passes this ethic to his nephew Mādho to help him survive as a businessman and as a Marwari abroad. (Later it passes from Mādho to Pannālāl, and then Pannālāl to Somā – each exchange posthumously, indebted to a death). The small fragment of advice, from a dead brother, very economically encapsulates a dominant ethic and problem in the Marwari community living *abroad*: the call to guard one's identity, culture, community, and yet reconcile these with the material realities of colonial modernity, nationalism, capitalism, and deterritorialization. The voice of his dead brother, out of the past and a different land, invites Kiśan to go with the times, so to speak, and yet it orders him to stay within the fold. This also anticipates another theme: the imperative to stay politically aloof or at least noncommittal, particularly in regard to nationalist politics. Hidden in this advice is a strategy for surviving changes in power of various regimes and path-makers – from Mughal or Rajput to colonial and post-colonial regimes and capitalism. It is a regular and strategic reconciliation with dominant trajectories in history, a strategy of entrepreneurial communities.

The advice offered to Kiśan is historically embedded in the moment in which his community enters a liminal period, a process of becoming, of deterritorializing and reterritorializing. His nephew, Mādho, will interpret this ethic differently, creating a

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[14] James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan; or the Central and Western Rajput States...*, 2nd ed. (Motilal Banarsidas, 1998), vol. i, 553. Chapter one of this dissertation discusses the various historical forces that drove merchants to British seaports. The major impetuses include the declining importance of overland trade routes that passed through Rajasthan, the instability due to the collapse of the central Mughal state, and the exportable surplus of commodities in British controlled India.

resistant subjectivity. This synthesis in Mādho is, then, a variant of vernacular capitalism, which takes up capitalist modes while preserving advantageous communal structures, codes, and resources. This admixture of codes is neither 'traditional' nor capitalist in the simplest sense, rather it is a third idiom of vernacular capitalism. The narrative presents this process as a series of liberations and limitations of individuals. Community and society set these limits, but also these collectives *subjectify* or create subjects with agency to change and influence events. Louis Montrose suggests:

> The term 'Subject' is … an equivocal process of *subjectification*: on the one hand, shaping individuals as loci of consciousness and initiators of action…; and, on the other hand, positioning, motivating, and constraining them within – *subjecting them to* – social networks and cultural codes that ultimately exceed their comprehension or control."[15]

The succession of characters occupying this subject role in this novel – Kiśan, Mādho, Pannālāl, Soma – fathom these limiting and empowering networks and codes as they evolve over time. For Kiśan, his community gives him the resources to start a business in this new land, but he quickly retires from the scene and Mādho takes over. For him, it is the new land-territory and nation that provide the resources, while his community increasingly offers the limitations.

Shortly after arriving in Dhanbad, Kiśan manages to establish a cloth business in Calcutta. He arrives at a *basa* (communal hostel) in Bara Bazaar in a well-drawn traditional business scene: the cloth merchant Seth appears, performs his puja, adjusts his turban, and sits on his pillows to hold court. Meanwhile, back in Rajasthan, Kiśan's father is shot dead trying to avenge his other son Rameśwar. As a result, Kiśan becomes dejected and retires from the scene, with his business only beginning to gather momentum. Consequently, the 14-year-old Mādho is compelled to take over, not uncommon for young Marwaris abroad. Meanwhile, Mādho is also exposed to an entirely new world from the Bengali revolutionary Shīl Bābū, who is secretly teaching the boy English and history at daybreak. This comes to an end when the local Dhanbad Seth, Lālā, informs the authorities about revolutionary Shīl Bābū, for which Lālā receives the Raibahadur title for his act of loyalty. Shīl Bābū and Mādho (by association) are arrested. Mādho is released, but Shīl Bābū is taken away crying, "*inqalab zindabad*" (long live the revolution). In a gesture of Marwari political prudence and to insulate him from the influence of nationalists and revolutionaries, Kiśan dispatches Mādho to Calcutta to learn how to keep accounts and to calculate *parta* (dividends). However, in Calcutta Mādho learns that nationalism and reform are not Bengali patents. He discovers within the community the existence of two camps: the Sanatani (Orthodox) and the Sudharak (Reformist), the latter actively nationalist and the former cautiously conservative. The Seth is a sanatani while Mādho finds himself drawn in the direction of the reformers. The Seth promotes Mādho to *dalāl* (commission agent) and the entire Rūngṭā family moves to Calcutta. Mādho enrolls Sānwar, Kiśan's son, into the *Vishudhananda Saraswati Vidhyalay* in Bara Bazaar. Thus it is the novelization of a rather typical Marwari arrival narrative which unfolds here, but it is unprecedented in Hindi literature.

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[15]Louis Montrose, *The Poetics and Politics of Culture*, in Harold Aram Veeser, ed., *The New Historicism* (Psychology Press, 1989), 21.

Keeping Accounts and Writing Fictions

Early in Book 1, the narrative – somewhat self reflexively – touches on two types of fictional record keeping. The first set is the false accounts kept by the humble merchant Kiśan and the second is the grand narratives written by the colonial historians. These two examples reveal some of the prejudices and anxieties of the history writer and the milieu in which the histories were written or records were kept. The narrative expands the realm of acceptable historical evidence to include not only historical texts, but also images, memory, account books, diaries, gossip, and anecdotes, which serve to expose contradictions and eddies in the stream of history. Thus the same event on the level of story, has multiple and contradicting versions on the level of narrative. One such moment comes when Mādho finds a discrepancy in the account books:

> माधो ने पूछा, "चाचा, अपने तो घर में दस सेर आटा नहीं लगता और आपने ढाई मन गेहूं का हिसाब लिख रखा है, यह बात जरा मेरे कम समझ में आई। और फिर यह पिश्ता-बादाम का भाव, गाय का भाव।"

> "माधो, आने वाली पीढ़ी हमारे बेटे-पोते हमें गरीब नहीं समझें, परिवार में बेटे-पोतों के सामने यही कहानी रखना कि हमारे दादाजी बहुत रईस थे। कि, घर मुनीम-गुमाश्तों से भरा रहता था। घर में दूध-दही की कमी नहीं थी, मुफ्त का बासा चलता था।" (53)

Mādho asks, "Uncle, we didn't purchase ten *sers* of flour and you wrote that we have two and a half *mauns* of wheat, I simply don't understand this. And then this about the value of the almonds and pistachios, and the value of the cow." Kiśan replies, "Mādho, the coming generations should not think we were poor, in the family the children and grandchildren will be presented with the story that our grandfather was a great gentleman. And that the house was full of accountants and agents. There was no shortage of milk and yoghurt at home, and that we ran a free communal housing shelter (*bāsā*).

This passage introduces a thematic that runs throughout the novel: that of keeping and correcting the record. These account books (*bahī-khātā*) are private texts guarded within the family, therefore the fabulation is not meant to impress or influence outsiders – these fictions are for themselves and future generations. Keeping fictional accounts preserves a touch of the shame and anxiety for these newly arrived migrants. Kiśan exchanges an arduous struggle for a lineage of privilege, placing a low premium on the self-made man, and a high premium on the well-established line. He includes traditional Marwari status symbols, such as the sponsorship of free communal housing and the employment of several kinsmen. This indicates where Kiśan is positioned vis-à-vis the narrative of capital in India; he is juxtaposed to new economic actors like Mādho and later Pannālāl. Kiśan attempts to establish the family's prestige by descent, while Mādho strives to establish it by ascent. The passage records a generational shift in the cultural notions of prestige, a wider process of 'modernization' of merchant communities, and a move from the communal towards the individual subject. Long after Kiśan and Mādho are dead, a portrait hangs in the Rūngṭā house that depicts Mādho as a bejeweled Seth in an elaborate costume, and not the khadi-wearing progressive reformer that he presented himself as. Thus the fiction that Kiśan promotes manages to survive him and appear in different media, such as Mādho's portrait.

The history that Kiśan invents is not of a native ruler or nobleman; rather, it is the house of a merchant-prince, a figure that gradually gives way to the industrialists. The presence of *bāsā*, accountants, and agents establishes tenure in Bengal. This reterritorializes the family as a firm with business in this land. Kiśan would like to give the impression that they came to Bengal not as dispossessed refugees, but as representatives of a great family, with subordinates of their own. He writes his fiction to spare the future generation the ignominy of poverty and exile, suggesting that deterritorialized communities need writing and fiction to create and protect them. Kiśan's account even allows Mādho to indulge in a moment of fantasy:

> माधो ने कुछ नहीं कहा, बस खामोश नज़र से चाचा की ओर देखता रहा। कम से कम आधा मिनट यानी तीस सेकेंड, क्षणों का यह गुच्छा अनंत में विलीन हो गया। इसके बाद माधो ने पीठ घुमा लिया और वापस पहाड़ा याद करने लगा - एक ऊंटा दो…दो ऊंटा चार… माधो की स्मृति तेज थी। किशन बाबू उसे गते पर मात्रा विहीन सुंदर अक्षरों में मुड़िया (महाजनी भाषा) लिखवाने का अभ्यास करवाते। (54)

> > Mādho didn't say anything, he simply looked at his uncle for a half a minute, he was lost in this tangle of bliss for a few moments. Then he turned his back and returned to memorizing his multiplication tables – one camel two…two camel four. Mādho has a clear memory of Kiśan making him practice the beautiful cursive merchant script *muṛiyā*.

Incredibly the text works its magic on Mādho, even as he is the first to discover its falsity. The false record is meant to deliver a certain image of the Rūṅgṭā family to the next generation. This indulgence in fabulation is immediately (on the same page) juxtaposed with colonial histories and their consequences, particularly the discursive creation of the Marwari *Feindbild* (enemy image), and how the colonial prejudice was transferred to Bengalis (amongst others). It is noteworthy that the scripts (*muṛiyā* and Roman) are linked with the types of fiction which they can produce. Early in the twentieth-century, the time during which Mādho is learning *muṛiyā*, the merchant script was ridiculed in the Hindi press in an effort to promote Hindi in the Nagari script, and to recruit Marwaris to the cause of Hindi. This novel itself represents a successful completion of that ambition, Hindi is the representative medium and *muṛiyā* has very few practitioners remaining amongst Marwaris.[16] The scripts link Mādho and Kiśan to either side of a significant historical divide in the community. Kiśan is linked with highly traditional Marwari world, of which the *muṛiyā* was script was a symbol of identity and insulation since outsiders could not read it. Mādho, on the other hand, learns Roman and Nāgarī, scripts that link him into national and global currents of modernization.

When a boy Mādho's age calls him a *meḍo* (a pejorative term for Marwaris in Bengal), he consults Shīl Bābū regarding the incident. Shīl Bābū tells him that *English History* has convinced Bengalis that Marwaris are the enemy, and not the English. Shīl Bābū tells Mādho that the class of English reading clerks is particularly subject to this divisive propaganda meant to advance the idea that it is not the English merchants, but rather the Marwaris that have exploited Bengal. Mādho's community has warned him

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[16] Gupta, *Bālamukunda Gupta Granthāvalī*. For a discussion of merchant scripts and the Hindi movement see chapter two of this dissertation.

repeatedly against learning English, as it is known to lead to Christianity. Added to this, he learns how Bengalis are misled and manipulated by English education. Despite the dangers, Shīl Bābū insists English must be studied and read to scrutinize and demystify history:

> लेकिन हमें तो अंग्रेज़ी पढ़नी पड़ेगी, ज़रूर पढ़नी चाहिए। शील बाबू का स्वर गंभीर था। माधो तुम देख नहीं रहे कि कैसे हमारी अज्ञानता का फ़ायदा ये अंग्रेज़ बनिए उठा रहे हैं। अंग्रेज़ी के अक्षर से ये झूठा इतिहास लिख रहे हैं। ये लिखते हैं कि बंगालियों का शोषण मारवाड़ी कर रहे हैं। झूठे हैं। बिल्कुल झूठे हैं, लोग काम करेंगे नहीं, रईसी करेंगे … जानते हो आज से पचास साल पहले कलकत्ते के एक रईस ने अपनी बिल्ली का ब्याह रचाया था और उसमें एक लाख रुपया फूंक दिया। (54)

> "But we will have to read English, we certainly need to read." Shīl Bābū's voice was severe. "Mādho, don't you see the way the English merchants are taking advantage of our ignorance. They are writing false histories in English letters. They write that the Marwaris are responsible for the exploitation of Bengalis. They are liars, complete liars. These people (Bengalis) won't work, they luxuriate… you know that fifty years ago a Bengali nobleman celebrated the marriage of his cat in which he spent 100,000 rupees."

Shīl insists that there is truth available in reading what is known to be fictitious – at least it can reveal something about the authorial intention. In this case, the demagoguery and divisive intentions of the colonial historians are available in 'English letters.' These writings in 'English letters,' like Kiśan's ledger, betray an anxiety of the writer – one of legitimacy and belonging. Shīl Bābū recognizes a key component in the discourse of orientalism: the creation of knowledge and histories that justify a colonial presence and identify the despotic or exploitative oriental. The anti-bania discourse of colonial administrators seeped into the consciousness of many segments of Indian society, even anti-colonial segments.[17] Shīl Bābū insists that careful reading can reveal intentionality in false or teleological histories. He explains that the reason Marwaris became the principal agents in the jute industry is because Bengalis and Khatris became decadent. To show Mādho that Marwaris are not all to blame for the Bengali decline, Shīl Bābū refers to a famous anecdote about an eccentric Bengali merchant prince. Shīl Bābū calls the decline and decadence of Bengalis the *Bengali rog*, or the Bengali illness. Mādho, still a child, is not particularly interested in the historical and discursive reasons why Bengalis may see Marwaris as exploiters; the complexity of historiography escapes him. Rather, he is defensive and threatens that his people can quit Bengal if no convenient and amicable commercial conditions present themselves.

> हाँ शील काका, चाचा राजनीति से बहुत दूर रहते हैं। वे तो कहते हैं अपने को लिसी से क्या मतलब? रोटी कमाने आए हैं, रोटी कमा रहे हैं। सुविधा नहीं मिलेगी तो कहीं और जा बसेंगे। जब हमने अपने देश छोड़ा तो बंगाल छोड़ने में कोन-सी बड़ी बात है। ऐसे तो है नहीं कि दुनिया में जाने के लिए हमारे पास और जगह नहीं है? (54)

> Yes, Shīl Bābū, my uncle stays clear of politics. He simply says, "what's it to us?" We've come here to earn our bread, and we are earning our bread. If we don't meet with favorable conditions

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[17] Markovits, *Merchants, Traders, Entrepreneurs*, 254.

we go settle elsewhere. We've abandoned our homeland, so what's the big deal leaving Bengal? It's not as if there is nowhere else in the world for us to go.

Their deterritorialization has become an asset and liberation. Having no roots affords the Marwaris great mobility as fluid, 'apolitical' agents of capital. Remaining aloof of politics is a subject that comes up at every turn in the novel. But, ironically, the very solidarity of the Marwari polity consistently brings their actions into the political. Mādho feels that politics is a regional concern. Collectively unmoored, they are attached only to the market, yet the market and Marwaris become politicized by nationalist forces. The concept of private property gains purchase amongst Marwaris of Mādho's generation precisely because of this insecurity and non-belonging. For the men, belonging with regard to private property and national utility will eventually lessen the weight of local and regional issues. The women, on the other hand, experience the weight of the local and the anxiety of belonging, more severely, because of the insulated sphere of the Marwari home in Bengal.

Domesticity and Belonging in Bengal

This sense of belonging through ownership and economic nationalism is not available to women. Kiśan's wife (Mādho's aunt) Rādhā Bāī laments about her loneliness in Bengal: a condition she feels is acute for both men and women. When Rādhā Bāī asks about women in Calcutta, Mādho tells her that they are completely different from women back home: "They play instruments, sing, and read books as they like. They don't do anything else. In the evenings they get in buggies and go see plays" (62). Rādhā Bāī pines for the homeland; she finds life here is very lonely for men and women, and even Madho is so busy he can't be a child. Rādhā Bāī's account runs counter to what one might assume about Bengal, since it was to be the home of India's most emancipated women, the *bhadramahila*.

राधा बाई को पहले पानी का उच्छृंखल बहाव अच्छा लगा। अब सूखी हवा की याद आने लगी। राधा बाई चिड़चिड़ाने लगती, जब देखती कि, मरी बरसात दस-दस दिन तक रुकने का नाम नहीं लेती, सूरज निकला धरती थोड़ी तपी नहीं कि उमस बढ़ी ... और फिर वापस वही काले-काले बादल ... घूम-घूम कर, नाच-नाच कर बरसते हुए, पेड़ का पत्ता-पत्ता तपकता हुआ, मेढ़कों की टर्र...टर्र, सांप - बिच्छुओं की भरमार। बाजरा तो आंख से नहीं दिखता। कैर-सांगर को बचा-बचाकर बना लेती। अगल-बगल दो-चार मारवाड़ी परिवार बस गए थे। उनको याद आता सावन का हिंडोला, लेकिन यहां पर मैं कहाँ जाऊं? किस हिंडोले पर झूलूँ? गाँव में पर्दा होते हुए भी आने-जाने की छूट थी। कम से कम कुए पर तो हम औरतें चली जातीं सबेरे - शाम। कुएं पर तो एक मेला ही लग जाता था! किसी के पीहर से यदि कोई नयी ओढ़नी आई तो वह ज़रूर ओढ़कर आती, कोई अपने चूड़े का मुठिया दिखाती। इस देस में तो और बड़ा बंधन है। पति-पत्नी दोनों दुखी रहते। (52)

At first Rādhā Bāī liked this frantic unbridled flow of water. Now, however, she has begun to recall those dry winds. She gets annoyed now when she sees that the morbid rains don't even consider the word 'pause' for weeks. If the sun emerges it doesn't dry the earth, rather it increases the stuffiness, then the dense black clouds return, swirling, dancing and roaring, the leaves on the trees rustle, the frogs croak, and with it a deluge of serpents and scorpions. Millet is nowhere to be seen. *Ker – Sāngar* must be carefully saved to make anything. A few Marwari families have

settled nearby. They recall the summertime swing, but where shall I go here? On what swing may I swing? In the village, even in purdah, there was no restriction on movement. At least we women went to the well morning and evening. At the well there was always a little festival going on, someone showing off a veil or piece of jewelry, etc…But in this land there are grave restrictions. Both man and wife live in misery. …

Radha Bai is the first woman in this family to live in Bengal. She has very little contact with the region, which she looks upon with suspicion. She makes some interesting inversions: linking the rains with morbidity, purdah as mobility, and Bengal as more restricted for woman than Rajasthan. Radha Bai longs for the grain and millet from the land she knows to be in a severe drought. Mādho's impression of Bengal's rain and lush vegetation are of wonder and plentiful resources. Yet the climate of 'Bengal' seems to push Rādhā Bāī indoors. She finds nowhere to belong, no communal well at which to socialize, and no swing for amusement. The Rūngtā women stay indoors for the next three generations, until Soma leaves the home to live with Sujīt. It bears mentioning that the progressive Soma is from Delhi, thus the conservatism of the Rūngtā home is a particularly Calcuttan quality in this period.

As we have seen, a schism appears in the Marwari community in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The Marwaris began to move towards one of two camps: Sanatani (Orthodox) and the Sudharak (Reformist). The novel handles these two camps dialogically, two positions existing because of one another and performing an ebb and flow of salience. Even the individual characters resist squarely embodying one position or the other. The camps firstly stake positions of cultural practice: the orthodox side favors a strict observance and defense of religious and traditional codes, and the reformist side is inclined towards lifting strictures such as the bans on widow remarriage, oceanic travel, inter-caste marriage, etc. Linked to these cultural facets, or even insulated with them, are the economic activities on each side of the debate. As Mādho becomes increasingly drawn toward reform (anti-purdah, anti-dowry, anti-child-marriage), it follows that he begins to despise traditional merchant commerce:

माधो देखता, सेठजी तेजी-मंदी खेलने के अलावा और कुछ भी नहीं करते। यह फिर इन लोगों का रुपया ऊंचे ब्याज पर राजा-महाराजाओं के और बंगाली रईसों के पास जमा रहता। यानी महाजनी का धंधा। और उनका तीसरा काम था अंग्रेज हाकिमों के सामने गिड़गिड़ाना, या फिर किसी बिचौलिए को पटाकर रखना। लेकिन मेहनत कहाँ। मेहनत तो मुनीम-गुमाश्ते करते हैं। चाहे रायबहादुर लाला बिसेसर हों या नाथूराम जी, इनके पास तो बैठे=बैठे लक्ष्मी आती हैं।. . .स्वराज आंदोलन, समाज सुधार की बातें प्रायः होतीं। बड़े सेठजी पुराने ख्याल के थे, सनातनी थे और सुधारक मारवाड़ियों से बुरी तरह से चिढ़ते भी थे। जबकि माधो को समाज सुधार की बात भाती। लेकिन बड़े सेठजी के पास पूंजी है और माधो के पास कुछ नहीं। (59)

Mādho sees that the Sethji doesn't do anything aside from play the rise and fall of the market. Or else they loan capital at very high interest rates to Maharajas and Rajas or other Bengali gentlemen. In other words – money lending. The third activity is whining before their English masters or else closing deals with their middlemen. But where is the hard work? The real work is done by accountants and agents. Whether it is Rāibahādur Lāljī or Nāthūrāmjī, they just sit and Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, simply arrives … The *swaraj* (self-rule) movement and social reform movements were the main topics of the day. The big Sethji was of the old school, he was a

> *sanātanī* (orthodox camp) and he hated the *sudhārk* reformist camp. Whereas Mādho relished all talk of reform. But the big Seth has all the capital and Mādho has nothing.

Mādho resents the lack of productivity and real labor of the Seths. He does not understand how the value is created, he only knows that it is appropriated by the ones who do the least work. To Mādho's mind, the Seths are guilty of speculation (betting), usury, and collusion, in that order. He has neatly internalized first the colonial and then nationalist critiques of native business. He resents the power and capital of the Seth as a regressive force. Mādho is conscious of an economic nationalism emerging from the young, ambitious members of the community, yet he feels that he cannot be part of a reformist camp because he is beholden to an orthodox Seth. He says to himself, "My ideas are my wealth, what *bāniyā* simply opens his safe publicly for anyone to see his wealth" (59-60). He uses the traditional commercial language to think about 'his' new ideas. Fulfilling Rāmeśhwār's decree, he has managed to adapt and yet remain essentially Marwari, performed here by using merchant speech genres to think about nationalist and reformist politics.

Despite his ideological shift toward the liberal, reformist movement, or perhaps because of it, the community conspires to impose its cultural and economic interests on the most personal part of Mādho's life – his marriage. A powerful *dalāl* arrives at the *gaddi* and arranges Mādho's marriage to his daughter. The bride is described as a dark child of ten years and severely epileptic, but uncle Kiśan considers the alliance commercially advantageous. To add to Mādho's misery, Kiśan loses all the family's money in speculation. Because of his dejection, he is confined to a room and sedated with morphine, but he jumps from the fourth floor to his death. Mādho had previously taken an oath never to speculate on commodities, again indicating that he had already internalized new idioms of 'respectable' commerce. These developments conspire to trap him in an orthodox Marwari world with a child-bride and account books.

The voice of the deceased Kiśan rings in Mādho's head, "diśā badalo, magar āge baḍho." The adage that Kiśan receives from his dead brother has been updated to the more progressive sounding, "change direction, but always move forward" (75). Mādho wonders, "where is my land, where is my country… how to move forward" (75). He begins to think of his community as uprooted with bleeding roots. He is precisely between his deterritorialization and reterritorialization as he strives to find a place for himself. The fortunes of orthodox characters begin to turn and Seth Nathuram's brother, Lālā (of Dhanbad), is killed by revolutionaries. The violence between Bengali revolutionaries and Marwari businessmen anticipates the figure of class enemy that the latter comes to represent in Marxist and Maoist movements in the second half of the twentieth-century. Mādho realizes that it was Shīl Bābū's group retaliating for Lālā's Raibahadur title, which marks Lālā as a traitor and collaborator. The revolutionary atmosphere begins to reach the community; Marwari youths are implicated in the Rodda Conspiracy Case, in which stolen guns and ammunition turn up in Marwari warehouses (77).[18]

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[18] Laushey, *Bengal Terrorism & the Marxist Left*, 8–11. 10 cases containing 50 Mauser pistols and 46,000 rounds of ammunition went missing in transport to the Rodda and Company warehouse in Calcutta on

Yet Mādho is held away from the excitement of the world. His home life is miserable; the family lives in filthy cramped conditions with several other feuding families. The narration here is focalized through Mādho as he sees his atmosphere, in business and domesticity, suffocated by communal structure. No matter how much surplus value he creates for Sundarlal (the Seth who employs him) he has to live in a filthy, overcrowded building. The communal solidarity is beginning to erode as Mādho doesn't consider Sundarlal's fortunes anything to feel pleased about. Even though Marwaris like Sundarlal clearly gave Mādho his start, his thoughts and the imagery here represent a desire to break from them:

नीचे चौके में झांकते हुए माधो बाबू के होंठों पर हल्की हंसी तैर गई, आंखों में कौतुक और पीड़ा दोनों थी, उन्होंने सोचा सेठ सुंदरलालजी का पैसा मेरा तो नहीं, किसी और की उपलब्धि को मैं अपना कैसे मान लूँ। उन्होंने ऊपर की ओर ताका, बिता भर आकाश नज़र आया। झरोखों में बैठे कबूतर गुटरगूं कर रहे थे। चौक में पेटियों का, गांठों का ढेर लगा हुआ था। चौक ऊपर लोहे की जाली थी, जिस पर जूठे पत्ते, कूड़ा-कचरा, लीरा-लुग्गड़, खाली शीशियां क्या नहीं फेंका हुआ था। पूरी बाड़ी में एक रोला था, गड़गड़ाहट, लोगों की चहल पहल। कितने परिवार बसते जा रहे हैं...यह दो-दो, एक-एक कमरे में रहना कोई रहना है...उन्होंने बारजे से नीचे झांकते हुए फिर ऊपर की ओर देखा...दो तल्ले और हैं। छत पर गद्दियों का बासा चलता है। इतने में ऊपर के तल्ले वाली मूलिए की माँ ने गीली धोती पसारी। हवा के झोंके के साथ गीली धोती का एक सिरा माधो बाबू के मुंह से लिपट गया। ओह...हो! लोग अपने तल्ले से कपड़े हमारे तल्ले तक क्यों पसार देते हैं? कुर्ते की बांह से मुंह पोंछते हुए वे अंदर जाने को हुए मगर अब तक राधा बाई पास आकर खड़ी हो गई थी। (80-81)

A light smile played across Mādho's lips as he looked down into the courtyard, in his eyes there was a mixture of desire and pain, he thought about how Seth Sundarlal's money is not his own: how can I consider someone else's accumulation my own? He stared up at a cubit of sky. Pigeons were sitting on the lattice cooing. There was an abundance of cloth belts and knots tied in the courtyard. The steel cage that stretched across the square of the courtyard was covered in dead leaves, trash, filth, rubbish, empty bottles – what wasn't thrown out there? So many families had settled in this building; two families per room. He looked down to the ground floor and up to the two floors above. On the roof there was a communal shelter for kinsfolk working in the shops. In the middle of all this the upstairs neighbor, the mother of Mūlia, spread a wet *dhoti*. With a gust of wind one end of the wet cloth wrapped around Mādho's head. Damn it! Why do people hang their wet cloth all the way down to our floor? He wiped his face with the sleeve of his shirt and turned to go inside but by then Radhabai was standing there.

There is a hand's breadth of sky visible to Mādho, but it is held far away by the structure of the communal building. Even that cubit of sky gets obstructed by a wet *dhoti*. He is surrounded by instruments of restraint: belts, knots, lattice, and a steel cage or netting. On all of this he sees trash, filth, and empty bottles, etc. The objects and traces of human production are either oppressive or useless and filthy. Finally he comes to the people: first the newly arrived roof-dwelling kinsfolk who provide labor to the shops and then the families that swarm this building with their cyclical and invasive activities. The latter

August 26, 1914. The weapons were distributed to various revolutionary groups in Bengal and suspected to be used in up to 54 cases of revolutionary activity. Some of the arms found their way to the storehouses of prominent traders in Bara Bazaar.

literally slaps Mādho in the face and wraps his head in a wet cloth. Without quotation marks the narrative voice takes on Mādho's disgust as he complains that the upstairs folks are starting to invade his space. This type of free indirect discourse appears throughout the novel and is a feature of the way narrative focalization manifests. The line between the narrator and Mādho blur, while Radhabai's thoughts, on the other hand, are reported directly, producing some distance from the narrator and her character. She indulges in a conflict with the neighbors, precisely what Mādho was trying to avoid. Radhabai begins:

ले आज तू अपनी आँख से देख ले, मैं तो रोज झकती रहती हूँ...मामूल नहीं...किस किस रांड का पूरपल्ला लटकता रहता है, यहाँ तो छुआछूत सब कुछ एकमेक है."

ओह...हो! चची तुम भी राई का परबत बनाने बैठ जाती हो, ठीक है जाने दो..." कहते हुए माधो बाबू भीतर मुड़ने को हुए. मगर उनकी बांह पकड़े राधा बाई ने जोर गले से हेला मारते हुए ऊपर वाली पड़ोसन को सुनाकर कहा--

"अरे ऐ...मुलिए की माँ! तेरी हिए की फूटी है क्या? तुझे दीठता नहीं? लुगाई की गीली धोती मोट्यारों के मुंडे से लग जाए, घिरना नहीं आएगी...यह कोई दंग में दंग हुए?

तब तक प्रतिउत्तर में ऊपर से सामने बारजे से मूलिए की दादी ने कहा-- "हाँ...ऐ सेठानी तू अपनी बात अपने पास रख. मेरी बीनणी तो ठीक से ही गीली धोती पसार रही थी. तेरे बेटे को वहां से हट जाना चाहिए था. लेकिन उसकी तो नजर ख़राब है--तब से ऊपर की ओर मूंडा किए न जाने किसको आँख फाड़ रहा था."

"मेरा बेटा ऐसा नहीं!"

"हाँ...हाँ...तू और तेरा बेटा, खूब समझ लिया मैंने कुंती और उसके युधिष्ठिर को। उसकी लुगाई तो रोगली ठहरी, टाबर हुए नहीं, बाड़ी की लुगाइयों पर बुरी नजर डालता है, टाक-झांक करता रहता है।"

"क्या बोली रांड...जबान संभाल कर बात कर नहीं तो मैं तेरा मूंडा तोड़ दूंगी, मेरा बेटा कोई छैल भंवर नहीं, मेरी बीनणी घणी सुखी, घणी सोरी।" ...

घमासान वाक्ययुद्ध जारी था, अब तक घर की बहुएं भी मैदान में उतर गई थीं। आस-पास के लोग तमाशा देखने जुट गए थे।

तब तक नीचे चौक में से गिरधारी लाल सोनी ने ताल ठोंकते हुए कहा-- "अरे कहाँ है वह माधिया। अपन ऐसे लुच्चे लफंगों तो बर्दाश्त करेंगे तो बहू - बेटियों की इज्जत ख़त्म हो जाएगी..."

मूलिए ने ऊपर से चीखते हुए कहा-- "निकल साला बाहर निकल! अन्दर कमरे में लुगाई के घाघरे में क्यों छिपकर बैठ गया..." (81)

"Look! Now you see with your own eyes what I've been lamenting about, I don't know what all whore's clothing she hangs there, but now everything here is polluted."

"Oh no, Chachi, are you going to make a mountain out of a mustard-seed? Fine, just let me go." Mādho turned to go in as he said this, but Radhabai caught his arm and forcefully bellowed at the

upstairs neighbor, "Hey you, mother of Mulia! Does it break your heart that no one looks at you? Even if you wrap your daughter-in-law's wet printed saris around someone's head you won't attract anyone! Is this any way to act?"

At this point Mulia's grandmother launched a counter attack from across the way, "Yes…look Madame, you keep your opinions to yourself. My *bīnnī* was hanging the *dhoti* just right. Your boy should move from there, oh but that would ruin his view – who knows who he is staring at all this time.

My boy is not like that!

Yes…yes…you and your son, I completely understand *Kuntī* and her *Yudhisthir*. His wife is sickly, he has no children, he casts his evil gaze at the women in this building, leering constantly.

What did you say you whore? If you don't get a hold of your tongue and speak properly I'm going to break your head. My boy is not some rakish bee! And my daughter-in-law is very happy and satisfied.

The swirling war of words was in full force. All the women in the house had come to the battlefield. People near by had gathered to watch the spectacle.

By now, from below in the courtyard, Giradharī Lāl Sonī, slapping his arms defiantly said, "Hey, where is this Mādhiya? If I tolerate his lecherous behavior, the women in this building will have no honor left."

Mūliyā screamed from above, "Come out you bastard, come out! Why have you gone in the room to hide behind your woman's skirt?"

When compared to the idyllic rural relationship amongst neighbors that Radha Bai imagines, the urban Marwari cosmos is one of ghettoization and friction. The numerous *jatis* lumped together in this cramped building do not easily mix as neighbors may have in the *desh*. The proximity, filth, and urban pressures lead to conflict and a war of words characterized as a *Mahabharat*. Mādho first looks at the physical structure of the communal building that has trapped him in darkness and filth, and then at the social structure. It is women who fight on this front and insult each other's virtue, the immense tension among them released with the slightest provocation. Only in the end (to preserve the women's honor) does one man gesture to harm Mādho physically. Mādho does not have to fight here, he has far less at stake because it is not his only world as it is for the women in this building. Rādhā Bāī's two experiences of living in Bengal are extreme isolation or overcrowded suffocation. For the women this reterritorialization is suspended and frustrated by the closed structure of the home. They cannot find the sorority that characterized the daily village *melas* (festivals) at the well. Mādho is forced to marry by communal forces and then he is mocked for the condition of his epileptic wife.

With all this turbulence at home, the *gumashta* (clerk) of a Bengali gentleman appears and offers Mādho a distress sale of some land in the coal-belt. Mādho wants to own a piece of Bengal (Bihar/Jharkand), so that this place will finally become home. He easily borrows the capital from his brethren and then purchases the land to escape them. There is a clause attached to the sale stating that the property can never be resold, preventing land speculation and legally settling Mādho's family.

A Sense of Belonging: Private Property and Migration (Book 2)

In this short section of the novel the narrative pace quickens. Mādho buys the land in Jharia (Bihar/Jharkand) and is transformed into an industrialist. He is happier than he has ever been; he horripilates at the sight of coal dust. The 1942 Quit India Movement is in full swing while merchants are amassing war profits. When Mādho's wife has a seizure and falls into the kitchen fire and dies, his family prevails upon him to return to Rajasthan to marry a woman half his age. Mādho feels a terrible sense of guilt towards his very young bride, Padmāvatī, for he feels that he has now ruined her life, the way his life had been ruined by his first marriage. His concern and sympathy for Padmāvatī's emotional life, and his resentment of the communal marriage apparatus, along with his entry into industry, places Mādho squarely in a reformist camp. Padmāvatī becomes a central character and a conduit for Mādho's progressive and tolerant thinking long after his death. She allows herself a moment of happiness in a love affair with the coal pit manager Pannālāl Sūrānā, and she forgives a similar transgression committed by Soma, a daughter-in-law of the house in the coming generation.

Pannālāl Sūrānā enters the novel when he comes to Calcutta to look for work. He has had to give up his engineering education because of his marriage to a child-bride. Because he is partially educated and speaks some English, he is loath to become a *munim*, *dalal*, or *gumashta*. He meets Mādho at Sundarlal's *basa* and *gaddi* at 118 Kali Godam Road. By now Mādho has bought two coal mines and can afford to make Pannālāl his manager. Mādho recruits Pannālāl in a gesture that strikes a compromise between the communal structure of Marwari business and the modern requirements of industry – a third idiom of Indian capital.

नाश्ता ख़त्मकर माधो बाबू ने एक भरपूर नजर पन्नालाल सुराणा पर डाली फिर पूछा--" तुमने थोड़ी-बहुत तो इंजीनियरिंग पढ़ी है?"

"जी हाँ।

"कोयले की खान पर सुपरवाइजर का काम करोगे? तुम्हारे जैसे शिक्षित नवजवानों को हमारे समाज को ज़रूरत है। ...भाईजी सब कुछ संभव है, यदि आदमी निष्ठावान हो। अपने समाज में अंग्रेजी सिक्षा का आभाव है इसलिए प्रोफेशनल लोगों को दुसरे समाज से उधार लेना पड़ता है। लेकिन पराया, पराया होता है और अपना, अपना। भाईजी. अब गद्दी पर बैठे-बैठे महाजनी के धंधे में ही मत लगे रहिए। मिल कारखानों की ओर भी नजर दौड़ाइए। बहुत जल्दी ही देश स्वतन्त्र होगा।" (111)

Upon finishing his breakfast Mādho Babu took a careful look at Pannālāl Surana and asked – "So, you've studied a bit of engineering?"

"Yes, sir."

"Would you consider the position of coal pit supervisor? We need young educated men like you in our community… Brother, everything is possible if one is loyal. There is a dearth of English education in our community and therefore we have to borrow professionals from other communities. But outsiders are outsiders, and our own are our own. Brother, this is no time to sit

in the shop and learn about money-lending. Direct your attention towards mills and factories. The nation will be free very soon.

 After a long process of moving away from the community, Mādho takes a step back towards it. At the end of the last book he desperately seeks an escape from his community. However, when he marries Padmāvatī and hires Pannālāl, Mādho confirms that on many levels he still thinks in communal terms: insiders and outsiders. Despite the eminent freedom of the nation and the modernization of the economy, the community is still the site of credibility. Thus in spite of himself, Mādho has internalized and reinstituted some traditional modes of commercial organization, but modified for industry. Therefore community culture is hybridized with national and international currents.

Pannālāl represents the possibility of adapting and staying the same; he has some education and yet still remains Marwari. Yet Mādho selects Pannālāl because of his progressive inclinations as well his Marwari loyalties. The following is an entry in Pannālāl's journal in which he records the aspirations he shared with Mādho:

> एक सपना था जो मैंने बड़े बाबू के साथ देखा था। कोलियारी बेल्ट का, फिर स्टील मिल का। हम लोगों ने यहाँ एक नगर बसाने की सोची थी, यहाँ इसी अंचल में। बड़े बाबू का तर्क था, "सुराणाजी अपने जब तक स्वयं को प्रवासी मानते रहेंगे और यहाँ की ज़मीन से नहीं जुड़ेंगे तब तक कुछ नहीं कर सकते। उन्नति नहीं होगी। व्यापार की जड़, आम आदमी में उसकी साख में हैं।" (274)

> There was a dream that I shared with *bare babu*. It was a dream of the coal belt, and of steel mills. We want to build a town here, in this very marginal region. *Bare babu*'s logic was that as long as we consider ourselves as outsiders and don't put down roots in this land we will never accomplish anything. There will be no progress. The root of business is to have the respect of the common man (*sākh*).

It is symbolically very important to Mādho to connect to the actual land because it establishes a new credibility. He now thinks that his *sākh* (credibility) lies not only with the community, but with the local, common man (*ām ādmī)*. Interestingly, Mādho indicates that *not belonging* is a psychological issue in the community, for it is the Marwaris who must not consider themselves outsiders. Their *outsiderness* is at least in part generated and reified by their self-conception. Every deterritorialization necessarily implies a reterritorialization in which a culture is rooted elsewhere and, to some degree, mixed with the local and global cultures. This process relieves some of the strains of reterritorialization associated with competition or friction with the local culture. In the first half of the twentieth century, progressive Marwaris embraced capitalist categories of private property and industrial production along with local imperatives of social reform. This had the dual purpose of legitimizing their presence in Bengal while serving economic nationalism. Increasingly, as belonging is detached from originating territories, legitimacy of place is established by ownership (or trusteeship in Gandhi's terms) and a public integration with the local social milieu.

A transformation takes place in Mādho as he starts investing in politics by making financial contributions to Congress and adapting his outward image by wearing homespun cloth. As independence approached, Marwaris increasingly began to abandon

their position of political indifference in favor of nationalist politics. This was not an abrupt end to a tradition of abstinence from the political sphere, since Marwaris had been engaged in political agitation since the late 19th century, rather it was a nationalization of a segment of the business community:

उस दिन घर में सबने देखा कि माधो बाबू ने खद्दर पहना हुआ है और गले में सोने के बदले तुलसी की माला थी। लोग कुछ पूछते, इससे पहले ही उन्होंने कहा-- "तुम लोगों को मेरे इस पहनावे पर आश्चर्य हो रहा है, लेकिन मैं आज कलकता जा रहा हूँ कुछ कांग्रेसी कार्यकर्ताओं से मिलने। अब बड़ी जल्दी आज़ाद होगा। नये हाकिमों के सामने गांधी टोपी लगानी चाहिए।"

"बाबू, आप स्वतन्त्र आन्दोलन में भाग लेंगे?" पन्नालाल के स्वर में छलकता हुआ उल्लास माधो बाबू से छुपा नहीं था।

उन्होंने बस इतना कहा- "पन्नालाल भावुक मत बनो। हमें राजनीति से क्या लेना-देना? यहाँ प्रवास में रुपया कमाना है, कोई जुलूस में तो शामिल होना नहीं है। हाँ, जरा वह दस हज़ार की थैली तो देना! जाऊंगा तो दान- दक्षिणा तो देना ही पड़ेगी।"(113)

On that day everyone saw that Mādho Bābū was wearing *khadi* and had replaced his gold chain with a garland of *tulsi*. They were about to ask when he preempted them, "You folks seem surprised to see me in these clothes, but I'm going to Calcutta today to meet with some Congress workers. The nation will be independent very quickly now. One should wear the Gandhi *topi* in front of our new masters.

"Bābū, are you going to take part in the freedom movement?" Pannālāl could not conceal his enthusiasm from Mādho Bābū.

He just said this much, "Pannālāl, don't get emotional. What business do we have with politics? We are only living abroad here to make money, not to join in some procession. Yes, give them ten thousand in a sack! I'm only going because I have to offer my tribute."

The passage captures Mādho in a process of becoming a citizen and belonging in a broader, national sense. The nation lessens the weight of the local in which he still feels he is "living abroad." His change in dress is a clue as to how his reterritorialization manifests itself. He becomes a bearer of cultural symbols of national significance associated with Congress, Gandhi, and the nation. Mādho admonishes Pannālāl not to get emotional, for that would be an engagement with politics exceeding the rational calculation of buying a place in independent India. The ambiguity regarding belonging is linked with nationalist ambitions, for the language the Marwaris are using to describe Bengal – abroad – will lose meaning with the coming of the nation. Mādho hopes that the condition of being outsiders may end when they all become citizens, and yet he hedges his bets by giving money, but not his person, to the movement. Mādho thus makes his contribution, not for the nation's independence, but because of its inevitability. The story begins with native rulers taking their wealth by force and it will end with new rulers nationalizing their coal mines.

At the end of Book Two Mādho is dying of lung cancer, likely caused by the years of exposure to the coal dust (of which he was so fond). The death scene overlaps nature and industry: "Along with the hum of the wind came the sound of the conveyer

belt. In the darkness of the blue sky the gears of the shaft tower were slowly revolving" (127). As he tries to take stock of his life, Mādho wonders if there may have been more to life than earning money, and how the drive to create wealth consumed him, quite literally, in the end. Curiously he compares building industry with artistic creation:

"सराणाजी मैं तो कलाकार नहीं, कोई चित्रकार नहीं। लेकिन मेरी यह खान? क्या यह भी किसी सृजन से कम है? बाणिए के पेट में भोमर (आग) जलता रहता है और इस आग को लिए वह भागता रहता है। सारी दुनिया को चुनौती देकर खड़ा हो जाता है। अपने-आप पर कितना ज़बरदस्त भरोसा रखना पड़ता है। क्यों? मैं ठीक बोल रहा हूँ न सुराणाजी।" उन्होंने मसनद के सहारे उठते हुए फिर पूछा।

अच्छा सुराणाजी आप ही बताइए, भला अपनी कमाई से प्यार होना भला गलत कैसे हुआ?

नहीं बाबू, गलत तो कुछ भी नहीं।

लेकिन आप इतने सुस्त क्यों हैं? पागल कहीं के। सुराणाजी आप तो जानते हैं कि रुपया कमाने के लिए कितना तनाव झेलना पड़ता है। कैसा संयम साधना पड़ता है। किसी नये काम को खड़ा करने के लिए कैसे-कैसे भगीरथ प्रयत्न करने पड़ते हैं। विचारों की कितनी स्पष्टता रखनी पड़ती है। केवल हमारे चाहने भर से, इच्छा से, कल्पना से, तो रुपया नहीं बरसने लगता। केवल कल्पना के सहारे तो कोयले की यह खान नहीं खरीदी गई। बात यह है सुराणाजी कि, रुपए कमाने के लिए स्वयं को, अपनी सारी व्यकगतिगत् इच्छा-अनिच्छा को दुनिया के माया जाल में क्यों बंधना पड़ता हैं? आप अपने लिए कुछ भी बचाकर नहीं रख सकते। कुछ भी नहीं। अपने से बाहर धन से संपर्क स्थापित करना बहुत कठिन है। (128)

"Suranaji, I'm not an artist, I'm no painter. But my coalmine? Is it any less than a work of art? In the belly of a *bania* there is a burning fire on which the *baniya* runs. He stands in defiance of the whole world. You have to have such great faith in yourself. Right? Am I not correct, Sūrānājī?" He propped himself on the pillow and asked.

"Right, you tell me Sūrānājī, how did it become bad to love one's earnings?"

"No Bābū, it is not wrong."

"Then why are you so dejected? Are you crazy? Suranaji, you know that in earning money one must endure a lot of stress. It requires such restraint. To start a new business requires such a *Bhagirath* (Herculean) effort. The plans must be so clear. Just from wanting, wishing, and dreaming it never rains money. Imagination alone didn't purchase this coal mine. The fact is, Suranaji, that to make money why do you have to attach yourself, and all your desires and reluctance to the worldly net of illusions? You can't save anything of yourself."

Mādho aligns his productive energies and 'fire' with the aesthetic energies of an artist. He feels that he has stood in defiance to the world, as artists do, and also created something lasting. The trope of creative, artistic Marwari, suggests that this death speech is heavily dialogized with authorial context and speech, more acutely surrounding his character zone at this intense moment.[19] His coal operation is how he established his

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[19] M. M Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, 11th paperback printing., University of Texas Press Slavic Series 1 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 316–318.

belonging in the new land and escaped the control of the Seths. When Pannālāl smells coal smoke wafting into the room, he realizes Mādho is dead, as though burning coal is his symbolic cremation. The smoke foreshadows Pannālāl's own fiery death in a coal pit. If the men in the novel are consumed by the land (Kiśan, Mādho, Pannālāl), the women in the novel are consumed by the home.

The Home, Women, and Writing (Book 3)

The final section of the novel is marked by a change of pace in the narrative and deals most explicitly with the lives of women. The representation of time and space contracts to a slow day by day temporality and is mostly confined to the Rūngṭā family's large home in South Calcutta. Nearly half the novel is devoted to describing the "claustrophobic triviality of the entire milieu," which Stephen Greenblatt refers to as "atmospheric realism." [20] He paraphrases Auerbach,

> The hallmark of this kind of realism, he suggests, is the organic unity of the moral, physical, social, and historical environment, so that virtually all details, even those apparently idiosyncratic or marginal or jumbled together in disorder, are clues to the true nature of the whole to which they are structurally bound.[21]

Khetan's detailed representation of the Marwari domestic sphere opens a relatively secluded world of the women in her community. What emerges from this representation is a cultural homogeneity that shows little trace of reterritorialization except in its reactionary isolation. This background produces its own forms of resistance for Soma and for Pannālāl via his journal. This final section seems at times like an unedited memoir and at other times like gossip, for these are the types of discourses Khetan is especially fond of novelizing. Subversions/sub-versions of the grand narratives of history might be achieved through gossip since the *raison d'être* of this mode of discourse is the creation of doubt about established versions of facts.[22] Writing about the politics of gossip, anthropologist Niko Besnier has written:

> Gossip is a classic form of agentive action. One of the most "hidden" of hidden transcripts, it is a quintessential tool for political action in private realms … it enables us to understand politics "from below," particularly from the perspective of those whose voice is rarely heard in public or from the perspectives that are deemed "not to matter."[23]

The other "hidden' transcript that appears in Book Three is the journal of Pannālāl Surana, which is smuggled out of the Rūngṭā home and reproduced as a metafiction at the conclusion of the novel.

Book Three begins with the narrator addressing the reader and explaining that the story till now has been an anecdote that the narrator has heard from her mother (a *dharmbahan* of Rādhā Bāī).[24] The narrator coincidentally befriends Soma (formerly

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[20] Gallagher and Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism*, 38–39.

[21] Ibid., 39.

[22] Rukmini Bhaya Nair, "Text and Pre-Text: History as Gossip in Rushdie's Novels," *Economic and Political Weekly* 24, no. 18 (May 6, 1989): 995.

[23] Niko Besnier, *Gossip and the Everyday Production of Politics* (University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 11.

[24] Rāṇāvata, *Prabhā Khetāna Kā Aupanyāsika Saṃsāra*, 175–194. Prabha Khetan states that she heard a good portion of this story from her maternal aunt.

Rūngtā, now Sen), the Marwari wife of a Bengali professor. Soma had been married into the Rūngtā house and the story picks up when she returns, after 15 years, to visit Tāījī on her deathbed. (The Tāījī here is Padmāvatī, the second wife of the late Mādho). Tāījī regains consciousness long enough to inform Soma that she is to inherit everything. When she receives the key to the almirah, the rest of the family is livid.

Soma is from a progressive Marwari family in Delhi and was educated at the elite, modern girls school Welham in Dehradun. Her marriage to Gautam Rūngtā is a long series of humiliations and suffering and she is continually scolded for various infractions of the house rules. She quickly learns that she is at the bottom of a labor hierarchy of cleaning, foot-pressing, oil rubs, etc. The most striking part of her situation is her intense isolation and insulation from outsiders. Tāījī warns Soma with a Marwari expression that she is not to even have girlfriends or any interlocutor beyond the family because they will eat you out of house and home: *Bhāyalī ghar khāyalī, khāvagī ghar khuāvagī* भायली घर खायली खावगी घर खुआवगी (217). The contrast is stark between this late twentieth-century Marwari home in Calcutta and Rādhā Bāī's life back in the *desh*, where various women of the village could socialize.

While Soma lives at the Rūngtā house she becomes increasingly dejected; she turns to studying to give her life meaning and stimulation. In this capacity Sujīt Sen comes to their home as a tutor. It gradually emerges that Soma's husband, Gautam, is most likely in a same-sex relationship and Soma is consequently lonely and childless for years. Thus the motif of mismatched marriages appears again, but now focalized from a woman's perspective. Soma and her tutor Sujīt fall in love and abscond to a hotel room (in Delhi) where she becomes pregnant. When she returns home, Gautam insists she terminate her pregnancy, but she refuses and runs away to live with Sujīt. Fifteen years later, upon Padmāvatī's death, Pannālāl's wife Nimli Bai gives Soma a lump of coal and the Gītā as part of her inheritance, both items had powerful sentimental value for Tāījī-Padmāvatī. However, she discovers that in place of the Gītā, she has been given a journal with the following inscription: Name: Pannālāl Sūrānā, 1958, 40 years old, Dhanbad; Occupation: Seth Mādho Dāsjī Rungta's coal pit manager. Soma sits down to read the journal and thus begins the final section of the novel, narrated by Pannālāl in the first person. The journal deals largely with the love affair between Pannālāl and the *bari-bahu*, Padmāvatī. The journal spans the years 1958 to 1965 in Calcutta and Jharia (site of the coal mines). The first half of the novel is about Marwari arrival and their place in the bazaar. This second half of the novel, which includes Soma's story and Pannālāl's journal, deals with the home in Bengal, the *bari*. It is here that the narrative illustrates the incongruity between the rapid modernization of commercial practices in the community and airless timelessness of the domestic sphere.

Hearsay and History: The Three Deaths of Pannālāl

Like most of Khetan's work, *Pīlī Āndhī* includes actual events and people, as she has stated in interviews. The novel itself is inspired by an anecdote Khetan heard from her aunt: "I heard the story from my *māmī*… My family has a role throughout *Pīlī*

Āndhī." [25] For Stephen Greenblat, the anecdote in literature is "in compressed form the ways in which elements of lived experience enter into literature, the ways in which everyday institutions and bodies get recorded."[26] In all of Khetan's work there is a palpable presence of lived experience and real people resulting in strikingly unliterary moments in her work. In some cases, particularly *Chinnamastā*, the narrative was so close to real events, and incriminating, that the book caused something of a scandal in the Calcutta Marwari community. *Pīlī Āndhī* is based on an anecdote externally (from Khetan's *māmī*) and in turn is revealed as an aestheticised or novelistic anecdote by the narrator. These circulating anecdotes or rumors (once so vital a part of the intelligence apparatus of *sākh* credibility) are the source material for nearly all of Khetan's work and amount to an oral history comprising the only stories Calcutta Marwaris have about themselves. As Greenblatt has pointed out, the anecdote

> satisfied the desire for something outside the literary, something that would challenge the boundaries of the literary … the sphere of practice that even in its more awkward and inept articulations makes claim on the truth that is denied to the most eloquent of literary texts. Or rather, the anecdote was a way into the "contact zone," the charmed space where the *genius literarius* could be conjured into existence.[27]

In this last section of the novel, the accounts of Pannālāl's death/murder are a site for the relationship between social and aesthetic discourses and their varying claims on truth.

The death of Pannalal is reported three times in the final section of the novel: firstly Revā Bāī's account, then Padmāvatī's recollections, and finally in Pannālāl's diary. The forces and motives differ in the three accounts of what turns out to be his murder. Previously, Mādho had been close to the laborers, celebrating and singing songs with them. Pannālāl was a similar kind of manager, therefore it does not follow that the laborers would kill him. Soma is the audience for all three death narratives. It is as though she cannot escape this death story returning regularly and even following her out of the Rūngṭā House as her inheritance. The inconsistency in the three versions echoes the first book's meditations on history and fiction.

In the first death narrative, Revā Bāī, Soma's sister-in-law, warns her not to cross Nimlī because she is closer than a sister to Tāī. Revā Bāī tells Soma how Nimli Bāī came to be in their family and why she is so important, which includes Pannālāl's death story:

[रेवा] "कैसी हो भाभी? ताईजी ने कहीं कुछ डांटा तो नहीं?"

[सोमा] "नहीं बाई जी। लेकिन अभी तक मुझे किसी ने बताया नहीं की निमली बाई हमारी क्या लगती हैं?"

"सभी कुछ लगती हैं।"

"कैसे?"

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[25] Ibid., 189. In the same interview Khetan claims that she is not a character in this novel, but that she is a character in most of her other works.
[26] Gallagher and Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism*, 30.
[27] Ibid., 48.

"मैं बताती हूँ। अपनी कोलियारी के मैनेजर थे पन्नालाल जी सुराणा। निमली बाई उनकी पत्नी हैं।"

"पन्नालाल जी कहाँ पर है?"

कोलियारी में एक बार मजदूरों का बलवा हो गया और मजदूरों का जो मुखिया था न, उसने सुराणा जी को जलते हुए कोलपिट में झोंक दिया था।"

"क्यों?"

"कोई आपस में कहा-सुनी हो गई थी। यह घटना ताऊजी के स्वर्गवास के सात-आठ साल बाद घटी थी। तब माँ और बाबू जिंदा थे। लेकिन बाबू से तो काम होता नहीं था। जो संभालते थे, वह सुराणाजी ही संभालते थे। सुराणाजी के मरने के बाद बाबूजी से कोलियारी संभाली कहाँ? घाटे पर घाटा लगता गया। कोयले का दाम तो सरकार बढाने नहीं दे। कोयला बेचने का दाम था नौ रूपये मन। मजदूरी ही नहीं चुक पाती। इस पर ये पुरानी मशीनों, जो लोग चालाक थे वे तो जोरों से ब्लैक में रुपया पीट रहे थे। लेकिन बाबू को तो काम करना ही नहीं आता था। बड़ी माँ तो हमेशा बोला करती-- "काम ठीक से मैनेज नहीं हो पा रहा है।" मोहन भैया छोटे ही थे। सब कुछ तो सुराणा जी ही संभालते थे। दो बरस के भीतर ही तो सरकार ने कोलियारी ले ही ली।" (184)

[Revā Bāī] How are you Bhābhī? Tāījī didn't scold you in anyway did she?

[Soma] No, Bāījī. But no one has told me how we are connected to Nimlī Bāī…

I'll tell you. The manager of the coalmine was one Pannālāl Sūrānājī; Nimlī Bāī is his wife.

Where is he now?

There was a labor insurrection once at the coal-mine and the leader of the workers had Sūrānājī thrown into a burning coal-pit.

Why?

There was some altercation among them. This happened seven or eight years after the death of Tāūjī (paternal uncle, Mādho). Mother and Bābū (Mādho's cousin, Sānwar) were alive then. But Bābū didn't handle the business. The one who managed things was Sūrānājī. After Sūrānājī's death what did Bābū (Sānwar) do to manage the coal-mine? We suffered losses upon losses. The government would not allow the price of coal to go up. The price was nine rupees per maund (approximately eighty pounds). The workers couldn't even be paid. The clever ones sold all the old machinery on the black market. But Bābū didn't know anything about business. Barī Mā always said, "He doesn't know how to manage business properly." Mohan was just too small. Sūrānājī had handled everything. Within two years the government simply seized the mine.

In this case we have the anecdote of Sūrānājī's life and death, his place in the family, the status his wife and children have because of his merit. In this version he is martyred for the family business. It is even suggested that governmental price regulations led to his death. Reva Bai only knows that an altercation took place: "*Koi āpas meṁ kahā-sūnī ho gaī thī*." She begins her account of Pannālāl Sūrānājī's death by telling Soma that there was some altercation that had happened, but the details are not entirely clear to her (184). This passage links the economic life of the men in the family firm with the women, as Nimlī is brought into the family based on Pannālāl's utility and loyalty as a coalmine

manager. The diary reveals that Pannālāl and Padmāvatī were in love and perhaps guilt motivated her to invite Nimlī to live in the house.

The second anecdote of Pannālāl's death is similar to the first in that it is an incomplete picture of the historical forces at work in the incident. But there is a little more information; we learn that the animosity between Pannālāl and Sānwar was well known, even to the workers. But why would they kill Pannālāl the proxy, when Sanwar was the real owner of the mines? If this were a *balvā* (insurrection, rebellion, mutiny), why do the laborers turn their hatred towards the most benevolent of managers? Padmāvatī's version suggests that the laborers are ignorant, impressionable, and manipulated. The government nationalizes the operation two years after Pannālāl's death to secure the commodity, since the management of the facility cannot be reliably left to the Rūngtā family. Padmāvatī and Revā blame the government for setting the price of coal too low. They ignore or are ignorant of communal obligations that compel Pannālāl to pay Sānwar fifty thousand rupees a month to maintain him in Calcutta. In this passage Soma learns of Pannālāl's death from Tāījī:

"...देवरजी का झमेला अलग चलता। सारा कारोबार तो अपने सुराणाजी ने सम्हाल रखा था। मैंने कभी सुराणाजी के चेहरे पर एक शिकन नहीं देखा। क्या मजाल की, देवरजी के सामने कभी उन्होंने ऊंची आवाज़ में किसी से बातें की हों।"

"ताईजी! अपने सुराणाजी को मजदूर लोगों ने क्यों कोलपिट में फेंक दिया था, मगर क्यों?"

सोमा और ताईजी के बीच एक ठंडी सांस लेकर समय रुक जाता। फिर ताईजी कहने लगतीं--

"बेटा अपने सुराणाजी आदमी क्या हीरा थे हीरा। वे क्या गए अपने तो कोलियारी से जैसे लिछमी रूठ गई।

"ताईजी, रेवा बाई कह रही थी कि कोलियारी में लेबर प्राब्लम हो गया था, वह कैसा बलवा था कि सुराणाजी को मजदूरों ने जलते कोलपिट में फेंक दिया?"

ताईजी धीरे से सोमा के कानों के पास मुंह ले जाकर कहतीं..."बात यह है बेटा कि देवरजी तो काम करते नहीं थे और सुराणाजी का बढ़ता हुआ पॉवर, देवरजी और सुराणाजी के आपस की अनबन का फायदा मजदूरों ने उठाया।"

ताईजी अतीत की गलियों में पीछे मुड़ जातीं। औ सोमा को उन्हीं पुरानी बातें का, उसी पुराने इतिहास का बार-बार दोहराया जाना, आखिर सोमा को कब तक रुचिकर लगता? वह उकता कर उठ खड़ी होतीं। (229-230)

"...Devarji's entanglements went on separately. All the management was handled by our Surānāji. I never once saw a wrinkle or crease on his face. What courage, that he should raise his voice in front of Devarji."

"Tāijī! Why would the laborers throw your Surānājī into the burning coal-pit? Why?"

Between Soma and Taiji Time took a deep breath and stopped. Then Taiji began to speak –

"Child, our Sūrānā was simply a diamond of a man, a diamond. When he left it was as if Lakshmi got irritated with our coal-mine."

"Taiji, Reva Bai was saying that there was a *labor problem* in the coal-mine. What sort of insurgency was it that the workers would throw Sūrānājī into the burning coal-pit?"

Taiji slowly moved towards Soma's ears and spoke, "The thing is, child, that Devarji did no work and Sūrānājī's power was growing. The workers took advantage of the mutual enmity between Sūrānājī and Devarji."

Taiji turned down the alleyways of the past. And Soma had to hear these same ancient matters and ancient history repeated again and again, but to what extent does Soma have a taste for this? She gets sick of it and gets up.

The last line here has Soma trying to run away from this story again, but it will find her once more as a journal. Taiji places the blame on the workers – they took advantage of the mutual enmity between Sānwar and Pannālāl. It is easier for her to imagine the workers killing Pannālāl than Sānwar. It is as though workers killing a Marwari manager is *sui generis* and need little further inquiry. It does not seem likely that she is intentionally spreading misinformation to protect the family. The story does not make sense, not least because the workers have nothing to gain from killing Pannālāl aside from venting rage. Padmāvatī is visiting the by-lanes (*galiyāṁ*) of the past; she repeats and conjoins small matters (*bāteṁ*) and history (*itihās*). Padmāvatī is not satisfied with her own version of Pannālāl's death, which is why she visits the side streets of history and considers its small clues.

In the final and written version of Pannālāl's murder we learn that it is organized from Calcutta, a fact that Pannalal is aware of and records in the last pages of his diary, which appears here as an extra-literary device. He is warned about the labor uprising, which is a pretext to throw him into the burning coal pit. He goes willingly, thus making this event both a suicide and a murder. This is the final section of the novel, and the final two pages of the diary. The written evidence (Pannālāl's diary), which appears at the conclusion of the novel, suggests that he is killed by Sānwar Bābū's assassins. Here, blame for unpaid wages goes to the government, but later it is suggested that the insolvency is due to obligations made to Sānwar in order to maintain him in grand style in Calcutta, particularly since he has a mistress. Sānwar is well-educated, sophisticated, and urban. Mādho placed him in school so that he would not become a narrow-minded and conservative *baniya*. Yet, education and privilege do not spare Sānwar from turning out very similar to Seth Nathuram - the gambler and womanizer. Reva Bai's account suggests the 'clever ones' (workers) sell off the machinery, but this is contradicted by the diary that holds Sānwar responsible:

आज छोटे बाबू से जोरों की बहस हो गई। वह भी उन्हें समझा रही थी। उसका कहना-- "देवरजी...!"

"भाभी, तुम बीच में मत बोलो। जाओ, अपने कमरे में, भीतर जाओ।"

"मैं नहीं उठूंगी। आप यह कालाबाजारी, यह अनर्थ मत कीजिए।"

"चुप रहो रांड। नहीं तो तुम्हारा झोंटा पकड़कर घर से बाहर कर दूंगा।"

कुछ ऐसे शब्द जो उन्हें नहीं कहने चाहिए थे। कुछ ऐसे जो मुझे नहीं सुनने चाहिए थे। वह आई थी मेरे पीछे-पीछे, मेरे घर में सबके सामने वह खड़ी हुई थी और उसकी वह स्थिर दृष्टि, मुझसे वह फिर रही थी ... अब क्या करूं? मैंने बस इतना भर कहा-- "पद्मावती, क्या अच नहीं होगा...हम लोग...अब इस मसले पर और कुछ बात नहीं करें।बस खामोश रहें।जो जहाँ भी है, जैसा भी है, उसको वहीं रहने दें। हम दोनों समझते हैं पद्मावती कि कहाँ क्या गलत हो रहा है....लेकिन हम दोनों पिस रहे हैं....एक ही काक्के में घिसट रहे हैं ....तुम स्त्री हो इसलिए और मैं ...पुरुष होकर भी नौकर हूँ...हाँ पद्मावती, दो टके का नौकर हूँ। मेरी क्या मजाल कि मैं बाबू का हाथ पकड़ लूँ। कह दूँ कि बाबू ऐसे गलत काम मत करिए। मैं कह नहीं सकता कि बाबू साडी विलायती मशीनों को एक-एक करके बेचते जा रहे हैं। खान धंसने वाली है मगर आपको चिंता नहीं। मजदूर भूके हैं। ठेकेदार उनका खून चूसता है मगर बाबू आपको फर्क नहीं पड़ता? लयों बाबू? क्या अपने भूक और गरीबी नहीं देखी? बाबू मैं अपनी अतीत नहीं भूल पाता। यह हिंसा है, शोषण है। पाप की कमाई ठरेगी नहीं।"

"मैं जानता हूँ की अब पढ़े-लिखे लोगों की एक नयी जमात सामने आएगी। आ रही है, जो अपने स्वार्थ में मुट्ठी भर पैसे के लिए कुछ भी करने से नहीं हिचकेगी। मैं प्राचीन हूँ...बिलकुल प्राचीन...छोटे बाबू तो मेरे जैसे मलबे को रास्ते से हटाना चाहेंगे ना? जाओ पद्मावती, अब अपने घर जाओ।"

कुछ पुराने कागजात हैं जिनको मैं जला देना चाहता हूँ। जला रहा हूँ। बड़े बाबू की वसीयत, कंपनी के ज़रूरी कागज़ और बही-खाते को बड़ी कोठी में उसके पास भेज दिया है।

छोटे बाबू ककाता गए हैं। यहाँ वे कौन-सा हुकमनामा किसको देकर गए हैं, यह भी मेरे कान में सारी बातें आ चुकी हैं। बस एक बार उसको देख लेता, एक बार... लेकिन नहीं ... उसकी व्यथा मुझसे कई गुना ज्यादा है, उसको कुछ भी नहीं मालूम होना चाहिए।"

भीखन आकर बोल भी गया-- "मनेजर बाबू, आप भाग जाइए या अपने देश चले जाइए।"

"क्यों भीखन?"

"का बोलें मनेजर बाबू? गुंडों को रुपया दिया गया है। आज मजदूरों में बलवा होगा, अउर आपको उ लोग जलती हुई कोलपीट में फेंक देंगे।"

"अच्छा ठीक है। तुम जाओ भीखन!"

वह गरीब आँखों पोंछता हुआ चला गया। नहीं मैं भागूँगा नहीं और न यह कायर की मौत होगी। सब कुछ जानते हुए मरना यदि कायरता है तो समझौता करते चले जाना आखिर कौन सी बहादुरी है? आग से तो हम राजस्थानी कभी डरे नहीं। फिर आज कैसा डरना! लेकिन एक और आग जो आज तो महज गीले कोयले से धुन्धुआ रही है, एक दिन जोर पकड़ेगी। ये सेठम ये घराने समझ नहीं रहे की एक दिन सारा कोल बेल्ट इनके हाथों से निकल जाएगा। हाँ, वह एक बड़ी आग होगी, बुझाए नहीं बुझेगी। (301-302)

Today there was a heated discussion with *Chote Bābu* (Sānwar). Even she (Padmāvatī) was trying to convince him. She said, "Devarji!..."

"Bhābhī, don't speak out of turn. Go, go back to your room."

"I'm not getting up. You must stop this black marketing and foolishness."

"Keep quiet you whore. Or else I'll drag you by your hair and throw you out of this house."

He should not have spoken to her this way. I didn't need to hear that. She followed me out and came into my room in front of everyone. And with a severe look she asked me again – what should I do now? I could only say this much, "Padmāvatī, what good will come of it…for us…we shouldn't speak on this topic again. Just be silent. Wherever he is, however he is, just let him be. We both understand, Padmāvatī, where the blame lay … but we are both in the grinder; we are being dragged on the same threshing wheel. You, because you are a woman and me … because I am a man and a servant, yes a two-bit servant. Do I dare catch hold of Babu's hand? Shall I say, Bābū, don't do all this! All the foreign machinery is being sold off piece by piece. The mine is sinking but you don't care. The laborers are hungry. The contractors are sucking their blood, but Bābū, it makes no difference to you. Haven't you seen poverty and starvation? Bābū, I can't manage to forget my past. This is violence, exploitation. Ill-gotten gains will not remain.

I know that for the educated classes a new standard will come. It's on the way, when one will greedily snatch after a fist full of money without doing any work at all. I'm ancient … completely from the old school … Chote Babu will want to clear away ruins like myself from his path, won't he? Go Padmāvatī, return to your house.

There are some old documents which I wish to burn. I am burning. The rest - Bare Babu's (Mādho's) testament, the company's important papers, the accounts and ledgers have been sent to her (Padmāvatī) in the main house.

Chote Babu has gone to Calcutta. I have already heard everything about some orders given to someone here. I just want to see her once more … but her distress is many times worse than mine, she shouldn't know anything.

Bhikhan came in and said, "Manager Babu, you must flee or go back to the village."

"Why Bhikhan?"

"What are you saying Manager Babu? The thugs have been given money. There will be an insurrection today among the workers, and they will throw you into the burning coal-pit."

"Right, okay. You go, Bhikhan!"

He left wiping his poor eyes. No, I won't run and I won't die a coward's death. If to go willingly to one's death isn't courage, then I don't know what is. We Rajasthanis have never feared fire, why should I be scared today. But there is one more fire smoldering in the moist coal today, one day it will gain strength. These Seths and their households don't understand that one day every bit of the coal belt will slip from their hands. Yes, this will be one great fire, *bujhāe nahīn bujhegī* – even smothered it can't be extinguished.

Pannālāl writes cryptically about a great fire to come, a prognostics of social forces that are just emerging in his epoch – the next storm – perhaps even the beginnings of the Naxal Legacy. He refers to himself as being of the old school, which here is not to be confused with the orthodox camp of the community, but with a particular attitude about productive labor which he shares with Mādho. He predicts an era of corruption and exploitation from the educated classes, a critique of the post-liberalized India that Khetan

writes in. Pannālāl concludes his diary, just before facing his fiery death, with a description of Padmāvatī's experience of becoming a widow, how she changed into white clothes and scrubbed the vermillion from her head and wept.

Pannālāl chooses not to tell Padmāvatī, but leaves her a diary that she cannot read. The entire end is peculiar in that he keeps a record of the records he destroys, the ones he transfers to Padmāvatī, and the contract on his life, but he doesn't tell anyone. The temporality is also interesting, because Pannālāl knows that there will be a delay in the reading of his diary, perhaps after the concerned parties are gone. He is more interested in posterity than he is for any immediate justice, just as Kiśan had written his fiction for the good of the coming generations. Pannālāl cannot criticize Sānwar and he cannot speak freely to Padmāvatī. His diary is what cannot be said, not yet, and conspicuously in a novelistic mode, that is, Pannālāl writes the dialogues in his diary – precisely as the narrator presents them throughout the novel. As Bakhtin has written, a dialogue exists between the authorial discourse and the internally persuasive discourse of the character within his character zone.[28] The diary is thereby 'dialogized' as Pannālāl becomes a co-conspirator with the authorial voice within his character zone. What appears as genre confusion suggests an easy flow between the personal discourses of the diary and the novel, and these 'incorporated genres' are the most fundamental way of including and organizing heteroglossia. As Ian Watt suggests, the modern emphasis on the "primacy of individual experience" makes "the pattern of the autobiographical memoir" fundamental to the novelistic narration.[29] The first is a personal and private discourse while the latter is aesthetic and public. Yet, especially for Khetan's work, the energies of both discourses inform one another. The recipient and reader of this diary cum meta-novel, after all, is Soma, who reads it for its history, intrigue, and its love story. A love story and an energetic chunk of earth (coal) have become her inheritance and she is the first one to finally be at 'home.'

Conclusion: Kethan and the storm of writing

It would be hard to make a case for Marwaris as marginal or minor, as they are certainly not an oppressed or vulnerable group. What this novel has tried to unfold, most clearly on a structural level, is that women inhabit different lines of escape than the men of the community. As Mādho's independence struggle unfolds in step with the nation's timeline, Padmāvatī and Soma have their own independence struggles for several more decades in the home. This separate reality for women is a preoccupation of Khetan in several nonfiction books on women's issues and patriarchy. Until Khetan began writing, there were no spaces for Marwaris in Hindi or Bengali literature or film that was not a flat caricature of a money-lender, fool, or covetous knave (Meenakshi Mukherjee 2008). Except for a few scattered examples such as Mahadevi Varma's *Bhābhī* (1933), there was little precedent for Marwari figures in literature. Varma's depiction is based on her friendship with a Marwari child-widow. The sketch is about the severe physical and psychological abuse the child-widow suffers at the hands of her father-in-law and other relatives. Varma was so moved by the hardship of her friend that she said the experience

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[28] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 320.
[29] Ian P Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, andFielding*, 2nd American ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 10.

catapulted her from childhood to adulthood.[30] Khetan's work, appearing over half a century after Varma's *Bhābhī*, similarly continues to make public and political the private world of Marwari women.

Louis Renza's radical reading of Sarah Orne Jewett's "A White Heron" carries many resonances with Khetan's work. Jewett is often dismissed as a New England regionalist writer, yet Renza takes her work to be an act of literary resistance: "The second characteristic of minor literature, then, involves its immediate "political" connotations *as an act of writing*. The "minor" writer's 'deterritorialized' relation to the major language in which she writes inevitably diminishes her authority to represent situations which will have more or less the same aesthetic or ideological effect for all readers beyond those of similar minority ilk…"[31] This raises the question: in what way does Khetan's novel have meaning for non-Marwaris or Bengalis, or even people living outside of Calcutta? Perhaps the broader themes of belonging and representation as they relate to writing have saliency for any diaspora or minority. Khetan's writing is clearly important as the first novelized representation of Marwari history with a Marwari subjectification.

Renza's words could be a reasonable assessment and characterization of *Pīlī Āndhī*: "she writes in a patriarchal social and literary milieu which diminishes her authority to represent anything more than what Deleuze and Guattari term 'l'affaire individuelle.'[32] Thus in minority literature, 'familial' and 'conjugal' situations appear unnaturally large, as if seen through the distorted focus of a microscope, and with only an isolated or mere 'local color' significance."[33] This type of author can write as a communal or nonindividual figure which enables her to produce a literature "positively charged with the role and function of collective and even revolutionary utterance."[34] Khetan's utterance, collective or not, was unprecedented for Marwaris living in such a literary city. Such a pioneering work as *Pīlī Āndhī* made the Hindi novel an available avenue for others in the community to consider their past and present. The storm of history and how its winds have blown the bazaar and the *bari* has become a motif in most Marwari writing.

Khetan spent a large portion of her life ostracized from the community and its functions and weddings, and yet this may have helped her write about the community: "It is literature that produces an active solidarity in spite of skepticism; and if the writer is in the margins or completely outside her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more possibility to express another possible community and forge a means of another consciousness and another sensibility."[35]   Khetan's writing brings out the fact that in Bengal a ghettoization of Marwaris occurred, and this isolation was most profoundly visited upon the women in the community, but not only. The remembrance of

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[30] Karine Schomer, *Mahadevi Varma and the chhayavad age of modern Hindi poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 161.
[31] Louis A. Renza, *A White Heron and the Question of Minor Literature* (Univ of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 25–35.
[32] Ibid., 32.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Gilles Deleuze, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 1st ed. (Univ Of Minnesota Press, 1986), 17.
[35] Ibid.

the *desh* (homeland) is a strong theme for immigrants, but while this is not necessarily a desire to return, it is an acknowledgement of something lost. Further, in the effort to recover or conserve something, a stifling conservatism can emerge. Khetan's novels were the first rumbling of dissatisfaction after which other Marwari women began to write. Khetan's last novel appeared in 1997, one year before Alka Saraogi's award winning *Kali-Katha: Via Bypass* took similar themes into the mainstream of Hindi letters.

Chapter Five:

Kalikathā: Via Bypass: Affective Archive of Marwari History

The multiple entendre title of Alka Saraogi's *Kalikathā:Via Bypass* (1998) suggests a story, or *kathā*, which is simultaneously about the metropolis of Calcutta and the *kaliyuga* (the end-time), but the subtitle also suggests marginal perspectives, and short cuts. The novel's key word is 'bypass,' which refers concurrently to a surgical procedure, a road diverging from and re-entering a main road (e.g. Calcutta's Eastern Metropolitan Bypass), and the prevailing narrative structure of the book. The protagonist of the story is Kishore Babu, an elderly Marwari businessman who sustains a mysterious head injury in the hospital after his successful bypass surgery. Upon recovering from his head injury, Kishore Bābū emerges as a flâneur, exploring the markets, streets, and material history of Calcutta. In the home, Kishore also discovers unorthodox archives such as diaries, objects, and his own memories. He revisits the 'feelings' of his community at major historical moments, its sense of otherness and alienation, its patriarchy, its internal strife and contradictions – the invisible histories.[1] The Marwari affective experience, such as diaspora and migration, is basis for new cultures and histories that form part of the fabric of Calcutta, though it is suffered institutional neglect. *Kalikathā's* narrative interrogates differing layers of history and uses of the past by juxtaposing the representation of time and space on the street and in the home, and the historical tensions and incongruities between the 1940s and the 1990s. By holding these moments (and spaces) side by side, the narrative highlights the plurality of people and ideas in the early part of the twentieth century that have become homogenized in the 1990s, though the threads of this former diversity remain defiantly available to the urban flâneur and archivist of memory.

Alka Saraogi is the second, and most celebrated, writer to emerge in the wave of Hindi writing in late twentieth-century Calcutta. She was born in 1960 into a Marwari family in Calcutta. She attended Calcutta University and completed a PhD dissertation on the poetry of Raghuvir Sahāy (1929-1990). She made her literary debut in 1991 with a short story, '*Āp kī haṁsī*' (Your Laughter), named after a Raghuvir Sahay poem *haṁso, haṁso, jaldī haṁso*.[2] At the insistence of her mentor Ashok Seksaria (writer and journalist), Saraogi sent the story to the Hindi literary magazine *Vartaman Sahitya* where it was published alongside works by stalwarts such as Nirmal Verma and Krishna Sobti. Her first collection of stories appeared in 1996 — *Kahānī kī talāś meṁ*, followed by her first novel, *Kalikathā: Via Bypass* (1998), and *Dūsrī Kahānī* (2000, her second short story collection). She has three more novels to her credit: *Śeṣ Kādambarī* (2001), *Koī bāt nahiṁ* (2004), and *Ek Break ke bād* (2008).[3] Her work has been translated into several

[1] Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Duke University Press Books, 2003), 1–14.
[2] Raghuvīra Sahāya Raghuvīra, *Haṁso, Haṁso, Jaldī Haṁso*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Dillī: Neśanala Pabliśiṅga Hāusa, 1975).
[3] Saravagi, *Kali-katha, vaya baipasa*; Alaka Saravagi, *Kahani ki Taalaash main* (Panchkorla : Aadhaar Prakashan, 1998); Alaka Saravagi, *Sesha kadambari* (Nayi Dilli: Rajakamala Prakasana, 2001); Alaka Saravagi, *Dusari kahani* (Nai Dilli: Rajakamala Prakasana, 2003); Alaka Saravagi, *Koi bata nahim* (Nayi

languages including English, German, French, Italian — but more significantly for the city of Calcutta — Bengali, Urdu, and Gujarati. Saraogi has won several awards, most notably the Sahitya Akademi award for Hindi literature in 2001 for *Kalikathā*.

The outpouring of Hindi literature from Calcutta that appears at the end of the twentieth century coincides with a sea-change in the Indian economy. Almost precisely at the moment of economic liberalization, Prabha Khetan makes a permanent switch from poetry to prose and Alka Saraogi publishes her first short story. These simultaneous developments are not coincidental: the 1991 initiation of neoliberal policies caught the attention of Marwari writers precisely because of their historical proximity to the economic front lines of domestic and international trade, currency, investment, (de)regulation, and taxation. It had been, in fact, a previous stage of economic and material globalization that brought the Marwaris to Bengal: "The Marwar area encompasses ancient trade routes across northern India, the economic impact of British rule impoverished that area … forcing emigration, since the nineteenth century."[4] Marwaris worked as brokers and agents to European firms until these compradore ties were eroded by a nationalist consciousness setting in at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the 1920s and 1930s, the last two decades before independence, Marwaris like G.D. Birla and Janmalal Bajaj assumed the imprimatur to advise Gandhi and Congress on the state of the Indian economy. The prose literature of Khetan and Saraogi—particularly the former's *Tālā Bandī* (1991) and *Pīlī Āndhī* (1996) and the latter's *Kalikathā:Via Bypass* (1998)—reflects on over a century of economic practice while offering a cautionary tale about globalization. Saraogi is concerned with what is culturally and ethically at stake for a community and nation in the shifting political economy of India— namely what is lost and what is gained by various historical transformations. *Kalikathā*, via its narrative structure of bypasses, suggests that history and progress are non-linear, and that these sea-changes and reforms often contain as many regressive positions as they propose to undue. The novel self-reflexively places a high premium on texts and publics as dialogical spaces of plurality and sites of resistance against the homogenizing juggernaut of late-capitalist consumer culture.

Kalikathā appeared two years after Prabha Khetan's novel *Pīlī Āndhī*. The pioneering combination of content and narrative in *Pīlī Āndhī* find a refined literary voice in *Kalikathā*; this is not to suggest that *Pīlī Āndhī* amounts to a rough draft of *Kalikathā*, rather, it is part of a process of a Marwari literature emerging and finding a voice. *Pīlī Āndhī* introduces uncharted themes and voices that hitherto found little place in novelistic discourse; Khetan's work thus prepares the ground for a new literature. *Kalikathā* beautifully crafts and innovates on the level of narrative and structure; the perfect blending of these being in many ways unprecedented in Hindi literature. It does not come as a surprise that *Kalikathā* won so many awards and readers for Saraogi.

For anyone familiar with both novels, the similarities are difficult to ignore—they are both narratives of the Marwari community finding a place in Calcutta—and they have

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Dilli: Rajakamala Prakasana, 2004); Alaka Saravagi, *Eka breka ke bada* (Nayi Dilli: Rajakamala Prakasana, 2008).
[4] Mansingh, *Historical Dictionary of India*.

a surprisingly male focalization, as Rajendra Yadav has indicated.[5] Saraogi herself addressed the issue of a male protagonist in an interview with Meenakshi Mukherjee: "I could have singled out the story of Shanta Bhabhi, one of the many strands that comprise *Kalikathā*, because she is a widow, and the narrative of her deprivation would have satisfied those who expect every woman writer to record the sad chronicle of the victimhood of women – अबला जीवन हाय तुम्हारी यही कहानी, अंचल में दूध, आँखों में पानी – but that is not the story I had chosen to write…"[6] It must be said that Saraogi's subsequent novel, *Śeṣ Kādambarī*, has a thoughtful and enterprising woman as its protagonist.

The male protagonist in *Kalikathā* provides a vantage point regarding the role of the Marwaris vis-à-vis capitalist development in South Asian political-economy.[7] With the eye of a businessman, and as a flâneur in Calcutta, Kishore is the chronicler of the city's history and political economy. Walter Benjamin suggests that this is a function of the flâneur in literature, "The flâneur is the observer of the marketplace. His knowledge is akin to the occult science of industrial fluctuations. He is a spy for the capitalists, on assignment in the realm of consumers."[8] As Kishore strolls around the city, in his youth and in retirement, he observes commodities, values, labor, and consumption—and from his experiences (merchant-industrialist) he is able to see in this material matrix the invisible ideology and power structures operating in different historical contexts.

The narrative demonstrates sensitivity to the historical shift in 'experiential horizons,' which, as Sudipta Kaviraj puts it, "construct a paradigm-like internality of questions, answers, procedures, presuppositions, defiance, and conformity."[9] Regarding the historical source of the novel Saraogi writes, "150 years of history buried in my memories through my grandmother began to be reaffirmed by what I read or what the old Marwari citizens of Calcutta told me, when I talked to them or when I went through their old diaries and memoirs."[10] Kishore Babu also gains access to the past from the diaries of his ancestors, from memorial markers on the streets, as well as from his own memories, as he attempts to experience the past in its own words. In other words, he seeks an 'affective archive' of his community. In this way, the 'experiential horizons' of the minor subjects of history enter into the narrative, placing their individual defiance and conformity in context. Saraogi (like Khetan before her) acknowledges the high coefficient of anecdote and lived experience that go into her fiction:

[5] Joseph Ammu and Ritu Menon, eds., *Just Between Us: Women Speak About Their Writing, India* (Women Unlimited, 2004), 158.

[6] Sahāya Raghuvīra, *Haṁso, Haṁso, Jaldī Haṁso*. This is a major departure from Khetan who feels it is her duty to make public and political the private deprivations of women—particularly in her community. *Chinnamastā* (1993) and *Strī – Paksh* (1997) stand out as exemplars of these efforts. The Hindi reference Saraogi makes here is to Maithilisharan Gupta's poem *Yaśodharā*.

[7] Mansingh, *Historical Dictionary of India*. Marwari industrialists received patronage from Congress provincial governments after 1937; they profited fantastically from both world wars, and by 1960, they controlled 60% of India's total industry.

[8] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 427.

[9] Kaviraj, 8.

[10] Alka Saraogi, *Streaming up Memory In-between Past and Present : a River of Words : Meeting the Indian Writers Alka Saraogi and Anita Nair* (Torino: L'Harmattan Italia, 2004), 19.

Many of the facts and experiences were absorbed from my life, the life of the community in which I grew up, and the stories that floated in the air I breathed. …But the main source was my *dādī* (paternal grandmother). Now I realise what a remarkable woman she was. Through her stories I came to know her own past, the past of our community, and the dilemmas of individuals during the struggle for India's independence…[11]

As Stephen Greenblatt shows, the anecdote "satisfied the desire for something outside the literary, something that would challenge the boundaries of the literary…the sphere of practice that even in its more awkward and inept articulations makes claim on the truth that is denied to the most eloquent of literary texts. Or rather the anecdote was a way into the "contact zone," the charmed space where the *genius literarius* could be conjured into existence."[12] *Kalikathā's* exploration of memory and anecdote excavates histories of identity, diversity, and the perpetually dying city of Calcutta. Thus *Kalikathā* does something much more than recover history; the novel 'conjures' the 'genius literarius' in its very contact with Calcutta. The streets of Calcutta become the text into which all of these histories are inscribed: "The Bengalis, the British, the Marwaris, the Armenians, Jews, Parsees, Greeks all left traceable marks on the city like Armenian Street, The Greek Orthodox Church, and Jewish Girls' School, etc."[13] Thus the streets are also an archive of numerous cultures and histories.

Kalikathā's narrative structure seeks to avoid retrospective, teleological histories that Sudipta Kaviraj identifies as *anachronistic* history, for "anachronism distorts our historical judgment" by giving the impression that "earlier periods and cultures were structured like our own in their institutions, practices, discourses, meanings and significations of concepts, etc." Kaviraj maintains that this type of anachronistic historiography is the result of a degree of arrogance with which the present views the past:

> The conceit of the present, the precarious ontological privilege that it enjoys over the other times, is expressed often in another, subtler and more fundamental fault of historical vision. This is the temptation to believe that the only function of the past, its only conceivable justification, was to produce the present.[14]

The historical vision and structure of *Kalikathā* reverses this conceit, specifically the 1940s becomes an ideological lens to consider the present. The result is that the ideological plurality of the past, ranging from figures like Gandhi to Subhash Chandra Bose, cannot make sense of the mainstream homogenized present. The interstices in the dominant narrative (the narrative this story is *bypassing*) leave space for a number of other minor stories that make claims on history, but are not contiguous or consistent with the official version of the present. The conclusion of the novel demonstrates that marginal social formations and historical trajectories may remain below history and society until the material conditions for their reassertion mature. The reversal of class hierarchy in the post-apocalyptic conclusion reveals the presence of invisible social formations and narratives. The disjuncture among ideologies and trajectories between the 1940s and

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[11] Sahāya Raghuvīra, *Haṁso, Haṁso, Jaldī Haṁso.*, 19.
[12] Gallagher and Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism*, 48.
[13] Saraogi, *Streaming up Memory In-between Past and Present*, 19.
[14] Kaviraj, 6.

1990s represents a failure to locate and include social formations and ideologies that fall below history's gaze.

Below I will discuss how the structure of the novel privileges an inclusive view of history and historiography by oscillating between the end of the colonial era and the beginning of a neoliberal India, making Kishore's experience of the past a metric for the state of the present. As an analog to the discussion of inclusive and exclusive history, I shall consider the novel's treatment of space and time in the 'home' and 'street' scenes. While the novel's point is not to disparage the home as such, it comes to represent the very insulation, clannishness, conservatism, and ahistoricism that plague the contemporary nation. The street, on the other hand, is the privileged site of encounter that is deeply historical and diverse. According to Benjamin,

> The street conducts the flâneur into a vanished time. For him, every street is precipitous. It leads downwards…into a past that can be all the more spellbinding because it is not his own, not private. Nevertheless, it always remains the time of a childhood … In the asphalt over which he passes, his steps awaken a surprising resonance.[15]

The past that Kishore discovers on the street is an inclusive and shared past; one that takes into account both major and minor agents in history. I will examine the novel's major structural retrospectives that lead the narrative to the days of Kishore's youth and how they allow him to consider his own journey along with the nation's.

The Novel's Structure and Architecture of Memory

The macro-narrative structure of *Kali-Kathā* oscillates between the 1940s and the late 1990s. In order to discuss the function of the novel's structure, I make use of Gérard Gennette's terminology from the "Order" chapter of his book *Narrative Discourse*. Gennette provides a set of terms to categorize the different types of temporal distortions to a chronological ordering of events in a narrative. These terms are particularly useful in considering the macro-narrative of a novel like *Kali-Kathā*, which privileges the anachronistic features of narrative temporality.[16]

The 'first narrative' of *Kali-Katha: Via Bypass* begins in 1997.[17] It functions as the pivotal historical moment in the novel. To borrow Genette's description of this aspect of Marcel Proust's *Recherche du temps perdu*, "This position…serves as a springboard

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[15] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 416.
[16] It is worth taking a moment here to point out a problem with Genette's terms which he addresses in a footnote, "Here begin the problems (and disgraces) of terminology. *Prolepsis* and *analepsis* offer the advantage of being—through their roots—part of a grammatical-rhetorical family some of whose other members will serve us later; on the other hand, we will have to play on the opposition between the root – *lepse*—which in Greek refers to the fact of taking, whence, in narrative, assuming responsibility for and taking on (prolepsis: to take on something in advance; analepsis: to take on something after the event)— and the root –*lipse* (as in ellipsis or *paralipsis*) which refers, on the contrary, to the fact of leaving out, passing by without any mention." Genette, 40.
[17] Gérard Gennette defines the 'first narrative' as a narrative into which anachrony is inserted or grafted. It is, in a sense, the narrative present and every anachrony is temporally secondary and subordinate to the 'first narrative.' Gennette, 48-49.

for…memory-elicited analepsis." [18] The *analepsis* in *Kali-Katha* is a retrospection or evocation of events after the fact. The late 1990s are the point of departure for the rest of the novel's narrative. Therefore what Genette says about *Recherche* holds true for *Kali-Katha* as well, "Thus, the *Recherche du temps perdu* is launched with a vast movement of coming-and-going from one key, strategically dominant position…" [19] The novel's strategic position is 1997 because it is exactly half a century after India's independence. This position provides adequate temporal disjunction to consider the 1940s with a sense of critical distanciation; moreover, this anachronism provides a refracted and refreshed representation of the literary present of the first narrative (1990s).

There are seven major analepses[20] (retrospections) in the novel, six of which shift the narrative to the 1940s and one that leads the narrative from 1857 to the 1920s. The first analepsis concerns the city of Calcutta (North Calcutta's Barabazar) and Kishore's early life. The second analepsis takes the narrative from 1857 to the 1920s and features the Marwari migration and the emerging nation. The third analepsis revolves around the lives of Marwari women. The fourth addresses the chronotope of the home and the middle period in between the 1940s and 1990s. The fifth delves into leadership, ideology, and World War II. The sixth analepsis deals with poverty and commodity. The seventh and last prolepsis confronts idealism and communalism of the present and future. These narrative anachronisms reveal a multitude of ideologies and personalities in the past, which are seemingly lost to history and have not managed to consistently inform the makeup of the contemporary nation-state and society. These marginal and multiple histories do not necessarily contradict popular and dominant historical assumptions, but offer a challenge to their totality.

The novel begins *in ultimas res*, as opposed to *in medias res*, because the first narrative begins at a point near the end of Kishore's life. This is a significant feature of the novel's structure because the *medias* section of action is mostly left silent via ellipses. The standard epic use of *in medias res* involves what Genette calls a *completing* analepsis, or one that returns to its point of origin without significant ellipsis. *Kali-Katha's* analepses do not breech the 50-year ellipsis of the middle period. The *medias* or middle section is intentionally only dealt with in a few exceptions and without any temporal specificity in order to rhetorically draw attention to the mysterious or undisclosed history of the period. In this sense, these analepses to the 1940s are what Genette calls *partial* analepses, meaning they leave a temporal gap from where they conclude and the first narrative begins.

The narrator's intervention in Chapter 11 explains that Kishore has lived a tripartite life: the first part up to independence, the second part until 1997, and the third part starting after the bypass surgery. The second phase, or middle period, of his life coincides with fifty years of the sovereign democratic Indian State, which, the narrator indicates, shows no trace of the ideals of the freedom struggle. The narrative structure reproduces this tripartite scheme by linking phases one and three of Kishore's life

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[18] Genette, 44.
[19] Genette, 45.
[20] Analepsis (to take on something after the event) is part of a grammatical-rhetorical family of terms Gérard Genette uses to describe narrative structure.

roughly with independence and liberalization. The oscillation between the first narrative in 1997 and flashbacks to the 1940s engages the tension between the first and third phases of Kishore's life. The structural analepses make apparent the historical incongruities between the 1940s and the 1990s of the first narrative: thus the narrative emphasizes the middle period by affecting to pass it without notice—a rhetorical paralipsis. This historical coincidence of the protagonist and the nation turns Kishore and his bypass surgery into a national allegory: one of patching a dysfunctional system.

These phases of Kishore's life (and the nation's) are staged and coincide with literary genres and types of time-space that Russian linguist and literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin identifies as the chronotope. For Bakhtin the chronotope is "the intrinsic connectedness of the temporal and spatial relationships that are expressed in Literature … Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible – Space becomes charged and responsive to movements of time, plot, history." [21] The nature of the chronotope in any literary work is what defines genre and generic distinctions. The chronotope thus constructs the image of man or woman in literature. The two major chronotopes at work in *Kalikathā: Via Bypass* are the chronotopes of the 'home and homogenous time' and the 'street and historical time.' The first and third parts of Kishore Babu's life fall into the latter category. The street is a place of encounter, social diversity, and causal interventions that propel Kishore's development, or *Bildung*. The second phase, or middle period, of Kishore Babu's life is set in the 'home' chronotope. The representation of time and space in these sections is always approximate or implied. The narrator emphasizes this distinction between these two modes of chronotopic representation by explaining the ways in which the home misrepresents the past to create a homogenized narrative. Conversely, the events of the streets are consistently accurate in time and space and free of sanitizing narratives. (There is an element of this in *Pīlī Āndhī* as well, false records are kept at home while streets scenes often give the precise addresses and reference historical signposts like the 1942 Quit-India Movement).

These two chronotopes emphasize an opposition between two types of history. The street possesses a metonymic connection to historical events, particularly moments of revolutionary rupture. It plays an important role in the recovery of heterogeneous marginal histories because of its social diversity. In contrast, the 'home' uses history 'conceitedly,' attempting to sanitize the past. The narrative privileges the historicity of the streets by consistently representing the time and space of the streets with cartographic and calendric precision. The figure of the 'home' enjoys this type of precision only in the 'street' sections of the novel. Kishore's experience of history always has some direct or at least tangential relationship to the street.

Kishore Bābū as the Flâneur: Urban Observer of Markets and History

The temporal oscillation has a spatial analog in the split between the street and the home: the novel attempts to reconsider what may seem to be a belabored binary in the Bengali context, most notably Tagore's 1916 novel *Ghore Baire* (literally: at home [and]

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[21] Mikhail Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) 84.

outside). This binary is not belabored in the Marwari context and continues to resonate in all their novels. The city and the streets represent a spatial and temporal contiguity to Kishore's early years; he is transported back to pre-independence India by way of these urban portals. The road or street in the history of the novel is an important space of encounter and plurality, particularly in terms of the local exotic, as opposed to the foreign exotic, as Bakhtin states:

> The road is always one that passes through *familiar territory*, and not through some exotic *alien world*…it is the *sociohistorical heterogeneity* of one's own country that is revealed and depicted (and for this reason, if one may speak at all about the exotic here, then it can only be the "social exotic"—"slums," "dregs," the world of thieves). [22]

The road is a space for convergence, where the chronotopes of various classes, religions, nationalities, and ages meet; social distance is collapsed. In the rich heteroglossia of Calcutta streets Kishore speaks Bengali, rather than Hindi, interacting with a group that constitutes a significant 'other' to the Marwaris. Bakhtin also asserts that the road is "profoundly, intensely etched by the flow of historical time, by traces and signs of time's passage, by markers of the era." [23] The street is the place where Kishore has several *chance* encounters with people and history that propel the plot and his development; these causal interventions allow him in the end to make sense of his quest from the beginning.[24] The road is also the conduit for textual and historical sites for wandering. Bakhtin describes the street in terms typically associated with text (etched, traces, signs, and markers) implying that the street is itself legible. The streets elicit memories for Kishore that are the impetuses for his textual-historical research. Kishore is said to repeatedly map and measure the street, amounting to what Monika Horstmann has characterized as cartography of memory:

> Kiśor tramps through the scenes and locales of his life. By doing this he connects the present of the out-going millenium with his past and the past of his family. The streets and places thereby lose their solely locational function and gain deeper, mostly fathomless connotations. Kiśor Babu connects the wandering reconnaissance with all sorts of research in old newspapers, statistics, etc. And by doing this he takes something up, which he had already done in childhood for self-assurance, for example, in libraries to gain knowledge about the much abused role of the Marwaris as mounting-supporters for the British.[25]

As Horstmann indicates, Kishore connects his wandering urban reconnaissance with his research in old newspapers, statistics, and in the library. The implication is that

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[22] Bakhtin, 245. (Emphasis in the original).
[23] Bakhtin, 244.
[24] Moretti, 67.
[25] Monika Horstmann, Kartographie der Erinnerung: Alkā Sarāvgīs Roman *Kali-kathā: vāyā bāipās.*" In *Tohfa-e-Dil. Festschrift Helmut Nespital*. Ed. Dirk W. Lönne, (Reinbeck: Orientalistische Fachpublikationen 2001), 237-248. "Kiśor vagabundiert durch die Schauplätze seines Lebens. Damit verbindet er die Gegenwart des ausgehenden Jahrtausends mit seiner eigenen und mit der Vergangenheit seiner Familie. Die Straßen und Plätze verlieren so ihre lediglich ortsangebende Funktion und gewinnen tiefere, meist abgründige Konnotationen. Kiśor Bābū verbindet das wandernde Rekognoszieren mit allerei Recherchen in alten Zeitungen, Statistiken, usw. und nimmt damit etwas auf, was er bereits in seiner Kindhheit zur Selbstvergewisserung getan hatte, beispeilweise, um sich in Bibliotheken über die vielgeschmähte Rolle der Marwaris als Steigbügelhalter der Briten Kenntnis zu verschaffen." (My translation).

existentially, Calcutta is also a textual phenomenon, inasmuch as it is spatial-temporal, and that Kishore's language/community is an integral part of the story, or *kathā*. The title of the novel clearly makes use of this play on words. In the last paragraph of Chapter 3, Kishore (we are told by the narrator) insists on relaying his conception of the past:

> इस संसार में बीता हुआ कुछ भी खोता नहीं हैं। कैसे खो सकता है जब हम हैं अभी तक? ज्यादा-से-ज्यादा वह हमारे अन्दर भीतर कहीं दूर पुराने उजड़े शहरों की तरह ऊपर की परतों की तह में दफ़न हो जाता है...

> In this world nothing from the past is ever lost. How could it be lost when we still remain? At most, like old ruined cities, it gets buried under many layers deep within us...[26]

This is the beginning of a series of narrative interjections that set the tone for the treatment of time and memory. Kishore is able to review and even relive the past within himself and mapped on the city; the "old ruined city" is a simile for memories within the individual and the collective.

The novel begins in the street chronotope with Kishore Babu already in the dialectic of the flâneur: the man who is at once viewed by all and suspect, and who is utterly undiscoverable, the hidden man.[27]

> कलकत्ते के लैंसडाऊन रोड पर तेज़ी से दौड़ती गाड़ियों, बसों-मिनी के धुंए, चीखते होर्न और ब्रेक लगाने की आवाज़ों के ठीक बीचोंबीच किशोर बाबू आगा पीछा न देखते हुए शहर के सबसे नए और सबसे महंगे रेस्तौरांत 'गोल्डेन हार्वेस्ट' के सामने से सड़क पार करते देखे गए —

> Exactly in the middle of the speeding cars, the smoke of the buses and mini-buses, and the screeching sound of the horns and brakes of Calcutta's Lansdowne Road, in front of the city's newest and most expensive restaurant 'Golden Harvest,' Kishore Babu was seen crossing the street without looking —[28]

We find Kishore Babu jaywalking on Lansdowne Road in Calcutta in 1997. From the outset, Kishore is in a specific modern capitalist chronotope, in calendric time and cartographic space, in urban high-speed traffic and in front of the newest and most expensive restaurant in Calcutta. He is presumably visible to his social peers in and around the restaurant as he jaywalks to investigate what he thinks is a group of men urinating in an unorthodox manner. This episode of jaywalking continues in the following chapter in the form of a note that Kishore has written. Kishore's wife, Saroj, finds the note and conceals it because she considers the note deeply embarrassing. This is the first indication of a tension between the 'street' and the 'home.' The home, in a sense, attempts to suppress the vulgarity of the street here in its written form. Kishore narrates that the line of squatting men turns out to be diners, who are eating a cheap lunch with a plank for a table. In this space of heterogeneous convergence, Kishore is able to see life outside his upper class setting. From the vantage-point of the *street* Kishor sees one of his employees eating with the others sitting at the plank. He writes in his note that he was very surprised to see Shiv Babu sitting there. Kishor wonders if Shiv Babu's wife is sick

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[26] Saraogi, 13-14.
[27] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 420.
[28] Saraogi, 5.

and therefore unable to prepare tiffin for him to take to work. Then he realizes that he doesn't know whether or not Shiv Babu has a wife. He reflects on the fact that one of his workers is so removed from him socially that he has no idea whether or not he is married. His thoughts then return to urination. He wonders where women can relieve themselves while walking in Calcutta.[29] Though these ideas seem banal, for Kishore they are radical in terms of class and gender consciousness, and they represent a break with the former Kishore who could never conceive of these concerns. Kishore stands between the cheapest and most expensive places to dine in Calcutta, forcing him to confront social realities he has hitherto failed to notice—at least not since he was a teenager in the 1940s.

Homespun Fictions

The home is set in contrast to Kishore's experiences on the street. Both space and time are homogenous in the chronotope of the home. Kishore's family alters and sanitizes familial narratives in order to suppress humbling memories. Some of the devices are listed in the second chapter as follows:

(1) पुरानी बातें भूलना।

(2) नए तथ्य गढ़ना।

(3) कई तरह के जुमलों की ईजाद करना।

(4) पुरखों के शानदार अचकनधारी गिल्ट-फ्रेमवाले पोर्ट्रेट टांगना; इतिहास-प्रसिद्ध लोगों और घटनाओं से उन्हें जोड़ना।

(5) पुराना फर्नीचर, पुराने गहने, मूर्तियाँ खरीदना।

(1) To forget past matters.
(2) To fabricate new facts.
(3) To invent new phrases.
(4) To hang portraits of splendidly attired ancestors in gilt frames; to connect them to famous historical people and events.
(5) To buy antique furniture, antique jewelry, and sculptures. [30]

In this regard, Kishore becomes the antithesis to his family in his efforts to search through historical documents and diaries for the truth in history. To the extent that they can, the family tries to conceal their actual past and replace it with a more idyllic past, one in which they never suffered the ignominy of living in *Barabazar*. They display the trappings and artifacts of an old-money family and not humble migrants. This conception of time presents the family saga as a homogenous line of fabulously wealthy and important ancestors, with each generation *cyclically* reinventing the ancestral prestige. (*Pīlī Āndhī* offers a fascinating site for comparison here if one recalls the false and flattering records of the family's former glory in Kiśan's account book and the gilt frame portrait of Mādho). Ann Cvetkovish has noted that forgetting always works in relation with memory and that it can be as powerful as an obsession and as material as a visible artifact: "Both the fantasy of return to an origin and the desire to assimilate can be

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[29] Paromita Vohra, *Q2p*, videorecording (Devi Pictures, 2006). This is an excellent film documenting the scale of this problem presently in India.
[30] Saraogi, Alka. P. 8.

strategies for forgetting the trauma of dislocation."[31] One of the new phrases Kishore's family invents gives this chapter in the novel its title: *Somewhere in the North*.[32] This is a representation of space that avoids specificity and cartographic precision. In contrast, the representation of time and space in Kishore's outdoor sections tends to give the exact address, street, an important landmark, and it gives time in terms of the calendar or clock. The first scene, as we have seen, is 1997 on Lansdowne Road in Calcutta, across the street from the *Golden Harvest* restaurant. This scene narratologically signals a link between fictions and prestige, or the fiction of prestige. It illuminates a continued shame of humble beginnings, displacement, and reterritorialization.

Marwaris and the Freedom Struggle: First Analepsis

In chapter three, Kishore has the false impression that he is in his former Barabazar home (North Calcutta), instead of his opulent Ballygunge (South Calcutta) home. He cannot understand why his wife is talking about a middle room when the Barabazar house only has two rooms. This initial spatial disorientation results in a 50-year leap in time. The chronotope of North Calcutta is a space that is linked with national historical time. The early events of Kishore's life and his experience of the freedom struggle mostly transpire in this part of town. The temporal shift moves around the central 50-year period of his life and makes a temporal bypass to the pre-independence period of idealism. He sees the veranda overlooking Central Avenue and Muktaram Babu Street (Barabazar)—the year is 1940. He hears his mother's voice bidding him to wake up. Kishore is 15, fatherless, and struggling with the identity crisis of a Marwari in Calcutta—constantly juxtaposed to the figure of the culturally superior, politically engaged Bengali. The political climate is charged with the struggle for independence: "Right now, the beautiful dream of independence is everyone's dream." [33] As Meenakshi Mukherjee notes, Kishore Bābū is an agonizing and wavering participant in the freedom movement, baffled by events and caught between conflicting ideologies of Gandhiji, Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945?), and the Hindu Mahasabha."[34] Despite his reticence, Kishore finds the 1940s to be a robust and diverse period in national discourse. In contrast to this, Kishore sees the late 1990s as a homogenized era of base consumerism and ideological bankruptcy. The ideal of the nation in the 1940s becomes a marketing scheme in the 1990s. The flag, for example, is commodified to sell cars and other goods in the 1990s; the word *freedom* and the tri-color are associated with a Ford.

The narrative of this chapter in the novel passes through major national-historical ruptures. Kishore struggles to find his appropriate place as a Calcutta Marwari in the politically charged pre-independence times. He finds himself pulled between the equally persuasive positions of his two best friends: Amolak, the Gandhian, and Shantanu, the follower of Subash Chandra Bose. Yet Kishore's Mamas (maternal uncles) want him to

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[31] Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*, 121–122.

[32] It is worth noting that this phrase is in English in the novel as well. North Calcutta was considered 'Native' town in colonial times while South Calcutta was predominantly European. As part of this colonial legacy, South Calcutta is still considered the prestigious part of town.

[33] Saraogi, 19. "*Abhī āzādī kā khūbăsūrat sapănā sabăkā sapănā hai.*"

[34] Mukherjee, *Elusive Terrain*, 56.

leave politics aside and concentrate on the family businesses. The most significant event in this section is the protest at the Holwell Monument. [35] Led by Shantanu, Kishore goes to the protest where he receives a blow to the head when the police *laṭhī*-charge the crowd. The blow results in the same bump that appears after his bypass surgery half a century later. The bump is a corporeal on-off switch for his political-consciousness. The incident at the Holwell Monument pulls Kishore into the violence of the freedom struggle. The historical thread of Holwell leads the narrative back to the "Black hole of Calcutta" and the "Battle of Plassey."[36] The day after the protest, Shantanu shows Kishore an image of the Nawab Siraj-ud-duala and tells him that it was the treachery of big merchants that led to the fall of the Nawab and consequently British rule. Shantanu (like Shīl Bābū of *Pīlī Āndhī*) denies the historicity of the notorious "Black Hole" of Calcutta, "*duniyā kā sabse baṛā jhūṭh*."[37] Kishore decides not to mention the 'patriotic blow' he took to the head the day before because it doesn't sufficiently absolve him of his allegedly collusive ancestry.

Kishore anxiously goes to the Barabazar library on Syed Sali Road to find out if Marwaris committed the alleged treachery. The narrative moves briefly to 1756 and 1757 by way of archival sources. Kishore learns that the Jagatseths of Murshidabad were indeed Oswal-Marwari. The librarian, Satyapalji, tries to reassure Kishore that the Bengalis also helped the British plant their feet in India. Kishore's thoughts narrow from the culpability of the community to that of his family. He asks his mother to never mention that his great-grandfather was a close friend to police commissioner Teggart. We are told that Sarat Babu, Subash Chandra Bose's elder brother, was arrested for plotting to kill Teggart. This confirms for Kishore that his family's past is indeed marked by collusion with the British. Yet Kishore's mother tells him that history is more complicated than it seems at present:

> पर तुम्हारे दादाजी ही क्यों, गांधीजी के साथ रहनेवाले बड़े-बड़े लोग भी तैगर्ट के साथ मिलते-जुलते थे। मैं तो इतना जानती हूँ कि हमारे पुरखों ने जो ठीक समझा, वह किया और हम जो उचित समझेंगे वह हम करेंगे। लेकिन किसी बीती हुई बात को पोंछने या छुपाने की हमें क्या ज़रूरत है, उस पर शर्म करने की क्या ज़रूरत है? [38]

> But why just your great-grandfather, even very important people close to Gandhiji used to associate with Teggart. I know this much, our ancestors did what they understood as right, and we

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[35] In July 1940 Subhas Chandra Bose was arrested for his involvement in the Anti-Holwell Monument Satyagraha in Calcutta. Shortly after his release in December, he made his way to Germany and formed an alliance with the axis forces.

[36] The Holwell Monument was built to commemorate John Zephaniah Holwell and a small contingency of Europeans left in peril after the sack of Calcutta in 1776 by Siraj-ud-daulah, the Nawab of Bengal. As the story goes, the Nawab stuffed 143 of them into a small guardroom in which all but 23 died of suffocation. This came to be known as the "Black hole of Calcutta." There has been quite a lot of speculation regarding the accuracy of Holwell's account of the event. Many scholars believe that he exaggerated the affair to make Indians look cruel and despotic. On June 23rd of the following year, under the command of Robert Clive, the forces of the East India Company defeated the army of Siraj-ud-daulah at the Battle of Plassey, a small village between Calcutta and Murshidabad. This battle is conventionally described as the beginning of British rule in India.

[37] Saraogi, 20. "The world's greatest lie."

[38] Saraogi, 26.

will do what we consider appropriate. But why is it necessary to hide or wipe out bygone things, what's the point of feeling ashamed about it?

Kishore's mother has a sophisticated view of history and believes nothing should be concealed or wiped out. The curious shame about Marwari pasts seems to develop in the post-colonial home. The historical relationship between Marwaris and the British is more complex than the 15-year old Kishore can understand. In the 1940s he has neither the material (Ramvilas' and Kedar's diaries) nor critical perspective to go further back in history, but in the late 1990s he does. Therefore the story returns to the first narrative of 1997 to graft a second analepsis. The analepsis provides a 150 year temporal distortion in order to answer Shantanu's charge:

> शांतनु कहता है कि मारवाड़ी लोग आज़ादी की लड़ाई में भाग नहीं ले सकते। वे इतने दब्बू और डरपोक हैं कि न जेल जा सकते हैं और न ही पुलिस के डंडे खा सकते हैं—हर समय उन्हें जान-माल की ही फ़िक्र लगी रहती है।[39]

> Shantanu says that Marwaris cannot take part in the fight for freedom. They are so submissive and cowardly they can neither go to jail nor withstand police beatings—they constantly just worry about their life and property."

Marwaris and the British: The Second Analepsis

Chapter 5 begins with an interpolation by the narrator addressing the narratee. He claims that the protagonist, Kishore, has put certain restrictions on the narration. The chapter opens with the line, "कथा-लेखक का अनिवार्य हस्तक्षेप—The narrator's inevitable intervention—."[40] The narrator is 'allowed' this liberty due to the 22-karat scheme established between the protagonist Kishore and the narrator in the second chapter. The scheme provides that the narrator may contribute two karats to the otherwise unadulterated 24-karat story. These 2-karats are the presence of narrative voice, the *fabula*, and the historical interpretation in the novel. As part of the narrative's critique of historiography, it "deliberately makes visible, within the very structure of its narrative forms, its own repressive strategies and practices…"[41] Gerard Genette identifies this 'taking hold of the telling' as a narrative metalepsis in which levels of discourse are breached by either the extradiegetic (narrator or narratee) or the diegetic (characters). In this case, Kishore communicates one level up into the extradiegetic realm to control the telling of his story. Genette describes the process as simultaneously breeching and reifying a discursive boundary:

> All these games, by the intensity of their effects, demonstrate the importance of the boundaries they [the authors] tax their ingenuity to overstep, in defiance of verisimilitude – a boundary *that is precisely the narrating (or the performance) itself*: a shifting but sacred frontier between two worlds, the world *in* which one tells, the world *of* which one tells."[42]

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[39] Saraogi, 20.
[40] Saraogi, 27. *"kathā-lekhak kā anivārya hastakśep."*
[41] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (New York: OUP, 2000) 45.
[42] Genette, 236.

Kishore intends to inhabit both of these worlds and then lead the narratee into the embedded narrative of an ancestor's diary. This *seizing the telling* is a motif in all Marwari fiction and speaks to issues of representation and self-representation of their community.

The motif of a 22-karat gold alloy may also be a metaphor for migrant/outsider narratives melted into the story of *āmār sonār bānglā* (Tagore's poem *My Golden Bengal*). This is emphasized by the heteroglossia of the chapter title written in *Śādu Bhāśā* Bengali: *Jodi nirbāsane pāṭhābeī—Kolikātā* (If exiled, let it be Kolkata). The narrator discloses that the story in this chapter is based on the personal diary of Kishore's great-grandfather Ramvilas, a primary source text within the novel. Kishore returns to Ramvilas because his is the shared story of the community of Marwaris and the city of Calcutta. Kishore now maintains that the truth in history is just in the marginal and insignificant individuals, in the minor stories. It is the street that has some bearing on Kishore's change of attitude,

> कथा-लेखक के अनुसार यह एक अवांतर कथा है। पर बाइपास सर्जरी के बाद सड़कें मापते-मापते किशोरे के मापदंड बदल गए हैं।[43]

> According to the narrator, [Ramvilas'] story is a marginal story. But surveying the streets after the bypass surgery Kishore's standard has changed."

In the Hindi the key words here are *māpnā* (to measure) and *māpădanḍ* (scale or standard). Taken quite literally, while measuring the streets his scale or standard changed. From the perspective of the socially diverse street, Kishore begins to see insignificant people (including himself and his great-grandfather) as agents of history. To emphasize this new worldview, he transgresses levels of narrative discourse (and Marwari stereotypes) to seize the telling.

The story of Ramvilas and his father Babuji is a plausible account of Marwari migration to Calcutta; it has what Stephen Greenblatt characterizes as 'a touch of the real.' Saraogi has written elsewhere about what it was like for her grandfather to experience exile and leave his palatial home in Rajasthan (bought with money made by her great-grandfather in Calcutta during World War I) and live in a small rented apartment in North Calcutta – like the characters of this novel. Thus lived Marwaris histories enter the novel along with the key institutions that made the Marwari migration and business ventures successful enterprises. According to Thomas Timberg, the Marwaris thrived by way of a matrix of commercial interaction and institutions of mutual support. Thus when Babuji gets to Calcutta, Seth Nathuram of Bhiwani gives him a job. Like most newly-arrived Marwaris, Babuji seeks shelter and food in a *bāsā*, collective messes organized to provide support and housing for communal fellows.[44] Babuji eventually becomes a *banian*, broker, for the senior Hamilton Sahib. However, this was

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[43] Saraogi, 27.
[44] Timberg, 5. Timberg mentions that one of the Calcutta *basas* was run by a leading cloth merchant of the time called Nathuram. Perhaps he is the historical source of Seth Nathuram of *Kali-Katha*. Nathuram Saraf was the first Marwari to become a *banian* to a European firm. He imported so much labor from Rajasthan that he had to open several *basas* to accommodate the immigrants. Timber characterizes Saraf as an exemplary Marwari.

not simply Babuji's good fortune but a historical trend. Timberg notes, "Slowly, starting in the 1880s, the Marwaris started replacing the Khatris and the Bengalis as *banians* to British firms."[45] Ultimately Babuji loses his fortune speculating on the futures or *phāṭkā* market. As Dipesh Chakrabarty notes, the Marwaris were heavily invested in the *phāṭkā* (literally bubble) market or the *bhitar bazar* (inside market or secret market).[46] In this sense, Babuji's story reflects a generalized history of Marwaris in Calcutta. The character is infused with the lived experience of Saraogi's ancestors.

After some delay, Ramvilas finally goes to Calcutta in 1899 (at the time of the *Chappania akāl* referred to in *Pīlī Āndhī*) and arrives at the *gaddi* of Seth Nathuram, the same place that Babuji had gone. Ramvilas begins by brokering jute on his own and within a year, he becomes the *banian* to the junior Hamilton Sahib's company. His son Kedar, on the other hand, becomes increasingly anti-British and nationalist. The secret of Kedar's animosity for the British remains hidden from Ramvilas. Kedar writes scathing letters of disapproval to Ramvilas regarding his association with the English and particularly with Police Commissioner Tegart.[47] It is only after the death of Kedar that Ramvilas notices the many inequities around him:

> शेयर बाज़ार की ईमारत में हिन्दुस्तानी लोग लिफ़्ट से नहीं चढ़ सकते। वे किसी के दफ्तर में जाएँ, तो इंतजार करने के लिए बेंच पर नहीं बैठ सकते। उन्हें खड़े ही रहना पड़ता है। कई ऐसे रास्ते हैं जिन पर वे चल नहीं सकते। ऐसे क्लब, खाने-पीने की दुकानें हैं जहाँ वे जा नहीं सकते।[48]

> In the stock exchange building Indians were *not allowed to use the lift*. If they [the Indians] go to someone's office, then they could *not sit on the bench while waiting*. They just have to remain standing. There are many such roads on which they may not tread. There are many clubs and restaurants in which they may not go.

This passage bears a striking resemblance to a passage in the memoirs of G. D. Birla.[49] Echoing words of G. D. Birla invests Ramvilas with a historical significance and nationalist trajectory. The figures of Birla and Ramvilas characterize the troubled relationship between the Marwaris and the British. In the early part of the 20th century, the Calcutta jute industry became a front in the independence struggle. Some leading industrialists like Birla, who initially benefited from collaboration with the British, began to call for fiscal autonomy. On one hand, the British function as commercial mentors and patrons, as the junior Hamilton Sahib is to Ramvilas, and yet their "racial arrogance could

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[45] Timberg, 56.

[46] Chakrabarty, 53.

[47] The historical Tegart served in the Calcutta police force from 1901-1931. He gained notoriety for his brutality and opposition to Indian nationalism. He also recommended Saratchandra Chattopadhyaya's novel *Pather Dabi* for proscription in 1926.

[48] Saraogi, 51.

[49] G. D. Birla, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma: Personal Memoirs* (Bombay : Vakils, Feffer and Simons Private, c1968.). "When I was 16 [1908] I started an independent business of my own as a broker, and thus began my contact with Englishmen who were my patrons and clients. During my association with them I began to see their superiority in business methods, their organizing capacity and their many other virtues. But their racial arrogance could not be concealed. *I was not allowed to use the lift to their offices, nor their benches while waiting to see them*. I smarted under these insults, and this created within me a political interest which from 1912 until today I have fully maintained," xv.

not be concealed." After Kedar dies, Ramvilas begins to hate the British and he refuses to have anything to do with Tegart. Though Birla maintains that these "insults" were the 'origins' of his nationalism, it is important to realize that Birla writes these words many years later in the well-articulated late nationalist period. In the moment that these 'insults' take place, they produce anti-British sentiment rather then a fully articulated nationalism.

The narrative allows for a historical process to emerge from collaboration with the British to disillusionment; Ramvilas refuses to make *banians* of his grandchildren. However, Ramvilas never learns the source of Kedar's anti-British vehemence. As Ramvilas searches for the diaries and writings of his dead son, he never thinks to check with his grandson, Kishore's father. The analepsis moves back to January 10th -12th, 1902 on the train journey from Delhi to Calcutta. Kedar's diary recounts the cruelty and violence the British inflict on the 12-year-old Kedar and his father Ramvilas: they are both taken off the train for plague inspections and are beaten when they protest. They manage to get back on the train only after Ramvilas announces in English that he is friends with Hamilton Sahib. The meta-story attends to one of the bypasses of history as it accounts for a hitherto unexplained antagonism Kedar harbored, suggesting that even a given like anti-colonialism is not *sui generis*.

The Middle Period and the Home: The Third Analepsis

Following the second analepsis is a relatively extensive discussion of the middle period of Kishore's life and his home life. The middle period and the home are linked by the inaccurate or approximate representations of time and space. The domestic chronotope in *Kalikathā* is one of idyllic time, which, as Bakhtin suggests, is grafted to the familiar homeland, home, native fields and mountains. In *Kalikathā*, the native land or *desh* is reproduced in effect by insulating the home from the outside Bengali world. This insulated, and consequently benighted, domestic world is a trope in most literary representations of Marwaris. The representation of time is influenced by the delimited unity of the space. The setting is static and cyclical. Bakhtin notes that this generic form is given to family, tradition, generations, and idyllic forms of labor. It does not confront the abstract modern and historical world. Bakhtin writes, "This blurring of all temporal boundaries made possible by a unity of a place also contributes in an essential way to the creation of the cyclic rhythmicalness of time so characteristic of the idyll."[50] As the antithesis to the street, which represents a plurality of contradictory discourses, the 'history' of the home is a homogenous repetitiveness of events—a claustrophobic milieu. This echoes the domestic sections of *Pīlī Āndhī*, but the treatment of the home is sharper and briefer.

In the middle period, Kishore spends his time trying to give the south Calcutta home a modern look that would distinguish it from the Bengali homes. The walls of this delimited space insulate the family and community from the diversity of street and city. Instead of having a *haveli* constructed in a place of authenticity (Rajasthan), Kishore Babu's house constructs his identity relationally to his Bengali neighbors. The house is completely stripped of all Bengali markers. Measures are taken to insulate the private

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[50] Bakhtin, 225.

sphere. A wall is built in place of iron grill bars so that those who sit on the verandah are not visible from the *street*—the emphasis here is not so much on security as it is privacy and insulation—modern grillwork is placed on top of the wall. Modern glazed glass windows replace the green wooden-shuttered windows, which are described as "*Satyajīt Rāy kī 'Cārūlatā' kī tarah,*" a reference to the 1964 Berlin International Film Festival Prize-winning *Charulata*, which Ray believed to be his best work. Thus the removal of items marked as Bengali becomes key to the construction of identity in this non-Rajasthani locality. The wall facing the street doubles, reinforcing this dichotomy of the street and the home. The windows on the right are sealed off to prevent the humble Bengali neighbors from peeking into the home. In this period, Kishore's children surreptitiously call him "Hitler" for his stern patriarchal demeanor. He turns away most visitors from the house, particularly cousin Banwari, who was excommunicated for marrying a Bengali woman.

The Defiance and Conformity of Marwari Women: the Fourth Analepsis

When Kishore closes his eyes at the end of chapter 6 he thinks of his father, who played no role in his life except as his mother's husband. This takes the narrative back to 1940 again. This analepsis rallies around the significant women in Kishore's life. The women in the 1940s sections are juxtaposed to the silent, oppressed women in the post-independence middle period, even though they are the same women by and large. The representation of space and time once again returns to the specificity of the two previous analepses. In the middle period we can estimate the time of an occurrence within a rough 20-year span. In contrast, in this analepsis we know that the year is precisely 1940 and Kishore's mother plans monthly outings to Chowringhee and Victoria Maidan on the night of the full moon. The spatial locality is exact and the lunar dating is calculable calendar time. This is meaningful because it connects the events of the chapter to world history, contextualizing the degree to which the women in this period pushed back against some societal and communal strictures, and strategically conformed to others.

Kishore's Gandhian Marwari friend Amolak despairs that women of their community still live in *purdah*, despite living in Bengal. He feels that the Bengalis are right to call them *meṛos* and other pejorative terms because ten years earlier his mother picketed the sale of imported goods in Burrabazar and the Marwaris called her a prostitute. Amolak's parents are active Congress workers, while Kishore's family tends to be much more conservative. Kishore's uncles contribute money to the Hindu Mahasabha and sell the imported cloth that Amolak's mother protests. This reintroduces the conservative and progressive schism in the community. This schism is the dynamism of the community—the zeal either to preserve or reform largely fades after independence.

The women of this period offer more resistance; the mothers of Kishore and Amolak have a public presence—whether at a protest in Barabazar or picnics at the Victoria Maidan. *Baṛi Ma* voices her protest against her wayward husband by giving her life and Shanta Bhabhi, the wife of Kishore's deceased brother, is defiantly well-educated. However, in the middle period Shanta Bhabhi claims to have forgotten everything she knows about Hindi literature—an analog of the general decline of Hindi in Bengal after independence and during the linguistic reorganization of the states. The historical disjuncture of this section is the shift from active women in the 40s to the

passive women of the following decades. Despite Kishore's admiration for Bhabhi's education and knowledge of Hindi literature, he denies his daughters (in the middle period) a level of education that would make them difficult to 'marry off.'

Leaders, Ideology, and War: The Fifth Analepsis

On the 1997 side of the 50-year ellipsis, Kishore collects old newspaper clippings (from scrap paper dealers on the street) and thematically organizes them into several envelopes. Kishore's wife, Saroj, discovers that the envelopes are organized into politics, war, and pop culture — a sort of amateur national archive. Collecting articles from scrap paper vendors is his creative way of recovering his youthful dream of running a newspaper stand. The newspaper theme transports the story to July 2nd 1940, after the injury from the Holwell Monument protest. Kishore wanders the street like a "*fakir*," or a flâneur, looking at a wide assortment of people including Anglo-Indians, Muslim dervishes, yogis, lunatics, Chinese merchants, and Jews. He despairs of being Marwari,

सब जातियाँ अपना मनपसंद का काम कर सकती हैं, मारवाड़ी होना ही झंझट है।[51]

Every community can do as they please; the trouble is just in being Marwari."

Kishore decides the best career for him would be to open a newspaper stand. This way he could read the news of the world as well as benefit from being on the street with the people. The nexus of the street and print world is significant for Kishore as these are sites of exploration and integration; they represent publics that he longs to be a part of. The interest in the press also connects Kishore with his grandfather Kedar, who wrote articles for the nationalist Hindi papers in Calcutta.[52] But Kishore's dream is short lived because his uncles force him to work in their shop, pulling him back into a traditional Marwari fold.

While wandering the streets in his rediscovered flânerie (idle strolling), the 70-year-old Kishore observes that someone has been placing *tilaks* (ornamental forehead marks) on the heads of statues around town. However, he soon realizes that the *tilaks* are actually bird droppings when he sees that Lenin's *'tilak'* had run all over his face. Kishore writes a letter to West Bengal's Communist Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu, to have the statues of the many great leaders around Calcutta cleaned of pigeon droppings. His list of statues includes, among others, Gandhi, Subash Chandra Bose, Vivekananda, Nehru, Rashbehari Bose, Ambedkar, and Lenin. The statues are traceable marks on the urban space; they recall figures of historical and ideological significance and diversity. Kishore urges the state to dignify the memories of these leaders by building canopies to protect them. It is particularly telling that the Lenin statue should be the most disfigured by pigeon droppings, even after decades of Communist Party of India (Marxist) rule in West Bengal.

Wandering around looking at statues draws the narrative back to 1941-2 and Calcutta's place in the Second World War, for as Benjamin remarks, "We know that, in the course of flânerie, far-off times and places interpenetrate the landscape and the

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[51] Saraogi, 104.
[52] Saraogi, 48.

present moment."[53] The political climate of the era is complicated by the various wartime allegiances: Subash Chandra Bose courts the Germans and Japanese while the Communists in Calcutta, because of the German offensive against the Soviet Union, support the British in the Peoples' War against Fascism. Kishore's dreams of freedom end as he is forced to sit in his Mamas' (Uncles') shop on Harrison Road, Barabazar. But the Japanese bombing raids approach Calcutta and on December 16, 1941 they reach Rangoon. The following day Kishore and his family flee Calcutta for the hinterland.

The Fabric of the Nation: Poverty and Textiles: The Sixth Analepsis

The sixth analepsis takes the story to 1943 and departs from a point in the first narrative, which is a week before the 50-year Independence Day celebrations. The structural tension in this section rallies around the issues of poverty and commodities in 1997 and 1943. From reading an article by Ajit Narayan Bose entitled 'The Economy of India,' Kishore learns that 40% of India's population spends less than Rs. 40 on clothing annually.[54] When he tells his wife, she insists that Rs. 40 is a misprint. Yet Kishore insists that when he went to give sweets to the nurse who took care of him during the bypass recovery, she could not meet him because her only two saris were drying. Kishore then strolls to Minto Park now called *Shaheed Bhagat Singh Udyan*. The park is across the street from the 'most expensive boutique in the city.' In his role as flâneur and observer of markets and consumption, he sees his factory supervisor's daughter persuade her wealthy young companion to buy her Rs. 8,000 in clothing. Kishore Babu thinks to himself,

> इस लड़के को इन कपड़ों का क्या मुआवज़ा देगी? अपने सुपरवाइज़र पिता को क्या बताएगी कि इन कपड़ों के लिए वह कहाँ से पैसे लाई? ऐसा क्या अकाल पड़ा था इसके जीवन में इन कपड़ों के बिना? – किशोर बाबू का दिमाग एक के बाद एक उठते प्रश्नों से भनभनाकर दुखने लगा। कैसा अ-समय आ गया है? क्या यही कलियुग है? – पत्नी से सुने कलियुग के लक्षण उन्होंने याद करने की चेष्टा की, तो उन्हें चौवन साल पहले आत्महत्या करनेवाली एक दूसरी लड़की की फूली हुई लाश याद आई।[55]

> What will she give this boy in compensation for these clothes? What will she tell her supervisor father regarding where she got the money for these clothes? Was there such a dearth (*akāl*) in her life without these clothes? … Has such an evil-time come? Is this the *Kaliyug*? Though he attempted to remember the characteristics of the *kaliyug* his wife recited, the memory of the bloated corpse of another girl who committed suicide 54 years ago came to mind.

The beggar girl that Kishore recalls is from a family that camps in front of his home during the famine of 1943. He overhears the girl tell her father that she cannot beg because she has insufficient clothing. Kishore and Amolak find the girl's bloated corpse floating in the lake by Lake Street. The blame for the famine goes to the British mismanagement and the consumption of resources by the American troops. The soldiers are compared to demons and implicated in numerous horrors, particularly rape and

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[53] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 419.

[54] Ajit Narayan Bose is an activist and member of NAPM (Nation Alliance for People's Movements). At the time of the first narrative the exchange rate was approximately Rs. 43 to $1.

[55] Saraogi, 140.

vehicular manslaughter. Therefore, the troops are also suspected in the rape and death of the beggar girl. The military presence places Kishore in a difficult situation as he feels they are responsible for the famine and related atrocities and yet his uncles and community are minting a fortune supplying provisions for the military: "The *mamas* have obtained a tender to supply the army's green uniforms, tarpaulins, and blankets, because of which there is no end to work and no end to profits."[56] This reintroduces the clothing-commodity motif in yet another context; supplying textiles to the military helps the British in the war effort and is therefore problematic concerning the anti-colonial struggle. The uncles force Kishore to work six days a week in their shop and on his day off he distributes *rotis* to the poor from a pushcart in Bhawanipur. Manjhale Mama scolds him for distributing food on the *street* because if he is seen the association with Congress activism could cost them their contract with the military.

Cloth is an important national symbol in the late colonial era, with the emphasis on homespun cloth as a powerful gesture of self-reliance. Kishore's uncles represent an opposing position by supplying the military with clothing and selling imported cloth. The disjuncture, which the narrative interrogates in this section, is the shift in the significance of cloth and textiles in the late 1990s. We find no trace of the 'patriotic' significance of clothing as Kishore's children refuse to wear anything made in India. In the 1940s, the lack of clothing is an external sign for *akāl* or famine, yet in the 1990s, the commodity itself creates this *akāl* (dearth) that acts upon the supervisor's daughter. Kishore can only account for the *akāl* in the 1990s as a symptom of the *kaliyug*, whereas the 1940's *akāl* has concrete causes that are resisted. Towards the conclusion of the novel, the *kaliyug* and *akāl* become synonymous with the spike in consumerism initiated by liberalization.

The Perils of Foreign Aid: the 7ᵗʰ and Final Analepsis

In Chapter 14, again in the literary present of 1997, Kishore learns of the conclusion of Amolak's war against *Hindutva*. The Sanskritwala Panditji, who along with Swami Sahajanand, comes to the house to collect money for a Sanskrit school. They present Kishore with an issue of *Frontline* magazine in which there is a picture of Swami Sahajanand with a megaphone giving instructions to the *karsevaks* atop of the Babri Masjid. This image is juxtaposed to the image of the *sannyasi* Swami Sahajanand standing in Kishore's home observing a vow of silence. Panditji describes the destruction of the Babri Masjid as a great victory for Hindutva and adds that *crores* of rupees came from abroad to support the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (World Hindu Council) in their struggle. Panditji informs Kishore that his childhood friend Amolak was killed trying to intervene at the Babri Masjid. With the pages of *Frontline* flapping in the breeze depicting images of the mosque's destruction, Kishore attempts to strangle the Swamiji.

Fifty-one years after their last encounter, Kishore decides to contact Amolak's soul. As Kishore had discovered his ancestors by way of their textual legacies, he also contacts Amolak in a supernatural textual ceremony:

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[56] Saraogi, 144. मामाजी लोगों को फ़ौज की हरी वर्दी, तारपोलिन, और कम्बल सप्लाई करने का टेंडर मिल गया है, जिसके कार*ण* न काम का अंत और न मु*नाफ़े*का।

बचपन में उन्होंने गिगिया बुआ को आत्मा बुलाते देखा है। एक बड़े कागज़ पर सारे अक्षर एक गोलाई में लिखकर एक कटोरी को उलटकर उस पर रखना है। अमोलक की आत्मा ज़रूर आएगी। उन्हें पूरा विश्वास है।

> In childhood he has seen Gigia Bua call souls. One must *write all the letters* of the *alphabet* in a circle on a large *sheet of paper* and place an inverted bowl over it. Amolak's soul will surely come. He has complete faith. [57]

Kishore's wife sees the entire ceremony while spying on him from the balcony. She witnesses the bowl move on its own and Kishore drinking its contents. From this point on, Kishore speaks mostly to a spiritually manifested Amolak, which gives Kishore the mad appearance of speaking to himself. In this penultimate chapter, Kishore makes contact with Shantanu as well, but through more conventional correspondence:

> मैंने शांतनु के लिए अखबार में इश्तिहार दिया था। यदि वह उसे पढ़े, तो मुझसे संपर्क करे। और देखो उस शैतान को, उसने तुरंत मुझे फ़ोन करने के बजाय वापस यह छपवाया है कि वह कलकत्ता में ही है और मुझे आज नौ बजे फ़ोन करेगा।

> I had placed an announcement in the newspaper for Shantanu. If he should read it, then he should contact me. And look at that devil, instead of phoning me immediately he had this reply printed that he also lives in Calcutta and he will call me today at nine.[58]

When the phone call arrives the only reported speech is, "Shantanu…North Calcutta, Rajbari…4 o'clock in the evening." [59] Shantanu uses his ancestral mansion, which he swore to never use, to run an NGO for tribal peoples. Kishore notices that the once passionate follower of Subash Chandra Bose now prefers to speak in English and has become very wealthy running this NGO with foreign aid.

To Kishore, the great Indian democracy is losing ground to the influence of *crores* of currency from abroad. The emergence of a triumphant right-wing Hindutva ideology in the 1990s betrays the secular and pluralistic ideological possibilities of the 1940s. Amolak's resistance has been extinguished at the Babri Masjid. Shantanu ultimately betrays his ideals and opportunistically gets rich from foreign aid. Kishore, for his part, essentially withdrew from the affairs of the world after independence and therefore cannot historically account for the disjuncture between the two periods. This contradiction reaches its climax on August 15, 1997, the 50-year Independence Day. Kishore's son promises him a gift for the occasion. Kishore mistakenly assumes that it is to be a flag; he feels that he has misjudged his son's generation. The brief analepsis goes back to the first Independence Day celebration in Calcutta. Gandhi is present and the people on the streets are chanting slogans: "*Hindū-Muslim ek hon, jay hind, inḳalāb zindābād, aur vandemātaram.*"[60] While in 1997, Kishore's son refers to 500 rupee notes as 'Gandhis.' The section pivots on the English word 'freedom.' Kishore's son presents him with car keys and tells him that it is 'Freedom.' The keys belong to a 'Freedom

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[57] Saraogi, 176.

[58] Saraogi, 186.

[59] Saraogi, 186. शान्तनु… *नार्थ कलकत्तावाली राजबाड़ी… शाम को चार बजे।*

[60] Saraogi, 196. "Hindu-Muslim Unite, Victory to India, Long Live the Revolution, Hail Mother (Land)."

Ford,' a limited edition Ford painted in one of the colors of the Indian flag. Kishore proceeds to give his son a curmudgeonly lecture on the virtue of Marwari frugality and the evils of buying on credit. But Kishore's son insists that it is not easy to live in these times because the TV tells one of the many things to buy. Kishore's son asserts his own experiential horizon regarding the peculiar circumstances of his era. He tells his father that Marwaris are known as the "Jews of India"[61] and therefore he has to buy an expensive car to prove that he is not stingy. Even this internalized stereotype has been ideologically co-opted and inverted to make him consume. While watching TV on the night of Independence Day, Kishore sees that one of the biggest soft-drink companies in the world has placed a fifty-foot brass cola-bottle in Parliament House. At this moment the ghost of Amolak leaves Kishore's body and Kishore smashes the TV with his fist.

Conclusion and Prolepsis:

The creation of an economic subject as it is traced in the 'vernacular' capitalist (to borrow Ritu Birla's expression) is particularly interesting regarding the Calcutta Marwari. *Kali-kathā*'s protagonist, Kishore *Bābū*, experiences in his own family the process by which merchants and traders are disciplined by and recruited into modern rational market business practices, departing from vernacular modes. The novel traces the homogenizing creation of economic subjects which is ultimately shown to trump their sovereign political subjectivity in post-liberalized India of the late 1990s. What is so distressing to Kishore Babu is, despite his best efforts and all the idealism of the late nationalist period, the fulfillment of empire was in making civilized subjects into economic subjects perfectly governed by market values, so much so that political sovereignty loses significance.[62] Kishore Babu and his ancestors are at the center of a process in which idioms of respectability and credibility, or *sākh*, are shifting from their relevance in the community in favor of national—and later global—homogeneity.

The conclusion of the novel—in the twilight of Kishore's consciousness—features the rendezvous of Kishore, Amolak, and Shantanu on the first day of the new millennium. Kishore becomes a highly idealist figure; he refuses to use anything made by multinationals or with their collaboration. His wife sees him sitting on a mat and reading *namaz*, or reciting a Sikh prayer as he ties a turban on his head. Then he calls himself 'Father Kishore' and finally returns to reading the *Gīta*. The novel concludes after an environmental catastrophe caused by global warming and general environmental degradation. The narrative interpolation indicates a complete class inversion:

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[61] Saraogi, 199. *"bhārat ke* Jews *(Yahūdī)…"*
Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 427.
[62] Birla, *Stages of Capital*.

अब सबसे सुखी सबसे गरीब आदमी बन गया जिसे धरती पर ही रहने और पैदल चलने की आदत थी। सबसे ज़रूरी काम खाने के लिए अनाज-फल-सब्जियाँ उगाना हो गया और इस काम को जाननेवालों की तनख्वाह सबसे अधिक हो गई।[63]

> Now the happiest man was the poorest one, who had just been living on the land and used to going by foot. The most important task in order to eat became the production of grains, fruit, and vegetables and people acquainted with this work became the highest paid.

The use of all petroleum products ceases and factories shut down. People return to villages, agrarian life styles, and pre-capitalist modes of production. It is as if some thread of humanist-socialism or Gandhian economics reinserts itself into history to save the world from global capitalist exuberance. This proleptic conclusion is the final historical incongruity and suggests that the goals of history are no longer clearly imaginable,

अब तक लोग डरते आए थे कि तीसरा विश्वयुद्ध छिड़ा … पर … जो घटा, वह बिलकुल अकल्पनीय था।[64]

> Until now people had feared a Third World War … but … what happened was completely unimaginable.

The revolution in the novel is passive in the sense that it is neither violent nor is it achieved by any intentional mass collective action. It occurs as a "molecular" social transformation and without the dissemination of any information. The novel's significant twist in this scenario is that World History progresses from a capitalist mode of production (CMP) to the pre-capitalist or so-called Asiatic mode of production (AMP) sans the despotism. Gramsci, in fact, calls "Gandhism" a "naïve theorisation of the 'passive revolution' with religious overtones."[65] Kishore, in the end, turns to spirituality and becomes a *sannyāsī* (mendicant renunciant) in a state of dispassion and detachment from worldly and materialistic pursuits. Kishore the flâneur and observer of the material transforms into the millennia old Indian counterpart, the fakir-sannyasi, observer of the spiritual.

In the final and possibly imaginary scene, Kishore reunites with his friends Amolak (who was killed at the Babri Masjid) and Shantanu. The three of them made a pact half a century earlier to meet at the Victoria Memorial, now a statue of Rishi Aurobindo, to become *sannyāsīs* together. Amolak explains that he did not die at the Babri Masjid, rather someone with his same appearance and thoughts died there. Taken metaphorically, Amolak's ideology did not perish, only it could not advance openly. Yet in this post-*kaliyuga* world, many erased histories and trajectories reassert themselves. All things begin anew as this part of the novel is post-*kaliyuga*, thus concludes the *kali-katha* (story of the endtime). Amolak says that the problem with modern culture is the propensity to bypass difficulties instead of resolving them. The social revolution in the

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[63] Sarogi, 214.
[64] Saraogi, 214.
[65] Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1999) p. 107.

novel comes when systemic contradictions come to the fore and additional bypasses are no longer possible.

Chapter Six:

***Khule Gagan Ke Lāl Sitāre*: Jain and Naxalite Consciousness and Reconciliations**

Madhu Kankaria's novelistic debut, *Khule Gagan ke Lāl Sitāre* (*Red Stars in the Open Sky*, 2000), was published at a time when West Bengal had been under Left Front rule for nearly a quarter of a century. The historical origins of this nearly unopposed tenure form the context for the novel. Calcutta and West Bengal politics of the 1960s and 1970s had a profound impact on Kankaria's generation of Hindi writers in Calcutta. Alka Saraogi and Prabha Khetan also take up themes of radical political formations in their work (*Koī Bāt Nahīṁ* 2004 and *Tālā Bandī* 1991, respectively). Kankaria's narrative, however, is a sustained and intense engagement with the Naxalbari legacy from the perspective of a young Marwari Jain woman during her college years at Presidency College, Calcutta. In the late 1960s and 1970s, Presidency College was the vanguard of urban radicalism and student politics. Naxalbari provided a radicalized student body with a focal point closer to home than Vietnam. This was the era of slogans on campus such as: *āmār nām, tomār nām,* Vietnam*,* and *āmār bāri, tomār bāri,* Naxalbari.[1] The elite space of Presidency makes the encounter and love relationship between a Marwari Jain and a Bhadralok Bengali possible and revolutionary. For the Jain protagonist these '*red hot days*' are the formative years of her political and philosophical consciousness. She is the first woman in her family to attend the university; the college setting allows her to experience love and student militancy, which challenges the way she sees her family's practices and beliefs. Yet this shifting perception is not unidirectional, her inadvertent engagement with Jain philosophy begins to color the narrative's representation of seemingly antithetical formations to Jainism such as revolutionary violence.

Like the protagonist of the novel, Madhu Kankaria (b. 1957, Calcutta) attended Presidency College, where she received an M.A. in Economics. Kankaria has four novels and four short story collections to her credit: *Khule Gagan Ke Lāl Sitāre* (2000), *Salām Ākhirī* (2002), *Pattakhor* (2005), *Sej par Saṃskṛit* (2008), *Antahīn Marusthal* (2005), *Aur Ant meṃ īśu* (2006)*, Bīte Hue* (2004), *Bharī Dopaharī ke Āndhere* (2007).[2] Her work tends to address major social issues in Calcutta; *Salām Ākhirī* and *Pattakhor* are about sex workers and drug addiction respectively. Plurality and manifold aspects of being are central ontological motifs in her work and the way she represents the city of Calcutta. Her style is significantly different from Saraogi's or Khetan's. Kankaria's work tends to freely mix elements of various genres such as Gonzo journalism, interviews, literary

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[1] Rajat Ray, Chakraborti Subhas, and Benjamin Zachariah, "Presidency College, Calcutta: An Unfinished History," in *Knowledge, Power and Politics: Educational Institutions in India*, ed. M. Hasan, 1st ed. (Roli Books, 1998), 362–365.

[2] Madhu Kāṅkariyā, *Khule Gagana Ke Lāla Sitāre*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Nayī Dillī: Rājakamala Prakāśana, 2000); Madhu Kāṅkariyā, *Salāma Ākhirī*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Nayī Dillī: Rājakamala Prakāśana, 2002); Madhu Kāṅkariyā, *Pattākhora*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Nayī Dillī: Rājakamala Prakāśana, 2005); Madhu Kāṅkariyā, *Seja Para Saṃskṛta*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Nayī Dillī: Rājakamala Prakāśana, 2008); Madhu Kāṅkariyā, *Bītate Hue : [kahān̐ ṡaṅgraha]* (Nayī Dillī: Rājakamala Prakāśana, 2004); Madhu Kāṅkariyā, *--aura Anta Meṃ Īshū*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Nayī Dillī: Kitābaghara Prakāśana, 2006); Madhu Kāṅkariyā, *Bharī Dopaharī Ke Aṅdhere*, 1. saṃskaraṇa. (Noeḍā: Remādhava Pablikeśansa, 2007).

allusions, diaries, newspapers, and conventional novelistic discourse. She makes full use of the carnivalesque potential of novels. The novel as a genre allows Kankaria to move across lines of authority and subvert hierarchies. The rich heteroglossia of Calcutta informs the individual's identity and consciousness, as language diversity and demographic plurality populate the thoughts of the protagonist cum narrator.

In *Khule Gagan*, the consciousness of the protagonist becomes an analog of Calcutta's plurality of voices, which thinks in diverse registers and accents about issues of Marwari identity, otherness, and deterritorialization in Bengal. The poles of Bengaliness and Marwariness, Naxalism and Jainism, begin to dissolve in the first person narrator, Maṇi, in an almost inadvertent move towards a synthesis of Calcutta's extremes. Thereby the highly plural voice of the Marwari-Jain Calcuttan emerges from what had been a squarely Bengali voice. The narrative achieves this by examining the Naxalite legacy through a Jain consciousness and treating Jain practice through a Marxist lens.

Diversity versus homogeny is a motif that appears in Saraogi's and Khetan's work as well. One need only think of the corrupting and homogenizing consumerism of post-liberalized India that Kishore Bābū despairs of in *Kalikathā*, or Mādho and Pannālāl's bonhomie with laborers, and Soma's resentment of domestic insulation in *Pīlī Āndhī*. As deterritorialized people, Calcutta's Marwari fiction necessarily confronts diversity, otherness, and cultural identity. *Khule Gagan* not only tells a minor story of Calcutta, a *Via Bypass* story, as it were, but it attempts to offer another way of looking. While not explicitly mentioned in the novel, Maṇi gradually absorbs and adopts a Jain type of epistemology known as *anekāntatva*, after she is deeply moved (and confused) by her sister's initiation as a Jain nun.[3] In Jain philosophy, *anekāntatva* acknowledges the internal logic and intelligence of competing philosophical systems.[4] Scholars have referred to this as a type of relativism of knowledge (*syādavāda*) and a dialogical search for truth. Jayandra Soni explains that "Jaina thinkers drew from a common pool of ideas (like the assumption of suffering as a characteristic feature of human existence, and the knowledge of reality as crucial for liberation and the possibility of liberation), and they couched these ideas in accordance with their own ontology, metaphysics, theory of knowledge, and ethics."[5] It is a willingness to benefit from truthful insights of other philosophical traditions, for to deny another's claim to truth is to harbor pretensions towards omniscience. The multiple positions of *anekāntatva* become the cognitive strategy for Maṇi to hold several opposing positions at once – Gandhianism, Maoism, Jainism, etc. Although she never uses the term *anekāntatva*, it becomes Maṇi's process of cognition after she is inspired by the profound experience of her sister's Jain initiation.

Khule Gagan (like *Kalikathā*) privileges the many voices of Calcutta's streets; they appear as public texts where the flâneur may read forgotten histories. As the novel shows, the walls along every road in Calcutta bear highly stylized political graffiti that is an unending political conversation writ large.[6] Yet to see these histories and texts, the protagonist frequently seizes the 'telling' of the story, becoming at those moments the

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[3] For a moving account of a Jain Nun's life see 'The Nun's Tale' in Dalrymple, *Nine Lives*.
[4] Cort, "'Intellectual Ahiṃsā' Revisited."
[5] Jayandra Soni, "Basic Jaina Epistemology," *Philosophy East and West* 50, no. 3 (July 1, 2000): 367.
[6] Kāṅkariyā, *Khule Gagana Ke Lāla Sitāre*, 162.

narrator. This is a feature of Calcutta Marwari writing that insists on interventions (*hastakṣep*) in the narrative as a comment on the politics of representation. For in Bengal, the treatment of Marwaris in literature and film has been static and demonstrates the durability of a stereotype.[7] The act of writing itself develops as liberation struggle from a painful past and as an *aide à penser* for a complicated present. Through her encounters on the streets around Presidency College, Maṇi begins to see her home life through different eyes, a process which at first reproduces the stigmatization of popular attitudes towards Marwaris. However, through the process of writing and thinking, she develops a nuanced understanding of her Marwari identity and of differing ways of being in the world.

I will explore the context of the novel, beginning with Calcutta's relationship with communism and the role of the Bengali bhadralok in all political formations, before turning to how Marwaris and Jains fit into this world and how they have been framed as class enemies (a revitalization of previous forms of anti-Marwari discourse found in the *Marwari Ank* such as compradore, traitor, usurer, etc). Next I will briefly give a synopsis of the novel and how it is structured, after which I discuss how speech genres and heteroglossia in the novel serve to dialogize Jain and Naxal identity. The revolutionary language Maṇi receives from her lover Indra allows her to critique the circumstance of women in her community in a new way. Similarly, her unexpected interaction with Jain philosophy allows her to see the Naxalite legacy in a new light. This diversity of thought is realized through the act of writing because it is a space into which various discourses flow. Writing becomes, then, Maṇi's salvation and liberation, which she realizes along the way is her debt to Indra and the Naxalbari movement.

Calcutta and Communism

Calcutta's long relationship with communism is central to understanding the modern city; it is the context in which *Khule Gagan* is set. The well-known Bengali communist M. N. Roy founded the Communist Party of India (CPI) in 1920 in the Soviet Union. In the late 1920s and 1930s, the trade union movement in the Calcutta area was under the purview of the Communist Party of India and other leftist groups. Roy and Lenin's debate in the Second International regarding whether or not to collaborate with the Indian National Congress and nationalist bourgeoisie was never to be resolved within the CPI. This contributed to the schism that led to the formation of the left splinter party CPI (Marxist) in 1964.

Since then, the communist movement has gone through several incarnations, and the CPI(M)-led Left Front coalition of leftist parties held power in West Bengal from 1977 until 2011. The leadership was consistently the *bhadralok*, but there was an effort to 'declass' themselves according to historian Suranjan Das. "The greater appeal of the Communist over the Congress-Khilafat combination can be partly explained by the efforts of early Communists to declass themselves from their petty *bhadralok* background, and the dissemination of Communist ideology through propaganda literature

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[7] Examples abound in the arts of negative representations of Marwaris – from Agha Hashr's *Bilwa Mangal* (1919) in Parsi Theater to Satyajit Ray's covetous, Marwari villain Maganlal in *Joi Baba Felunath* (1979). For a detailed discussion of this trend see Mukherjee, *Elusive Terrain*.

and populist campaigns."[8] One of the most remarkable features of the ruling Left Front Government was its longevity. As Ross Mallick notes, "West Bengal has the longest ruling democratically elected communist government in world history. Since 1977 the Left Front has governed a population of 68 million, larger than Britain or France."[9]

In 1967, the United Front coalition came to power in West Bengal; the chief parties in the coalition were CPI(M) and the Bangla Congress. The Maoists within the CPI(M) did not support the coalition, therefore the centrists gradually took control of the party and marginalized the left and radical elements of the party.[10] This process eventually led to the creation of a new communist party. On Lenin's birthday, the 22nd of April 1969, the CPI(ML) was founded and the new party was officially announced by Kanu Sanyal from the Shahid Minar on May Day of the same year.[11] The Maoist, or CPI(ML), launched a peasant soviet in Naxalbari, with which began the *Naxalbari Legacy*, as Partha Chatterjee has called it.[12] Charu Majumdar, the movement's chief ideologue and General Secretary, wrote extensively about the revisionism in the party, taking aim at the CPI and the CPI(M). In retaliation, the CPI(M) leadership used police and paramilitary forces to wipe out the Maoists in West Bengal, therefore they had no Left opposition remaining and were able to rule West Bengal from the 1970s until their catastrophic defeat in 2011. Chatterjee writes (and Mallick concurs) that Naxalite "left[ist] deviation and adventurism have their social roots, and part of those roots lie in the organizational and programmatic deficiencies of the parties of the Left."[13] *Khule Gagan* is concerned with this precise moment of revolutionary consciousness in 1969-1970, and the intense violence that attended it.

The Badhralok and the Jains

Partha Chatterjee suggests that "Calcutta earned its reputation for political volatility in the early decades of this century when revolutionary nationalist groups began to carry out, with varying degrees of effectiveness, their secret plans of political assassination…"[14] Violent agitations in the 1960s and 70s contributed to Calcutta's reputation as a locus for radical political activity. For Chatterjee, the most crucial and unique characteristic of Calcutta's socio-political structure is the central importance of the *bhadralok* (upper-caste elite) in most major political formations. He writes that the "upper-caste intelligentsia were to be found in leading roles in every contending party – the ruling party and the party of opposition, parties of *status quo* and parties of change."[15] The cadres of the communist party were largely made up of the *bhadralok* and educated

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[8] Suranjan Das, *Communal Riots in Bengal, 1905-1947* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 23.
[9] Ross Mallick, *Development Policy of a Communist Government: West Bengal Since 1977* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1.
[10] Mallick argues that this was part of a larger trend in the Global left which found its most memorable articulation in the Sino-Soviet tensions starting in the late 1950s and reaching its peak in 1969, but continuing in various ways until the 1980s.
[11] Ray, Subhas, and Zachariah, "Presidency College, Calcutta: An Unfinished History," 365.
[12] Partha Chatterjee, *The Present History of West Bengal: Essays in Political Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
[13] Ibid., 87.
[14] Ibid., 183.
[15] Ibid, 81.

refugees from the erstwhile East Pakistan. These people were no longer tied to the land nor were they tied to industry which was largely in Marwari hands.[16] The protagonist of *Khule Gagan*, Maṇi, and her love interest, Indra, come from these radically different worlds of the Marwari Jain merchant milieu and the Bengali *bhadralok* revolutionary.

From the second half of the nineteenth century the *bhadralok* dominated practically every aspect of public life in Calcutta. Their strength was in education and knowledge of English, which gave them a massive competitive advantage in colonial Bengal's economic and political milieu. Nineteenth century Calcutta-based *bhadralok* political associations eventually flowed into the early Indian National Congress. Even the so-called terrorist organizations in the early twentieth century were mostly populated by the high-caste *bhadralok* because of the level of education and well-articulated political thinking, as well as a contempt for the political immaturity of the "masses." By way of two major partitions of Bengal (1905 and 1947) many of the elite Hindus were dispossessed of their land and from any material interest in the land. Therefore, political issues regarding land and cultivation did not concern the *bhadralok* in a material sense. Thus detachment from land-owning class interests enabled the *bhadralok* to form alliances with the rural masses in terms of radical agrarian reform. In the 1930s a new generation of *bhadralok* youth and students started to participate in new types of vanguardism. After the 1947 partition of Bengal, a massive flow of displaced refugees came into Calcutta and its suburbs. For this reason the *bhadralok* once again became indispensable for the rise of new political powers, particularly the radical parties.[17]

The counterpart to this novel's radical Bengali world is the Marwari Jain merchant world. A major portion of the novel considers Jain practice and family life at the level of narrative. Maṇi's family are Oswal Jains and members of a *Swetambara* sect called *Terāpanth*. The sect was founded by a monk called Bhikṣu (1726-1803) in the desert region of Marwar in Rajasthan. Jainologist Paul Dundas has remarked that the harsh nature of the landscape imparted something of itself to the uncompromising and vigorous Jainism which Bhikṣu preached. The movement began in response to what he saw as increasingly diluted practice and revisionism in the other sects (particularly *Sthānakavāsīs*). "Terāpanth has remained Marwari in ethos and most of its adherents are members of the Bīsā Osvāl merchant caste…"[18] The strict adherence to doctrine, and the aversion to revisionism, is an important parallel the novel draws between Jainism and Naxalism. The importance of one's standing amongst kin or comrades, the individual in the collectivity, renders another set of meaningful structural similarities.

As we have seen, merchants, Hindu and Jain alike, require a good reputation and prestige to take advantage of ready-made networks of capital, credit, and social relationships based on religious, regional, and caste origin.[19] This had direct bearing on the behavior of the lay Jain community and placed significant restrictions on the lives of

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[16] Ray, *Fields of Protest*, 50.
[17] Chatterjee, *The Present History of West Bengal*, 81.
[18] Dundas, *The Jains*, 255–256.
[19] Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*; Dundas, *The Jains*, 196. For a further discussion of *sākh* see chapter one of this dissertation.

men and women. As Dundas explains, reputation and credibility (referred to as *sākh, ābrū,* or *pratiṣṭhā*) are based on

> observable correct behavior, itself regarded as an index of inner piety, which had to take the form of the organization of one's life and those of one's immediate relatives in accordance with certain essentially conservative principles. These would include lack of ostentation or scandal in the conduct of private and commercial affairs, strict vegetarianism and temperance, *avoidance of overt involvement in political matters, carefully regulated marriage alliances*, and a cautious approach to business enterprises…active support of the religious sect…[20]

The protagonist of the novel is a young woman emerging precisely from this milieu. One must take into account the severity and strictness of Maṇi's community to fully appreciate the radical and transgressive nature of her involvement with a Bengali revolutionary and what the communal discovery of such an act would mean to her family. The process at first makes her critical and even disdainful of her community, yet as she matures she develops a sophisticated and nuanced appreciation for the philosophical complexity and tolerance at the core of Jain principles, even if these principles are absent in many of the followers.

The Novel: Synopsis

Madhu Kankaria uses several types of discourse and speech genres in her novels, even more so after *Khule Gagan*. The protagonist cum narrator appears to be conducting very personal research and the voices and languages surrounding the objects of her research penetrate her consciousness throughout the novel. Kankaria's style has an element of reportage that is akin to Gonzo journalism in that it does not make claims to objectivity and interjects (*hastakśep*) the 'fiction writer's' opinions and experiences throughout the narrative. *Kalikathā* and *Pīlī Āndhī* also employ interventions as a narrative strategy, also referring to these ruptures as *hastakśep*. The narrative style moves among various discourses - from journalism, ethnography, history, diary, political propaganda, and novel. This cacophony is the novel's heteroglossia, as Bakhtin notes,

> The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized. The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behavior…languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve a specific sociopolitical purposes of the day…"[21]

The speech genres operating in the novel place it historically and geographically in Calcutta of the Naxalite era – it is what develops the novels space-time, or chronotope. It is also the basis of the dialogism that is the characteristic "epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia."[22] While the novel is focalized through Maṇi, the character zones of the other main characters are voiced in her mind.

Maṇi is a 45-year-old Marwari Jain woman who teaches in a school and is single. Twenty-six years after the fact (mid 1990s), she is trying to piece together and write the

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[20] Dundas, *The Jains*, 196. (my emphasis)
[21] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 262–263.
[22] Ibid., 426.

story of the Naxalite movement and the disappearance of her lover Indra. The basic frame is a series of interviews with a former Bengali Naxalite (Gobind Da) that are punctuated with flashbacks to the late 1960s and early 1970s. Gobind Da had been a central figure in the movement; he operated a printing press where the party published its ideological writings and propaganda pamphlets. The fictionalized printing press *Yugvrati* (renunciant, or vow-taker of the age) became the nerve center connecting the various ideologues in the movement, making for Gobind's privileged position in the organization. Gobind's account of the movement and the violence that accompanies it causes Maṇi to recall her days at Presidency College and her home life during the period. The narrative reconstructs the love story of Maṇi and Indra through her diaries and memories, against the backdrop of rapidly intensifying political violence in West Bengal. Maṇi recalls that in those *red hot* days her family was intensely insulated, steeped as it was in Jain tradition. As she reconsiders those years, Mani cannot avoid juxtaposing the seemingly polar opposites of Naxalism and Jainism. On the level of narrative, however, the opposite poles look more like two extremes of disillusionment, rejection, and the opting-out of mundane hypocrisies. Gradually, the speech genres and heteroglossia of the worlds of the Naxalite and the Jain begin to merge, describe, and critique one another. This process complicates the construction and location of identity – everything Maṇi voices is marked by her encounter with Bengal and her Marwari heritage. The vocabularies and utterances of the Bengali Naxal-Violent-Political and the Marwari Jain-non-violent-apolitical fill and cross-pollinate Maṇi's experience of both worlds.

The first chapter is called *A Meeting Consigned to Death/Time (Kāl)*. Speaking to Maṇi in a mixture of Bengali and Hindi (*bangālī miśrit hindī*), Babul Da, her Naxal contact, leads her through "a little historical alley emerging from Calcutta's Hathibagan District … Sikdar Bagān Street … whose history lives only in the memory of its inhabitants. In those hot days 1970 – 1972 the Naxalites called this street *Lāl Galī* (Red Alley)."[23] Across the street from the house is a neglected old memorial of the revolutionary Jatin Das (1904-1929) – small, dusty, and covered in pigeon droppings. The Calcutta streets are "profoundly, intensely etched by the flow of historical time, by traces and signs of time's passage, by markers of the era."[24] The road or street in the history of the novel is an important space of encounter and plurality, particularly in terms of the local exotic, as opposed to the foreign exotic. As Bakhtin has shown the "road is always one that passes through *familiar territory*…it is the *sociohistorical heterogeneity* of one's own country that is revealed and depicted."[25] The 'Red Alley' is the site of layered history that Maṇi has come to discover. It is a history that only lives in the inhabitants (*bāśindā*) of the alley. The desire to know and to uncover mysteries and lost narratives becomes existentially significant to Maṇi; she cannot continue her own story until she completes Indra's.

Gobind Da, the former Naxalite, lives in a modest home with old lattice windows and a staircase that descends into the past.[26] Gobind has a small printing press in his home from which he once produced Naxalite propaganda literature. Gobind's account of

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[23] Kāṅkariyā, *Khule Gagana Ke Lāla Sitāre*, 9.
[24] Bakhtin, 244.
[25] Bakhtin, 245. (Emphasis in the original).
[26] Kāṅkariyā, *Khule Gagana Ke Lāla Sitāre*, 9.

the Naxalite legacy is almost completely focused on violence; it is a violence he presents as the justified cleansing of the class enemy: हम उसे हिंसा नहीं, वर्गशत्रु का सफ़ाया कहते थे – we didn't call this violence, we called it cleansing of the class enemy.[27] He narrates to Maṇi numerous stories about tribals and Dalits taking righteous revenge and killing landlords and moneylenders – some from her own community. He speaks at length about the severe state response involving warrantless arrests, new innovations in torture, and hundreds of murders and encounters. However, Gobind makes no mention of Indra, forcing Maṇi, as the *kathā-lekhikā*, to commandeer the story. Maṇi addresses the reader and explains that she will turn to Indra since Gobind Da has not. Gobind, in a narrative sense, cannot move beyond the violence, which is not the story that Maṇi has come to hear (or tell). She, on the other hand, cannot move past her love for Indra, even 26 years later.

The narrative turns to her diary: Presidency College – March, 1970. The love story begins in classrooms and at the bus stop on College Street. Maṇi is forced to confront two worlds: a home that she characterizes as orthodox and conservative (*sanātanī, rūḍhivādī mārvāṛī parivār*) and Presidency College (a site of knowledge, revolution, and love). However, the velocity of the revolution outpaces the love story as Indra gets increasingly pulled into campus and then party politics. He goes underground and is presumed to have gone to Dhanbad to organize the coalminers. (Perhaps this is an allusion to the Dhanbad coalminers' insurrection in *Pīlī Āndhī*; Indra occasionally refers to the Naxalite movement as an *āndhī* or powerful dust storm). Students are disappearing and the college is closed *sin die*. In the midst of all this violence, Maṇi tries to find another way to be part of the world, to be a force for change. She seeks the guidance of her upstairs neighbor, a middle-aged Hindi journalist called Navalkishore. The Hindi press (or literature) always appears a progressive force in Marwari literature. Navalkishore persuades Maṇi to travel with him and his wife to visit Alok Bhagat, a friend who runs an organization for the empowerment of *ādivāsīs* (tribals) in Bihar. Alok shares Indra's idealism and goals, except that he is a self proclaimed Gandhian. He makes an impression on Maṇi with regard to her attitudes towards violence and as a counterpart (alternate interlocutor) for Indra. Upon returning to Calcutta, Maṇi is thrilled and grateful to see Indra once more, but it will be for the last time. The bloodshed is in the papers everyday and young mutilated bodies appear all over West Bengal. Indra disappears for good and Maṇi realizes that the revolutionary storm has passed and its spine is broken. She finds that in the midst of the suffering, she has emerged a communist and is informally initiated by accepting and harboring seditious, revolutionary literature, her last tie to Indra.

The violence and sacrifice of the revolutionaries in West Bengal is juxtaposed to the events in Maṇi's home. She turns her attention inward to the lives of her family members – particularly her elder sister Pārasī. Pārasī's face gets burned and disfigured from an accident with a petromax lamp. When she comes home from the hospital, she learns that her imminent wedding has been called off. Devastated and disillusioned, Pārasī turns to spirituality; Maṇi tries in vain to convince her to go back to school. Yet Pārasī decides to take initiation (*dīkṣā*) as a Jain *sādhvī* (nun). Maṇi struggles against her

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[27] Ibid., 19.

sister's decision until the last moment before the initiation. Pārasī convinces Maṇi that she has no affection for the world, rather she feels detachment (*vairāgya*); she has realized her non-attachment (*aparigraha*), and she can observe the *mahāvrata* (the great sacrifices required). Although she remains critical of *dīkṣā*, Maṇi recognizes that Pārasī is truly a *mumukṣu*, one who is abstracted from human passions and striving for emancipation. Meanwhile, Maṇi receives her B.A. and her M.A. and finds a teaching job. Her mother and brother tell her that her degrees and political activities have ruined her for the marriage market, alienating her from the community. The Emergency (25 June 1975 – 21 March 1977, a 21-month period in which Indira Gandhi ruled by decree) pulls her back into politics as she joins the movement to free political prisoners.

The final section of the novel is in the present (late 1990s) and in the form of an afterward called the *uttārddh* (second half, here postscript). Govind Da appears a full two years after their last interview. He has information about a revolutionary poet living in Karimpur who shared a cell with Indra during the last 28 days of his life. Still paranoid from years of prison and torture, Govind runs off as soon as he has delivered the news. Alok Bhagat returns from Bihar to accept an award for his work with the *ādivāsīs*. Maṇi and Alok begin a relationship which allows her to finally move on after Indra. The novel closes the night before Maṇi leaves for Karimpur for one final interview with a man who can tell her about Indra's last days.

Refractions and Oppositions

While *Khule Gagan ke Lāl Sitāre* is thematically quite different from *Pīlī Āndhī* and *Kalikathā*, it is still concerned with the Marwari place, image, and identity within a Calcutta cosmos. Kankaria is not as concerned with questions of migration and the earlier stages of Marwari establishment in Calcutta. She devotes hardly two pages to the topic of Marwari migration and arrival. Yet, despite the brevity, she manages to establish a very different Marwari trajectory than that which exists in the novels of Saraogi and Khetan. Significantly, Maṇi's father is an active congress worker who gives up his shop and works for someone else. Nevertheless, the novel does attend to certain tropes and binaries that remain unresolved in the Marwari community: the political and the apolitical; the home and the street (private/public); the community and the individual. But it is more keenly focused on what these themes mean for women. The Marwari Jain themes explored in this novel are focalized through Maṇi and shaped by the speech genres of student militancy and revolution. Maṇi's encounter and love relationship with Indra is at once liberating and devastating – an analog of the Naxalite movement.

The narrative uses Naxalite speech to refract and extract meaning from its seeming opposite: Marwari-Jainism. The reverse process also takes place by way of intermixing speech genres that make it possible to read each tradition in the logic of the other. On the level of language, both systems begin to dialogize and acquire the potential to condition one another. The ideological battles in Maṇi's consciousness lead to a type of Jain dialectics that allow for the co-existence of multiple perspectives on reality; the novel is functionally an analog for this type of comprehensive epistemology, for as Bakhtin claims any "unitariness is relative to the overpowering force of heteroglossia,

and thus dialogism."[28] In spite of her opposition to many Jain practices, Maṇi unconsciously starts using the language of Jain epistemology to consider Naxalism, Jainism, and perspectives in between. The respective provenances of Jain asceticism and Naxalism make for another set of oppositions: Jains in Calcutta are largely Marwari and to a lesser extent Gujarati. The main ideologues of the Naxalite legacy are Bengali – as are all the Naxal characters in the novel. The relationship and tension between Marwari and Bengali is, as we have seen, a preoccupation for Marwari writers in Calcutta. As part of the growing process, young Calcuttan Marwaris come to see themselves through Bengali eyes at some stage. The novel operates by refracting oppositions, or counterparts, through religious and political speech genres.

An example of the religious speech genre is Gobind's small publication and press called *Yugvratī* – a name that invokes the idea of sacrifice in a religious idiom such as vows and fasts voluntarily undertaken – yet historicized (*yug*) to belong to an era. Indra was a contributor to this paper, which links him to Gobind. *Yugvrati* is most likely a reference to the *Deshbrati Prakashan* – the publishing organ of the CPI(ML). Historically, the police raid on these premises marks the moment the movement goes underground. Gobind's discussion of Naxalite violence repeatedly emphasizes a rhetoric of purification, atonement, and liberation. Indeed, when he speaks of the Naxalite program, he refers to the establishment of a liberated margin (*muktāncal kī sthāpnā*). He describes the execution of a landlord for his 'evil deeds' (*duṣkṛtya*) and crimes against Dalits and landless farmers. The Santhalī tribals chant "death, death" and sacrifice the landlord. Gobind tells Maṇi about Dilip Biswas who killed a moneylender in Medinipur. The police catch him, pluck his eyes out, and shoot him just as he manages to cry out, "Naxalbari Lal Salaam" (Naxabari Red Salute). The anecdote causes Maṇi to think of Biswas's act in terms of religious devotion, as even his name means belief. She involuntarily thinks of this commitment as quasi-religious; she recalls a story she heard at a literary conference about a Buddhist *bhikśuk* who writes a 5,000 page biography of the Buddha. Each time he collects enough money to publish the tome, he gives the money away to charity. He believes that to not do so would make every word in his book meaningless (24).

In the Naxalite context, this level of intense commitment to core revolutionary values, sacrifice, and armed struggle is the concern of nearly all of Charu Majumdar's (1918-1972) writing. As the chief ideologue of the Naxalite movement, he labeled any compromise or departure from revolutionary Marxist-Leninist doctrine as revisionism – a term akin to heresy in the Maoist world.[29] The words of Majumdar and Mao appear throughout the novel as dogma, and begin to appear to Maṇi as an unwavering orthodoxy. Gobind's account colors the concept of revolutionary consciousness in a quasi religious hue.

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[28] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 426.
[29] Charu Majumdar, *The Eight Historic Articles Against Revisionism* (Kolkata: Deshbrati Prakashan, 2004); Charu Majumdar, *Collected Writings of Comrade Charu Mazumdar* (Kolkata: Deshbrati Prakashan, 2004).

ज़रूरी है कि व्यक्ति में क्रांति चेतना के साथ-ही-साथ अध्यात्मिक उत्थान भी होता है। एक काल खंड में आकर एक नैतिक जीवन जीने लगे पर निरंतरता बनी रहे उसके लिए ज़रूरी है कि उसका अध्यात्मिक उत्थान भी साथ-साथ होता रहे।[30]

It is necessary that within the individual a spiritual uplift take place along with the revolutionary consciousness. One reaches a stage when to live a consistently ethical life it becomes necessary to undergo spiritual uplift.

Gobind is referring to a post-revolutionary period in which the survivors would have to heal from the period of intense violence. It is not clear what he means by spiritual regeneration, but it seems that he cannot escape thinking of this healing in quasi-religious terms, similar to Chandragupta Maurya or the mythical Prince Bahubali's turn to Jainism to atone for the violence inherent in their worldly conquest and empires.

The oppositional character of Jainism and Naxalism comes to represent points on a broad spectrum of the Calcutta cosmos; Maṇi thinks of them as poles (*dhruv*). Indra gives her the *Communist Manifesto* and Mao's *Little Red Book* as gifts, which she reads in a ghostly room illuminated by a newly installed tube light, while the rest of Calcutta enjoys its most celebrated religious holiday, Durga Puja. In the process, she gains a revolutionary vocabulary that allows her to reflect on her own community in new ways:

उस रात देर तक वह इन्द्र द्वारा भेंट की गई माओत्से तुंग की रेडबुक और मार्क्स-एंगेल्स का पचास पृष्ठोंवाला कम्युनिस्ट घोषणापत्र पढ़ती रही थी। उस नीली-श्वेत रोशनी पहली बार उसकी चेतना में एक सर्वथा नया क्षितिज एवं नया शब्दकोष उगा था। सर्वहारा, समानता, वर्गशत्रु, सामूहिकता में विश्वास जैसे शब्दोंवाला वह शब्दकोष।[31]

That night she poured over Mao's *Red Book* and Marx-Engel's 50-page *Communist Manifesto* that Indra had given her. In this blue-white light, for the first time in her consciousness a new horizon emerged and a new vocabulary took root. *Sarvahārā, samāntā, vargaśatru, sāmūhiktā* (proletariat, equality, class-enemy, collectivism) – in such words a lexicon emerged that was akin to a vocabulary of belief .

Maṇi first thinks of revolutionary vocabulary in a religious idiom – as articles of faith. Initially it is Indra who frames Marwaris as class enemies, but it is Maṇi who, recalling Indra's words, makes the connection: "Every era has its own definition of class enemy, which constantly changes. Once it was the British, today it is the country's corrupt leaders and officials, capitalists, black marketers, futures traders, speculators, and profiteers."[32] In Calcutta, the last five types of class enemy (namely capitalists, black marketeers, futures traders, speculators, and profiteers) would certainly evoke the image of the Marwari, for since the end of the 19th century, it was they who were associated with futures trading, commodity speculation, and (war and famine) profiteering. [33]

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[30] Kāṅkariyā, *Khule Gagana Ke Lāla Sitāre*, 34.
[31] Ibid., 69.
[32] Ibid.
[33] See Chapter one of this dissertation, and for a discussion of the legislation documenting these activities see Birla, *Stages of Capital*.

Maṇi's exposure to Indra's world and student militancy initiates a self-critique of Marwaris and Jainism. Through an initially simplistic lens, she begins to think of her community as thoughtless, stagnant, and self-centered: *kaisā vicārvihīn, rukā huā, ātmakendrit samāj!*[34] She finds it surprising that no one questions the point of Jain practice or its aloofness from the world:

यहाँ जीवन के केंद्र में अहिंसा, अति सूक्ष्म अहिंसा, त्याग, तपस्या और जाप। … किसी को यह बात परेशान नहीं करती कि इन महान त्यागों, निषिद्धों और कष्टों का सामाजिक एवं राष्ट्रीय सरोकार क्या है? … वे परम पुरसती निश्चिन्तता से धर्मगीत गा सकते थे, उस समय भी जब पूरा कलकत्ता नक्सलवादियों के लिए कत्लगाह बना हुआ था।[35]

> The center of life is nonviolence, extremely subtle nonviolence, sacrifice, austerities, and prayer … no one is bothered about what the social or national relevance of these noble sacrifices, prohibitions, and austerities may be … they can sing their holy songs in supremely leisurely nonchalance while Calcutta is turned into a slaughter house for the Naxalites.

Whether or not Jainism was socially purposive had previously not been a concern for Maṇi, yet increasingly she becomes critical of her community's insulation and detachment. She develops a self loathing that is articulated in Indra's Marxist speech genre of class enemies and the false consciousness of religions. She thinks to herself that while Jains take great pains to avoid harming microorganisms, they wound society through "deception, black marketing, and embezzling public funds."[36] It is Maṇi, and not Indra, who maps a class enemy status squarely on Jains (and all Marwaris). But this also because her thoughts are not a monologue, rather they experience an 'angle of refraction' as they pass through the emotional structure created by Indra's character zone. But this is an early stage in Maṇi's thinking, when she hasn't yet learned to embrace the complexity of multiple perspectives. As she matures, her mind (re)turns to a type of Jain dialectics of many-pointedness (*anekāntātva*) in which she can see the legitimacy of different ways of being in the world. Because of the three decade split in temporality in the novel, Maṇi is able to even dialogize with earlier and later versions of her self.

Women, Individuality, and Collectivity

After the second interview Maṇi, sometimes called the *kathāvācak* (narrator), journeys to her own past (*safar atīt kī or*) and quotes Tolstoy: "Life is neither a pleasure-ground, nor a mine of tears, it is a sensibility."[37] Maṇi's sensibility is profoundly connected to Indra and her love for him:

कथावाचक का निश्चित मत है कि इस संवेदना को महसूस करने की शुरुआत हर जीवन में तभी से शुरू हो जब वह अपने जीवन के प्रथम असफल प्रेम से गुजरता है।[38]

> It is the narrator's firm opinion that in every life one begins to experience this sensibility with the passing of one's initial unsuccessful attempt at love.

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[34] Kāṅkariyā, *Khule Gagana Ke Lāla Sitāre*, 132.
[35] Ibid., 133.
[36] Ibid., 134.
[37] Ibid., 40.
[38] Ibid.

Maṇi's life is stuck at that moment due in part to the circumstances of Indra's disappearance and death. Maṇi is identified as the narrator, and yet there is another narrator on an extradiagetic, narratological level, commenting on this Maṇi. This first level narrator knows that writing about Indra will help liberate Maṇi from the rut she has been in, but the intradiagetic narrator (Maṇi) is not yet conscious of the purpose of her writing. This is when the narrative moves back to Presidency College 1970, where Maṇi falls in love with Indra.

The young Maṇi cannot find a way to reconcile the two worlds she inhabits at home and at Presidency. She talks to Indra in her head trying to explain that her home has the same policy regarding the role of women as the Third Reich: Kinder, Küche, Kirche (children, church, kitchen).[39] She creates a political metaphor of the impossibility of their love by linking her family with the fascist extreme right, while Indra clearly represents the extreme left. Maṇi attempts to explain the complexity of defiance for a Marwari girl in a speech genre that is influenced and populated by her imaginary interlocutor – Indra. She is the first girl in her family who has the good fortune to go to college and sit in a classroom with boys. She says to Indra in her mind:

> हम जैसी लड़कियाँ प्रेम नहीं कर सकतीं क्योंकि हमारा प्रेम करना घरवालों के साथ विश्वासघात होगा।...इससे हमारे समर्थक पक्ष का मनोबल चूर हो जाएगा और घात में बैठा विरोधी पक्ष अपनी तलवार भांजेगा और जिसका परिणाम मुझसे बड़ी बहन एवं आनेवाली स्त्री पीढ़ी को भुगतना पड़ेगा। जो खुली हवा सदियों बाद हमारी पीढ़ी को मिली है–उसे अंधड़ कैसे बनने दूँ? मुझे अपनी भावनाओं पर ढक्कन लगाना ही होगा।[40]

> Girls like us cannot love, it would be *treachery* to our families … and from this our *sympathizers* will be *demoralized* and our *opposition* waits in *ambush* and will brandish its *sword*. The consequences will be borne by me, my elder sister, and the coming generation of women. How can I create a storm with the first bit of fresh air we have had after centuries. I have to put a lid on my feelings.

When thinking of Indra, Maṇi's language overflows with Indra's vocabulary of Naxalite or guerilla warfare: treachery, demoralization, sympathizer, opposition, ambush, and swords. She then confronts the crisis of solidarity with her sisters; her defiance would doom them as well. In the end, she has to annihilate her own desires in the interest of her sisters and women. Maṇi examines the stifling security of her family:

> एक ज़बरदस्त परम्परावादी निम्न-मध्यवर्गीय मारवाड़ी जैन परिवार की पैदाइश वह, जहाँ परिवार को सिर्फ़ एक ही विश्वास चलाता है - सामूहिकता का विश्वास। जहाँ कुछेक अपवादों को छोड़कर नियमपूर्वक प्रत्येक मैं - हम में विसर्जित हो जाता है। और जहाँ इसी प्रकार पूरी व्यवस्था को शॉक एबज़ार्बर बना दिया जाता है कि परिवार के प्रत्येक व्यक्ति के जीवन की समस्या का सामना परिवार का सामूहिक व्यक्तित्व करे। जहाँ व्यक्तिगत स्वतंत्रता कितनी मूल्यवान है, इसका अनुमान इसी बात से लगाया जा सकता है कि पुत्र भी कितनी संख्या आगे तक वंश-वृद्धि करे - जैसे व्यक्तिगत निर्णय भी माँ-चाची की सम्मिलित समितियाँ करती हैं। जहाँ पिता ही नहीं, भाई और

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[39] Ibid., 8.
[40] Ibid., 42.

भतीजे तक की पीढ़ी पुत्री को भेंट करना अपना कर्तव्य ही नहीं पुण्य कर्म मानकर चलती है।
...वहां विद्रोह और प्रतिवाद के सारे झंझावातों के रास्ते सदियों के अनुभवसिद्ध सधे हाथों द्वारा
लगभग बंद कर दिए जाते हैं। जहाँ डूबने का डर किसी को भी नहीं रहता है क्योंकि सभी पैर
एक ठोस धरती के ऊपर खड़े रहते हैं पर तैरने का आनंद भी नदारद, क्योंकि तैरने का आनंद भी
वहीं लिया जा सकता है जब पाँव कहीं टिके न हों।[41]

> A stridently traditional, lower-middle class Marwari Jain family, where the family has but one belief – the belief in collectivity (*sāmūhiktā*), where with some exception every 'I' is regularly dissolved into the 'we'. The entire system has as its shock absorber that any individual's personal life problem must confront the family's collective personality/subjectivity (*sāmūhik vyaktitva*) … the value of personal freedom can be estimated by the fact that mothers and aunts convene *joint committees* to make even very personal decisions regarding the propagation of the family line. Where men give women away as gifts, even the brothers and nephews consider this more than a duty but a sacred rite … where paths of resistance and opposition have been more or less shut down through centuries of experience. Where no one has the fear of drowning because everyone has their feet on terra firma, but the bliss of swimming is absent, because the bliss of swimming can only be when the feet would not be fixed anywhere.

In this passage Maṇi does not return to militant language, rather it sounds more like a stifling structure of committees and regulations of the *politburo.* As she indicates later in the novel, *sāmūhiktā* (collectivity) is also part of the new vocabulary she extracts from reading Marx, Engels, and Mao.[42] Maṇi is aware of the debate regarding individuality and collectivity that Indra engages with as a Naxalite. There is a shared vocabulary of individual sacrifice (Naxal *yugvrat* and Jain *anuvrat* and *mahavrat*) in both contexts. Also on the level of language, the "I" dissolved into the "we" is a typical speech pattern of the type of Hindi used by women in Marwari homes in Calcutta, and in much of the Eastern Hindi belt.

The destabilization that Indra offers would alienate her from the safety of her family; it is the promise of freedom and danger – the bliss of swimming. Maṇi writes poetically about the blissful other-worldly state of love. She describes the state as an ecstasy that is more than she can manage or resist at the age of eighteen. Indra and Maṇi start leaving campus together to go to the coffee house or take walks. He gives her a book that appears to be Gorky's *Mother*. Maṇi imagines Indra as Pavel and herself as Pavel's lover Sasha. This moment of meta-literature allows Maṇi to imagine a revolutionary world that could unite the radical worker Pavel and the landlord's daughter, Sasha. Her dream is shattered when Gangābāī (Maṇi's mother) appears and scolds her for forgetting about a scheduled twelve-hour recitation of the *Namokar Mantra* (the most important and auspicious mantra of Jainism). Maṇi has to conceal *Mother* from her mother, ending her fantasy of a world of possibilities.

Maṇi refers to the power of speech genres regarding women's complicity in patriarchy – her mother Gangābāī is an exemplar of this phenomenon:

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[41] Ibid., 42–43.
[42] Ibid., 69.

हर अन्याय करनेवाली माँ स्वयं अन्याय का शिकार हो चुकी रहती है। शोषित होते-होते स्वयं जब वह परिवार की पालनहार बनती है तो स्वयं शोषक वर्ग के साथ मिलकर शोषक की ही भाषा बोलने लगती है।...यहाँ समाज व्यक्ति के लिए नहीं है - व्यक्ति समाज के लिए स्वाहा हो रहा है।[43]

> Every persecuting mother has already been the prey of such persecution. She has been oppressed herself. Yet when she takes charge of the household, she joins the exploitative class (*śoṣak varg*) and begins to speak the very language of the exploiters (*śoṣak kī hī bhāṣā*)…society is not for the individual, the individual is for society, the individual is a burnt offering (*swāhā*).

Terms like 'exploitative class' give Maṇi a way to think about the family structure as class society, and frame her gendered struggle in the rhetoric of class struggle. She uses the revolutionary discourse to frame patriarchal power in the family as an exploitative class. In the same passage Maṇi turns to Mao to think about the cyclical oppression in her community. When Gangābāī learns that a local girl has run off with a Muslim boy, an incident that has a profound influence on her thoughts about Maṇi's marriage prospects, the narrator quotes Mao to say that it is easier to teach the illiterate and uneducated than the poorly educated or misinformed because you don't have to disabuse the illiterate or make them unlearn anything. Maṇi cannot imagine a way for her community to unlearn its patterns; the pattern of oppression reproduces itself. In Maṇi's family, as elsewhere in her community, it has been women in particular who have maintained the patriarchal status quo.

Maṇi's father, Amarnath, is a progressive man but passive character. He was born in Rajasthan in 1907 and came to Calcutta when he was still a boy. He was very impressed by Gandhi and became an active Congress member. He does not stay aloof of politics as is the Marwari stereotype and a theme in other novels about Marwaris. A series of disillusionments ending in Gandhi's death lead Amarnath to withdraw from active engagement in politics. He gives up his shop and takes up working for someone else – not a prestigious (*pratiṣṭhājanak*) choice in Marwari circles as Gangābāī disparagingly points out, placing it just above begging. Maṇi and her father have similar personalities and status in the family. The narrative characterizes them in a language that reflects the state of West Bengal's economy: "The role Maṇi and her father play in the joint family is akin to the clearly moribund domestic micro-industries of multinational companies" (समक्ष मरियल घरेलू लघु उद्योगों की होती है).[44] The debates and disciplinary terminology she encounters in the Economics Department of Presidency colors the way she sees her home life — she is moribund, unproductive, and micro within a massive industrial complex. But like her other initial conclusions they are still one-sided.

Disillusionment and Initiations (*Dīkṣā*)

The function of setting Jain-asceticism and Naxalism side by side in the novel is not so much to highlight their similarities or differences, but to think about the origins of such heterodox and radical departures from the mainstream. These massive gestures of total renunciation or far left revolutionary violence represent an "irreducible nonverbal

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[43] Ibid., 58.
[44] Ibid., 75.

dimension of suffering."[45] The narrative engages with Jainism and Naxalism as discourse communities that shape and constrain the articulation of suffering. In Maṇi's consciousness, the moral and discursive communities start to overlap and interact. This process complicates the narrow and solemn sources of suffering such as class, patriarchy, desire, attachment.

Three characters undergo significant initiations in the novel: Indra (Naxalite, Central Committee), Maṇi (Communism, Love, and Communal Opting-Out), and Pārasī (Swetambara Jain *dīkṣā*). Indra's initiation is first, though we do not actually see much of his initiation into radical politics, but its location is critical. Presidency College in the late 1960s served as a training ground for radicals. Aside from the Derozians more than a century earlier, it was this generation that gave Presidency its radical reputation.[46] The initiation began in the student Hostel and a politicization of the student body into unions. Indra's involvement in student politics seamlessly transitioned into party politics. His comrades tell Maṇi that he has left the classroom to join the class-war. He has been elected to the central committee and become thereby a highly prized catch for the police.[47] It is at this point that Indra has to go underground and leave Maṇi and the world behind. His contributions to *Yugvrat*, his bodily sacrifice, and devotion place his Naxal activities in a quasi-religious idiom. Like a renunciant he forsakes all relationship with his loved ones. His torture and murder take on a vocabulary martyrdom; Gobind da tells Maṇi about cruel, perverted tortures with cryptic names like the *Hyderabadi goli* (the victim is sodomized with an iron rod), or the *carakhī* (inverted suspension from a ceiling fan while the face is beaten toothless).[48] For Gobind, every Naxalite that he talks about in the interviews goes through this bodily torture as a rite, always confirming his faith in the end with a declaration at the moment before death, "Naxalbari lāl Salām." Maṇi's quest, to write Indra's story and particularly his last moments, is an attempt to recover the narrative of his initiation into a league of martyrs.

The narrative pays far more attention to Pārasī's *dīkṣā* and the Marwari-Jain milieu, even though the title suggests that *Khule Gagan ke Lāl Sitāre*'s agenda would focus on the Naxalite portion of the story. Pārasī's *dīkṣā* is focalized through Maṇi, even though at the time it is not clear to her how this initiation will color her world-view. Pārasī's renunciation and initiation is also attended by violence on her body – during a power outage thirty percent of her face is severely burned by a petromax lantern, resulting in the unceremonious cancelation of her wedding. Maṇi tries to convince Pārasī that she should turn her attention to learning and studying; she still has value as a woman and human being. Maṇi thinks of Indra's thoughts on beauty as something that one does to bring beauty into the life of another.[49] Yet Pārasī is drawn to the *Upāsrā* where the Jain

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[45] David B. Morris, "About Suffering: Voice, Genre, and Moral Community," *Daedalus* 125, no. 1 (January 1, 1996): 27.

[46] Ray, Subhas, and Zachariah, "Presidency College, Calcutta: An Unfinished History"; Samaren Roy, *Calcutta: Society and Change 1690-1990* (iUniverse, 2005). Henry Derozio (1809-1831) inspired a large following of students at the Hindu College (later Presidency) to think independently and question all their traditions. One of the first acts of defiance was against the taboo on eating beef. Derozio encouraged his students to write and debate on topics from women's emancipation to British imperialism.

[47] Kāṅkariyā, *Khule Gagana Ke Lāla Sitāre*, 80.

[48] Ibid., 28–29.

[49] Ibid., 125–126.

Sadhus and Sadhvis live during monsoon. The violence to her body and her subsequent rejection leads her to become a *mumukṣu* (seeker of spiritual emancipation). Pārasī declares her intentions to take *dīkṣā* (initiation) into the Jain order of nuns and take the *mahāvrata* – vows of nonviolence, truth, non-stealing, celibacy, and non-attachment. Focalized through Maṇi, the narrative begins to explain the basic tenets of Jainism: the three major sects: *mūrtipūjak, terāpanth, sthānakavāsī*; the meaning of the word Jain as related to one who has conquered his senses. The religion privileges the spiritual and believes in the inferiority of the body (*śarīr kī nyūnatam*).[50] Initially, Maṇi points out the hypocrisy she sees in the Jain community, and that the lay community is constantly transgressing the *anuvrat* (lesser vows of the laymen). In spite of herself (as a narrator) Maṇi cannot prevent a certain Jain consciousness from pervading the novel, a dialectics peculiar to Jainism known as *anekāntatva*, or manypointedness or 'the doctrine of manifold aspects.'[51] Sanskritist and Jainologist Paul Dundas explains that "Jainism's main claim to fame among Indian philosophical systems [is] the doctrine of manypointedness." *Anekāntavāda* is the central Jain intellectual position; it refers to the simultaneous truth of a variety of approaches and standpoints. It has to be taken into consideration in any ontological judgment and evolves from an "interpretation of reality as being characterized by permanence and change."[52] It has been characterized (albeit inadequately) as intellectual *ahiṃsā* (non-inury, nonviolence) – the logical extension of *ahiṃsā* into philosophy.

In the first half of the novel, Indra's words and influence bear heavily on the form and content of Maṇi's thoughts. As we have seen, she considers her family life and her community through the speech genres she receives from Indra. Yet after her sister Pārasī's initiation as a Jain nun, Maṇi starts to literally experience competing voices in her head. During a final attempt to discourage Pārasī's *dīkṣā*, Maṇi discovers that Pārasī has known for years about her relationship with Indra and yet has made no objection to or mention of it. (The narrator frequently reminds the reader of the gravity of Maṇi's transgression in having a love relationship, and graver still, with a Bengali boy). This discovery gives Maṇi a new respect for her sister's tolerance and generosity. In fact, this act of magnanimity so impresses her, particularly since it runs counter to the self-righteousness she associates with religious Jains, that Pārasī's worldview begins to find a place in Maṇi's consciousness. After her sister is initiated into the Jain order, Maṇi starts hearing the voices of Pārasī, Alok (a Gandhian who works with tribals), and Navalkishore in addition to Indra's:

> शून्य की ओर तकते हुए, शून्य में बैठी मणि के शून्य में रह-रहकर पारसी की छवि कौंध रही थी। कितना विरक्तिपूर्ण!..."नहीं, बुद्ध, मार्क्स, नीत्शे, सब अधूरे सत्य हैं।" खाली मकान में भड़भड़ाते भूत की तरह मणि के भीतर गूँज रही थीं आवाज़ें और सिर्फ़ आवाजें। कभी इन्द्र की, कभी पारसी की, और कभी नवल बाबू की।[53]

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[50] Ibid., 130.
[51] Padmanabh S Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification* (University of California Press, 1979), 90–97.
[52] Dundas, *The Jains*, 229.
[53] Kāṅkariyā, *Khule Gagana Ke Lāla Sitāre*, 145.

> Staring into emptiness (*śūnya*) and sitting in emptiness, images of Pārasī flash in Maṇi's inner emptiness. How anchoritic!... Buddha, Marx, Nietsche are all incomplete truths. In this empty house and within Maṇi, voices and more voices were buzzing like howling spirits: sometimes Indra's, sometimes Pārasī's, and sometimes Naval Bābū's.

Maṇi's consciousness becomes the locus of these varying philosophical positions characterized as disembodied, ghostly voices swirling in emptiness. The stark image of ghosts and emptiness prefigures the existential haunting that this historical period will mean for Maṇi. In Navalkishore's voice she hears, "sadness, destruction, and pain are the prime movers of all human values, faiths, divine commandments, and ethical values – and yet no ultimate reality has occurred to us…Buddha, Marx, Nietzsche are all incomplete truths (*adhūre satya*)."[54] His remark is consistent with non-absolute ideas in Jain epistemology and ontology. Naval Bābū articulates a position of *anekāntatva*, which allows for the coexistence of multiple truths that are true in their respective contexts but potentially incomplete (*adhūre*) because of the singularity of perspective. Padmanabh Jaini maintains that Jains accept various views (Vedāntin, Saṃkhya, Buddhist, etc.) as valid when they are seen as *nayas*, or partial expressions of truth, they become false when they make claims to an absolute and exclusive validity.[55] The clue that Maṇi's realization takes the religio-philosophial position of *anekāntatva*, and not just intellectual confusion, is the reference to various philosophical positions as "incomplete truths" or *adhūre satya*. She does not wonder, however, which position is correct; she wonders how they may be reconciled in an "ultimate reality." Navlkishore represents a mediating figure, between Indra and Alok, which is why perhaps she hears the thoughts in his voice.

Navalkishor Bābū, the person who suggested that Maṇi go to Presidency College in the first place, plays a significant role in her emerging *anekāntavāda.* He is a married, childless, fifty-year-old writer for a prominent Hindi daily and lives in the flat above Maṇi's. She seeks his advice in searching for Indra. Maṇi's family, including Gangābāī, has great respect for him, therefore Maṇi can spend time with him and his wife without any suspicion. Naval Bābū tells her about Alok Bhagat, a friend who has worked with tribals in Bihar for the last 10 years. Naval Bābū decides to take Maṇi to Bihar to visit Alok so that she can clear her mind and see an alternative to Naxal methods of helping the tribals. Alok runs an organization to help with various concerns of the tribals: livestock, honey cultivation, education, sewing, agriculture. Maṇi wonders about the difference between Indra and Alok. She would like to show Indra another way of resistance to answer his questions about praxis and action. She characterizes Alok's activism as one of pickaxes and pens (*kudāl* and *kalam*) as opposed to Indra's hammers, sickles, and red stars. She thinks about the two men:

> 'क्या अंतर है आलोकजी भगत और इन्द्र में।...' सोच रही थी मणि। दोनों के सरोकार एक। ... पूरी तरह न्याय और समानता पर आधारित एक ऐसा समाज जहाँ कोई डाटा बनने का श्रेय ही न ले सके। दोनों के शत्रु एक--जर्मींदार, जोतदार, शोषक।[56]

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[54] Ibid.
[55] Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*, 93–97.
[56] Kāṅkariyā, *Khule Gagana Ke Lāla Sitāre*, 87.

> 'How are Alokji and Indra different?' thought Maṇi. Both are concerned with the same thing … a society based on justice and equality where no one may take credit for being the benefactor. They have a common enemy—the landlord, landholding peasants, and exploiters.

This begins a debate in her mind between Alok and Indra. She thinks the great difference between the men is that Indra has lost all faith (*āsthāhīn*) in contemporary institutions and therefore he is negative and iconoclastic (*nakārātmak evam mūrtibhaṃjak*). She imagines showing him all the work Alok has done in the last five years in 200 villages and Indra's voice says in her mind, "at that pace it will take an eon to bring about the revolution."[57] For most of the novel Indra is not present, but his voice and ideas are. Maṇi feels that she has clarity in her soul, "*Bhitar hotī ātmā kī pratīti*" but her brain is churning in contemplation (*mastiṣk ke andar cintan-manthan*).[58] It is a distinction of Jain separation of forms of knowledge into categories of transcendent and worldly.[59] Indra and Alok come to represent ideological positions that begin to fight fiercely: "*Indra aur Alokji Bhagat kuśtī laḍte, ek-dūsre ko ukhāḍte-pachāḍte*."[60] She finds that she is able to see the truth of both: when she thinks with Indra's logic she sees how true it is that "revolution can only come through the barrel of a gun."[61] But when she is far from Indra she is pulled into Alok's gravitational force (*gurutvākarṣaṇ*). Indra's voice tells her that Mao would have been made a prisoner had he been born in India. As Indra's voice trails off Alok's face becomes illuminated (*ālokit*) as he says Gandhi would have been locked behind bars in China. Here, Gandhian nonviolence is a political stand in for Jain *ahiṁsa*.

With the plurality of voices in her head, Maṇi's mind starts to reflect the concerns of Jain epistemology regarding the nature of truth:

मणि की चेतना दो धुवों पर खड़े दो युगपरुष! आलोकजी भगत और इन्द्र ! दोनों के मध्य गौतम बुद्ध की तरह सोचती वह - क्या कोई मध्यम प्रतिपद नहीं हो सकता? क्या दोनों ही अर्धसत्य हैं - क्या एक का सत्य दूसरे से मिलकर कोई व्यापक सम्पूर्ण सत्य नहीं बन सकता?[62]

On the two poles (*dhruvoṃ par*) of Maṇi's consciousness stood two great men of the age (*yugpuruṣ*). Alokji Bhagat and Indra. Between the two of them she asks like Gautam Buddha—can there be no middle path? Are both only half-truths—can a total and ultimate truth be made by combining them?

In Jain thought, any epistemological judgment made by non-omniscient *jivas* is necessarily incomplete. Thus the necessary outcome of this is a multifaceted approach that synthesizes and integrates contradictory positions. Jain epistemology is opposed to dogmatic insistence on a mode of analysis that relies exclusively on a single perspective, rather it insists that multiple perspectives are required in order to gain an understanding of the complexity of reality.[63] Maṇi tries to understand her complicated times by embodying the voices of various viewpoints that are often polar ends of political

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[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Dundas, *The Jains*.
[60] Kāṅkariyā, *Khule Gagana Ke Lāla Sitāre*, 87.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., 88.
[63] Dundas, *The Jains*, 229–230.

spectrums. She asks herself in the quote above if truth can be known by combining contradictions.

Writing the Red Stars

The failed revolution made Maṇi a writer and gave her a mode of escape. Throughout the novel the theme of writing emerges as an imperative. Gobind da tells Maṇi in Bangla, "*Dilīp bishāser kotha tūmi nishchoy hī likhbe* – You will certainly have to write Dilip Biswas' story" But until the end Maṇi is in a state of existential writer's block. She cannot finish the story until she knows what happened to Indra, this also means that she cannot continue her own story.

> और देखते-ही-देखते इन्द्र जैसे लाल सितारा बन उसे आवाज़ देता … मुझे लिखो … मुझे खोजो। …"मुझे अपने पाँवों पर खड़े हो जाने दो इन्द्र, यदि मैंने ज़िन्दगी से टक्कर लेते हुए अपने लिए ज़रा सी भी स्पेस बनाकर नहीं रखी तो मुझे भी मुन्नी और पारसी की तरह जीवन को बट्टे-खाते ही लिख देना पड़ेगा … फिर मैं तुम्हारे साथ भी न्याय नहीं कर पाऊँगी।[64]

> And ever watching a red star like Indra called out … write me … search for me … "Let me stand on my own feet, Indra. If I don't create even a little space for myself as I collide with life, then I will have to be written off as a loss in the account books! Like Pārasī and Munī. Yet I can't even do justice by you."

Here (and elsewhere) the narrator uses a merchant speech genre to convey how the story of Marwari girls is written: *Baṭṭe khāte likhnā* – to write off as a loss. Girls are treated here as a liability, financially and otherwise. By becoming the writer she takes control of her own narrative. Maṇi has to write so that Indra and his comrades do not pass into obscurity:

> तूफान थम चुका था। आन्दोलन की रीढ़ की हड्डी टूट चुकी थी। अधिकांश लाल सितारे टूट चुके थे और जो बचे रह भी गए थे वे सब अलग-थलग अपने-अपने क्षितिजों में थे जिनमें मध्याह्न के सूर्य की प्रखरता अब नहीं बची थी। … उद्योगपति, व्यापारी, पूंजीपति, सभी चैन की वंशी बजाने लगे थे। …मकान मालिक खुश थे, उनकी सम्पत्ति के मूल्य जो उन दिनों की करेंसी की ही तरह लुढ़कने लगे थे, अब धीरे-धीरे सामान्य हो रहे थे।[65]

> But the storm has passed and the spine of the movement has already snapped. The remaining red stars have been dashed wantonly on their own horizons and they won't be spared the ferocity of the midday sun … Industrialists, businessmen, and capitalists have begun to play the flute of peace … the landlords are happy as the value of their properties, which had begun to come crashing down just like the currency, begins to stabilize, and slowly everything goes back to normal.

Maṇi knows that the return to normalcy, the status quo, means the legacy of Indra and his comrades will be obscured. She seems literally bound to write them into history, or remain locked in the past herself. At the close of the novel, Maṇi is working as a principal of a higher secondary school, and she has been recognized in the Hindi literary world for a couple of collections of poetry. She is troubled, however, that she has not managed to write Indra and his comrades into history:

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[64] Kāṅkariyā, *Khule Gagana Ke Lāla Sitāre*, 148.
[65] Ibid., 116.

बेचैनी और अकुलाहट ...इन्द्र, उसके कॉमरेड और सर्वोपरि इस आन्दोलन को इतिहास में दाखिल कराने की।[66]

There was an unease and agitation to include Indra, his comrades, and foremost the movement into history.

 She finds that even her brighter students do not know of Dhrupad Majumdar (read Charu Madjumdar).[67] Maṇi repeatedly talks about writing Indra's truth, a peculiar construction suggesting that Indra has a private version of the truth – a non-absolute notion of reality – yet a part of the total picture of reality.

In a final merging of speech genres the narrative uses a merchant speech to account for the Naxalite Movement. Quoting a history professor of Rajasthani origin, Maṇi uses a Marwari saying to characterize the early Naxalite movement as a woefully unprepared merchant trying to start out in the market:

आडू चाल्या हाट, नी तकडी नी बाट (बिना तराजू और बाट के ही मूर्ख दुकान में हाट लगाने जा रहा है।)[68]

Only a fool goes to the market to set up shop without weights and scales.

Maṇi thinks to herself about what this failure has meant to the young people who were lost and how she may account for the Naxalite legacy in her own life.

बजा दिया सशस्त्र क्रांति का बिगुल ! आपके नेतृत्व का क्या बिगड़ा ... मारी गई एक जाँबाज पीढ़ी।[69]

[You] sounded the bugle of armed revolution! What was wrong with your leadership? ... a valiant generation was killed.

हिसाब माँगती ज़िन्दगी। क्या पाया, क्या खोया इन वर्षों? जिस जीवन को कभी उसने बट्टे खाते में डाल दिया था, उसी ने उसे आज कितना भर दिया था, पर लोग हैं कि उन्हें मणि के खाते में सिवाय इन्द्र की प्रतीक्षा के दिखता ही नहीं।[70]

But life demands accountancy. What has been gained and lost over the years? That life which she had once written off as a loss has now become so full, but there are people who can't see anything in her account books but her longing for Indra.

Maṇi knows that her life, politics, and literary work are part of that Naxal legacy, and it is why, finally, she was not 'written off as a loss.'

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[66] Ibid., 161.

[67] Majumdar, *Collected Writings of Comrade Charu Mazumdar*. Early in the novel, the narrator has to promise Gobind Da that she will change the names of all the Naxalites in the story, which she does rather consistently. She does, however, name Amartya Sen as having been on the wanted list, but never arrested because he was related to the detective assigned to his case.

[68] Kāṅkariyā, *Khule Gagana Ke Lāla Sitāre*, 163.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

Two major things happen in the last pages of the novel. Gobind Da appears after a full two years to tell Maṇi that he has discovered the identity of the man who spent 28 days with Indra in the Lal Bazaar Police Thana. These were Indra's last days and the final portion of his story. The man is a disabled poet who lives in Kareempur with his brother. Gobind Da, apparently still very nervous, says this and departs quickly. At the same time Alok of the Bihar NGO turns up to collect an award called the Vriksh Mitra. Alok proposes to Maṇi, convincing her to disregard what others will say. To her, Alok has always seemed to be the alter ego of Indra. As she is soon able to complete Indra's story, she may begin a story with Alok. The next day Alok will collect his award and in the evening Maṇi will make her journey to Kareempur for her final interview with a revolutionary poet. The novel ends as Maṇi wonders if Alok will take this final journey with her.

Once again, echoing a Jain idea that knowledge of reality is crucial for liberation, Maṇi must know and write Indra's story before she is set free from it. She feels that she owes Indra something for the freedom that he showed her. It is through Indra's mediation that Maṇi also sees new ways of being for women that she could not have imagined before. Examples of women's resistance such as Parul who runs a shelter house for Naxals, or Mary Tyler who fights alongside with them, inspire Maṇi to challenge her own apathy and find a way.[71] Maṇi's way to resist is writing, it is her *aide* à *penser*, it is her counter-attack. It allows her to explore contradictions and counter-narratives. Like Kishore Bābū of *Kalikathā*, she decries the India of the late 1990s as an increasingly homogenizing entity, which offers no resistance to globalization or westernization, or to the hegemonic rule of the CPI(M), which has no Indra to cry 'Yankee Culture *nipāt jāk* (down with)'. In other words, she rejects the one-sided (*ekāntavāda*) half-truth of the present and strives for a comprehensive view of reality and history that may treat Marwaris and Naxalites fairly.

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[71] Arunava Narayan Mukherjee, "The Naxalite Movement," in *Social Issues of India* (Smarak Swain, n.d.), 188. In May 1970, in the forest of Chhotanagpur, 54 revolutionaries were arrested. Most of them were Bengali, but one was a British women, Mary Tyler, who wrote poignantly that the Naxalites' crime was … the crime of all those who cannot remain unmoved and inactive in an India where a child crawls in the dust with a begging bowl; where a poor girl can be sold as a rich man's plaything … where usurers and tricksters exhort the fruit of the labour of those who work …" 188.

Conclusion

> "…the development of a new art would signify that the historic seed has not only grown into a plant, but has even flowered."[1]

At the beginning of my research, a Calcutta-based scholar, venturing a joke, told me that instead of literature, Marwaris only wrote *hundis* (letters of credit or cheques) and invoices. And while commercial documents were once the prime motive for merchant literacy in the nineteenth century, this remark came nearly a decade after Alka Saraogi had won the Sahitya Akademi Award and the twenty-first century had commenced.

Calcutta is a city that takes immense pride in the literary and cultural achievements of its inhabitants, but there has been little exchange between its diverse literary communities. Saraogi's subtitle *Via Bypass*, suggests just that, that it circumvents the mainstream and majoritarian version of Calcutta and its history. Nevertheless, her work, and that of Khetan and Kankaria, neglected or ignored as it may be by the Bengali mainstream, is nourished in the concrete environment and cultural richness of Calcutta.

Hindi speakers and well-wishers, often inspired by Bengali examples, collaborated to produce journals and newspapers in the new idiom. But financing and readership was always a problem, therefore throughout the nineteenth century the initial task of Hindi publications in Calcutta was to attract the business community by first persuading them to prefer Hindi over other regional languages and scripts, and second, to accept that the technology of knowledge had shifted from bazaar intelligence to print. Print Hindi required, for its survival, the establishment of bonhomie with Marwaris and other upcountry merchants. Since there was no other viable middle-class or elite readership to patronize Hindi, the press sought to shape and cultivate such a class amongst the Marwaris. The affiliation eventually resulted in the modernization and nationalization of the community through numerous reform programs mobilized via the Hindi press. Further, the process caused the Marwaris to regard and revere Hindi as their own language and as an integral part of their cultural identity. The Hindi literati of Calcutta will thus always proudly boast that Bengal was the starting point of the various paths taken by Hindi prose and publishing.

In the past, many of the great Hindi writers who marked the Calcutta literary terrain were from elsewhere in India, but patronage for Hindi was local and largely Marwari. As Karin Schomer has noted,

> As to Calcutta, it contained a floating population of Hindi writers coming through in search of work, and was patronized by certain members of the Marwari business community, for whom Hindi literature was a focus of cultural identity in a Bengali city.[2]

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[1] Leon Trotsky, *Literature And Revolution*, ed. William Keach, trans. Rose Strunsky (New York: Haymarket Books, 2005), 29.

[2] Schomer, *Mahadevi Varma and the chhayavad age of modern Hindi poetry*, 129–130.

Literary Hindi experienced a decline in Calcutta after independence and the "floating population" of Hindi writers no longer sought work in Calcutta. In 1950, when Hazariprasad Dwivedi left Shantiniketan for Banaras Hindu University, Bengal lost its most celebrated Hindi literary scholar. He had encouraged a certain amount of contact between Hindi and Bengali writers. Additionally, the 1956 linguistic reorganization of the states excluded once and for all any kind of official recognition of Hindi in West Bengal. Hindi was therefore not eligible for significant patronage from the state. Only Bengali was supported in West Bengal, thereby reifying the notion that Hindi and its speakers were outsiders. However, Marwari support for Hindi was already institutionalized, as Schomer early noted, the earliest and largest prizes administered by the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan were endowed by the wealthy Calcutta Marwari Sri Gokulchand in 1914.[3] Even more significantly, for our purpose here, was the Seksaria Puraskar, a prize for women writers. It was established at the 1931 Calcutta session of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan by way of a generous donation from Sitaram Seksaria, the Marwari educationalist and philanthropist. Similarly, Ramkrishna and Saraswati Dalmia instituted the Harjimal Dalmia Puraskar in 1943 for best Hindi writer of the year. It was regarded as a great honor to receive the prestigious award. The plan for the highly prestigious Jnanpith Award was initiated by Rama Jain; in 1961, she convened a meeting of the leading litterateurs at her residence in Calcutta to lay the groundwork of the literary honour that was to include all the official Indian languages. In attendance were Kaka Kalelkar, Harivansh Rai 'Bachchan', Ramdhari Singh 'Dinkar', Jainendra Kumar, Jagdish Chandra Mathur, Prabhakar Machwe, Akshaya Kumar Jain, and Lakshmi Chandra Jain. The support for Hindi and its institutions, coupled with the promotion of women's education, paid rich literary dividends at the end of the twentieth century when Marwari writers began to reflect on their history and community.

In advanced, liberalized, and globalized economies, hostilities towards pioneers of capitalist activity naturally erode as a shared consumerist culture becomes generalized.[4] The 1991 initiation of neo-liberal economic policies began to produce a generalized consumerist culture that diffused the otherness of entrepreneurial minorities like Marwaris. As this hostility diminished, it allowed some repose for Marwari writers to consider the historical origins and trauma of the antagonism and the stereotypes such as those contained in the *Marwari Ank*. The Hindi novels considered in the second part of this dissertation reveal an anxiety about what else may have been eroded along with hostility. Yet a consciousness of the otherness does not completely disappear; the Calcutta Marwaris were reframed as class enemies in the anti-capitalist milieu of West Bengal after the 1970s. The journey from compradore to class enemy finds regular expression in all Marwari literature.

It is from the vantage point, offered by this sense of a loss of identity, that these novels explore the intersection of historical processes that produced Marwari identity and the literary culture of Calcutta. The Marwari cosmos in Calcutta is outwardly melded here with a broader Hindi tradition. As we have seen, for Marwaris, the process of making Hindi their own began in the mid-nineteenth century with the encouragement of

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[3] Ibid., 138.
[4] Reid, "Entrepreneurial Minorities and the State," 59.

the Hindi press, which in Calcutta absorbed much from the Bengali examples and currents of thought. The reforms that occurred in the community in the decades before independence were always linked to Hindi through journals, schools, libraries, and literary clubs. The traditions, self-reliance, and idealism of this early period serve as a touchstone for literary reflection on the present – what has been gained and lost in the current Indian state.

The Marwari affective experience, such as diaspora and migration, was the basis for new cultures that emerged away from the *desh*. The loss of cultural difference, while potentially liberating from negative stereotypes, has also meant the end of certain solidarities and forms of resistance in the community and nation. In the colonial period, the consolidated identity of merchant communities offered commercial advantages such as easy access to credit, capital, and labor from within resource networks – credit from European banks was largely unavailable for vernacular merchants. It was also politically expedient for Marwaris to represent their minority interests as a bloc, since they were also treated as an undifferentiated group. As we have seen, living abroad caused a stifling conservatism to emerge, which placed heavy restrictions on the female environment. Marwari women living abroad lost some of the complex social web that was available in the *desh*, even in purdah. The stigma of conservatism that constricted their activity in the home was also a cause for shame in the broader Calcutta public. In this new culture, however, many progressive and feminist counter forces mobilized a dialectical relationship with the orthodoxy of Marwariness. Presently, as this cultural difference has eroded to some degree, Marwari writers have recovered from their affective archives, more than the enduring stereotypes of backwardness, but the topoi of resistance. The Marwari ethos of self-reliance suggests a way to push back against the influence of multi-national corporations and financial institutions, as it once did against empire. An updated version of *sākh* that likewise places a very high premium on honest dealings in all transactions would be a welcome improvement to current business ethics. Frivolous and conspicuous consumption, that was once a cause for a merchant to lose face may again be seen as needless, decadent demand on resources. However, cherry picking the most progressive qualities misses the point of plurality and difference, which underlies the radically democratic ethos of this literature. Marwariness, then, appears here as a metric and analog for a broader national and global slide toward homogeneity.

This new literature then gives Marwaris a literary past in Hindi; one in which their collective history and identity can be imaginatively explored. It also gives Hindi literature a Marwari past. Khetan, Saraogi, and Kankaria expand the Hindi tradition to include the subjectivities and domesticities of Marwari life. The novels share several intriguing qualities, which make their comparison rich and productive. The tropes of writing, memory, identity, and history loom large in all the work. The similarities and patterns in the works show that something radically collective is operating in the literature. The importance, for example, the narratives place on roads and bazaars act as legible sites of plurality that can be read as texts themselves. These diverse spaces are juxtaposed to the homogenous, insulated spaces of the home, the *bari* (বাড়ি). Each novel discusses the act of writing as a trope, and writing what is patently fictional, in a quest for truth, i.e. name changes, false account books, and other familial fabrications. Along these lines, the novels also suggest multiple versions of truth and history: Kishore Bābū, in *Kalikathā*,
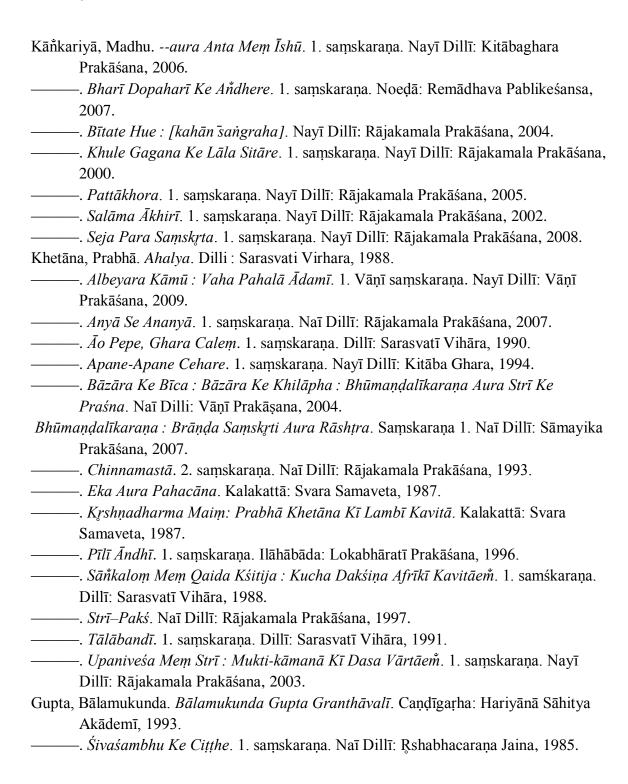
despairs of the corrupting and homogenizing narrative of post-liberalized India that reduces the freedom struggle to a marketing scheme; in *Pīlī Āndhī*, the multiple versions of Pannālāl's death critique problems in historiography; the fictions Kiśan writes in his account books reveal far more about him than accuracy could have; and in *Khule Gagan*, a relativism of knowledge is the cognitive strategy for Maṇi to hold several differing positions at once – Gandhism, Maoism, Jainism. As deterritorialized people, Calcutta's Marwari fiction necessarily confronts diversity, otherness, and cultural difference. It offers alternative ways of looking at the city and its multiplicity, creating space for minor narratives.

Hindi, then, for Marwari women, becomes a liberating medium, and just as in the early part of the twentieth century, the language is again implicated in reform processes. Previously, Marwaris had only been negative blots in any language, but now they stake out a parcel of Hindi literary ground to call their own. The question is in what way does this literature have meaning for non-Marwaris or people living outside of Calcutta? The broader themes of belonging and representation as they relate to writing have saliency for any diaspora or minority, particularly at a time when the proposed name change, West Bengal to Pashchim Bango, has been perceived by minority communities as majoritarian bullying that glosses over a shared history. Further research about the literatures and cultural histories of other communities in Calcutta is likely to open up yet more perspectives. Swimming against the tide has never been easy, it becomes more so because state policy propels the current in the opposite direction. For example, preliminary research suggests an Urdu tradition in the city, as well as a Bhojpuri literature of the jute mill laborers.

The writing discussed in this dissertation is the first novelized representation of Marwari history with Marwari subjectification. It is also bold given that the authority of women is also marginalized in the Marwari family. The Marwari writer is in the margins of this literary city and her act of writing has immediate political connotations. This situation allows her to imagine another possible community and to forge another consciousness and sensibility.

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Bangdut (1829, Calcutta)
Editor: Raja Ram Mohan Roy

Bhāratmitra (1878-1935, Calcutta)
Editors: Durgā Prasād Miśra (1878-1899), Balmukund Gupta (1899-1907)

Chānd (1924-194?, Allahabad)
Editors: Rāmrakh Singh Sahgal (1922-33)

Hindī Baṅgvāsī (1880-1921, Calcutta)
Editors: Amritlal Chakravarty et al (1880-1893), Balmukund Gupta (1893-1899)

Kalkattā Samācār (1914-1922, Calcutta)
Editor Amritlal Chakravarty

Mārwāṛī Bandhu (1904-1907, Calcutta)
Editor: Durgā Prasād Miśra

Mārwāṛī Gazette (1890-1898, Calcutta)
Editor: Rādhākṛṣṇa Tībaṛewālā

Mārwāṛī Sudhār (1921-1923, Calcutta)
Editor: Śivpūjan Sahāy

Matwālā (1923-1930, Calcutta)
Editor: Śivpūjan Sahāy

Nṛsiṁh (1906 -1907, Calcutta)
Editor: Ambikā Prasād Vājpeyī

Samācār Sudhāvarṣaṇ (1854-1868, Calcutta)
Editor: Śyāmsundar Sen

Sārasudhānidhi (1879-1890, Calcutta)
Editor: Durgā Prasād Miśra

Uchitvaktā (1880-1894, Calcutta)
Editor: Durgā Prasād Miśra

Udant Mārtaṇḍ (1826-1827, Calcutta)
Editor: Pandit Yugalkishor Shukla

Vaishyopkarak (1904, Calcutta)
Editor: Shivchandra Bharatiya

Viśāl Bhārat (1929-1964, Calcutta)
Editors: Banārasīdās Caturvedī (1929-1938), Agyeya (1938-1939)

Viśwabhāratī (1942, Calcutta)
Editor: Hazārī Prasād Dwivedī

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