A Worldly Home: Minor Cosmopolitanism and the Question of Identity, Malabar, 1947-1977

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a study on minor cosmopolitanisms. It has taken for its site the region of Malabar and its period as extending from 1947, when India attained Independence, to 1977. It has focussed on the works of two exemplary figures, Vaikom Muhammad Basheer (1908-94) and CH Muhammad Koya (1928-83), and analysed them to obtain the modes of negotiation in which the newly emerged nation-state was made meaningful. I argue that this meaning-making was a cosmopolitan task which required both drawing the boundaries of the new dispensation as well as traversing it for resources that can afford novel communities. The focus here is on the responses of the Muslim/minor exemplary figure to the newer options of governmentality and sovereignty as obtained in the postcolonial situation.

The dissertation consists of five chapters of which the first is an introduction situating the study as well as mapping out its structure. The second chapter focuses exclusively on attempting a survey of the debates on cosmopolitanism and extends the discussion to arrive at a possible cosmopolitanism for the postcolonial condition. Chapters 3 and 4 are analysis chapters, and is followed by Conclusion.

'Minor cosmopolitanism' performs a double operation in this thesis. Firstly it brings out the minor nature of any cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism is generally understood to

be a condition of non-constraint of culture or nationhood. Yet every version of cosmopolitanism is obtained under concrete historical circumstances including that of particular intellectual histories. Secondly, 'minor cosmopolitanism' also seeks to reveal the power operations which attests certain traditions of existence universal while casting others outside the register of 'proper' articulation. These other ways of existence are marked by their oppositional nature to the hegemonic. The 'minor' here becomes a mark of hypervisibility.

The dissertation progresses along the two tropes of mourning and mimicry. The term 'mourning' is owed to Sigmund Freud's study on "Mourning and Melancholia" where mourning suggests the successful riddance of a dead (metaphorically or otherwise) person (or, the other) while melancholia signals the continued existence of the other in the self. I have used "impossibility of mourning" to suggest the ways of coming to terms with loss in the absence of any set precedence, where impossibility suggests a moment of sovereign decision where the present could be rearticulated as to impinge on the past. The aporistic quality as well its resolution by sovereign decision is informed by Jacques Derrida use of the term 'impossibility'.

The concept of mimicry is employed by Jacques Lacan in his elaboration on gaze. The term consists in its performativity the dimension of travesty, camouflage and intimidation.

In the "Introduction" I indicate the historical changes in the political structure of Malabar and the need to study these changes as they were negotiated in the domain of culture. Malabar as an entity emerges as a distinct political geography when it was ceded to the British by Tipu Sultan in 1792. However the term Malabar is also indicative of the long

history of trade and other associations which the region had with other regions along the Indian ocean rim. The region is intricately connected to the Indian ocean rim, wedded to the common fate of the early Portuguese and Dutch explorations and attendant strife. Malabar acquired geographical fixity as a district in the Presidency of Malabar as part of British India. The region acquired political visibility in the annals of the Empire as a hotbed of Muslim fanaticism and agrarian strife, reaching a flashpoint in the Malabar Mappila rebellion of 1921. The region formed the major chunk of the proposed Moplastan in 1947. As part of independent India, and subsequent to the demand for linguistic states, Malabar was joined with the other Malayalam speaking regions of Cochin and Travancore to form the state of Kerala in 1956. These changes were shifting the concrete realities of the people of Malabar and the ramifications and concomitance of these definitions of the political self require study.

The thesis has undertaken to study the works of two exemplary personalities, Vaikom Muhammad Basheer (1908-1994) and CH Muhammad Koya (1928-1983) towards this end. Vaikom Muhammad Basheer is the most iconic of Muslim writers in Kerala and arguably of Malayali writers whose best work has been the narration, in refractions, of various episodes of his life itself. A settler in Malabar from the late ‘50s, Basheer’s led an early life of wanderings. CH Muhammad Koya is better known as the leading light of the Muslim League in Kerala who led the party to its most spectacular achievements. CH Muhammad Koya was also an exemplary writer conveying newer worlds to a defined audience. His speeches and writings continue to be cherished and thus present an excellent material for analysis of contemporary culture.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to surveying the various theories of cosmopolitanism. The term cosmopolitanism, though current in philosophy ever since the Greeks, attains a

normative condition In Immanuel Kant. Kant's cosmopolitan right is the third among the rights he deems essential for a peaceful world. Kant's third right, the cosmopolitan right, governs the relations between the state and the citizen of another state. The sole right that the stranger has is to be treated with hospitality. The premise of the Kantian cosmopolitanism is that the stranger too does belong to a state. In Kantian teleology, state is a condition arising out of property regulations. These premises point towards the necessarily bound character of Kantian cosmopolitanism. Nevertheless, in the modern day when the modality of nation-state is universal, Kantian cosmopolitan right has found its relevance. One of these is the claim that Kantian cosmopolitanism calls for a universal settlement of property such that there is no outside to the nation-state form and that every individual necessarily belongs to a state.

The conditions as obtained in the real world however require other interpretations of the Kantian theory as asylum seekers, stateless persons, refugees, etc. are contemporary facts. The neo-Kantians insist on the need and efficacy of law making to solve the condition of statelessness in the world. In their lexicography cosmopolitanism suggest a move on the part of those who can for those who cannot. In other words, cosmopolitanism is imbued with morality for neo-Kantians who see it as a transcendence of one's own particular social location. The catchword here is solidarity.

The institutional nature of the neo-Kantian cosmopolitanism has drawn criticism from those who would rather see repressive structures in the state. While solidarity still remains the solution, the state has to be kept out of the picture and solidarities formed among different movements for justice among disparate parts of the world. This new cosmopolitanism has been termed "cosmopolitics". The advocates of this position argue that

the necessarily exclusive nature of any definition impede any hope for an all-inclusive universality. Cosmopolitics has been a position first enunciated by Derrida, who, noting that the conditions specified by Kant are as yet unobtainable in Europe, turns to ethics via Emmanuel Levinas. The Levinasian concept of hospitality in which the self meets an Infinite Other, infinite and therefore undefinable Other, is transposed by Derrida to the real world of *sans papiers*, asylum seekers and economic migrants. Derrida sees the necessity of a rule of law to put into practice the practice of hospitality. Nevertheless, the law has to be decisionistic and not formulaic, for each stranger and situation is unique, and require unique solutions. The Levinasian ethics is a formulation of the world in which, contrary to Kant, forgiveness and not mutual antagonism is the primal condition of human existence. The cosmopolitics version of cosmopolitanism insists on the move away from juridico-legal formula and advocates a politics of singularities.

Derrida has brought forth the necessarily minor nature of Kantian cosmopolitanism. Kantian cosmopolitanism was not only shown to be premised on a particular understanding of human civilization, but also as a condition unobtainable in real terms. However, the mutuality involved in the Derridean (and Levinasian) forgiveness (and through it their concept of hospitality) undercuts its efficacy in that it does not pay heed to the unequal power relations between the two participants. At the same time, the notion of decision conveys the sense of uniqueness of contexts in which laws will have to be enacted. Psychoanalysis provides a framework in which these drawbacks of cosmopolitics could be addressed. Psychoanalysis points out the asymmetric nature of subject formation in which the yet-to-be subject is subjected to the specular regime. The decisionism involved in Derrida gives way in psychoanalysis to “pure act”. Pure act is however allied more with Kant’s categorical imperative. The singularity of the individual is his desire. The pure ethical act can be an act

of desire as well as an act of law (in the Kantian sense) in that desire itself can be law, since both of them are done for its own sake. The psychoanalysis' defence of Kant is therefore that Law need not be antagonistic to particularity, and that Kantian categorical imperative does not specify what to do, but only how to do. The acting subject has within him that which can reconfigure himself through the act, a transcendental substance that survive the change in law. Cosmopolitanism in psychoanalysis is this ability of discernment in the movement which can translate a particularity to universality, a condition which allows itself to mark its boundaries and not be subsumed by the universal. Cosmopolitanism in psychoanalysis is thus ironically an ability to occupy the empty universality in which the particularity of available claims to universalities can be exposed. It is not an act of erasure of particularities, but of marking them. This notion is particularly useful for our thesis for its suggestion of transformations in universalities and that of the fragmented social as is obtained in the postcolonial state under which particular communities can reconfigure politics in the pursuit of an ideal.

Chapter 3 engages with the works of Vaikom Muhammad Basheer. The endeavour of the chapter is to read these works for a minor critique of nationalism and suggestions of possible transcendence emanating from a grounding in the idea of nationalism itself. The key concept on which the works are investigated is that of realism.

Right from its advent to the contemporary period, realism has been associated with programmatic literature, one which can represent the present in its totality and can consolidate or transform it. Realism in India owes itself to the English novels of the nineteenth century. The project of realism has been closely allied with that of reformation. In the postcolonial context, realism drew the boundaries between the reformer and the

reformed within the state, the latter often belonging to the deprived classes and minorities. Realism performed the nation for the masses who had to be initiated into it. It is to this intellectual climate that Basheer made his entry. Basheer made himself visible as a minor writer in that he introduced a new style of writing infused with the demotic tongue, and introduced a new geography from within it into the Malayalam literature – that of the Muslim home. Basheer's own statements reveal his intention to perform the community for a literature which has either kept it out or represented it in poor light. The rest of the chapter is an investigation as to how this minority characteristic of his writing impinged on his use of realism and its implications on the performance of the nation.

As part of the analysis, the chapter first undertakes a reading of the two reform novels written by Basheer, *Balyakalasakhi* (1944) and *'Ntuppuppakkoranandarnnu* (1951). A structural analysis of the two novels reveals their isomorphic features. The cyclical nature of these two novels, in which the "I" of enunciation gives way to a collective enunciation in the end, is also shown to retrospectively lodge the collectivity within the singularity if the cyclical structure is allowed to fold back on its own in its logic of progression. This displacement suggests the impossibility of mourning. The author occupies the subject position of the 'unaltering' cosmos from which the changes cannot be mourned either for its triviality or because of the lack of terms that could describe the loss, which then has to be expressed in silence and stutter.

In the next section of the chapter, Basheer's *Sthalam* narratives, a collection of novellas and short stories are analysed to indicate the definitive resolution of the mourning of the lost community. The farcical nature of Basheer's *sthalam* (place) is shown to be a critique of the binaries which realism effected as a rhetorical strategy. The place is populated

by characters marked for their peculiarity, criminality, and liminality. The place however has the trappings of a nation, with its glorious past, its relics, its rhetoric of "one people", and its other – the intruder/foreigner. Its position in the world history is assured in its lexicography. Yet the functions of this nation are drawn out to be acts of impersonation, an exercise in trickery to keep oneself out of the scopic drive of the law. Citizenship is thus presented as an act of mimicry, performing a doubling of existence, such that the reformer and the to-be-reformed coalesce into the same, each nullifying the other. What ensues is the absence of an internal other which lends consistency to the project of citizenship. The lack of a principle of organization of the actions in The Place, its randomness, its riotous pomposity in its paper-thinness, is therefore an inversion of the problematic in which postcolonial nation-state was conceived of. Rather than becoming an abstraction, the citizen was itself the result of another zone of actions, a zone in which personal relations offered simultaneity of actions and communal identification. The minor here is non-existent not because he ceases to be the particular, but because it is only the particular which exists.

The Basheerian style of the *Sthalam* narratives invites us to think beyond the success or defeat of the different discordant discourses within a text. It is, on the other hand, a questioning of the gaze of judgement itself. Its strength is in its distanciation, in its abstinence from performing through its style a position to look from. The narrator and the narrated fuse and repel. It is the inability to be subsumed that characterises this politics. Basheer's *Sthalam* utopia can be seen as the resolution of the question of lost community, the stutters and silences giving way to the eloquence of multiple particularities.

In Chapter 4 we focus on the works of CH Muhammad Koya, juxtaposing it with the political transformations of that period in which CH Muhammad Koya's party played a

major role. The first work analysed in this chapter is a travel writing *Ente Hajj Yatra* (1959), a book immensely popular and important for its generic innovation.

Travel writings have been implicated in building the rhetorical ammunition for a cognitive mapping of the regions of the empire. Colonialism deems certain cultures travelling and certain others to be travelled to. Travel writings effect a hierarchy of positions in which the travelling self is the knowing subject. However, the assertion of a travelling self can also be an act of resistance on the part of the postcolonial subject. CH Muhammad Koya occupies a variety of enunciatory positions in his travel writing such that the transcendence of the postcolonial subject who hails from unprivileged background is asserted. The assertion of the garb of the transcendental traveller is to recover the category of the individual, thus escaping the communal logic of consensus. It is an enactment of selfhood. At the same time the pilgrimage also involves another layer of meeting with the Infinite Other. The transcendental I and the Infinite Other are in a dialectical relationship the effect of which is laid out for politics of the world rather than spirituality.

The Islamic utopia, where concepts could align with territories and people, is a past utopia. The journey to utopia is a journey to the past, at once one's own, but also never attainable. The past has to be lived through, but the past refuses to vacate its lodgings. Mourning gives way to its impossibility; and seeks decision. In the specific context of CH Muhammad Koya, this aporia is resolved through the decision of concretization of memories. Travelling is shown to be a resolution of the impossibility of mourning in two different ways, that it involves a sovereign decision of translating the face-to-face with the Other into real terms, and that it involves a concretization of spaces of historical memory such that the past can give way to the new. In this resolution, CH Muhammad Koya jettisons the market idea of religiosity, with its image of scale, for radical ethics.

The indeterminacy of CH's utopia has to be refracted through other metaphors. Juxtaposed with the concretization of Makkah as an absolute space on the map, is read the formation of Malappuram district in Kerala, in which historical memory had to be translated into a language of governmentality. Within the legislative assembly one could clearly see the hegemony of the language of postcolonial state as it has constituted itself – that any pre-existing cultural solidarity should express itself in a language of economy; that any problem could pose itself only insofar as it can articulate an economic solution to that problem.

In the last section of Chapter 4, two works by CH Muhammad Koya, *Mughal Bhranakaalam Kathakaliloode* and *Nabiyum Sahabimaarum* is analysed and shown to fashion a sovereign self. The fractional nature of the polity in Kerala gives way to a peculiar form of coalitional politics where numerical minorities enjoyed an ambiguous relation to power, one which did not necessarily keep them out of power. CH Muhammad Koya's works under discussion are shown to engender an impersonating self, a self which subjects governmentality to a logic of sovereignty, functioning within an alternative universality resulting from the logic of difference in which individual upkeep was accorded key importance.

Chapter 4 is followed by Conclusion.

dedicated to

my grandfathers

karinkurayil mohammed (*d.* 1993)
&
kolkkattil kallayath muhammed ali (1921 – 1997)

narrators of the soil and the skies,
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In November 2011, after many months of caution and postponement, the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia finally declared Saudization, more popularly known as "Nitaqat", which, belying the gravity it conveys, was a campaign to ensure a modest ten percentage of jobs for Saudi citizens. "Nitaqat" meant 'range' and was a reference to the colour-coded range which Saudi authorities employed for identifying companies as per the percentage of Saudis in employment. The Saudi decision had instant tremors in the south Indian state of Kerala, and by the second week of November at least 13,000 low skilled employees had returned home. The state government announced rehabilitation packages for the returnees.[1] Still, those who had come back was just a fraction of the 4,50,000 economic emigrants in Saudi Arabia from Kerala. Not much later, Nitaqat became a by-word for Gulf returnees, conveying not just the sense of having been wronged, but also the indomitable spirit to go on in life. Shops used "Nitaqat" as part of their names to boost sales. A Shajahan, one of the returnees, from Edakkara in Malappuram district in Kerala, justified the name of his 'coolbar' – Nitaqatcoolbar – thus: "I might be a foreigner in Saudi, but I am a native here. So I shifted business here and named it Nitaqat. If that helps, let it. And if an Arab happens to pass by, let him start" (Madhyamam, November 18, 2013).[2]

In the 1970s when the largescale migration to the Gulf countries had just started off, it was a matter of adventure. The journey itself happened away from the sight of the state and

[1] *Business Standard*, November 11, 2013

[2] Translation mine

the statutory security it proffered. The journey was by the sea and its legal status was often dubious. The passengers had to swim for a distance on reaching the shores of the Gulf. There they often led undocumented lives. It was a thoroughly individual fare, the confirmation of a person having made it or not took at least few months to reach back home. The Gulf was then– as would be recalled by every veteran in the days of his retirement – poor, deserted, "not like today", so different. One can sense in the recalling of those years not just the narrative of individual adventure, but also a claim of one's labour on a foreign shore, and an acknowledgement of the passing of one's time.

The Nitaqat episode conveys some of the familiar experiences of globalization – the large scale economic migration, the fickle nature of jobs, the experience of being at the mercy of not one but many governments, the thickening of the boundaries of insider/outsider, and also, the rapid displacement of signifiers from their initial moorings. The expanse of contemporary experiences has, to retell the familiar story, cast much suspicion on the efficacy of the state. However, in other ways, the nation-state remains the horizon in which ideological edifice is made sense of, be it rising xenophobia, or sweetening the harsher demands of readjustments and relocations.[3]

[3]Globalization is often understood as a weakening of the nation form and attendant repressions, in front of the onslaught of the global capital. For many (Hall, 1991; Mignolo, 2002; Menon and Nigam, 2007) the weakened state results in new spaces of expression for the hitherto marginalized populations. They are also aware of the strengthening of racist/communal/casteist politics as a defence to the unravelling of earlier certainties. Arjun Appadurai (1990), globalization is characterised by disjunctive flows of the various landscapes –*ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes*, *technoscapes*, *financescapes* and *ideoscapes*. Mignolo, Hall, and Appadurai (1996) call for a newer configuration of politics on a planetary scale that matches the reach of globalization. SassenSaskia (2001), who has studied the "new territorial and institutional conditionalities of national states" (276) thinks of national economy as being a particular territorialisation of capital, a particular spatiotemporal order under globalization (276). Hardt and Negri (2000) through their formulation of "Empire" similarly points to a new cosmopolitan logic of capital and finds the agency of transformational politics in "multitude". My own position

A 'worldly home' is suggestive of these expanded horizons of our experiences. It signifies vastness, and also of not being graspable in its entirety. It is also, at the same time, an indication of the boundedness, smallness –not pettiness – as opposed to its counterpart – "other-worldly". A worldly home is circumscribed with the problems of this world, and the need to find solutions for them here. It suggests concomitance with the political economy of the times and shuns versions of solipsistic existence across time and place. It is the need to operate in a certain worldliness, in a language that is in currency, away from mysticism. Worldliness thus suggests situatedness – to be situated in concrete historical conditions, beset with problems arising from those conditions and to be resolved there. It does not arrogate to itself a position of other-worldliness from which transcendental solutions can be formulated. It is also suggestive of the commonplace, devoid of the spectacular, something very worldly as opposed to "out of this world".

One of the earliest interventions of Edward Said has been to wrest for the text a "worldliness" (1975*a*)[4] against the notions of ideality of the text or its complete determinacy in the context. The worldliness of the text, in the work of Said, is the dual existence of the text, one in its ideal form and the other its actualization in the immediate historical conditions. A text is not solely determined by its material conditions, it looms over temporalities as yet to be spoken. Yet it is spoken, anew, in each historical contexts. Texts "affiliate" (1983) themselves to the historical context, they are participants in the power play of the historical juncture. They do not just reflect, but actively create realities, effect

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regarding politics under globalization is to remind of the refractions of positionalities often achieved, to the detriment of the marginalized, under the expanse of such configurations as "global solidarity". In the binaries of global north/south the subtlety and situatedness in the operations of power is often lost.

[4] Later the essay appeared in a book which was a collection of essays on related themes, see Said (1983).

limitations on who can and how to speak about what can be spoken of. Said was following, in the wake of Foucault, inserting the text into the making of the context itself. Though there has been at least one earlier attempt (Jauss, 1970 [1967]) to attempt a cartography of the presentness of texts and its reiterations over time, it shied away from invoking the role of social power and limited itself to aesthetic reception and production. The question of power was central to Said who implicated the critic too placing himself within the circuits of power relations, in his choice of texts, in his attitude towards the texts, his judgement about the texts and the audience, the context of the critical endeavour and the extend of the willingness to perceive its own history as it produces history, etc. Through the concept of affiliation, Said (1983) was also pointing out the necessity, in the modern world, to break communities formed on essences and instead rediscover ways of community formations. Robbins (1983) has noted the affinity between Said's own homelessness and the affinity it has with the idea of worldliness[5] – the latter term suggests, with relation to the text and the critic that they at the same time have been taken away from their ideal locations, but is in active interaction at their sojourn.

The expanse and the situatedness, the minor as well as the cosmopolitan nature characterises Said's "worldliness", though its primary concern has been literary texts. In our study the text has been broadened to mean a cultural text rather than the strictly literary. Malabar is thus a worldly text for us, existing at the same time over the ages, yet participating in the now-ness of its existence which is novel each time.

[5]Also noted by Giroux (2004), although Robbins and Giroux have contradictory opinions regarding the implication of worldliness for professionalism – while the former sees in the call for an engagement with the mortal rather than eternal a call to professionalism (Robbins, 1983: 75), the latter is emphatic of the anti-professional stance of Said. One needs to pay attention to the strictly qualified "professionalism" in the cited instance as the essay in the first half does attack professionalism, especially of the Paul de Man variety.

Minor Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism has been a term for some intense discussion in the recent years. The various meanings attributed to the term ranges from a condition of being away from one's own culture and territory and meaningfully so ("at home in the world")[6] to more particular meanings suggesting a regime of human rights, specific directions in institutionalisation of the state, etc. The responses to the discussion has ranged from an outright rejection of the term as a fraud morality after the imperial powers have lost their pre-eminence (Kagan, 2003) to sustained engagement with the advantages of pursuing the course of cosmopolitanism in the juridico-legal order, in the establishment of international solidarities, in fashioning lives, etc. As such the broad range of the semantic spectrum of cosmopolitanism corresponds to the matter at hand in our dissertation which deals with a people who have had a long history of maritime trade as well as migration. The dissertation also deals with the intersection of popular movements and juridico-political order. But it is necessary to state here that we attribute, also, to cosmopolitanism, a progression towards democracy, insofar as the term means greater participation of people in the making of political dispensation as well as the language that governs their being.[7]

[6]The home-world separation was crucial in formulating a national essence to the otherwise cosmopolitan form of the nation-state. Chatterjee (1993*a*) shows that Indian nationalism effected a binary of home and the world such that home was the realm of culture while world stood for material progress. To be at home in the world in this sense would be a transcendence of one's own narrow cultural location in a claim to universality.

[7]Thus carrying an ethical weight, and not just a term that denotes being able to converse in the world. For example, Waldron (2000) argues that true cosmopolitanism is to be inserted in one's culture, and as far his argument goes, without recourse to seeing that culture from outside, which is then identity politics and is

The question of a minor cosmopolitanism is at once a challenge in identifying the cosmopolitan while stressing the particular. In Marx's "On the Jewish Question" (1992 [1844]) one notices a curious irony in the case of the Jew; he is resented for his religion and cultural particularism even as the civil society is, and this was Marx's point, effectively Jewish in a secular way – it has in the secular sphere duplicated the aloofness that characterise the Jew for each law is a law to protect the individual, forgetting that human beings ought to have a communal existence. This ironic Jew, as exemplified in Bruno Bauer's scathing criticism of them (which Marx tears apart in this brilliant piece of materialist analysis), is reduced to a cultural detail, while, and this could be read off Marx, his real claim to universality has been usurped, his role in the universality erased as would require a forceful exposition. In the civil society, the Jew's demand for equality is met with either a demand of assimilation, or a suggestion towards separatism.

Aamir Mufti (2007) argues that the Jewish question, as it played out in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is with much relevance to the question of minorities in the colonies. The Jewish question has refracted across Europe providing a vocabulary to speak about minorities as they posed a question mark on the validity of Enlightenment ideals. Drawing out the cultural resources which sought to settle the minority question in India territorially (through Partition) in the lines of the Zionist solution in Europe (which ultimately made a nation of the Jews and thus resolved the question of the irreducibility of the Jew to the national form), Mufti draws parallels in the Muslim question in India to the Jewish question in Europe. Both of these identities were not just understood to be particularistic, but also, by virtue of their particularism, a stumbling block to the

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undesirable. But what justifies this unqualified valorisation of culture? Here is an instance where cosmopolitanism has acquired a non-worldly character, away from questions of power and politics.

Enlightenment ideas about self-determination, which primarily called for a non-reliance on tradition. At the same time, these two identities were also understood to be supra-national. They were caught between insufficient belonging and too narrow allegiances. To record the responses of the Jewish and the Muslim writers to the demands for either assimilation or separatism is also to delineate the minor critique of the majoritarian nation form which insists on complete correspondences of cultural resources to its territorial boundaries.

By configuring the nation as the limit of the horizon of aesthetic responses, the critic is implicated in the erasure of other cosmopolitanisms. Indeed the majoritarian cosmopolitanism of today's world is the ubiquity of the nation form itself, which on the one hand is cosmopolitan by its sheer disrespect for geographical boundaries establishing itself in every clime, and on the other, as Derrida reminds us (1992), claims for its own particular nationalist content a monopoly of cosmopolitan vision.

Mufti's work has deep resonances on my own. The Mappila community has been, as being part of the larger Muslim population, on the one hand accused of dangerous anti-national contacts with Pakistan or, lately, Saudi Arabia, their allegiance to these primarily owing to the extra-national character of Islam itself; and on the other hand, marked by the incomplete nature of its assimilation with the secular logic of the state of Kerala, still voting for parties on the basis of communal affiliations, marked by the dialect of language, caprice of spending, economic and family planning, etc. The Kerala mainstream has sought refuge in the contradictory nature of multiple narratives on the Muslim man and woman which casts the Mappilas as the other of the common destiny of the state. The figure of the Pardha-clad Muslim woman –"the penguin" – operates as a phantasmatic figure. That is, it is this figure which gives the support to imagining a particular kind of state, which is the state of

"Malayalam", and a particular kind of community, that is Muslim. On the one hand, the Muslim woman is a figure of the yet incomplete project of the state to deliver a uniform culture, and on the other hand, it speaks about the Muslim community, especially the Muslim man – of his atavism, his insensitivity, as also his undesirability, his paunch, his baldness.The new representation of the Muslim man in Kerala, which is essentially the core of such perverse imagination as the concept of "Love Jihad", is in effect much more perverse than the previous representations of the Muslim community reflected through its "suffering" women. While the earlier project assumed community as a region as yet unwelcoming of modernity, but could be delivered from its backwardness with ample supply of culture and governmental schemes, the new image of a Love Jihadi, the educated, well-off, handsome, sensitive Muslim is that of an appropriator – one who appropriates the language, as well as the statist projects such as higher education, to advance one's own fanaticism.

It is not my intention in this dissertation to study the representation of the Muslim man/woman in the mainstream media. The focus here is on the responses of the Muslim/minor exemplary figure to the newer options of governmentality and sovereignty as obtained in the postcolony[8], which corresponds to the options of assimilation or separatism

[8]The word "postcolony" is taken from Achille Mbembe who use the word to denote the condition of decolonised Africa. According to Mbembe, a postcolony is characterised by *commandement* (a patrimonial use of state resources which turn the state into a fetish), a vulgarity or excess of power, a regime of simulacrum, plurality of identities, impossibility of a totality in the structure, sharing of space between the earlier coloniser and colonised, a sharing of the episteme between the rulers (*commandment*) and the ruled, etc. Mbembe argues that the postcolonial subject has visibility only when two activities overlap: in the rituals that uphold the fetish that is the commandment, and in the deployment of a sense of fun towards the fetish which is turned into an artefact. See Mbembe (2001). It can be seen that not every postcolony is of the same content. Primary among the difference for our sake is the lack of a common episteme between the two domains in India, as explicated by Chatterjee (2004). What characterises the postcolony in the present study is the governmentalization of the state and the logic of communal representation.

that a Muslim or a Jew of an earlier time was advised to opt for. While sovereignty suggests that the particularistic group form a nation-state unto themselves and accept their current nationality as an Imaginary to be reckoned with, an equal like oneself, the logic of governmentality requires one to demand precisely in terms of one's particularism – of belonging to particular culture, or being subject to particular economic worries, etc. Minor cosmopolitanism functions in the interstices of these two demands, denoting first of all an inability or unwillingness to cast the national form as and at the limits of one's horizon, and unwilling to forgo the subject's cultural situatedness. Its negotiations with the nation is immediate, unable to ensconce itself safely within; its resources are cross-national and cross-temporal.

It is also pertinent that I point out at the moment two more functions that I have in mind when I have inflected 'cosmopolitanism' with 'minor'. First of all, it is to insist on the particularity of every cosmopolitanism. The focal point of our discussion in the next chapter is Kant's "Cosmopolitan Right"; the third right after the political right and international right which together could provide a condition of perpetual peace. It is nevertheless pertinent to see the particular nature of Kant's right, right at the centre of discussions on cosmopolitanism today, which ensues from a particular concept of world history which moves along the plane of property acquisition.[9] The second indication in the inflection of cosmopolitanism is to show the non-modality of the cosmopolitanism under discussion. The Nation-state form is an excellent example of a cosmopolitanism which has become, due to exigencies of history, a successful model across space. The non-modality of minor cosmopolitanism indicates the

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[9]Kant's cosmopolitan right, its location in his intellectual career, as well as the contemporary responses to this right form the organizing principle of the next chapter.

cross-national as well cross-temporal characteristic of the cosmopolitanism deemed invalid by the dominant cosmopolitanism of the nation-form. A finer detailing would suggest that the 'minor' is not a question of social location of the agents whom we study, but rather the strange topographies of their solutions, away from the resolution of sovereignty or governmentality, faced as they were with a task of translation across registers. The minor here is thus an indication of its firm placing in the context in which they operated, with no pretence to replication across time and space. Its resources brook no borders, yet its space of action is clearly bounded in time, place, and language.

It still requires us to see how the different cosmopolitanisms stand with relation to the asymmetry of power relations implied in the governmentalized State in a postcolony. Chapter 2 of this dissertation is solely dedicated to the discussion on that front and we shall postpone it until then.

Mourning and Mimicry

Our study is as much about the formations and figurations of newer self-definitions as it is about the loss of older ones. How are these losses negotiated? Within the frame of minor cosmopolitanism, the present work advances the analysis via the two tropes of mourning and mimicry, shown to be the modes of minor cosmopolitanism at work. The image of mourning comes from Freud's study "Mourning and Melancholia" (1971 [1925]) where the two terms denote two different responses to loss. While mourning suggests a successful burial of the loss and the recovery of the mourning subject from the loss to live his/her life another day, melancholia suggests the inability to do so since the bonds of attachment are strong and the very strength of it becomes an object of desire. The loss in melancholia is not the loss of an

object inasmuch as it is the loss of the object as an object of love. But the bonds between the self and the object, rather than cutting loose and thereby freeing the subject, displaces itself to the self, and the bond (*cathexes*) of love is soon turned to hate – an unconscious hate as opposed to the conscious living through it of mourning.

Melancholia has been associated with traditionalism and conformism, a sense in which it was used by Walter Benjamin and has been deliberated upon and rendered in harsher tones by Wendy Brown in her chastisement, in the wake of Stuart Hall, of the contemporary Left: "more attached to its impossibility than to its potential fruitfulness…most at home dwelling not in hopefulness but in its own marginality and failure…thus caught in a structure of melancholic attachment to a certain strain of its own dead past, whose spirit is ghostly, whose structure of desire is backward looking and punishing" (Brown, 1999: 26). Melancholia suggests that the melancholic subject is unaware of precisely what about the object was so deeply loved and is lost now. Brown's diagnosis is that the lost thing of the Left's political unconscious was the certainty of an earlier politics to lead to the "good, the right, and the true" (22).The preservation of the bonds of love has turned narcissistic. And as in Freud's schema of melancholia, the former intense love of class politics and economistic analysis has been now substituted with an intense hatred for identity politics and poststructuralist analysis. Brown does not want to, or so she says, "recommend a therapy" (27), but the suggestion is in evidence as she invokes Stuart Hall and his insistence on the need to engage in the politics of language – not that language would change reality, but that it could harness reality to desired political effects (24).

What Brown accuses the left of, could be easily transposed as an accusation on a party like Muslim League which carries the taint of particularism. After all, Muslim League

has been a beneficiary of the Communal Award as instituted by the British. In Malabar from their establishment in the late 1930s till 1952 they have contested and won the seats reserved for Muslims. They even demanded a separate state of Moplastan in 1947 which would consist of Malabar and parts of south Karnataka, a place they claimed to have a distinct culture. Is Muslim League then bearing the melancholia of the lost *Ummah*, the global community of Muslims lost after the end of Caliphate in Turkey and called to avenge in 1921?

My dissertation has to be understood as a modest attempt at reading the Muslim politics in Malabar against such assumptions. My contention is that the Muslim politics of Malabar has discovered itself in the language of the times. It has made an active effort in translating itself to the realities of the postcolonial life and politics, as is my attempt to show here. In other words, Muslim politics in Malabar has sought a worldly existence. It is due to this reason that I have used "the impossibility of mourning" rather than melancholia.

My suggestion at the 'impossibility' is to denote the more difficult nature of mourning, and is informed by a particular usage of that term by Jacques Derrida, who referring to the impossibility of forgiveness, states: "forgiveness must announce itself as impossibility itself. It can only be possible in doing the impossible" (Derrida, 2001: 32-3). In Derrida, the impossibility suggests an absence of precedence and a demand for decision, to transgress all the laws that govern the action and thereby to discover anew.[10] It requires a

[10]Or, as described elsewhere by Derrida with reference to Hospitality: "It is as though hospitality were the impossible: as though the law of hospitality defined this very impossibility, as if it were only possible to transgress it, as though the law of absolute, unconditional, hyperbolical hospitality, as though the categorical imperative of hospitality commanded that we transgress all the laws (in the plural) of hospitality, namely, the conditions, the norms, the rights and the duties that are imposed on hosts and hostesses, on the men or women who give a welcome as well as the men or women who receive it." (Derrida, 2000: 75-7)

decision on the part of the minor subject to attend to the unicity of the Other, the memory of an earlier community. The impossibility of mourning thus suggests a sovereign decision on the part of the self in which the mourning has to be carried out, often flouting the languages that govern our being. It is this decisionistic nature of mourning that adds to the minor character of cosmopolitanism –that its rules cannot be set out in advance, that the transcendence is often a transcendence of the registers that define our place. The decisionistic nature as well as the minor status both point to the non-modality of politics. As opposed to the example of the Left politics in Brown's analysis which is melancholic in its reaction to the new times, the decisionistic subject acknowledges the need to confront the new times without recourse to precedence. It is through this mode that he seeks to transcend his positioning in the past as well as his place in the present, and thus provides the exemplarity of his transcendence.

The second trope that runs through the analysis, which covers the mode of the realization of decision, is that of mimicry. Lacan's approach towards mimicry is characterized by a refusal to identify in the mimetic activity a purely functionalist motive as well as a strictly interpersonal domain. Lacan identifies three dimensions of mimicry – travesty, camouflage, and intimidation. Camouflage is an act of becoming mottled against a mottled background. The stress is on fitting in, not by harmonizing, which would make it transparent and thereby imply a loss of identity, but by being a stain against a stained background. The impure nature of it has to be recovered to comprehend its effectivity. Travesty intends a sexual finality, but again, it is a level constituted quite different from the sexual aim. It displays thus certain transformation which has as its object other than the end of the task at hand and has to be studied as a performative in different registers, facing

another gaze. Finally, the mimetic act in intimidation is strictly not mimesis at all, but an impersonation of a bigger being, a process of over-valuation (Miller, 1977: 98-100).

The dimensions of camouflage, travesty and intimidation is pertinent to political analysis too. All these are dimensions of translating politics in the postcolony. Camouflage is about the preservation of identity while being part of the stain – it is not an act of being invisible, but to maintain one's externality while making oneself fit into the picture. In the minority politics the dimension of camouflage refers to the attempts at maintaining cultural identities while stopping short of separatism. Travesty, though of a sexual nature in Lacan's elaboration here, is also a divorce of ends and means, such that the means could invest in pleasures not strictly consummated at the end. In a governmental state this would signal to the disparity between the means and the end with relation to demands that are of ideological nature but has to be in the language of culture/economy. Intimidation, as we shall see in Chapter 4, is a process of overvaluation. Each of these dimensions require a close analysis of the situations at hand, such that they point to a minor subject active in the appraisal of times rather than wallowing in melancholia.

Each of these dimensions, needless to say, smacks of deception. Aren't these contrary to my aims and in fact helping the process of strengthening the accusation against minority politics of being a convenience until a majority is achieved? Isn't this a confirmation that, after all, the minority desires the majoritarian and is only patiently awaiting that day? Definitely no. These strategies are the very predicates of being minor, they are there only under these specific conditions. The claims on what a particular community would do if they are in majority cannot be based on their reactions to some other

structure in place. This is a study of politics as it is obtained in the here and now without attempting any projections beyond the period under study.

In Lacan's formulation, mimicry is not exhausted by the interpersonal dimension. It is rather also a positioning of oneself in the symbolic. The ambivalence involved in the mimetic process has been illustrated by Homi Bhabha (1984) who has shown, in the colonial context, how the anglicised native man disturbs the colonial discourse precisely because it works between registers, being at the same time "the subject of the scopic drive and the object of colonial surveillance" (130) making the colonial discourse caught between the need to show progress as well as to cling on to civilizational justification for colonial possessions a mockery in the struts and frets of those who occupy the disjunction between a native body and a colonial mind. In our own study impersonation denotes the ambivalence of registers which undercuts the claim to the finality of the symbolic, a degree of mottledness of the postcolonial logic of state. Lacan is keen to state that the act of mimicry is an act of being in the act itself, a bid against symbolic dissolution, "to be inserted in a function whose exercise grasps it" (Miller, 1977: 100).

There has been a governmentalization of state in the postcolony, and it has been claimed that politics in much of the world now, being as it is postcolonial, is the politics of the governed carried out through "political society" (Chatterjee, 2004). Mimicry seeks to imply a notion of transformation of the self in a bid to alter the fundamental conditions of governmentality. It is an act on the side of dignity defined variously than the narrow coordinates of subsistence. Dignity involves being able to be comfortable with one's past, an acknowledgement of agency in the present, to be not reduced to being recipients. This

dissertation is concerned with how the fact of numerical inexistence was negotiated and attempted to overcome from a minor position in Malabar.

The Worlds of Malabar

Malabar became a definitive region on the map only by 1792, when, after a disastrous campaign for Tipu Sultan in the second Anglo-Mysore war, the areas wrested by him from Travancore, a British ally, were ceded to the British. In 1799 Tipu, an ally of the French, would himself fall to his enemies' swords, unable to resist the onslaught from all four sides of his kingdom. This settled Wayanad too as part of Malabar, which was ruled as part of Bombay Presidency. The district was joined with some other districts in 1800 to form the new presidency of Madras. . The district was broadly divided to North and South and had a total of ten *taluk*s.

The hazy contours of Malabar, however, go back many centuries. It had a recorded history of Phoenecians visiting the coast in roughly 1000 BC. Its size varied from document to document, covering at once the entire western coast of India, to the region between Kodungalloor, supposedly the erstwhile legendary port of Muziris, to south Karnataka. Like the *polis* of ancient times**,** it had multiple locations along the coasts of Indian Ocean. Its etymology is still uncertain, at times attributed to Sanskrit, at others to Arabic, and even elsewhere to Marco Polo.

While the nationalist movement found takers among the middle class in Malabar, this was mostly restricted to English educated Nairs. The Mappilas, the Tiyyas and the Brahmin landlords (jenmis) stayed away from it, each for their own varied reasons. The participation

from Malabar in the national meetings of the Congress was dismal upto 1919, and did not have a single Mappila. However, the hesitant steps by the Congress towards the plight of tenants coupled with the issue of protecting Khilafat in Turkey brought Mappilas in huge numbers to the District Congress Conventions from 1919 onwards. The Khilafat-Non-cooperation-Tenant movement saw the meteoric rise of the Indian National Congress in Kerala.

The Mappilas,[11] who formed the single largest community of Malabar, were notorious in colonial literature for their fanaticism. The Mappila reactions were often termed as "outrages", for the British could not comprehend the logic behind the desire for suicidal attacks on the part of Mappilas where the number of opponents killed were negligible compared to Mappila losses. The Mappila Outrages Acts of 1854 brought further repression on the Mappilas. The dispersed and episodic acts of rebellion nevertheless continued and a special Police force was created for the Mappila Zone in 1885. However, there were outbreaks again in 1894 and 1896. The Mappila insurgency was explained in terms of fanaticism and a desire to get to heaven. Ansari (2005) has pointed out that the British could comprehend the Mappila acts of rebellion only in terms of fanaticism, such that the words came to be the organising feature of a host of actions of rebellion inspite of the divergent causes in "economic hardships, mere criminality and madness" (Ansari, 2005:49)

The 1920 Nagpur session of the Congress saw the party's reorganization on linguistic lines, and subsequently the Kerala Province Congress Committee was formed at Calicut on 30 January 1921. The Congress started growing in the villages of Malabar. For the purpose of Khilafat agitation Kerala was treated as a separate province with the consent of the Central

[11]Various origins have been attributed to this word which in earlier times denoted children of mixed Arab and Malabari origin. For a discussion on etymology, see Miller (1976).

Khilafat Committee and around the same time the Kerala Province Khilafat Committee too was formed. The Non-cooperation movement started in Malabar in January 1921 with some lawyers suspending their practice. However, in the Mappila dominated areas of southern Malabar, the Hindus were largely absent in the Khilafat-Non-cooperation movements, to such an extent that, in the words of Moyarath Sankaran "the success of each meeting and speech was measured in terms of the number of Hindus who joined the Congress" (Gangadharan, 2008: 75). At the same time Congress membership was significantly less in the Muslim majority taluk of Eranad. Thus, while the Muslims attended the Congress agitations of Khilafat- Non-Cooperation *en masse*, only a few were officially members. The nationalist movements also used social violence to ensure cooperation with the agitators. Social boycott of the British sympathisers was the most prevalent *modus operandi*.

1921 witnessed the culmination of sporadic Mappila acts of resistance and the Khilafat movement. The Mappila rebellion of 1921 remains one of the most contentious uprisings of the freedom struggle, matched only by Chauri Chaura for the notoriety it earned in the nationalist mainstream. Variously termed as 'madness', 'fanatic' and communal, the sheer variance of its lived memory primarily among the Muslims and Hindus of Malabar still makes it 'that which dare not speak its name'. The rebellion commenced on 20 August, 1921 and was put down by the end of that year. According to official estimates 2337 rebels were killed, 1652 injured, 5995 captured and 39,340 surrendered voluntarily (Gangadharan, 2008: 250 *n*).

The Muslim character of the rebellion was very much in evidence. The use of Mappila war-songs, usually narrating the battles of Prophet and early years of Islam, in the war marches by Mappilas has been widely cited. One of the three leaders of the rebellion, Ali

Musliar, was a religious teacher, educated in Makkah, whose ancestors were involved in previous Mappila rebellions. He is believed to have preached violence believing that an offensive on the British Empire in India by the King of Afghanistan was imminent. A Malayalam version of a speech by Moulana Muhammad Ali in Madras was also in circulation and spoke about the duties of the Muslims in the event of an Afghan invasion. Some even expected the arrival of Mahdi, the just ruler to arrive in the end of times according to Muslim traditions. F.B. Evans, the Collector of the Malabar District from 1915, stated that the slogans of the rebels were '*Mahatma Gandhi ki jai*, *Shaukat Ali ki jai*, mingled with *takbir'* (Gangadharan, 2008: 176). The rebellion, which started as a part of the Khilafat-Non-Cooperation movement in Malabar, later attracted much criticism for its alleged anti-Hindu character, forced conversion, looting of property, violence, etc. Gandhi said that the Mappilas have "gone mad"[12] and the event remained a scar in the Congress annals. The reports and counter reports of the happenings in Malabar, fuelled by local incidents, gave rise to many communal conflicts in northern India in the subsequent years - Multan (1922), Sohranpur (1923), Kohat (1924), Calcutta (1926) and Bombay (1929) (Gangadharan, 2008: 261 *n*). The rebellion also forced the Indian National Congress in Kerala to turn itself into affairs exclusively dealing with the Hindu sectarian issues with an aim to create a unified Hindu society which could then become its base. The Congress activities hence turned towards matters of temple entry and untouchability (Menon, 1994). Gangadharan (2008) notes that the alternative system was clearly rooted in the Islamic idea of Khilafat, with a view to social justice.

The tragedy of heavy-handed repression and the isolation by the Congress after the rebellion led to deep disquiet. It is in this climate that the Muslim League makes an entry in

[12]M.K. Gandhi, CW, vol.21, p.120; quoted in Ansari, 2005.

Malabar, and having set up in the region in 1937, has remained successful in the region ever since. The major force in Malabar, the Communist Party was simultaneously building up its base in northern Malabar, and in 1948 E.M.S. Nambudiripad published *Keralam Malayalikalude Mathrubhumi* [Kerala, the motherland of Malayalis] which established Kerala as a region with specific history and laid foundations for the Marxist side of the linguistic struggles of the '50s. A move for linguistic reorganization was current in Congress from the '20s.

In 1947 Muslim League demanded a state of Moplastan in Malabar as part of Pakistan, but the move was soon aborted. The League claimed the region to have a distinct culture and history and therefore distinct destiny.

In the meanwhile the Communists were planning revolutionary struggle in the agrarian belt of Malabar. Armed clashes took place between armed agricultural labourers and the Malabar Special Police. The linguistic reconstitution of states fused Malabar with Kasargode to its north and Tiru-Kochi (a combination of the two erstwhile princely states of Travancore and Cochin) to its south to form the Kerala state, coming into effect from the 1st of November, 1956.

The career of the two major parties in Malabar other than the Congress – the Communists and the Muslim League – are instances of two different kind of universalisms, both suspect, allegedly more loyal to forces outside the nation. 1952 marked the year in which both the Communists and the Muslim League would fight general elections in India, thus beginning a period in which the two parties would ally and oppose each other in the curious twists of coalitional politics in Kerala. Yet, while in the case of Communists the internationalism, the revolutionary line and the pro-British stance during Quit India struggle

could soon give way to a popular mobilization which redefined the party in terms of the backbone of a different contemporary experience for Kerala as a region and as a model for the greater nation, and even as part of the special Kerala heritage and difference from the rest of India (save Bengal, occasionally), Muslim League has found itself, inspite of repeated electoral successes and ministerial berths, unable to translate their particularism to a universalism. Muslim League sought to effect within the hegemonic secular logic that informed the rhetoric of the left politics a cognitive division between minority politics and communalism. One of its most succinct expression is given by Pulikkottil Hyder (1879-1975):

> Wake up quick, Mussalaman,
> Join Muslim League
> Don't you hear the upright calls
> To organize in full.
> Let us live as Muslims
> Let us die as Muslims
> And with peace to others
> Let us live with our spines straight...
> We are not communalists
> Nor should there be communalism
> It is not our way
> To argue on communal lines.
> We will not go to Pakistan
> We will not be a Pakistani
> If you dream to send us to Pakistan
> Your dream will forever remain one.
> We do not doubt a bit

That on this Indian soil
Built on eternity
We have a right. ("We, Indian Citizens" Karasseri, 2007: 171-2)

As in the song above, the voice of Muslim League had to adopt a double posture faced with double addressee – the Muslim and the others. The party had to articulate two positions, one of right and the other of community, insisting on particularity to the Muslim, and on the right to be treated as a general citizen to the state.

Though both the Congress and the Communists have over the period worked along with Muslim League, the taint of "communalism" is yet to go away, and has become stronger in the recent years, which have also seen an unprecedented strengthening of the party on the electoral front.The Muslim League had, in the initial years, owned up its legacy of having derived itself as the Indian edition of the earlier formation led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The recent years have seen, at least at the popular level, a disowning of that past.[13] The party has however kept alive the traditional link which the Mappila political leadership has with the Arab countries, which framed a cosmopolitanism of the Mappila politics of the past. The Mappila traditional political leadership were routinely educated, and in many cases born, in Arabia. This has been a fact from the earliest records of Mappila resistance, namely the resistance to the Portuguese in the 16th century. The Syeds ("Sayyids", or "Tangals", as they are called in Kerala) who assumed the political leadership of Malabar Muslims continued to be educated in Makkah or Egypt in the nineteenth century, and the trend is still prevalent, with the latest popular Muslim leadership secure with the family at Kodappanakkal House at

[13] For a history of the early activities of Muslim League in Kerala and its justifications, see Badagara (2005) and (2007)

Panakkad in Malappuram district, who claim inheritance from the Ba'alawi clan in Yemen and have been variously educated across the Muslim world.

Minor Translations of the National Project

The time frame of the dissertation is the first three decades of Indian independence, and to put it precisely, it is 1947 to 1977. Yet any time frame is arbitrary, for movements do not just take place in overlapped times, they also take place in the circularity, which Walter Benjamin has insightfully called a 'then' and 'now'. "In reality, there is not a moment that would not carry with it *its* revolutionary chance – provided only that it is defined in a specific way, namely as the chance for a completely new resolution of a completely new problem" (Benjamin, 2006: 402). Benjamin's emancipation lives the split life of Said's text, in its ideal condition as well as in its immediate circumstances. The texts that we study are placed within their circumstances, yet they draw on resources which cannot be fixed in the now, leading circular lives through collective memory. Movements live reiterated lives. The time period has to be hence taken as just convenient landmarks on a road which extend beyond the signboards. However, there are certain considerations that have gone to the period. 1947 is obviously the definitive year of India's formal independence and its emergence from being a colony. How much of the colony has still remained within is condensed in the ambivalence of 'post' in 'postcolony', of temporal succession, of having been built upon, of aberrant continuities. 1977 looks more hazy. But the '70s is a significant period for the region. It was in the '70s that the Muslim League, a party which could be said as driving its electoral existence solely from the region of Malabar, became a formidable consolidated force in Kerala, handling important portfolios. The party even enjoyed the post of Chief Minister of

the state through the person of CH Muhammad Koya for a brief period in 1979. The '70s also marked a period of the Gulf migrations in Malabar. Migrations of an earlier period, predating our time frame has been to the plantation zones of Malaya, Ceylon, etc. The new wave of migrations has greatly altered the material conditions of Malabar life – a topic for a different study. One notes that it was as a means of coming to terms with the increased labour migrations after the Second World War and formal decolonisation in many parts of the world that the last decade, especially, has seen high stakes in the formulation of cosmopolitanism. Are we then forcing a contemporary term to study an older period? Very much so, inasmuch as theory itself is an act of retrospection, such that the actions are packed into a narrative in the here and now. However, what we discuss as minor cosmopolitanism is located very much in the particular characteristics of that time, characterised by a pedagogic state, logic of indirect rule of communities, and local configurations of electoral and cultural power. It would be noted, as we proceed, that our local resolutions did not have recourse to international solidarities or the regime of human rights as is wont now in a globalized world.

This dissertation reads the works of two exemplary writers, Vaikom Muhammad Basheer (1908-1994) and CH Muhammad Koya (1928-1983). While the latter is from Malabar, Basheer had made Malabar his home from the late '50s. Both of them are immensely popular, Basheer for his writings, and CH for his achievements in electoral politics. I have studied these writers as operating in the ambivalence of the two registers of nation-state and Islamic universality.

While we read Basheer through his writings, CH, apart from his writings, also has to be read through the major political events of his time, as I have tried to do by juxtaposing the analysis of CH's works with the creation of the district of Malappuram in 1969. It is the marked character of these writers as well as the Mapplia Muslim in Malabar, and the

apparent failure of translation to a universality and thus in the hitherto battle for hegemony, that I have chosen them to read the negotiations over the nation-idea and novel imaginations of community formation.[14]

Basheer's achievements in the Malayalam literary field as well as CH Muhammad Koya's achievements in politics defy their minor status by the gains they have achieved in their respective fields. Neither of these writers is, I claim, the representatives of the minorities in Malabar as a whole. Surely even the minorities have internal differences of class and denominations. Basheer and CH Muhammad Koya held contrasting opinions about faith and nationalism. For Basheer while faith represented a domain that could pervade religious differences and hence displayed a relation of immanence[15], for CH faith was a principle of secular ordering itself. Basheer does not seem to have been comfortably disposed towards Muslim League. On the other hand, there is ample evidence that at personal level both of them were quite appreciative of each other (Malayil, 2012). Basheer has in one and the same occasion called CH "a friend" while castigating Jinnah's League (2009*f*: 20 & 39). We shall see the implications of these positions for minor cosmopolitanism in the following chapters.

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[14]Curiously the historical narratives of the Mappila community, inasmuch as it is strictly 'political' ends with the 1921 Mappila rebellion against the British. See, for example, SaiduMuhammad (1951), Dale (1980), Hussain (2008), Mandalankunnu (2009). Studies on the contemporary are usually pitched at the sociological register, for example U.Muhammad (2007). Miller (1976) and Lakshmi (2012) are attempts at comprehensive study of the community, but the contemporary often revolves around educational practices, and in the former, of electoral successes of the Muslim League. Osella and Osella (2008) do read contemporary political aspects, but the stress is on social reform.

[15]Basheer notes that his first introduction to Islam was through the Qur'anic verse which states that Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth – thus establishing immanence (Basheer, 2009*f*: 36)

Though with such differences between them, each of them do *represent* the minor populations, not through election or delegation, but in a case of substitution, as figures "endowed with a legitimacy to represent" (Prasad, 1999: 46). Basheer and CH Muhammad Koya are figural representatives of a universe informed by the Muslim everyday life. Both Basheer and CH Muhammad Koya are self professedly particular, as we shall see. Both of them also have been treated as particular, the former as the one who opened the doors to the Muslim house, and the latter as one who could successfully deploy fractional politics for particular gain. Detailing of this can wait until after the next chapter. Both of these claims/accusations, needless to say, are descriptions afforded by an access to unmarked secular subjecthood which were not uniformly available. Yet the currency of that description is indicative of the minor status of these figures. This dissertation is just a minor effort to look beyond the buying power of these descriptions and to see in the efforts by these two Muslim men their own attempts to think through the places they found themselves in, in the new dispensation. It is not an endorsement of their politics, each of them different from the other, but a sympathetic reading to see in their attempts the reactions to the limited options extended to the national majority's particular other.

Chapter 3 reads the works of Basheer. The chapter is hinged on the concept of realism and its performance of the nation. The effort is to show the subversion of the realist mode by Basheer and the imagination of a new organizing principle which overcomes the binarist model of postcolonial nation-building. In Chapter 4, CH Muhammad Koya's travel writing and stories of self-fashioning is juxtaposed with the formation of Malappuram district to lay bare an alternative universality based on an organization of the self as opposed to the control of populations put forward by the governmental logic.

But before we attempt such a rereading, it is necessary that we turn our attention to the recent debates on cosmopolitanism, as well as elaborate on a concept of minor cosmopolitanism, which would be my point of departure.

CHAPTER 2:

Towards a Minor Cosmopolitanism

It might seem ironical, in quite a commonsensical way, that one should be speaking about cosmopolitanism right after situatedness, that one should be discussing universalism in the context of regional identity. For, aren't they antonyms of each other? To speak of cosmopolitanism demands of us that we make clear our coordinates in its ever expanding landscape. Pauline Kleingeld, for example, lists out six types of cosmopolitanism that were prevalent in late-eighteenth century Germany. It is not her claim that these six types exhaust the kinds of cosmopolitanism, but that atleast these six varieties, distinguishable from each other, did exist. These types were (i) moral cosmopolitanism which emphasised the belonging of all humans to a single moral community, (ii) "International Federative Cosmopolitanism", which concerned itself with world citizenship, (iii) cosmopolitan law, which was advocated by Kant and concerned itself with the relations of states and individuals belonging to a foreign state, (iv)cultural cosmopolitanism, which advocated a view of world history as the narrative of a single human essence realizing itself differently in different locales, (v) market cosmopolitanism, which trusts the pioneering market forces to usher in a reign of world peace, and (vi) romantic cosmopolitanism, which emphasized shared beliefs, traditions and aesthetic occupations (Kleingeld, 1999). Robert Fine (2007) similarly calls for a distinction between "cosmopolitan outlook" and "cosmopolitan condition". While the outlook is about normative values of living together, the condition just refers to the empirical

situations available, though he is cautious to note that such a categorization of the present moment is itself part of regulative principles which govern our terminologies. On a different register, even within discussing the cosmopolitan outlook, Fine distinguishes three aspects – "its theoretical moment (or way of engaging in concept formation in various social scientific disciplines); its empirical moment (or way of understanding the social phenomena of the modern age); and its normative moment (or way of judging what people do)" (Fine, 2007: 134).

Right at the outset let me make it clear that by cosmopolitanism we designate a project dedicated to an idea of democracy. Thus it concerns itself with the second and third varieties in Kleingeld, those which concern themselves with legal institutions for world citizenship as well as those which define the relations between states and foreign individuals. In Fine's distinctions we are placed at the theoretical moment, i.e., what we aim at is to arrive at a theory of cosmopolitanism that would make itself relevant in a postcolonial context. For those like Mouffe (2013) who insist on the uselessness of the term cosmopolitanism itself considering the so many different meanings that have been attributed to the word this would be another corruption of the word. I would however like to argue that the word still holds good, if not for any other reason, for the fact that no other word can be more appropriate given the range of discussions already available on the subject. However, in my defence I submit that I would like to call this cosmopolitanism a 'minor cosmopolitanism'.

A survey is in order: (i) to delineate the multiple trajectories and nodal points of the very different ideas called 'cosmopolitanism' within our coordinates, (ii) to account for the need for divergence from established cosmopolitanisms, (iii) to define the new cosmopolitanism.

This chapter is dedicated to those ends.

The Kantian Sublimation

The word cosmopolitanism derives from the Greek words *kosmos* (order; world-order; world) and *politēs* (citizen). The idea, first propounded by Stoics and Sophists, was a worldview which asserted the common citizenship of all humans in the world.[1] The concept was central to the eighteenth century French Enlightenment thinkers. Though dating to the classical period, the concept of cosmopolitanism acquires a definitive institutional form in thoughts of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). It is to Kant that we shall turn in our analysis of contemporary cosmopolitanism, for it is Kant who is our direct intellectual predecessor in times of the regime of human rights, war against terrorism, and pre-emptive strike on Weapons of Mass Destruction. It is to Kant we should turn to understand the notion of a world that is not-yet but always-becoming.

In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, written in 1781, Kant explains the laws of nature as necessary principles logically prior to and independent of experience. It was from these *a priori* principles that one can form a coherent and ordered uniformity of experience. The *a priori* principles and ideas of reason are thus, tautologically, independent and prior to experience. The idea of duty is such a Kantian *a priori* with regard to the moral status of the actions of humans. An action, which is issued out of the free will of the human beings, can either be moral or immoral. A moral action is so because it is done out of duty and not desire. These duties are called so because they are "categorical imperatives". The

[1] "cosmopolitanism" in Thomas Mautner (ed.) *Dictionary of Philosophy*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2005. p.127

categorical imperative enjoins us to act in a way such that our actions could become Universal Law. The second formulation of the categorical imperative is to act in such a way that one treats humanity as an end and not as a means. The next imperative is to act as if one were "a law-making member of a universal kingdom of ends" (Kant quoted in Reiss, 1989: 19) Put this way, Man should be his own law-giver. On the contrary, desire, or happiness, cannot be the basis of our actions, or by extension the general law, because they are in principle heteronomous – they depend on consequence, and that too capricious.

Kant's political thoughts could be directly based on his philosophical thoughts abbreviated above. As he would write three years later in his "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose" (1989*b* [1784]), it is the institution of the moral man that is the end of the universal history. In "Perpetual Peace" (1989*a* [1795]) Kant makes a distinction between democracy and Republicanism in favour of the latter as the form of governance required for the moral end. In a democracy the rule of the majority would mean a fusion of legislation, executive and judiciary subject to the whim of the majority. This whim, again, is heteronomous. The Republican dispensation, on the other hand, is one in which there is a separation of powers into legislative, executive and judiciary, in which the laws have to be in the service of *rights*, which assures a polity run in lines of the categorical imperative. By "right" Kant means the situation in which one's possession, not just material but also mental, is deemed to be so by the choice of action of the others too. Rights, for Kant, is what regulates the external relation of possession between men in a society. In his *Metaphysical Elements of Right* (1797), Kant considered human agency and personality to be dependent on a system which could permit the use of useful objects. Every human, by virtue of being human, possesses rights. In order to obtain a situation of relative respect for each other's rights men should enter a civil society bound by law. Thus civil society is necessary

for humanity in Kant's definition of human agency. For the continuation of law and to keep anarchy at abeyance, one should follow the law set by the sovereign. One should not rebel, for rebellion would bring anarchy and therefore loss of humanity or would only be setting up a new sovereign for an old one. One should however engage in public use of reason, that is, engage in criticism of the law so as to improve it, without aiming for rebellion.

Kant's views of the mode of cosmopolitanism arises from the separation of the form and the content. The Republican form as that which assures peace in the polity is imposed by law and is not dependent on the individual good-will of the citizens. If at all, it depends on the individual good-will of the sovereign (considering that the first Republican revolution, Paris 1789, was still a few years away). However, even the evil sovereign is no cause for rebellion[2], for even the asocial qualities in men, the Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra omnes*, was nature's way to bring about the development of the capacities in men towards an era of perpetual peace.[3]

In his "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose", ([1784] 1989*b*), Kant is concerned with what could be the greater purpose of nature with a creature it has willed with Reason. As mentioned earlier, in Kantian teleology, this ultimate goal of history, its very end, is the realization of the moral man. Kant proposes that the full realization of the

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[2] And thus even the French Revolution is against the categorical imperative except that, as Kant justified the Revolution, that the Emperor had already proclaimed it to be a Citizen-State and therefore there was no revolution at all!

[3] Other than the sources mentioned in the text, the section so far was also based on Reiss (1989) and "Property and "Ownership" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
"Property and Ownership" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/property retrieved on 16/11/2013

human potential is only possible in a society. However, man is as asocial as he is social. Kant resolves this tension of the asocial sociality by attributing to this complexity a hidden purpose – of it being the process through which a civil constitution at the level of polity is established. But the enforcement of any law requires a strong sovereign, who is again a man, and therefore subject to all passions of desire observable in a common man. There does not seem to be any solution to this, as man is made of "warped wood" (1989*b*: 46). However, no civil law or sovereign is capable of bringing peace on earth unless states relate to each other on foundations of reason. One should possibly surmise that the exhaustion of war on people would lead to a state of peace. Kant advances nature's role a bit further – that war itself is nature's way of bringing about the state of peace. Thus Kant comes to his eighth proposition:

> *The history of the human race as a whole can be regarded as the realisation of a hidden plan of nature to bring about an internally – and for this purpose also externally – perfect political constitution as the only possible state within which all natural capacities of mankind can be developed completely.* (Kant, 1989*b*: 50; emphasis in original)

The most striking factor about Kant's cosmopolitan purpose is what little role it has for human beings. Nature plays out a scheme which is unobtainable in its individual human actors, unlike in bees and beavers. But it is the very purposiveness in parts – in bees and beavers – that nature exhibits which is the supreme proof for Kant that in its whole too – the human being with free will – nature should hold for itself a purpose (Kant, 1989*b*; 48). However, not all human being is completely unaware of this purposive nature. Kant is aware

of nature's supreme goals. Philosophers are.[4] In his concluding proposition, the ninth one, Kant characterises his own effort at working out the universal history as an act which furthers the purpose of nature itself (Kant, 1989*b*; 51). Thus man is not completely barred of agency. He can, by the very act of delineating the *Idea* (which in Kant's sense would mean "a regulative idea") of a universal history can *will* it to happen. Thus Kant's scheme can be said to have a *telos* in the sense that nature has a 'unifying principle' but not in the sense of an assured destination (Kleingeld, 2009: 175-6). Barbara Herman (2009) reads the *Idea* in this manner of willing and calls it the "proleptic effect" (154) and further demonstrates the teleology as human driven such that for the institution of the moral man it is necessary for the nature to become *human habitat* (159). That is, according to Kant (and Hegel), rights is a necessary requirement for humans through which they can raise intelligent claims against each other thus becoming bounded selves. This is what constitutes the self and the other. Thus civil society as the realm of rights is necessary.[5] However, as long as members of the civil society accept law out of fear, they are being unreasonable, and thus nature has still not inhabited them. The task that Kant has taken upon himself is to make clear to the people why the laws have to be accepted out of respect – they are beneficial to man. Once this

[4] Compared to lawyers, for example – "And they may boast that they know *men* (which is certainly to be expected, since they have to do with so many of them), although they do not know *man* and his potentialities, for this requires a higher anthropological vantage-point" (Kant 1989*a*: 119).

[5] Herman does raise the question if this could be the only possible way of achieving civil society, and if the case be so then if it could be imposed from without. While Kant's answer would be a categorical "no" to the latter question, Herman states that it does not mean one should not benefit from such a civil society. In her opinion, for Kant the teleology meant that the fact that it is possible this way in one part of the world made it universally a possibility (Herman, 2009:164).

knowledge is internalized, it follows that universal history *can be led to* end in the moral man (Herman, 2009).[6]

The elitist nature of the surveying Kantian philosopher is in sync with Kantian thoughts on politics. While Kant upholds freedom and equality for everyone, he also maintains that law-making, on the other hand, should not be a right for everyone. Only those who are independent could make laws. These independent citizens are the *active* citizens, while those dependent on them are *passive* citizens. However, any law by the active citizens are to be enacted and carried out *as if* the passive citizens too were participating.

In "Perpetual Peace" Kant is concerned with three rights – the political, the international, and the cosmopolitan. In the realm of political rights, as discussed above, he identifies the necessity of a Republican constitution with a clear separation of powers between the legislative and the executive as necessary for a cosmopolitan community. The Republican constitution within the states is a definitive article for international peace.[7] Kant opines that it is better if a state is ruled by smaller number of people, and that representative form is the only possible form of a Republican system. Democracy, as in a system in which the people is simultaneously the legislative and the executive, is a logical contradiction

[6] The Kantian notion of the sublime, as explicated in *Critique of Judgement* (1790), suggests a movement from nature to human – from the seeming impotence in the face of the magnitude of nature to the realization of nature's harmony with rationality. Hence our subheading.

[7] Hegel found little reason to be so optimistic. He pointed out that though Republican, the decision of war and peace usually lay with a 'supreme commander'. Further, driving a wedge to Kant's central thesis of the correspondence between cosmopolitanism and rationality, Hegel argued that it is rational to be patriotic, for in a Republic rationality itself is achieved through conformity with the state's institutions. Thus the individuality of the state is dear to the individual as one identifies with the state. A Republic can resort to war to settle internal unrest. See Fine (2007)

because it would not explain the distinction between the accuser and the accused. Seyla Benhabib points out that Kant laid the foundations for a post-Westphalian legal order by conceptualising a move of sovereignty from unfettered authority over everyone and thing within a territory, to a sovereignty that has to be legitimated by adherence to certain values and principles like human rights, rule of law, etc. (Benhabib, 2006: 23)

In the realm of international rights, Kant pronounces six preliminary articles which are pre-requisites for perpetual peace, among which are articles which require states to end all hostilities; not to acquire any other state by inheritance, exchange, purchase or gift; not to involve in covert operations or involve in the domestic issues of another state, etc. The states should enter a federation. However, this federation would not be of coercive nature, but more mediatory. A federation of states is to be preferred over a universal monarchy, for the latter will ultimately turn into a soulless despotism. However, we are lucky enough to have passionate differences:

> It is nonetheless the desire of every state (or its ruler) to achieve lasting peace by thus dominating the whole world, if at all possible. But *nature* wills it otherwise, and uses two means to separate the nations and prevent them from intermingling – *linguistic* and *religious* differences. These may certainly occasion mutual hatred and provide pretexts for wars, but as culture grows and men gradually move towards greater agreement over their principles, they lead to mutual understanding and peace. And unlike that universal despotism which saps all men's energies and end in the graveyard of freedom, this peace

> is created and guaranteed by an equilibrium of forces and a most vigorous rivalry. (Kant 1989*a*: 113-4; emphasis in original)[8]

As is clear, Kant's account is teleological (arguably in the sense of "idea" discussed above), and is dependent on what he calls "providence"[9], and advocates that even if man is crooked and self-serving by nature, this very inclination of man can bring about the ultimate institution of the moral world.

It is the third right, introduced in "Perpetual Peace", what he calls the "cosmopolitan right", that is of much interest in hindsight of a world of labour migration, asylum seekers and *sans papiers*.[10] Benhabib (2006) points out that it was with Kant's third right that individuals, in their capacity as being individuals, acquired a new status of right-bearing

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[8] Robert Fine finds in Kant's cosmopolitanism a profound attempt to resolve the contradiction between the universality of the rights of man and the fact that it nevertheless has to be realized in the state. The turn of events after the initial euphoria in the post Revolution France can also be accounted to be a factor. See Fine (2007: 28).

[9] "In the mechanism of nature, of which man (as a sensory being) is a part, there is evident a fundamental form on which its very existence depends. This form becomes intelligible to us only if we attribute it to design of a universal creator who has determined it in advance. We call this predetermining influence *providence*… (Kant, 1989*a*: 108)

[10] Kleingeld (2009) points out *inter alia* three major differences between the *Idea* and Kant's later writings on cosmopolitanism – "Perpetual Peace" and "Metaphysics of Morals" : (i) while in "Idea" Kant speaks about a federation of states with coercive role, in "Perpetual Peace" he speaks of a weaker federation. Kant then proceeds the idea of strong federation from such a loose coalition, for it would contradict his own cosmopolitan principle if states were to be forced to enter coercive formations, (ii) While in "Idea" Kant is not clear how to resolve the issue of passion in man (in sovereign, especially), in later writings he believes even the self-inclinations of man will cancel out each other in a Republic, and (iii) Kant establishes a third category of public right – the cosmopolitan right – in "Perpetual Peace". This right refers to the right of individuals with regard to other states.

persons in a global civil society. Kant dwells on this the least, but the recalcitrance has only made it more potent. First of all, he defines it as the right of individuals with regards to states (which is synonymous with peoples in Kant whenever the discussion is on international scale – Kleingeld, 2009) to conditions of hospitality alone. By hospitality he means that the stranger would have the right to not be treated with hostility as long as he behaves in a peaceable manner, and that "he can indeed be turned away, if this can be done without causing his death" (Kant, 1989*a*: 105-6). The stranger cannot claim to be entertained as a guest, but the fact of communal possession of the earth's surface allows him to make himself present and *attempt* to enter into relations with native inhabitants.[11] Kant speaks about the conditions favourable to the cosmopolitan right – that trade and wealth is after all the biggest asset of a state, and this requires hospitality.

Kant does not have much to say about the third right, but the cosmopolitan right has turned out to be of great import in times of the two globalizations – of capital and of labour. In the final section of "Perpetual Peace", where Kant formulates his 'another transcendental and affirmative principle of public right', "All maxims which *require* publicity if they are not to fail in their purpose can be reconciled both with right and with politics" (1989*a*: 130; emphasis in the original), the subsection on the maxims of cosmopolitan right is to be noted for its "silence" – "for its maxims are easy to formulate and assess on account of its analogy with international right" (128). The maxims on international right can be briefly said to be of the message that any act of silent usurpation, subterfuge or breaking of promise is bound to

[11] Thus Jeremy Waldron's conflation of Kantian civil society (a resolution of internal conflict) with Kantian cosmopolitan right (which involves individuals in foreign lands) does not stand scrutiny because even though hospitality is a right, it is limited to visitation, except in cases where it will lead to the stranger's death. See Waldron (2000)

fail if it is made public, and insofar as it cannot be made public, it is not in keeping with the concept of right, for right is ultimately to be publicly acknowledged. It is against the backdrop of this final maxim that one should assess the relationship between Kant's cosmopolitan right and colonialism. While Kleingeld (2009) states and Niesen (2007) argues for Kantian anti-colonialist stance in "Perpetual Peace", Gideon Baker (2011) has, drawing from Niesen and Hunter, argued that Kant nevertheless saw the cosmopolitan right as ultimately paving way for a global bounded community with no outsides. In this scheme the cosmopolitan right is just an initial step for the resettlement of property claims on a universal level, such that a global civil society is in the offering. Thus ultimately, the right of hospitality is a necessary current requirement for its being superfluous in the future.

Baker's position does not tally with Kant's statements though. The Kant of "Perpetual Peace" is clear in his preference for a "federal union" rather than a "universal monarchy" (113). If, as Kant states in *Metaphysics of Morals*, civil society is the making public of the societally acknowledged individual possessions evolved out of an age of opposing claims, then surely the possessions acknowledged are so in the process of deliberation and settlement, rather than *a priori*. In that light, Kant's claim of the right of hospitality to be based on the "right to communal possession of the earth's surface" is not be read as the stranger's yet-to-be-settled claim on a strange land. Rather, this particular right, by the very nature of it being given *a priori* rather than subject to the formation of a civil society, thereby thus asserts Kant's statist focus – that the communal possession of land is a pre-given, but to be settled at the level of the state under the aegis of the sovereign, because any interpretation of it that either undercuts the sovereign or elevates it from the level of the state is bound to contradict the final maxim of the requirement of publicity. A global

settlement of possession of earth is only possible under conditions of what Kant would call "soulless despotism".

It might be instructive to consider Kantian teleology as teleology itself and not as prolepsis if we consider along with this the interchangeability between "states" and "peoples", as Kleingeld (2009) notes. Considering that Kant explicitly mentions irreducible cultural differences ("religious" and "linguistic") as being a guaranteed impediment for universal monarchy (and hence a boon), it is clear that Kant's conception of Right is not culturally specific. Rather, civil society is an(y) arrangement that comes into being as a settlement for mutually agreeing upon possession. Kant is clear that this agreement is bound to happen, teleologically, but at the same time clear that there is bound to be cultural differences forever – the implication being that civil society is not an exportable product, for it is universal, and so is the case with the Right bearing citizen. Thus, what we find in Kant is not "reducing subjects to bearers of rights" (Baker, 2011: 113) in the sense of defining them through the lens of a particular culture. Even though it could be argued, even if in the absence of a single empirical evidence, that not all cultures are individualistic, it could also be argued as vehemently, given the evidence, that Kant does not *will* it to be either. That is, the idea of a universal civil society *apropos* Kant does not require foreign intervention. The state is the site of particularity in Kant, at least of religious and linguistic, and is our guarantee against "soulless despotism".

Though concerned with the framework of institutions, their mandates and modes, Kant is ultimately concerned with morals, that is, a situation conducive to the setting up of laws according to which man ought to behave. It is directed towards equality and freedom for all, and it is in such actions which are duty bound (as in obeying the categorical

imperatives) not just in action but also in thought that Kant finds the moral man. An integral part of this process is ethical – it is issued from those in the power taking into account those without. Thus we have two streams branching off from Kant, often interacting, but at certain times reclusive too – one, which concerns itself with institutional arrangements, and the other, that of ethics towards the silent/silenced other.

The Neo-Kantians

The global conditions of the post-1989 world have given a spur to Kantian thoughts. Though the celebrated end of history, through such phrases such "clash of civilization", has only been a farcical rehash of cold war propaganda and vocabulary,[12] other developments have caught the attention of the world. The increased rate of movement following the formation of the European Union, the adoption of common currencies, the new global order of financial structural adjustments, the humanitarian military intervention in the Balkan crisis, the pre-emptive war and accusation of "weapons of mass destruction" against Iraq and many other incidents have caught the old vocabulary of national borders and sovereignty in for a fresh look. Immanuel Kant, who never left his native city of Königsberg in Prussia except on very few occasions, has rose to pre-eminence in the Anglophone world as one seeks the language to make sense of a new politics in the post-historical world.

What characterizes the neo-Kantians is their stress on the legal-institutional structures of governance and on the constitution as well as the optimism about a civil-society-in-

[12] As Edward Said forcefully pointed out in the context of Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations?* See Said's "The Clash of Ignorance" *The Nation*, Oct.22, 2001. pp.1-4

dialogue in ensuring a just world[13]. Jürgen Habermas's idea of a public sphere which takes as its prototype the decentralized freedom and informality of a café is one such version of a Kantian civil society (Habermas, 1989). Though Habermas himself is aware of the contemporary monopolization of opinions by political parties, he is still deservedly criticized for his overlooking of the empirical fact that individuals cannot be counted as the basic unit in their neutral form, rather the individual has to be taken as a complex of identification whose discrimination from the society is then overdetermined (Fraser, 1990). Similarly, in the context of global civil society as manifested during times of natural and manmade crises, Lillie Chouliaraki (2013) has built on Silverstone's notion of 'close-distance' (Silverstone, 2006). The politics of this preferred solidarity is the active and continuous assertion of the 'common and shared' world, what is called in Arendt (1990 [1958]) 'agonistic' solidarity, while not thereby mistaking a common condition for all humanity, or indeed an encompassing 'humanity'.[14] This solidarity requires a judgement that identifies solidarity to be a practice of the public world than a private inclination. Solidarity – for whom, why and how – becomes a question of public deliberation in this politics. The imagination is what makes possible the humanization of the vulnerable other – by not reducing "them" to common fate as "us", through our capacity to stand in the other's shoes, through the inclusion of the voice of the sufferer. Ultimately, a new politics of cosmopolitan solidarity should bring to the fore "the political question of injustice that can become the object of our collective judgement and empathetic imagination." (Chouliaraki, 2013: 92)

[13] Unlike Kant, whose basic unit of cosmopolitanism was the State.

[14] Kant himself never gave into the delusion of assuming equal living conditions for all, as can be seen in his division of those who can make laws and the others. However, the *a priori* principles meant that those who can make laws could make them arrogating the experience of those who cannot too.

Focusing on governance, David Held (2013) argues for a new world governance structure in which funding, which undercuts the efficacy of the international regulations, is not the benevolence of a few powers. His vision for funding is a sort of "carbon fine" in which the nations have to pay in terms of their carbon print. Seyla Benhabib (2006) focusses on the institutional structures of the state. According to her, the liberal democracies have a dual paradoxical structure. On the one hand, being liberal would mean state's commitments to certain principles on humanity and human rights which are considered *a priori*. However, the very idea of democracy leaves legislation and the choice of adherence to principles to the nation. On the other hand, the very institution of a democracy, considering that it is popular sovereignty, requires clarity on who constitute themselves as a nation – who is the "we" in "we, the people". This indicates necessary exclusions at the civic level and thereby different status among people inhabiting a territory. Benhabib distinguishes between three kinds of inhabitants in a territory – citizens, second class citizens (Benhabib's examples are women, workers, slaves, tribal people) and those belonging to a different bounded community and are categorized as "alien" or "foreign". It is in the negotiation of these two paradoxes, the shifts between "rights of full membership, democratic voice and territorial residence" (Benhabib, 2006: 35) that Benhabib locates the new politics of cosmopolitanism. It is thus an act of mediation between the moral and the ethical (of negotiating belonging and non-belonging to a community) and the moral and the political (of negotiating the privileges and limits of the *demos* – those who are authorized to determine the contents of democratic law). In the contemporary world the three assumptions of citizenship – of belonging to an *ethnos*, of privileges of political membership, and of social rights and benefits have been disaggregated from each other. Thus there could be citizens who do not belong to the ethnos – foreigners with social rights, and so on. The task of cosmopolitanism is to engage in an ongoing

shifting of boundaries within the two complexes, thus engaging in a "jurisgenerative politics" in which the disaggregated citizenship rights are advocated along normative lines. This task of negotiation is called "democratic reiteration" in which citizens as well as those who are excluded from citizenship engage in repositing, resignifying and reappropriating already existing covenants of law (70). She thus extends the agency as well as moral obligation/authority that Kant had bestowed only upon the "active" citizens to the "passive" ones too. Benhabib is aware that not all demands by the people are of normative nature. However, "democratic iterations" signify only the normative demands. In the absence of a world-nation, the ontological status of cosmopolitan norms have to be derived from their "morally constructive" nature (72), and has to rely on "*the power of democratic forces within global civil society*" (71; emphasis in original) for its implementation.

In *Inhuman Conditions* (2006) Pheng Cheah argues against this version of cosmopolitanism. His argument against new cosmopolitanism is that it is essentially no different from the old Kantian cosmopolitanism in its basic modalities: "a world federation as the legal-political institutional basis of cosmopolitanism as a form of right; the historical basis of cosmopolitanism in world-trade; the idea of a global public sphere; and the importance of cosmopolitan culture in instilling a sense of belonging to humanity" (22). The primary fault of the new cosmopolitanism has been in its pitching itself against nationalism (like Benhabib's scepticism on majority). However, nationalism cannot be historically understood to be against cosmopolitanism, for in examples like the career of Mazzini, Lenin et al. nation provided basic unit of cosmopolitanism. Furthermore, nationalism and cosmopolitanism cannot be thought of as inherently regressive and progressive respectively. Genuine cosmopolitanism has to be divorced from capital cosmopolitanism, just like capital penetration has to be differentiated from labour migration. Nationalism could be the socialist

cosmopolitan project when it struggles against imperial capital. The state is drifting away from the nation under pressure from the cosmopolitan capital. The cosmopolitan programme today should be to strengthen the bond between the nation and the state so that they become mutually indistinguishable from each other.

Cheah's partner in framing this new cosmopolitics, Bonnie Honig, similarly disapproves of the neo-Kantian cosmopolitans. Honig (2006) finds fault with two implications in Benhabib's analysis of cosmopolitanism: one, the paramountcy of the juridico-legal order, and two, the optimism that the world is inevitably improving in its inclusivity. Honig presents an alternative to Benhabib's neo-Kantian cosmopolitanism and calls it "agonistic cosmopolitics". This alternative seeks to address two blindspots of the Kantian variety of cosmopolitanism – its overrating of the legal-juridical and its grounding in the (narrow) present. Agonistic cosmopolitics seeks the agents of change in political movements "in which a future is claimed on behalf of peoples and rights that are not yet and may never be" (Honig, 2006: 117). In a similar vein, Jeremy Waldron's (2006) sardonic appeal is to shift our lenses from majestic events in world politics those "high-frequency but lower-profile uses and repetitions of norms in the mundane density of ordinary life" – international trade, currency standards, flight and customs regulations, etc. (Waldron, 2006; 97). The ontological status of cosmopolitan norms is not an issue once we realize its inhabitation of the everyday interactions among friends and strangers where roll-call is not the norm, and that these everyday interactions as custom emerge themselves into positive law.

Cheah's arguments (mainly supported by Saskia Sassen's studies on globalization) against postnationalism, the main architect of which has been Arjun Appadurai, merits our

attention and approval. The spread of global trade or communication does not guarantee a cosmopolitan vision. The labour force is not yet abstract, but is ordered and regulated on national basis. But these facts does not acquit Cheah of neglecting a crucial aspect of nationalism, even those bourgeois nationalisms Lenin supported for being anti-imperialists (Cheah, 2006: 28) – that nationalism, inspite or especially in postcolonial contexts, is *culturally* defined into selves and others. Nationalism defines its particularity via cultural self-definition, while adhering to principles of ethics and governance. While Cheah asks us to differentiate between globalizing capital and genuine cosmopolitanism[15], he is himself inadequately cautious of the hazards of such a conflation. In Cheah's repeated assertion of nation-state being the bulwark against globalization, exactly because he neglects the cultural element of postcolonial nationalism, he could neither see nor even imagine a possibility in which capital globalization can join hands with jingoist national aspirations – that nationalism could be the catchword for not just weapons manufacturers but even soft drink corporates. It is to one's peril if one mistakes the gate-keeping on "foreign culture" for a check on foreign investment in projects of exploitation of the nation's voiceless and the othered. Cheah conflates class with nation, forgetting that nation itself is a site of class and cultural struggle. This then brings to our attention the question of minority cultures within nations. How could cosmopolitanism relate to national minorities?

Jeremy Waldron is committed to finding a Kantian solution to the question of cultural toleration within the nation-state (Waldron, 1995). Although it is creative freedom on Waldron's part to interpret Kant's statement on pre-civil society asociality, "each will have

[15] The obverse of Cheah's argument would be to point out that the juridico-legal measures doesn't matter, because people are imagining newer worlds through images made possible by globalization, even though the cosmopolitan theory is still to catch up with these. See Moore (2013). For other accounts of lived cosmopolitanisms, see Nowicka and Rovisco (2009)

his own right to do what seems right and good to him" (*Metaphysics of Morals* [1797] quoted in Waldron, 2000: 240) as extendable to cultural difference, it remains a crucial factor of Kant's account of cosmopolitanism that Kant is not specific about either the cultural content of antagonism or its solution, i.e. the civil society. Rather, civil society is presented as a deracinated universal solution, a structure without content, an arrangement of external actions.

Benhabib's response has been to insist on the necessity, though not primacy, of the state (Benhabib, 2006). Responding to Waldron's position that law can follow the (supposedly) cordial interaction between friends and strangers at an everyday level, she asks if the latter is not aware of the violence between neighbours. ""Mundane and repeated contact" among different human groups is absolutely no guarantee of the spread of cosmopolitan point of view that considers all human beings as individuals equally entitled to certain rights" (153).

It is pertinent here, especially in the context of Cheah's anti-state centric position, to have a relook at the three distinct forms of government that Kant specified – despotic, republican and democratic. Of these three, maintaining the need for a republican government to achieve the cosmopolitan future, Kant says:

> Of the three forms of sovereignty, *democracy*, in the truest sense of the word, is necessarily a *despotism*, because it establishes an executive power through which all the citizens may make decisions about (and indeed against) the single individual without his consent, so that decisions are made by all the people and yet not by all the people; and this means that the general will is in contradiction with itself, and thus also with freedom. (Kant, 1989*a*: 101)

As mentioned earlier, Kant, in his clear assertion of Republican values as well as his insistence on the rule of law even at the expense of a possible revolution, is found to be abiding by the state, for anarchy (even a temporary one) would result in impingement of rights of individuals. This is not to say that Kant was totally against revolutions – his insistence was, ironically, more on the Schmidtian sovereignty, as the following makes clear:

> A state may well *govern* itself in a republican way, even if its existing constitution provides for a despotic *ruling power*; and it will gradually come to the stage where the people can be influenced by the mere idea of the law's authority, just as if it were backed up by physical force, so that they will be able to create for themselves a legislation ultimately founded on right. If, however, a more lawful constitution were attained by unlawful means, i.e. by a violent *revolution* resulting from a previous bad constitution, it would then no longer be permissible to lead the people back to the original one, even although everyone who had interfered with the old constitution by violence or conspiracy would rightly have been subject to the penalties of rebellion during the revolution itself. (Kant, 1989*a*: 118)

Kant could not have been more categorical in his order of preference, that of the primacy of the law and the state. The legislation is to be founded on right, a universal condition, than on will, the caprice of the particular. What makes a law lawful is its allegiance to this order of right.

While Cheah might be right to mention that Kant cannot be against nationalism, for nationalism was not yet an option in Kant's world, it is nevertheless clear that in a state with a division of majority and minority, Kant would not find nationalism – defined as it is,

culturally – to be the preferred option. It is however a matter of speculation if Kant would conceive of two distinct cultural populations as composing a nation-state. Kant's basic unit has been the individual and not the population groups.

The debate nevertheless points out the important fact that Kant's ultimate ideal of the moral result that ensues is solidly grounded on a *particular* conception of morality – a content which takes individual as the basic unit of action, an individual who is agential in the correspondence between thought and action, and thoughts and actions which corresponds to the Kantian idea of duty. This then brings us to the question of presentism in neo-Kantian thought criticized by Honig (2006). Are we to still think of the state as the only guarantor of the rights? Can there be no smaller unit for a cosmopolitan universe? Can cosmopolitanism itself be rethought other than as expressed by Kant?[16]

[16] The specific way in which this question of presentism has been cast has been to point out the anthropocentrism central to Kant's theory of Right. The move away from the culture/nature distinction is central to Cheah (2006). In the recent years the move away from human agency to distributed agency and the focus on non-human actors ("assemblage" [Latour, 2011], "vibrant matter" [Bennett, 2010], virtual world [Massumi, 2002]) have given rise to formulating new ways of cosmopolitanism in which the insistence have been on living in a world of blurred boundaries between human and non-human.

Deleuze and Guattari's "chaosmosis" (1987), Braidotti's, and Connolly's "becoming-word" (Braidotti, 2013; Connolly, 2011) have been some of the ways in which these new-cosmopolitanisms have been formulated. This school (meant in a broad sense) traces its intellectual precedence in Spinozist ethics which affirms that everything in nature are modes of a unitary substance. Interesting though it is, it is beyond the scope of this thesis which has set itself the task of addressing the question of cosmopolitanism in postcoloniality.

Keeping Faith: The Levinasian Infinitive

Pheng Cheah and Bonnie Honig, by insisting a move away from State and towards politics, are responding to Derrida's call – made almost a decade back – to turn to a cosmo*politics* (Derrida, 2001: 4; emphasis in original). Jacques Derrida, writing in 1997 (in French; English translation in 2001), points out with reference to series of laws in France regarding the various categories of immigrants – *sans papiers*, asylum seeks, economic migrants, etc. – that the conditions for perpetual peace, drawn out by Kant, is as yet unobtainable in Europe. There is still no clear separation of powers, and the legislation itself is often dictated by electoral interests. In short, the republic is yet to arrive in France, and in Europe in general. Under these conditions, the universal right of hospitality is not respected. However, it appears, the problem could be traced back to Kant himself. While acknowledging that everyone has a common right over the surface of the earth, it remains that the state is not universally accessible. The right to hospitality remains, in Kant as well as in the present world, as treaties between states, who on the other hand still exercise sovereignty contrary to the spirit of cosmopolitanism. It is in such a juncture that Derrida asks if we should not be thinking about a hospitality that could be defined in terms other than circumscribed by the nation-state (Derrida 2001). In advocating this move, Derrida turns to the concept of hospitality, and to the thinker par excellence of the act of hospitality, of welcoming the Infinite – Emmanuel Levinas.

In an incisive critique of the Kantian universe, Levinas writes:

> In this world without multiplicity language loses all social signification; interlocutors renounce their unicity not in desiring one another but in desiring

> the universal. Language would be equivalent to the constitution of rational institutions in which an impersonal reason which is already at work in the persons who speak and already sustains their effective reality would become objective and effective: each being is posited apart from all the others, but the will of each, or ipsiety, from the start consists in willing the universal or the rational, that is, in negating its very particularity. In accomplishing its essence as discourse, in becoming a discourse universally coherent, language would at the same time realize the universal state, in which multiplicity is reabsorbed and discourse comes to an end, for lack of interlocutors. (*Totality and Infinity*, 1969 [1961]: 217)

Levinas is here responding to a problem which he confronts in the whole of Western philosophical tradition – that it is a discourse of totalizing where differences are reduced to themes and subsumed.[17] In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas etches out a new mode of being in the world which is in contrast to the Kantian (from war to society) or Hobbesian (from war to sovereign) way of comprehending the world. In a language at a far remove from the logical and reasoned maxims of Kant and proximate to that of the revelatory and prophetic, Levinas puts to question many of the basic assumptions of the Kantian schema. To draw out his argument, Levinas introduces the concept of "face", or face of the Other. I shall briefly discuss some of the central features of Levinasian ethics below before we see how this new conception of being in the world has inspired newer versions of cosmopolitanism.

[17] And therefore it is more correctly said that Levinas's philosophy of ethics is a critique of philosophy from Plato to Heidegger. However, we have in this section limited ourselves to assessing Levinasian departure in the light of Kant.

Michael L. Morgan characterises Levinas's concept of "face", à la Bernard Williams, a "thick" moral concept. This is because, just like 'brutality', 'gratitude', or 'courage', concepts in which the descriptive and prescriptive of them cannot be separated. The face is thus not just the apparition, the view or the idea, but is also the appeal or the demand of the destitute, the widow, the orphan. The demand and its command on me is inseparable from the face itself (Morgan, 2011: 66). The face is not just an idea of the other, for the idea of the other presupposes the idea and therefore representation – i.e. its subsumption within a totality. The face is, on the contrary, Infinity. This radically other Other is therefore transcendent. This transcendence is called 'height' in Levinas. "The idea of Infinity is transcendence itself, the overflowing of an adequate idea…It is not the insufficiency of the I that prevents totalization, but the Infinity of the Other" (80). It is this face-to-face with the Other that is the primal scene. Subjectivity is formed at this juncture of face-to-face. Face-to-face does not imply knowledge of the Other. It is rather an expression, on the one side, of destitution and demand, and on the other, of responsibility from the self.

> The absolute nakedness of a face, the absolutely defenseless face, without covering, clothing or mask, is what opposes my power over it, my violence, and opposes it in an absolute way, with an opposition that is opposition itself. The being that expresses itself, that faces me, says *no* to me by his very expression…[I]t is not the *no* of a hostile force or a threat; it is the impossibility of killing him who presents that face… The face is the fact that a being affects us not in the indicative, but in the imperative" (Levinas, 1998: 68)

The face-to-face for Levinas is a moral summons that calls into question the self's powers. The Other calls out in his destitution. "To hear his destitution which calls out for justice is not to represent an image for oneself, but is to posit oneself as responsible, both as more and as less than the being that presents itself in the face" (Levinas, 1969: 215). Faced with such destitution, it would seem that one may claim to the Other in one's sovereignty, in one's ability to kill the Other. This should not be so. However, it would be banal to argue that the self is thereby not to murder just on account of this ethics. It is nevertheless the case that the first and foremost command of the Other is "You shall not murder". If language is the realm of representations of finitude and thereby of possessions (since possessions require objectification), then it requires that there be a point outside the finite from which the finite is assessed. This implies that "I" is predicated upon the infinite Other. It is thus in this face-to-face that subjectivity is formed. It is still possible, however, that "I" shall commit murder. While this is possible, this also poses great threat, in terms of "my" subjectivity, but also because murder cannot settle the question of sovereignty precisely because of the "*unforeseeableness*" (Levinas, 1969: 199; emphasis in original) of the Other's reaction, something which Agamben would later call the sovereignty of the bare body (Agamben, 1998). To thus resist thematization, the Other necessarily has to be someone who is as unpredictable as myself, and therefore free – "The alterity of the Other does not depend on any quality that would distinguish him from me, for a distinction of this nature would precisely imply between us that community of genus which already nullifies alterity" (Levinas, 1969: 195).

The equality that is so established between the self and the infinite Other brings in Levinas the category of the "third". According to Levinas, the moment of the face-to-face is simultaneously the moment of the witness of the "third". This third could be referred to as

"public order" (212)[18] or even "humanity" (213)[19]. The moment of the face-to-face, while marked by my responsibility to the Other, is also marked by the responsibility of the Other to this "third", and hence the equality (213) and the institution of the family:

> Paternity is not reducible to a causality in which individuals would mysteriously participate, and which would determine by no less mysterious an effect, a phenomenon of solidarity. It is my responsibility before a face looking at me as absolutely foreign (and the epiphany of the face coincides with these two moments) that constitutes the original fact of fraternity (Levinas, 1969: 213)

However, the category of the "third" also redefines Levinas's concept of unicity. The particularity of the face, in the light of the equalizing function of the third, does not mean particularity in its fullness, in its individuality and uniqueness. Rather, the unicity is taken to mean the infinity that is not thematized but also circumscribed by the idea of responsibility. Though put in terms of "public order", this "third", which institutes the law of equality, should not however be seen as equivalent to civil society or such mechanisms as framed by the nation – "It identifies itself outside of the State, even if the State reserves a framework for it" (306). It would be interesting in this context to note that Levinas characterised the feminine as the host par excellence. The feminine however does not relate to an actual woman. Levinas characterizes the meta-empirical Woman as the initial interiority of the

[18] "Everything that takes place here "between us" concern everyone, the face that looks at it place it in the full light of the public order, even if I draw back from it to seek with the interlocutor the complicity of a private relation and a clandestinity"

[19] "…but as an irreducible movement of a discourse which by essence is aroused by the epiphany of the face inasmuch as it attests the presence of the third party, the whole of humanity, in the eyes that look at me."

Home that makes it welcoming to the Host who then welcomes the guest. Thus feminine becomes the "pre-original welcome…par excellence" (45). It is important that this pre-original is characterised as sexual difference. The importance of the female figure in Levinas is that it upsets any idea of originary homeland, rather making land alienated, while public order, as expressed in terms of paternity, is without recourse to the idiom of nation. Levinas's ideas about land could therefore be seen as quite close to Kant in the sense that both of them termed as land as not belonging to anyone originarily. However, in Kant, the supposition is based on a common belonging of land, while in Levinas it is the radical un-belongingness.[20]

Levinas's account of the subject formation and its characteristics in relation to the infinite Other is, though fashioned in the religious imagery of Bible and Talmud[21], a reformulation of ontology as the first philosophy and is, in an ingenious reversal, heavily and categorically indented by the Cartesian reference to the infinite God in contrast to the finite imperfect self in "Third Meditation". Thus Levinas claims that if subjectivity is understood to be imperfect, then will is just arbitrary and violence to oneself. On the other hand, following Descartes, if subjectivity is understood to be fundamentally different from the infinite Other (God), and that the Other is understood to be at a higher plane than oneself,[22]

[20] "The chosen home is the very opposite of a root" (Levinas, 1969: 172)

[21] "For Levinas, the historical paradigm of one understands the primacy of the ethical character of human existence is the Jew; the Bible and the Talmud are the earliest Jewiish texts that teach this lesson. Later examples of people abandoned by others and subject to injustice, persecution, and assault are all "honorary" Jews, for Levinas" (Morgan, 2011: 83, *n*78)

[22] "In the next place, from reflecting on the circumstance that I doubted, and that consequently my being was not wholly perfect (for I clearly saw that it was a greater perfection to know than to doubt), I was led to inquire whence I had learned to think of something more perfect than myself; and I clearly recognized that I must hold

then will and intelligibility are separated, and hence intelligibility, by the very lack of it, calls for ethical behaviour. Thus in a fundamental sense, the will is not free of its ethical responsibility even when it is free to act as it wills (218-9). Levinas claims that when faced with the infinite, the thought of one's finitude is replaced by enjoyment, a template taken, again, from Descartes.

The myriad ways in which Levinas is opposed to Kant would be quite obvious. Let us nevertheless state them. While in the Kantian universe the primary interaction is that of laying claims, subsequent antagonism and then the institution of civil society, Levinas gets rid of this teleology. In Levinas the language to lay claim on possession is itself a product of the face-to-face. Thus the fact of being together precedes any mutually opposing claim. The bloodshed is just a contingency and not a necessity. Secondly, precisely because the language and subjectivity is formed in the context of an infinite Other, an Other which resists thematization, it also resists reducing the Other to definitions. The infinite Other makes it possible to acknowledge the singularities of the self and the Other. Subjects are to be seen in their singularity because, unlike Kantian universe, not everyone is of the same capacities – and hence Levinas's choice of the destitute.[23]

> Speech is not instituted in a homogeneous or abstract medium, but in a world where it is necessary to aid and to give. It presupposes an I, an existence separated in its enjoyment, which does not welcome empty-handed the face

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this notion from some nature which in reality was more perfect," writes Descartes in *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in 1641.

[23] For a discussion on the convergences and divergences in Kant and Levinas, see Shaw (2008)Ch.4 "The Duty to Care"

> and its voice coming from another shore. Multiplicity in being, which refuses totalization but takes form and discourse, is situated in a "space" essentially asymmetrical" (Levinas, 1969: 216)

Since language is instituted in the face of a singular Other, it follows that in this space of asymmetry the demands that are made of each could not be the same. This also follows that in society the intersubjective experience is asymmetrical. Given that, it is only rational that our languages, formed by our intersubjective experiences, can only formulate morality from experience, for there is no *a priori* to meeting the Other.[24] It also follows from the infinite Other that what we have in language is, by virtue of it having been formed intersubjectively and not prior to it, contrary to being an act of abstraction, a force which resists thematization. This also follows that "Responsibility" in Levinasian terms is not a discursive act, but one that precedes it as a state of nature, as opposed to philosophies in which war is accorded this primal space.

Derrida finds in Levinas the key thinker to conceive a new cosmopolitanism - hospitality as cosmopolitanism. Derrida takes the Levinasian Infinite Other to mean the foreigner, stranger to our language, laws and customs, who arrives unannounced. This stranger has, just as we have to decide on hosting him, has already decided on us being his host. Thus the host is obliged to the guest. If that be the case, then the welcome is primarily a welcome by the other to which the self responds. Therefore in the beginning is the call of the Other (Derrida, 1999). Unlike Levinas, however, Derrida is not keen on limiting the welcome to the sphere of ethics, rather ethics itself weaves itself in and out of the juridico-

[24] "Another way of saying it, if one still wishes to speak within the law of tradition, though against it, against its inherited oppositions, is that reason *is* sensibility" (Derrida, 1999: 26; emphasis in original).

political. It is therefore that Derrida is much interested in Levinas's idea of the third – "the public order". It is here that Derrida formulates his constitutive aporia that would guide the new cosmopolitanism.

In Levinas's discussion of the "third", of another person who is not a neighbour but also a neighbour, the one who is witness to the face-to-face, Derrida finds an aporia. While in a way the presence of the third seems to bring in transcendence beyond the reason that is solely arising from face-to-face and thus introducing a juridico-political role that blunts the threat of violation of ethics(32-3), this presence of the third is in itself a "perjury" (33) of my oath to the Other. The presence of the "third", which can be read as humanity, justice and equality, is what holds me hostage. It makes me interrupt myself (Derrida, 1999: 52) and be unfaithful to oneself out of fidelity for oneself (52). It is thus that one is hostage in one's own position as the host, as one is bound by the oath to the guest[25]. In his lectures delivered two years later (1997; and published in 2002), Derrida concerns himself with Levinasian welcome, again, but adds to it what he perceives to be its correspondence in Islamo-Christian thought. Derrida's focus here is however exhausted by "substitution", i.e. what is it, whether as an apparatus or as culture, that could make the presence of "third" – "original sin prior to any original sin" (Derrida, 2002: 388), the perjury at the heart of Levinas? Derrida answers it elaborately to insist that substitution in Levinas does not mean that unicity is sacrificed at the altar of common laws. On the contrary. One has to approach the question of substitution by fully acknowledging the question of forgiveness inherent in the welcoming. For welcoming is first of all an act of asking for forgiveness, for two reasons, one, for not being able to

[25] A point which Derrida exemplifies in detail with reference to Oedipus's death wish to Theseus, elsewhere. See Derrida (2000).

provide adequately (for the other is the infinite Other), and secondly, since no hospitality is hospitality unless the guest is unforeseen, for not knowing in advance of the Other's coming (381). The act of forgiving is caught in a series of aporia – that it is impossible (for to forgive what can be forgiven is not forgiveness)(385), that it cannot be issued from oneself and therefore is not one's to forgive (386), that it cannot be said nor unsaid (398), etc. This need to be forgiven at once casts the self in a relation of being hostage to the Other while at the same time being the host – it is this subjection to the Other that makes him a subject. To ask for forgiveness also means that the subject should be at the same time free too. The act of forgiving constitutes the subject retrospectively, in deference, but not in a sense of time as excluded or being fully inside the subject, but as subjectivity itself as a product of the time as in forgiveness predicated on welcoming (391-5). It is this formation of the subjectivity that forms the common, the public order of the third, of what is otherwise singular subjects.

In *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, published in French in 1997 (Derrida 2001), Derrida remains concerned with the idea of the third in the face-to-face. Continuing with the various aporias in forgiving, Derrida also introduces a newer aporia in the act of forgiving, that which is connected with language. If the victim and the guilty share the same language, then reconciliation has begun, and thus forgiving is no more pure forgiving (for the only pure forgiving is to forgive the unforgivable – an impossible act). On the other hand, if the two do not share a language, then the mutual unintelligibility renders forgiveness unintelligible and obsolete. It remains however, through the aporia and because of it, that the true act of forgiving is only face-to-face. It is thus heterogeneous to the order of politics and law. This again brings into question the role of the third – the public order. Derrida's suggestion here, not put in any straightforward terms, is to refer to the idea of sovereignty. Sovereignty is, in the act of instituting it, prior to the law. It is thus a pure act, but one that

gives rise to a law which then legitimizes it. In Derrida's "mad" suggestion (60) forgiveness should be "*unconditional but without sovereignty*" (59), by which, with recourse to the analogy with sovereignty, one is to understand that the act of forgiving while with resort to unconditionality that is to be issued from the unicity of the victim or the situation and not bound by laws, must nevertheless be referred back to a public order which in the first place is instituted by this very unconditionality and uniqueness of the individual act of forgiving. The oath of hospitality, found by oneself, nevertheless becomes a law.

That Derrida is not ready to leave hospitality on the terrain of ethics is clear from his repeated engagements with the theme of hospitality as it entwines itself with the juridical-political. As Derrida makes it clear, unconditional hospitality itself is a law (Derrida, 2000: 77-8). However, the two laws are not mutually exclusive, they are in each other. The laws of conditional hospitality are a perjury to the law of unconditional hospitality (55). At the same time *the* unconditional law of hospitality requires that there be laws of hospitality which makes it possible (Derrida, 2000: 79). *The* law and the *laws* are asymmetrical to each other. The decisionism thus involved on the side of ethics nevertheless dictate that it be heterogeneous to the order of procedures and at the level of the spirit.

> If the two meanings of hospitality remain mutually irreducible, it is always in the name of pure and hyperbolic hospitality that it is necessary, in order to render it as effective as possible, to invent the best arrangements [dispositions], the least bad conditions, the most just legislation. This is necessary to avoid the perverse effects of an unlimited hospitality whose risks I tried to define. This is the double law of hospitality: to calculate the risks, yes, but without closing the door on the incalculable, that is, on the future and

> the foreigner. It defines the unstable site of strategy and decision. (Derrida, 2005: 6)

Derrida's larger project is to think of a new world politics, something that can go beyond the frames of nation-state. The aporia are thus necessary roadblocks that are constitutive of a new future.

The insight of Levinasian ethics have been the rejection of state of war in nature, the non-totalizability of the globe, and the insistence on singularity and experience. The monumental significance of Levinas has been, by deferring the subject formation from the moment of *cogito* to that of facing the infinity in Descartes, that it has replaced ontology as the first philosophy with ethics.[26] However, for all its insistence on difference and its derision of universalist programmes, it still remains that the Levinasian Other is the Cartesian God as thought of by the thinking subject at the dawn of Western subjectivity. Levinas does secularize it and brings it down to the Infinity of this world. While philosophies of fascism posit an originary harmonious world in which one was at home with oneself, it has been Levinas's ethical break, and add to this the not so distant backdrop of Fascist Europe, that the original harmony is now the harmony between the self and the other, one of whom is of a land without originally possessing it, and the other is the destitute to whom he owes a responsibility. The flip side has been that Levinasian ethics is still predicated on the acting, and hence the agential subject. Even while acknowledging that Levinasian 'responsibility' is

[26] Levinas points out that the moment of *cogito* in itself is insufficient in the formation of the subject, since the doubting subject can doubt *cogito* itself. The confirmation of the subject should therefore come from an external point. "The I in the negativity manifested by doubt breaks with participation, but does not find in the *cogito* itself a stopping place. It is not I, it is the Other that can say *yes*. From him comes affirmation; he is at the commencement of experience" (1969: 93)

the pre-discursive state of nature, it still assumes that one therefore acknowledge this state of responsibility and act accordingly, though not in the framework of nation and citizenship. Therein lies the curious case of the Levinasian Other being at the same time equal to oneself and destitute. If only that should be so! It is only in the (one could say cruel) attribution of agency and false equality on both sides that Levinasian ethics work – because only that would allow its swap-ability. The self is to be free in terms of the Other, regardless of the empirical self.[27] One could then see that Levinas is much closer to Kant. Though far from the kingdom of ends and professing a kingdom of being, the philosopher could yet only conceive of the subject who is agential, responsible (for his act and plight) and can account for the others. Ethics still remains a question for the legislator, though Levinas would argue that law itself being totalizing he will leave it to the action of the singular subject. It

[27] The tense equality between the self and the Other belongs in Derrida too – the self is the one who should be asking for forgiveness as well as the one forgiving. The host is the guest of the guest and therefore the guest is the host of the host. Consequently the host of the host is bound by the oath of the host too. "These substitutions make everyone into everyone else's hostage. Such are the laws of hospitality" (Derrida, 2000: 125).

Contra Levinas, and drawing from the same pool of resources, advancing Cartesian moment (again, against Levinas who is deferring it), and arguing against and through philosophy from Plato to Heidegger is Jean-Luc Nancy. Against the (false) inequality of the self and the capital Other, Nancy argues that the drive behind the idea of infinite Other (or God) is primarily a marking off of the self (Nancy, 2000: 12-3). Advancing the Cartesian moment to the moment of language itself (in which one thinks, which then leads to all what follows)(11), Nancy posits being as being in meaning, that in its sharedness and singularity simultaneously, what he calls "being singular plural". Nancy's point is that conceiving singular subjectivity does not require an infinite Other, but singularity is the singularity of multiple origin, that is, each being is an original repetition of a concealed origin. Nancy's effort is to think society (inclusive of all that is other to humanity too) without reference to a higher being, and rather than to assert the coming off, or of having passed away, that we are in fact all being singular plural; but that philosophy has been taking the wrong turns.

Thus, as against agonistic cosmopolitanism which requires us to resign to difference, Nancy asks us to realize ourselves in difference. Nancy's is as much an ethical notion as Levinas's is, and suffers from the proposition of an equality which, in the terms of our study, is not of any guidance.

remains that Levinasian ethics is made for the welcoming self, the one though in solitude still does belong, the Derridean founding subject of the law of hospitality to which nevertheless he is hostage; not the migrating one, not the destitute, the orphan, or the low skilled immigrant from the global south.

One can see that though against written rules and legislative imperatives, those who derive their versions of cosmopolitanism are also burdened by the need to act, even if ethically. Gideon Baker (2011) has drawn on Levinas and Derrida to promulgate a new kind of international politics in which questions of international interference in the domestic affairs of nations would be based on ethical decisionism based on ground realities varying from case to case than any prefixed rules.

Honig's version of agonistic cosmopolitanism (Honig, 2011) draws on Derrida's double gesture in aporetic conception of hospitality as a conceptual framework so as to avoid the pitfalls of teleological progress predominant in thoughts about cosmopolitanism. The reconfiguration of borders that Benhabib (2006) points to should be subject to a scrutiny informed by such a double gesture – even while welcoming the inclusion of newer populations, one should be aware of the new borders drawn in the process.[28] One could see such a double gesture in Hannah Arendt. In her call for "the right to have rights" there is "a reproach to any particular order of rights *and* a demand that everyone should belong to one such order" (Honig, 2006: 107; emphasis in original). A closer look at history would suggest

[28] Will Kymlicka points out in a similar vein that the disaggregation of citizenship is not necessarily a progressive factor – it can be and is used to hinder rather than further claims to citizenship. See Kymlicka (2006).

that the world is not moving on a linear path, and is open to contingencies to be engaged with by politics.

Patrick Hanafin too underlines the need for moving away from legislative practices and advocates a politics of singularities (Hanafin, 2013). A critical praxis of cosmopolitanism will have to substitute such a belief in which the citizen is established by the stroke of pen with an active process in which the cosmopolitan subject is in the state of constant being. He is in agreement with Fuyuki Kurasawa on cosmopolitan solidarity as the latter states it to be:

> A networked practice composed of a vast web of actors who labour to create nodes of commonality and points of intersection out of shifting, cross-cutting lines of affinity that remains grounded in local and national settings. This web takes the form of a patchwork pragmatically assembled and reassembled from disparate and overlapping pieces, rather than a pre-established, neatly laid out and carefully followed plan. A dialectic between convergence and decentralization is what produces common ground, as solidaristic bonds must be discursively negotiated between parties. (Kurasawa (2007) quoted in Hanafin(2013: 41))

To translate into the terms of our discussion so far, one could read Kurasawa's observation as the need to think of an active governmental subject who, inspite of being always already a site of policy, should nevertheless struggle for the realization of the policy [which, looking from the other side is not a policy but a right, to reiterate Tharu et al. (2007)] and simultaneously find him/herself in the gaps between the different policies a space for him to negotiate the multiple subjecthoods bestowed and asserted. Hanafin thus brings into the

discussion the crucial turn to think of political community as away from its being completely determined by the rights bestowed on them. From the citizen being a subject of rights, subject to criteria of inclusion and exclusion, and therefore a *what*, one has to think of the citizen as unexhausted by definitions, actively building solidarities as well as defining him/herself from and against others, and thereby becoming a singular *who*.

Citizenship, being as it is based on a set of exclusions, a "they" for a "we", extract our acquiescence in those practices of exclusion even when we struggle to be a part of those who are right-bearing. One has to then strive for what Hannah Arendt (1951) calls "the right to have rights" of mere humanity beyond categories. That there are people who are not right-bearing necessitates a continuous political struggle for those who are yet-to-be people. The very idea of citizenship being exclusive guarantees an excluded zone of peoples and right on behalf of whom and which there has to be constant struggle.

Though borrowing from Honig's terminology of agonistic cosmopolitanism (Honig, 2009), Hanafin is in fact presenting a novel way to think about cosmopolitanism. Burdened by the need to fight for those without right, Hanafin nevertheless is presenting a politics of singularities which cannot be easily circumscribed by the imperative to act. Rather, a politics of 'who' rather than 'what' also presents (drowned by Hanafin's ethical sense of duty) a politics of asserting a *being* as it is being rather than on the way to *being a what* – exactly undermining from the other side Hanafin's politics of action. It is towards this direction that, independent of Hanafin, Costas Douzinas (2013) points to. Tracing the history of cosmopolitanism, Douzinas argues that the theory has, drawing from Christianity and later colonialism, assumed a split in humanity. Christianity had the suffering and the redeemed, colonialism the civilized and the un-, nationalism its citizens and aliens (and, should we add,

postcolonialism, its civil and political societies). Cosmopolitanism perpetuates the binary between those who have rights and those who don't. Douzinas puts forward a new split between law and desire, or what can be termed a split between language and desire. He argues that the politics of desire is to long for what does not exist according to law. As both cosmopolitanism as the idea and cosmopolitics as the praxis belong to the realm of law and therefore language, one could safely assume he would abstain from calling this politics of desire either of those. The question of singularities away from universal models needs to occupy us more. The question of the being as an excess of what and the point about desire has set the stage ready for a discussion on the psychoanalytic uses of Kant, but not before we explore another case for particularisms, that of rootedness.

Rooted Cosmopolitanisms

Kwame Anthony Appiah is a major proponent of what he calls "rooted cosmopolitanism" which poses itself as articulating a new language of belonging. By 'rooted cosmopolitanism' Appiah means that one need not be rootless to be a cosmopolitan. Rather one can be rooted and celebrate or atleast engage with cultural differences. One can even contemplate and effect a shifting of one's roots. One could also have simultaneously different sense of belongings, from the regional to ever expanding horizons just as one occupy different roles and identities in life, from cultural to religious to career-wise distinctions to position in family and among friends. Identity being so many, national identity is just arbitrary – which is not to deny the power structures at work. By claiming that national identity is arbitrary, Appiah is pointing out (with historical examples of Ghana, Bosnia and Serbia) that prior to national identification one already requires a state in whose regulative policies the nations

come to be. Thus state is the regulative principle though not the determinant body of identities. Thus it is also the site that requires our loyalty, Appiah insists, if we are to be cosmopolitan – for the state alone makes the range of identities possible (Appiah, 1998; 2005).

Appiah's position is self-declaredly liberal patriotic cosmopolitan. It is liberal because it believes in the individual choice to make identities as well as insist that the society should be based on respect and dignity for individuals. It is patriotic to the institutions of the state because it is cosmopolitan in tendency – for it is the state structures which allows the identities for one to choose from. There is, *prima facie*, much closeness between Kant and Appiah. Kant establishes the state to be the basic unit which allows for the cosmopolitan right, and so does Appiah. Kant as well as Appiah emphasize the need to uphold the state structures. However in Kant ("What is Enlightenment") one finds that inspite of having to do one's duty, one can have independent thoughts about it, thoughts which could even be critical of the duty. In Appiah, on the other hand, while one can be loyal to the state structures for different reasons, the reasons cannot have in it a reason against the state itself. Again, while in Kant the civil society is a natural outcome of individuals living together, neither the modus operandi nor the content of that civil society is fixed, Appiah makes "respect for human dignity" a universal value which has to be in place for a cosmopolitan society, and, ironically, something which already is available universally in all cultures. While it is possible (though an empirical analysis would be burdensome) that each society has an idea of and a vocabulary for the respect for human dignity, one should nevertheless emphasise that Appiah's liberalism is a product of a particular historical juncture, and to find rootedness for such a universal is just an of acculturation.

Even if it be the case that Appiah's rooted liberal cosmopolitanism is in fact the Enlightenment ideal presenting itself for an evening of indigenous cultural show, this in itself is not an argument against it. Rather, the argument is that Appiah's cosmopolitanism falls into what Costas Douzinas (2013) calls the metaphysics of cosmopolitanism – which is the division of humanity into binaries (the liberals and not-liberals, in Appiah). This binary is reflective of another central faultline in Appiah – that loyalties and identities are conscious, and consciously articulated. This idea of voluntarism logically extends therefore to arguing that one has to choose from the available articulated options. This gives rise to a delimiting presentism which is blind to possibilities outside the binaries. Secondly, Appiah's cosmopolitanism is also indicative of a utopia – that a world devoid of the not-liberals is possible – the impossibility of which is exactly its source of enjoyment, for its possibility would erase the idea of cosmopolitanism itself.

Our interest in Appiah is solely focussed on its opinions on state, which tally with ours[29]. However, while Appiah sees identities as emerging from the state, we also see possibilities in the limits of the state. These limits of the state are not external to the state, which would then be anything in an endless drifting of signifiers. Rather, the limit of the state is what gives it consistency, thus occupying a space both within and without. It is this space too where we find alternatives to the current language of belonging[30].

[29] Though the focus of Appiah has been on cultural adaptation and formation of the self. In this regard, the most scathing criticism of Appiah has been from Pratap Bhanu Mehta who argues that if anything cosmopolitanism gives us an understanding of our own culture rather than turn the deeply affective cultural place invested with meanings and rationalities to an easily consumable market product. See Mehta (2000)

[30] A long list of authors and their versions of cosmopolitanisms could be appended as examples of rooted cosmopolitanisms, some of whom are: Bruce Robbins's idea of "discrepant cosmopolitanism" in which the world is not given *a priori* but is worlded by the self (Robbins, 1992); Sheldon Pollock's and Walter Mignolo's

Our project allies more with Mignolo's "Critical Cosmopolitanism" (2000). "Critical cosmopolitanism" as a concept is an attempt to go beyond the thoughts of globalization as an ascription from above, or of the various reactions that it has engendered in different polities. Instead, it envisions a world in which the margins are in contact with each other, as opposed to the globalization model where the margins are individually connected to the center. While critical cosmopolitanism argues the need to move beyond uniform global designs (of democracy, for example) on a planetary scale, it does not fall into the trap of cultural relativism precisely by reading culture as a product of the coloniality of power. Instead, the focus is on "the coloniality of power and the colonial difference produced, reproduced, and maintained by global designs" (742).

The Psychoanalytic Parallax

Slavoj Žižek asks us to go back to discovering the uncanny Kant far removed from the one proposed by the neo-Kantians. Žižek's Kant is he who first delineated the dimension 'beyond the pleasure principle' – the pure ethical act. Žižek's moves towards discovering this Kant, "worth fighting for", in two steps: first, to argue how the decenterment of the subject, an act imputed to Feud, is present in Kant; and secondly, to read in Kant, in consequence, the presence of the unknown remainder, *the objet petit a*.

"vernacular cosmopolitanism" which claims that each culture has its own version of cosmopolitanism (Pollock, 2000; Mignolo, 2002); Sneja Gunew's "vernacular cosmopolitanism" which is, curiously, the experience of European travellers in European settlements (Gunew, 2013). I am more inclined to repeat Robert Fine's argument that the present awareness of the need for or already existing cosmopolitanism can be traced to the development of the many rights which has then given rise to human rights (Fine, 2007). While it is of course probable that each culture has its own notions of cosmopolitanism, the very framing of the question already has the discussants in a particular universal framework.

The specular constitution of the subject (as in Lacanian mirror-phase through its improvisations along his career) in psychoanalysis implies that the subject is constituted from elsewhere other than from itself. It is in relation to the mirror that the infant constitutes itself as a unified subject and also discovers a field constituted by similarly unified subjects. Žižek connects this to Kant's statement in *Critique of Pure Reason*: "In the pure thought of myself, I am the being itself, yet no part of this being is given to me thereby for my thought" (quoted in Žižek, 2000*a*: ix). In other words, I cannot constitute myself as the object of a thought from myself. I have to necessarily occupy a point outside myself. This condition of pure thought results in a void – the thought is without content and the being is absent in the thought – losing both thought and being. This void is, for Lacan, the absent thing, the veiled thing – desire! The void also means that there is no a priori universe in which the subject is grounded or of which the subject is a particularity. Rather, the subject herself is the provider of the standpoint from which she is seen to herself. The subject is the ground of the universal, the subject is she who grounds it:

> That is to say, the intervention of the subject undermines the standard, pre-modern opposition between the universal Order and the hubris of a particular force whose egotistic excess perturbs the balance of the universal Order: 'subject' is the name for the hubris, the excessive gesture whose very excess grounds the universal Order; it is the name for the pathological abject, *clinamen*, deviation from the universal Order, which sustains this very universal Order. (Žižek, 1999*a*: 291)

Kant's idea of pathological involves that we do what we do for heteronomous ends (for pleasure; to satisfy our ego, material needs, etc.). Even the moral satisfaction or superiority

one could attain by doing the duty is thus pathological. However, that there is in one's own grounding the void, that one is in fact grounded in this void (because the look from outside is coming from a non-existent place) follows that the duty could be thus grounded in this void itself, in the pure desire (insofar as desire is the expression of a something lacking in oneself) that is not pathological (Žižek, 2000*a*). Thus doing one's duty cannot be an excuse, for the grounding in the void makes duty *ex nihilo* rather than of a pre-existing order (Žižek, 1999*a*). The terms are not set for us, the terms of the duty are set by the subject. The Kantian subject, being its own ground, is thus not the instrument of an Order/Other, but the very origin of its own horizon. This original grounding, the primordial gift does not constitute itself in terms of accruing benefits. This means that the ethical act, the act of pure desire, is separate from thoughts of public good (Ego-Ideal) or of guilt (superego). It is the pure act itself (Žižek, 2000*a*)[31].

What are we then to make of the duty – isn't that the universal Order to which the subject ought to comply with? One notices that the categorical imperative is pure form – it doesn't recommend the actions, that is, is without content. It is not the *what* of it, but simply the *how* of it. The actions are to be grounded in the particularity of the subject who is assumed to be the ground of Reason. Given that this be the case, the kingdom of ends would mean to treat each human being as if he is already acting rationally. As such then punishing

[31]Almost a decade earlier Žižek equated the Kantian categorical imperative with the impossible laws of the superego whose enjoyment results from the impossibility of the realization of its laws. What makes Žižek's turnaround more startling is that he begins with the same premise – that the divorce in Kant of reason and experience indicates the new-born status of the subject, and that the Kantian reduction of the Law to pure form produces an excess – *the objet petit a*. How do we account for the two contradictory implications then between 1991 and 1999/2000, the move from Kafka to Antigone? Žižek then (1991) presumed that in Kant there is a primordially repressed Supreme Good which itself is the content, whereas later he retracts this and finding in Kant an act which is purer because it is just for the sake of itself. The ethical stance in Žižek remains the same then as in now, most succinctly put by Lacan as 'never give up on your desire.'

the guilty is in accord with treating him as an end, because he was aware of the Order and is responsible for his translation of it into action (Žižek, 1999*a*).

Žižek is here launching a critique of the politics of particularity. The argument is that particularity is well in consideration and beyond the register of the Kantian ethical act. The ethical act is universal, and is grounded nowhere else than in one's own pure desire. It is the act of Antigone, who, by insisting on proper burial for her outlawed brother Polynices, was acting despite threats and towards no other goal than of doing one's duty. One can see here that the ethical act is not just to do one's duty regardless of one's intentions, and one could have one's own interests in them (clearly what conditions Kant's civil society); but to do one's duty *only* because of one's duty. Since there is no difference in outcome between duty done for ulterior motives and duty done only for the sake of it, in an ethical duty there is a surplus. This excess disturbs the simple opposition between desire and Law, for desire itself could be the law.

This theme is developed in more detail by Alenka Zupančič. In her rereading of Kantian ethics through the frame of psychoanalysis, Kant's statement in *Critique of Pure Reason* with regards to the one who claims to have *just* done his duty while harbouring within him other motives, "the advocate who speaks on his behalf cannot silence the accuser in him when he is conscious that at the time when he committed the wrong he was in his, i.e., he was in possession of his freedom" (quoted in Zupančič, 2000: 25) posits a subject who is not phenomenal or noumenal. That is, in Kant one can see a subject who is not just a self-constituted conscious 'I' who can impute to himself the position of an agent or an instrument of the natural order (phenomenal) or a subject who is unaware of himself (noumenal). We also find in Kant a third subject, the transcendental I. The transcendental I is that which is

not visible in the phenomenal (the subject cannot say what it is) nor the noumenal (it cannot be easily figured from outside the subject). Thus we have a blindspot. It is this blindspot which acts as the empty place from which we (a "we" the status of which we will come to in a bit) choose not just whether to act but how to act at all.

To unpack: When the Kantian subject feels guilty of a fact inspite of her having nothing to do with the outcome of a certain series of events, it means that whatever be the outcome of events, whether it be connected or not, the feeling of guilt is the result of a choice. I need not have been guilty in the first place. That I am guilty means implication. That one feels guilty is because one has chosen to incorporate a certain maxim, and that one has accorded a particular object (courage, greed, immortality) as the Cause of the cause. But there is no such Cause which is *a priori*, rather the Cause of the cause is within the subject itself. This corresponds to the psychoanalytic motto that there is no Other of the Other and the Other of the Other is the barred subject. It is the freedom of choosing one's Cause that is the ground of future guilt or fidelity. This transcendental subject is the free subject who may give herself in to the ethical act. The ethical act, as we have seen, is that act done *only* for the sake of duty and not *because* of duty. If duty itself has to be grounded in the subject, in the free subject, it is that which escapes the Other, is not determined by it. Since the conscious I is nothing but the I of language and therefore of the Other, we have a double lack/crack here. It is a crack in the I as well as the Other. This crack is desire. The ethical act is the act of fidelity to desire, that empty space. It is this which makes the Kantian duty cosmopolitan, that it is devoid of content, that its content is mandated by the subject of desire.

What then is Reason? Isn't Reason, rationality, the Euro-centric core par excellence of Kant? Zupančič prays for a closer look. In Kant's scheme, understanding is the temporal accretion of concepts while reason is that place from which they compose a unity in purpose. Reason has no outside referent (71). It is thus very much a part of the ordering of the signifiers right at the inauguration of the subject. But where is this point outside oneself in which the accretionary progress is visible from? This is where Zupančič calls for the need to traverse Kant. For Kant this point is the immortal soul[32]. This is because since a subject is so only because it is constituted from outside, this outside should remain for it to remain as subject and progress infinitely. In other words, translating the argument to a political scenario, the argument is in sync with Kant's view on revolution which we have discussed in the beginning of this chapter – that the *status quo* is to be maintained, because the subject is a subject because the state lends it consistency. Zupančič claims that Kant has slipped here. He has conflated the subject of enunciation (the subject of action) with the subject of enunciated (the subject). But there is an excess in the subject of enunciation in relation to the subject of enunciated that maintains its identity inspite of the revolution. The people after the revolution are not just masses but still continue to be people, a people newly inaugurated by their own authentic act. This excess allows the subject of enunciation to see the subject of the enunciated. That is, this transcendental I is not Thought or Being, but one which the two overlap. The transcendental I is further explained with recourse to Marx's idea of the three values – use-value, exchange-value and surplus value – by Kiarina Kordela (2007). In use-value what we have is the object in itself, in exchange-value we attribute to it its price or its status. In these two values we have two different kinds of temporality (or Kantian antinomy) involved. The use-value is diachronic, that is, there is no end to the objects in the world

[32] Which Zupančič reads as immortal body. But for conciseness we shall offer only the fundamental arguments.

(mathematic antinomy) – the list can go on in infinite regression. On the other hand, in exchange-value what we have is a decision based on an idea of totality – its relation to the total social structure. Here the temporality is synchronic (or dynamic antinomy). However, the surplus value is of a different order. The surplus value inheres between the use-value and the exchange-value and this is what drives the capitalist system. The surplus value then is an effect of the other two values but also the cardinal value which allows us to figure the other two values.

The question of the transcendental I in Kant can be translated as what is called Gaze in psychoanalysis. The Gaze is what the Other lacks and is lent to it by the self. Inasmuch as this Gaze is grounded in oneself, it is particular. Inasmuch as the Gaze is what allows the world to be constituted as such it is also an index of the totality and what allows us to see us as *one among the others*. To go back to Marx, money (or gold) is at the same time a commodity and that which defines all commodities. This follows that the *objet petit a* inheres in the parallax between the Universal and the Particular.[33]

A related confusion from which the Kantian conclusion on status quo results is about the source of the ethical action. For Kant, the moral duty stems from the will, and any act against the law will automatically be evil. However, Kant's own conceptualization of duty

[33] Agamben puts the point succinctly with relation to "example": "In any context where it exerts its force, the example is characterised by the fact that it holds for all cases of the same type, and at the same time, it is included among these. It is one singularity among others, which, however, stands for each of them and serves for all. On one hand, every example is treated in effect as a real particular case; but on the other, it remains understood that it cannot serve in its particularity. Neither particular nor universal, the example is a singular object that presents itself as such, that *shows* its singularity" (emphasis in original). He designates the example as an empty space which lends the particulars its communicability, "without being tied by any common property, by any identity." It is in the example that Agamben can foresee the "coming community". See 10,1 "Example" in Agamben (1993)

warrants another conclusion. Since will is constituted *ex nihilo* it is a law unto itself. It could not be immoral for it is the law. And in so far as law is the choice of the Cause, as we saw above, it is not necessarily an act of will. It is rather an act unknown to oneself – "the subject is not necessarily the *hero* of his act" (Zupančič, 2000: 101).[34] The subject is retroactively created by the act itself (255). Insofar as guilt is not consciously engineered, the Cause incorporated is also not conscious. But the surplus allows in hindsight, after the act to relate back to it.

But if desire is the ground of one's act, is the psychoanalytic ethic to follow one's desire – the motto of consumerism? Never. The maxim is not to give up on one's desire. To not give up on is not to follow but to *follow through* one's desire, to see in one's desire not the fullness of the phantasmatic object but the very gap itself, the crack that does not lend itself to healing.[35] The act of following through one's desire is *drive*.

> Psychoanalysis knows many kinds of ethics; we could almost say that every "pathology" implies its own ethical attitude. The *hysterical* ethical imperative is to keep the *desire* alive at any price: apropos of every object which could satisfy it and thus threatens to extinguish it, the hysterical reaction is a "This is not *that*!" which sets the desire again in motion. The object of the *obsessional* desire is the Other's *demand*: his imperative is to guess it and comply with it at any price. The obsessional is completely at a loss if the Other poses no

[34] Žižek's and Zupančič's discussion on Kant are both their own commentaries on the comments on Kant by Lacan in "Kant with Sade" and *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*. I have not discussed them here as the ideas there have been explicated thoroughly in the texts that we discussed.

[35] Which is then the same as saying as "not to give up on one's desire" is to give up everything else but one's desire, that is the gap itself – to realize oneself in not-having, as Zupančič reads Antigone.

> demands on him, if he cannot in any way be "useful" to the Other; since this lack of a demand throws him face to face with the abyss of the Other's desire beyond his demand – the obsessional sacrifices himself, works all the time for the Other, in order to prevent the appearance of the Other's desire. The imperative of a *pervert*, on the contrary, is to work for the Other's *enjoyment*, to become an object-instrument of it. (Žižek, 1991: 271)

The fourth ethical attitude which is "inherently ethical" (272) is *drive* – the point is not to remember the past trauma. "All we have to do is to mark repeatedly the trauma as such, in its very "impossibility", in its non-integrated horror, by means of some "empty" symbolic gesture" (272)

The difference between desire and drive is further explicated by Žižek in greater detail:

> [I]n the case of *objet petit a* as the object-cause of *desire* we have an object which is originally lost, which coincides with its own loss, which emerges as lost; while in the case of *objet petit a* as the object of drive, the "object" is directly loss itself – in the shift from desire to drive, we pass from the *lost object* to *loss itself as an object*. That is to say: the weird movement called "drive" is not driven by the "impossible" quest for the lost object; it is a push to enact "loss" – the gap, cut, distance – itself directly…
>
> [A] drive does not bring satisfaction because its object is a stand-in for the Thing, but because a drive, as it were, turns failure into triumph – in it, the very failure to reach its goal, the repetition of this failure, the endless

> circulation around the object generates a satisfaction of its own (Žižek, 2006: 62-63)

Psychoanalysis warrants some scepticism from the point of view of transformative politics at this point. Isn't the core of drive what is suggested by its own name – *death* drive? The repeated marking of an impossibility seem to suggest nothing but nihilism. To resolve this doubt the exact status of the "object" which generates a satisfaction of its own is to be asserted. To restate, to desire is to be asking the question *what does the Other want*? It is in the particular context of the Other itself that desire is formed. And drive is to continue in the realization that the Other will be constantly lacking. The "object" is therefore lack itself, but a positive lack inasmuch as it is obtained from a positive order.

To translate into our concrete terms: nation-state, inasmuch as it is represented by the walled-in bourgeoisie, is just another community. But there is another level, a meta-level in which all the communities, including the bourgeoisie, partake in a nation-state. These two nation-states are not in correspondence to each other. The point of gaze directed by the community towards itself is thus of a meta-level nation-state. This is the nation-state which is a surplus, the idea of which is what given its particularities intelligibility. This is not transcendent, but is transcendental in the sense of being constantly conditioned by the conditions that accrue. This is the transcendental I which can see in itself the unity and agency of change even when the conditions that gave rise to it in the first place have been altered. It is within this particular universe that the drive of the communities makes sense. It is only by assuming such a universe that one decipher the drive in it. This follows that the ceaseless repetition of the drive is not aimed at dissolving every community by in repeatedly

asserting the lack within the formation itself. In other words, *it is an act of improvising newer forms of community*.

In the light of this discussion, let us go back to Derrida (and thus to Levinas). It is a common feature of the psychoanalytic ethics and the ethics of hospitality as advocated by Derrida that these cannot serve as any basis for legislation. The ethical acts are particular. One can say that the commonality ends here. On the other hand, the differences between the two are quite striking and deserve notice. If hospitality involves the double gesture of a conditional hospitality conditioned by the Other but always in reference to an unconditional hospitality, the object of one's maxim, the Cause which induces in one satisfaction or guilt, is hospitality itself. Inspite of the fact of the unknowable infinite other, it remains that our duty is to provide hospitality. Derrida does acknowledge the possibility of the Other refusing our offer. Nevertheless we are not left with anything else to do. The exceptions to hospitality suggest that the value of utmost importance is hospitality. It is hospitality for the sake of hospitality. It is majoritarian as long as it sets the agenda, not for oneself, but for the whole of humanity. It is majoritarian precisely in the way it can assume a universal status by common applicability erasing in the process its own particular point of enunciation. The particularity of the Other is of no real consequence except in determining the extent of my hospitality. Let us assume that the Other's demand is not in accordance with, but quite detrimental to the third, the whole of humanity, as Levinas puts it. Of course this is possible, considering that we do not know in advance what the Other needs of us. He is as free as ourselves (let us not forget that in Levinas the host and the host of the host are both "he"). If this be the case, what would be our ethical reaction? It of course does not matter, because hospitality is the be all and end all of the particularist ethics as propounded by Derrida. As Kordela (2007) points out, what is missed by Levinas is that what we see in the Other is

conditioned by our own desire – i.e. the empty place from which the gaze is returned (138). To elevate hospitality to be the only ethic already speaks of a particular position. The concept of conditional hospitality also implies one's own privileged position with regard to the home – its destiny is to be decided by me! What is occluded here is the possibility that the Other could be a better host.

As opposed to this, the Kant of pure act, as explicated by psychoanalysis, is cosmopolitan and minoritarian. Inasmuch as it is form without content, it is universal, inasmuch as its content is stained with its groundedness, it is Particular. It is in its markedness of particularity that it is minoritarian.

The important factor here is that Lacan moves the Other away from the imaginary to the symbolic.[36] The subject of psychoanalysis is neither capable of knowing the Other nor herself. She does not set any one's agenda – rather she is the effect of an agenda. It is not a question of deciding what would most benefit the world. It is an act of changing it. The Kantian law in itself is cosmopolitan in that it does not prescribe the action, it only elucidates its framework. It gives way to radical particularity, of the inauguration of new subjects. As when read through psychoanalysis, it is a minoritarian Kantian ethics. The subject does not assume her equality with the Other. Rather it is overwhelmed by the Other. The Other is in

[36] But isn't this view discrepant with Žižek's accusation of Levinas that by raising the Other to the divine he dissipated the revolutionary potential, that the true potentiality is in the Other being equal as me – "This compels us to detach the Christian "love for one's neighbor" radically from the Levinasian topic of the Other as the impenetrable neighbor. Insofar as the ultimate Other is God himself, I should risk the claim that it is the epochal achievement of Christianity to reduce its Otherness to Sameness: God Himself is Man, "one of us"" (Žižek, 2003: 138)? While it might look so initially, Žižek's God, it is pertinent to point out, is not the Other but the Other of the Other. Thus God is the one of deliverance out of the symbolic. The point is, there is no such agency from whom revolution will follow like the rains of June (to use a Malayalam expression). There is no Other of Other. The Benjaminian Messiah is here at this moment in a time which is heterogenous to the linear time.

herself than she knows. Yet, there is in her, unknown to herself a crack, a crack which is at the same time a crack in the Other. The Other is the originary site of one's desire, yet it is not the desire of the Other that should dictate the ethical act. It is in the fidelity to this crack, this unfillable gap, that constitutes the ethical act which gives birth to a new subject.

Why do we find the psychoanalytic ethics of relevance than the others? First of all, as we have said, it does not imply a meeting of the equals. Neither is it a question of setting the programme for the world. In other words, it is not the ethics of the subject who constitutes the nation through a will of contract. It is the ethics of a shipwreck as she finds herself on an island totally foreign. It induces in us the sense of awe and confusion as in when set in a tumultuous infinity. It is the ethics of the migrant, those millions who leave their familiarity behind. There is always something from the past. There is the uncertain future.

It still remains a pertinent question as to what would be of value to a theory of cosmopolitanism. The answer depends on what one makes of cosmopolitanism. Is cosmopolitanism just about getting out of one's culture? Is it of making an inclusive society? Is it about formulating a set of practices which can regulate one's affairs in the world? If cosmopolitanism is all about regulating the movement of bodies and capital, we do not have much to offer. If it is about making laws, psychoanalytic ethics can serve as the basis of no law. On the other hand, if cosmopolitanism is also of transcending not culture or place but registers, then psychoanalytic ethic offers us a new outlook – the outlook of the gap. The psychoanalytic ethics is all about the impossibility filling of the gap (Stavrakakis, 1999). It is then also about traversing the fantasies of fascism, of the radical questioning of belonging, and finding in the gap the transition to the new. It is about introducing a new register in

transcendence of borders, a register of transcending borders of imagination and of effecting a new language of belonging.

Conclusion

The question of communities, of governmental subjects in the postcolonial state as they face the state, is the question of the subject and the principles of subjecthood. Yet, one is not dissolved in it. One does retain a stain in oneself, a stain that is not exhausted by the Other. Cosmopolitanisms which speak the language of legislation or of welcome are only of limited value to the minority subject. The minority subject is Kant's shipwrecked sailor – he finds himself in a foreign land. Rather than attributing to him a false equality, one would do better by claiming for him the unequal and the abnormal status. Susan Koshy (2011), in her definition of "minority cosmopolitanism" has characterised minority by the asymmetry of cultural encounter, as well as by its contradictory pull of centripetal and centrifugal forces – "its centripetal capacity to intensify affiliations of race, ethnicity, and culture and its centrifugal capacity to extend these affinities outward into inventive affiliations" (594). Our task has been to outline a site of this asymmetry as well as the location of forging identities and alliances.

The postcolonial subject, be it the individual or the community, is underwritten by the state which defines her yet does not exhaust her. Cosmopolitan for this postcolonial subject should arise not from her power to make laws, for she doesn't have it yet. She is not even in possession of the language of administration. Cosmopolitan then, which is the act of imagining oneself, the politics of civility, that hero-less politics of ours, results from an extimate position. The postcolonial subject simultaneously occupies a position within and

outside the postcolonial state. It is from this exterior limit that democratic politics can ground itself on.

To cling on to one's desire, never to give up on it, is the ultimate act of cosmopolitanism, for it is the herald of a new world, to be effected through endless repetitions. It has been the inference of the long discussion on nation-state and globalization that the state is effectively the agency of globalization, its local agent. In the age of Empire where the walls effected between states is increasingly the barrier not for capital or their human faces but to prevent the refugees (of war, of economy, of sheer hate) (Brown, 2010), one finds that the language of 'parochial' nationalism and 'cosmopolitan' capital are not mutually exclusive. It is important then to point out and negate the fantasies of nationalism – that of true belonging and ordered spacing. The ethical act is to stain these purities, to introduce a radical heterogeneity, to reiterate the impossibility of belonging and thus to repeat un-belongings: belonging-without-belonging, or, cosmopolitanism.

CHAPTER 3

Communities Lost and Found:

Re-Reading Basheer

> If there is a law that all Muslims in India should leave for Pakistan, I have found myself three names. I will accept one of those. They are the following: Vaikkom Mammada Bhattacharyar, V.M.B. Namboothirippad, Vai. Mu.Ba. Panikkar. (Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, *Nerum Nunayum*)[1]

In his milestone work, *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson (1983) draws a relation of causality between novels and the nation form. Anderson claims that novel at once institutes a life-world within the work which is marked by the mundane – of everyday people and institutions producing a simultaneity for the reader with the world of the novel, and with

[1] "Nerum Nunayum" (Truth and Lie) was the name of a column by Basheer in *Jayakeralam*, published from Madras. The column was in question and answer format, to which readers would send questions and Basheer would give witty answers to each. This was in 1948 before Basheer would find relative economic stability, which would happen only a few years later. The column was compiled into a book and was published by DC Books in 1969. For the quotation, see Basheer (2009*a*: 27-28)

other readers who would also be reading at the same time. This temporal simultaneity is also accompanied by a spatial familiarization such that there is a community formed, a territorially bound community of action. What Anderson might have overlooked was the very necessity of the *act* of reading for the rest to ensue – the performative aspect of community formation. Nation is not a given, but is constantly produced, re-presented. The question of nation is far from settled, especially in the postcolonial context.

Homi Bhabha (2000) finds in the nation-form, borrowing from Fanon, "an occult instability." This instability is caused by the antagonism at the heart of the nation form, which is that the people of the nation is at the same time the nation as well as the reference point in whose name the nation acts. That is, the nation-form presents us with an ambivalence of representation because the relation of the nation towards its people is at the same time that of pedagogy and performance. On the one hand the nation has to be imbibed in an accumulative fashion, and on the other it has to repeat itself in performances. The novel becomes a site of this twin endeavours of "*writing the nation*" (Bhabha, 2000: 297).

Timothy Brennan (2000) too has critiqued Anderson's easy alliance of novel and nationalism. Drawing on Bakhtin's theory of novel as the site of heteroglossia and dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981) where the latter argues the novel to possess different and opposing voices by virtue of the different characters in them; and building it up and rectifying it with Benjamin's theory of the struggle between oral and print literature in the modern world (Benjamin, 1969), Brennan (2000) points out that the modern novel, especially those from the Third World, are characterised by a heteroglossia from not just within the nation, but also from the imperial metropolis. That being the case, the novel can in fact destabilise the nation rather than give it the discursive strength.

The necessary nature of the link between nation and literature in the third world was put forward by Fredric Jameson in his controversial essay "Third World Literature in an Age of Multinational Capitalism" (1986), where he argues that literatures from nations who had experienced colonial rule are allegories of the nation. His detractors (Ahmad, 1987; Schwarz, 1989) have insisted on the failure of metanarratives that would confine the heterogeneous conditions from Asia to Latin America in a single explanation. Participating in this debate, Madhava Prasad (1992) makes two pertinent points. First, the communal nature of Third World literature is the work of theory itself. Theory does not explain a world otherwise obtainable in reality, it creates frames through which the object of study is made intelligible. Thus the question of empirical evidence cannot be the starting point of the debate. Secondly, a theorist has to occupy a position "*produced by the theory and elaborated at the same time as it is occupied*" (Prasad, 1992: 77; emphasis in original). The theorist of the Third World literature cannot proceed according to readymade theories, but should point out the particularity that is the Third World, in other words produce it, even as it theorizes it. Prasad argues that the particularity of the Third World literature should be located in the counter-nationalist characteristic of the nationalisms, produced through a process of countering a foreign force and producing itself as a nation due to external pressure. Thus the national frame of reference should be attributed to the historical conditions in which the Third World nationalism is caught in a relation of comparison and competition both inside the nation and internationally.

This chapter and the next is an exploration of the minor readings of the nation through literature. As has already been stated, minor here refers to of being characterised by a position that is divergent of the mainstream relation to the same situation. To explore minor reading of the nation is to convey the sense in which the nation was performed in the

space of the novel, or simply a literary work, which did not easily tally with the positions obtained in the specific field of literature. Even as we investigate the minor reading, we will simultaneously be discovering a cosmopolitanism which allowed the author to imagine a newer world.

Vaikom Muhammad Basheer (1908-1994) is one of the greatest and most translated Malayalam writers of the twentieth century. His writings are known for its simplicity and wit and have been read as humorous yet realistic representation of Muslim life of the mid-twentieth century. Basheer is without doubt the most successful of the writers the Muslim community of Kerala has produced. As a writer who has received several major state and national awards, and whose writings have found a place in school textbooks, Basheer has been elevated into the domain of the canonical culture. Basheer has also been read as a figure of that strand in Muslim writing which is touted as nationalist and 'progressive'.

In this chapter, I shall explore some selected works from Basheer's prolific oeuvre. It would be my endeavour to read in Basheer's characteristically witty self-deprecation and communitarian satire, a sample of which can be seen in the epigraph, as a performance of a critique of nationalism from within the grounds of nationalism itself. In the first part of the chapter I briefly sketch out the importance of realism – the major programmatic force in literature when Basheer started his career – to delineate in the subsequent section Basheer's subversion of that ethos, and the implications for a minor rewriting of nation one can draw from these.

I

The Subject of Realism

In his *Studies in European Realism* (1950) Georg Lukács identifies the task of realism as the adequate representation of the complete human personality at the cusp of the subjective and the objective. One could see in Lukács's study three connected but distinct moves. The first of this is to identify what is a realist literature. The second, which proceeds from this, is to identify what makes a realist writer, and the third is to present a methodology adequate to studying realist literature. Presently I am concerned only with his first two concerns.

"The central aesthetic problem of realism is the adequate presentation of the complete human personality" writes Lukács (1950: 7). This complete human personality is the "type" – where "all the humanly and socially essential determinants are present in their highest level of development" (1950: 6). Such literatures can "fructifyingly educate the people and transform public opinion" (1950: 17-18). The task of the realist literature is to throw light on types, and steer away from a photographic recording or a representation of non-recurring abstractions. In other words, realist literature needs a writer who can accurately portray not just the surface attributes and appearances of his society but also the subterranean forces at work that constitute the present as well as lay the foundation for future structures. Needless to say then, the realist writer is also a writer of acute insight. This insight in itself in not exhausted by a personal faculty, but is determined by the evolution of society, though not automatically. The question is therefore of aptitude. The great realist writer, of which Balzac and Tolstoy are examples for Lukács, is the one, who, regardless of his personal sympathies, is truthful to record reality even as it contradicts one's own position. However, precisely due to this contradiction between the writer's personal views and his honest

recordings, the reality beyond the sympathies come to be expressed through the characters. It is the being and the fate of the characters that reveal to us the tectonic shifts of the age. One should note here that the 'types' are not to be understood as stereotypes – this is as much of a non-recurrent abstraction as any. Rather, even while belonging to different classes and with different interests, characters can share certain world views due to the "unity of the social evolutionary process" (43), while on the other hand, different characters belonging to the same class do have differences between them too, because the characters are "never simply and never directly" "determined by the totality of the socially decisive forces" (1950: 53).

The greatness of a realist writer then is to allow the characters to be in their natural plane of evolution, not circumscribed by chance happenings, but only accelerated by them (as in the death in Romeo and Juliet, an example of a perceptive play provided by Lukács):

> A great realist such as Balzac, if the intrinsic artistic development of situations and characters he has created comes into conflict with his most cherished prejudices or even his most sacred convictions, will, without an instant's hesitation, set aside these his own prejudices and convictions and describe what he really sees, not what he would prefer to see. This ruthlessness towards their own subjective world-picture is the hall-mark of all great realists…The characters created by the great realists, once conceived in the vision of their creator, live an independent life of their own: their comings and goings, their development, their destiny is dictated by the inner dialectic of their social and individual existence. No writer is a true realist – or even a truly good writer, if he can direct the evolution of his own characters at will.
>
> (Lukács, 1950: 11)

Decades later, in Europe which was no longer the same, but had wilted by the great war and withered by depression, the question was not about the efficacy of depicting the reality of contemporary existence as a programmatic exercise, but only of the efficacy of the specific method of realist novels. Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht, the western Marxists in the age of fascism, have been against the Lukácsian idea of realism, but not against realism per se. Their point has been to say that the realism of the nineteenth century, as seen in Balzac, is not adequate or appropriate to the twentieth century (Morris, 2003). It was in this context that the alienation effect of Brecht sought to raise awareness in the audience as to what their real condition of existence was.

In her study on Realism, Pam Morris (2003) mentions how realism continues to be important in the contemporary context, more than a century after its advent. Realism is also about imagining possible worlds, rather than just depicting the already existing ones. In this context she draws on Jürgen Habermas, who, in his *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1987) studies intersubjective communication as a process in which the participants align themselves in order to render more spaces of mutual intelligibility. The process of communication here is thus not a communication of statesquo but that of an active world-making. Realist fiction, in the process of reading, is also about unveiling such a world, a world of possibilities which the readers will incline themselves to. In other words, realist fiction is a performative exercise of cosmopolitanism. We have seen in the last chapter how the neo-Kantian cosmopolitanism stresses on moral constructivism and generative politics to shift meanings of existing terms such that people who are not yet covered by rights become their subjects. Realism promises this politics of reiteration in the field of literature!

Pam Morris is here not putting forward a novel view. The performative aspect of realism has been acknowledged right at its inception in India as a nation building exercise. Shifting away from the embellishment of the existing traditions of literature, realist fiction served several purposes at the same time. First of all it gave a new mode of expression to a very new urban experience (Mukherjee, 1985: 6). Secondly, it was a declaration of the coming of age of Indian nationalism. Writing realist novel was a means of establishing that Indians too can afford scientific observation of the empirical world. Thus at the first meeting of All India Progressive Writers' Association (AIPWA) held in 1936, Premchand, the doyen of Urdu-Hindi literature and the first president of the organization, exhorted, "In earlier times we might well have been impressed by fairy tales, ghost stories and accounts of star-crossed lovers, but those have little interest to us anymore…In order to produce an impression in literature it is necessary for it to be a mirror on life's truths" (quoted in Anjaria, 2012: 1). Realism was the manifestation of moment of arrival in the specific field of literary production.

However, realism was also, to reiterate a point we mentioned already, a world-building exercise. It was deployed not just to record the empirical conditions, but also to align the conditions in a particular way. The idea was not always that life was so and so, but that life *can be* so and so. O. Chandu Menon, in his introduction to *Indulekha* (1888), wrote:

> Twenty years hence there may be found hundreds of Indulekhas in Malabar who would be able to choose their husbands for pure and sweet love. My narrative of the love and courtship of Madhavan is intended to show to the young ladies of Malabar how happy *they can be* if they can have the freedom to choose their partners. (quoted in Mukherjee, 1985: 8; emphasis mine)

The emphasis on realist literature as a record not of empirical reality but as fidelity to the times in the making has been a point central to Marxist debates towards the mid-twentieth century. Priyamvada Gopal (2005) attributes the rise of realism in the 1930s to the perception that the time has come in which radical endeavours would be possible.

Meenakshi Mukerjee (1985), in her study of Indian novels in the nineteenth century, observes that there were three dominant strands, often intertwined, in the Indian novels of the second half of the nineteenth century. "The first strand consists of the novels of purpose which utilized this new literary form for social reform and missionary enterprise. The second is an inclusive category where the apparently opposed tendencies of historical and supernatural fiction merge, the common denominator being the creation of an ethos remote in time. The third strand attempted to render contemporary Indian society realistically in fiction…" (Mukherjee, 1985:16). Mukherjee's central concern is to investigate the local idioms in the genre which was an inheritance of the nineteenth century English education. According to her, the English realist fiction would even appear fantastic considering the remove at which Indian life was, and it was especially in the arena of relationships between opposite sexes that the contradictions played out. This meant two tendencies, one, that English realist fiction did not necessarily give rise to realist fictions in form, and two, when it gave rise to it, it often had to be oriented towards the difficulties of the Indian contemporary life and was often pessimistic, *Indulekha* being a rare example of it being otherwise. Ulka Anjaria (2012), on the other hand, treads a Brechtian line when she says that realist fiction in India is to be read for its ability to express the contradictions in Indian life, and hence might upset several parameters of realism.

The programmatic nature of realism in the postcolonial situation found its arena of operation in undertaking a bid of pedagogy. In the postcolonial nation where the nation had to be created and performed for the masses who thus had to be initiated into it, the subject of realism is the reformer. The reformist-realist fiction was a mode of engagement with the minorities, which were hypervisible, as opposed to the invisible majority (Poduval, 2010).

In Malayalam literature, realism, in both its role as recording and realigning, was represented by K.P.Karuppan (1885-1938), Edasseri Govindan Nair (1906-74), Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai (1912-1999), Kesava Dev (1904-83), Ponkunnam Varkey (1910-2004), et al among Basheer's contemporaries. Thakazhi's 1947 novel *Thottiyude Makan* (*Scavenger's Son*, English Translation by RE Asher, in 1975) was a record of life under the caste system as well as an exhortation to change. Another example of a realist writing, this time a poem and dealing with the gender question is Vayalar Ramavarma's (1928-75) "Aayisha" written in the 1950s. Here the subject of reform is the Muslim community which marries its daughters off at their tender age, and who, after being sexually used by their husbands are necessarily sent away to the streets to lead a life of prostitution.

To end the section on realism with Ayisha seems apt. One, because Ayisha is also the name of one of the central characters in one of Basheer's most important novel. Two, in his career, as I argue henceforth, Basheer was also reacting to realist conventions of representing the Muslim community, three, Basheer also had questions regarding the closed nature and the particular framing of the reform question. The question of the subject of realism will stay with us throughout this chapter.

II

The Minor Basheer

Born in 1908, at Vayalalil, near Vaikom, in south Kerala which was a part of the princely state of Travancore, Basheer, would grow up to be the towering literary personality of Kerala. Between his birth and this initial fame, which came in 1944 with the publication of his first novel *Balyakalasakhi*, there was a gestatory period of having touched Gandhi when the latter had come for Vaikom Satyagraha, of nine long years of wandering from Vaikom to Bombay, Sindh, Lahore and Karachi to the shores of Arabia (the latest as a ship employee), having been part of the Salt Satyagraha in Kerala, of having served several terms in various jails as part of the struggle for Indian independence, of starting a clandestine armed urban guerrilla (which had the record of drawing up lists of people to kill but not killing anyone – the high point of activity was when, unknown to Basheer, the members threw acid in the local post office at night and destroyed the letters) and a newspaper (*Ujjivanam*) as its propaganda wing, of poverty, hunger and short stories to ward off their ultimate perils. *Ormayude Arakal* [Cells of memory] is a recollection mostly of those years of anonymity, each memory prodded on by one of those grouped around him. Basheer had by now authored works which established his status of a living legend. His house, now in Beypore near Calicut in Malabar, was a hub of students, artists, literati, fans, spiritual followers, journalists, and random itinerants.

Basheer's career would tower in the following years. His books were to be translated into some 16 languages, including English and French. Beginning from M.P.Paul Prize for *Ntuppuppakkoranandarnnu* (1951), he would be awarded fellowships from Sahitya Akademi and Kerala Sahitya Akademi. The Indian Government honoured him with Padma Sri in

1982. His death on the 5th of July, 1994 could not halt his literary career. Three of his books were published posthumously. Add to that the anecdotes on Basheer as said by Basheer written later by those who knew him. He was soon called "the writer who writes after death" (Tharuvana, 2013: n.a.).

To read this figure, the hyperreal Basheer, within the gridwork of 'minor' would then seem to be debilitating not just to the vast literary output of his, indeed the man himself. Yet this is precisely what I intend to do in this chapter, for as I show, such a re-reading yields rich results to understand the internal fissures of nationalism and creative ways of asserting claim on the politic. In what follows is an example of how the empty signifier of a homeland acquired, if not a positive verity, at least an oppositional conjecture.

Let me also add right at the outset that Basheer's 'minority' status is not presented here as a sociological fact. That would be contradictory to the spirit of this study. Rather, minor here denotes a position at once within the field of literary production and simultaneously within the field of discursive performance. In his study of the minority question in Europe and India, Aamir Mufti (2007) has observed that the formation of Israel was a moment of the majoritarian resolution to the minority question (90). The minority in Mufti, as well as here, refers to a paradigm which is outside – as in an exception of the field – the nationalist one, "the very disruption and disaggregation of the categories of identity (Mufti, 2007: 7).[2] The nationalist paradigm operates within a system of simultaneous

[2] Hans Kohn, on the other hand, argues that modern nationalism has borrowed three elements from the Judeo-Christian tradition – "the idea of a chosen people, the emphasis on a common stock of memory of the past and of hopes for the future, and finally, national messianism"(Kohn, 1965: 11). Of these, the last factor indicates the idea of being an outsider which is then mobilized to form a nation of one's own, for example, the Zionist movement for Israel. It is immediately clear that this idea of messianism is not what is meant in Mufti or in this

equivalence and difference. Postcolonial nationalism is maintained as the localised version of a global phenomenon, a global form with a local content (Chatterjee, 1986). At this higher plane each nation is assimilated to the same logic, a logic which deems Zionism as the resolution for the Jewish question, thereby assimilating the particularist Jew at another level. Nationalism thus operates within the broader paradigm of capitalist equivalence in which each commodity is different in terms of its value (national content), but also equivalent with reference to a universal form (the state form).

Balyakalasakhi [Childhood Friend] was Basheer's first novel to be published after he had decided on writing to be his career, after the early youth spent in poetry, and then a stint of short stories. Basheer was by then known for his skills among a few in the literati, especially the respected critic M. P. Paul who remained a lifelong mentor for Basheer, and a few other friends. Basheer's first story to come out was "Ente Thankam"[My Thankam], published during his years in Eranakulam. It was in Eranakulam that Basheer suffered injuries to his leg thus putting an end to his job as a representative of a sports goods firm, a job that he came back with after nine years of his self-imposed exile. "Ente Thankam", Basheer's first story, was based on an unknown woman, a dark woman whom Basheer could see through his windows on her way to collecting water. This first attempt was itself a sign of Basheer's iconoclasm in a literary world which told the stories of 'worthier' lives (Ashraf, 1999: 45). After this story, Basheer had written a few more stories, and his years in Kollam prison – where he was put for his political participation in the struggles against Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer, the Divan of Travancore – were especially productive.

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study by minority. Rather, minority is outside this politics of sovereignty, it is its very impossibility of being reduced to that politics of alternate nationalism.

Balyakalasakhi was written much before, during Basheer's life in exile, in Calcutta, but went through many rewritings, more than twenty at the least, before it was finally published, immediately after Basheer's release from Kollam prison, in 1944. It was then that Basheer decided to be a writer for life. It was his first novel to be published. *Balyakalasakhi* is supposed to have been first written in English, and rewritten in Malayalam ten years later (Manalil, 1998). Although this short novel is today considered a masterpiece in modern Malayalam literature, and even hailed as *the* major work to appear in that language after O.Chandu Menon's *Indulekha*, the initial reaction to the book was mixed in the literary circles. The book opened to criticism by some of the major literary critics of the time. Kuttikrishnan Marar identified in the novel, in his piece written in 1945 and published in *Mathrubhumi*[3], a degeneration of the narrative technique after the initial few chapters, and attributes to *Balyakalasakhi* the propensity to join the bandwagon of blaming the rich for everything that is wrong with the world (Neelarmadam, 1998). M. Krishnan Nair, who enjoyed a long career of literary criticism until his death in 2006, in his column published in 1958 in *Kaumudi* weekly, accused Basheer's work to be inspired by *Victoria*, a novel published in 1898 by the Norwegian author Knut Hamsun. Basheer denied the charges and stated his not having read Hamsun (Asher, 1998). Later, in 1992, "notwithstanding [his] earlier comments," Nair stated the novel to be a pre-eminent piece in Malayalam literature (Neelarmadam, 1998)[4]. In the years after Nair's accusation, the novel was translated to English by R.E. Asher (and published by Edinburgh University in 1980), and in the meanwhile *Victoria* was translated to Malayalam and was published as a series in *Chandrika*

[3]Later included in the collection of essays called *Kaivilakku*, published by Current Books in 1965. pp.65-68

[4] All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

weekly. R.E. Asher himself defended Basheer and *Balyakalasakhi* comparing *Victoria* with its alleged copy and stressing on the singularity of the latter (Asher, 1998, 1999).

Balyakalasakhi was the entry of not just a new writer to the world of Malayalam fiction, it was also the entry of a different dialect, different characters, and a whole new universe. Basheer recollects how, after he had submitted the manuscript to Viswanatha Press, and the first edition come out, he discovered to his fury that the Muslim dialect has been replaced by "pure Sanskritic language". Basheer's attributes this "correction" to the generally held condescension that Muslims do not know the proper language, and hence deserves correction. The retention of the dialect was the result of Basheer's insistence and a show of violent aggression, as Basheer himself notes (Basheer, 1998). K.E.N. observes that the downside of the reformist zeal of Malayalam literature in the early twentieth century has been its flirtation with Sanskrit, at a high cost to the democratization of the literary space (K.E.N., 2000)[5]. In such an atmosphere, the book was deemed unworthy of publication in the first ever platform it was read out – "Sahiti Sakhyam", a forum for literature in Kottayam. To those who found obscenity in circumcision (Majeed's circumcision is an important episode in the novel), M.P.Paul replied:

> "It is better that those who faint by the sight of blood abstain from reading this novel. Those who find dignity in the dialect and social situation of Namboodiris and other uppercastes might not find Basheer's *biriyani* and

[5] This argument itself is however at the cost of alternate literary traditions in Kerala among communities other than Hindu and their specific relation to Kerala modernity. It has been generally observed how the hegemonic literary historiographies in Kerala exclude Muslim and Christian traditions (Kumar, 2010). Literary traditions of Muslims, either in Malayalam itself or in Arabi-Malayalam cannot be subsumed under this tendency to Sanskritisation. For an example of the relation between the Mappila song tradition and reformation, see Vallikkunnu (2008).

> chicken very exciting. But they better remember this: literature is not the monopoly of uppercaste haves. It can be possessed by anyone." (Ashraf, 1999: 87)

M.P. Paul, who also wrote a foreword to the novel when it was first published, is himself torn between the particularity and universality of the work. Paul insists that the merit of the work is not of its being a Muslim story written by a Muslim, that is, an essentialist and experiential representation. At the same time, the very Muslim character of it is presented as a merit – as an attempt in which the Malayalam literary tradition, so long poor due to this exclusion of Muslims, have now found a way to "enter the heart" of that community. He terms the novel as a means "to establish hearty relations with a considerable population living in our midst" (Paul, 2009: 10-11). Basheer himself has stated his entry into the Malayalam literary tradition as a means of ending the long Muslim silence. Basheer was uncomfortable by the fact that in all the stories he read, the Muslim characters, if any, were always villains. Basheer wanted to show the world that Muslims too had virtues in them (Basheer, 1994: 1574). Sukumar Azhikode has characterised Basheer's work as a simultaneous turn away from the exaggerations of an earlier period as well as a departure from realist and social traditions that held sway with Basheer's contemporaries (Azhikode, 1998)[6].

Realism, as a mode of narrative fiction, was an attempt of derivative nationalism, in which the ability to record without embellishments was seen to be a moment of arrival of the

[6]Other critics on Basheer too have noted if not his anti-realist position, at least the impossibility of terming Basheer as a properly realist writer. P.Meerakutty identifies Basheer's works as spreading across a diversity of literary styles –stream of consciousness, naturalism, psychological realism, fantasy, etc (Meerakutty, 1998: 16-7). Perumbadavam Sridharan too is of Azhikode's opinion that Basheer kept away from the realist path that was adopted by his contemporaries (Sridharan, 2009: 23). Asher too shares the opinion (1999: 34, 69).

Indian nation in the world of representations. Realism was about establishing the objective eye hitherto available only to the Europeans. A turn away from this mainstream tradition along with Basheer's assertion of a particular – communal-specific – position of enunciation makes this work a deterritorialized attempt in the majority language, attempting at a communal-subjective hold on the symbolic, the field of cultural production. What we have here, in Deleuzian terms, is minority literature, characterized by an "impossibility of not writing" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 16).[7]

[7] However, I am not sure if the other characteristic of minority literature in Deleuzian terms, that of being rare talent, can be applied to the Muslim literature in Kerala. C.N.Ahmed Moulavi and K.K.Abdul Kareem, in their encyclopaedic work on "the glorious Mappila literary tradition" claims that Muslims have published many novels in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, some of which he names – *Alauddin*, *Qamarssaman*, *Shamsussaman*, *Amir Hamsa*, etc. They also named *Subaida*, *Sainaba*, and *Qidrnabiyekkanda Nabeesa* as examples of Arabi-Malayalam novels (Arabi-Malayalam: Malayalam written in Arabic script, supposedly older than the Malayalam script) (Ahmed Maulavi, C.N. and K.K. Muhammad Abdul Kareem, 1978: 51).

However, going by their claim that the first Malayalam novel was by a Mappila, and was the translation of *Chaar Darvesh* from Persian which was translated to Malayalam some six years before Chandumenon's *Indulekha* (1889), one has to assume that what the claim effectively means is the availability of prose literature among Mappilas rather than novels *per se*, *Chaar Darvesh* being a late thirteenth century *Arabian Night*-style narrative by Aamir Khusro. The fate of these works is unknown and unfortunately not discussed.

While *Indulekha* itself is not considered the first Malayalam novel (Appu Nedungadi's *Kundalatha* [1887] is usually accorded that honour, though it continues to be a matter of debate, the other contenders to the post being Mrs. Collins's *Ghataka Vadham*, Archdeacon Koshy's *Pullelikunchu*) literary historiography in Kerala is the site of identitarian contention which took on "aesthetic, moral, and linguistic preferences" (Kumar, 2010: 49)

III

Reading the 'Reform' Novels

Reformist fiction provided the natural inhabitation for the realist mode. This mode was characterised by a scopic drive, one which would not be very far from the elation expressed by many of having found a new room to look into, the interior of the Muslim house. However, how far was Basheer a party to this act of voyeurism?

Basheer has authored three novels which are popularly known as his Muslim novels. These are *Balyakalasakhi* [Childhood Friend], *Ntuppuppakkoranandarnnu* [My Granddad had an Elephant][8], and *Pathummayude Aadu* [Pathumma's Goat]. These three novels were translated by R.E.Asher and published by Edinburgh University in 1980. This collection, called *Me Grandad 'ad an Elephant* were taken up by UNESCO as representatives of Muslim lives. This section is dedicated to a reading of these novels to delineate what I call, following Derrida, the difficulty (in Derrida, an aporia) of mourning. Rather than mourning the individual, my effort is here to read in these novels, a difficulty of mourning principles of community formation that preceded the nation form itself.

[8] The exact translation of the title *Ntuppuppakkoranandarnnu* has been a matter of some contention. Some translators have translated the title as "Your Grandad had an elephant". Part of the confusion seems to stem from the marginal and ambiguous status of "*Inte*". First of all, this possessive pronoun is not standard Malayalam, and is primarily associated with Muslim dialect, though it is shared by other communities too. Secondly, *Inte* alternates between 'mine' and 'yours' in various geographical locations, "mine" in south Malabar and "yours" in north Malabar, for example. I have here translated the title as "My Grandad had an Elephant" following the popularity of R.E.Asher's translation of the novel which is titled, so as to emphasise its marginal status, *Me Grandad 'ad an Elephant*, though it is my opinion that the correct translation would indeed be "Your Grandad had an Elephant", and would then be what the protagonist's mother tells her, as substantiated by some information in the story, the least of which is that the granddad of the protagonist is called Ana Makkar, the "Elephant Makkar" and that the protagonist often refers to herself as the dearest daughter of Elephant Makkar. For a discussion on translation debates around the novel, see Asher (1999: 121-30)

Let us start with *Balyakalasakhi*. First the story: Majeed and Suhra, two neighbourhood kids, aged eleven and nine respectively, start loving each other. Majeed is the son of the richest person in the village, while Suhra's family tries hard to make the ends meet. They go to school together, sit as close to each other as possible. Suhra is good at studies, Majeed isn't. Years pass by. Suhra's father dies. Majeed is unsuccessful in convincing his rich father to educate Suhra too, she being a neighbour. Majeed himself is thrown out of the house in some time. Years pass by. Majeed, who had remained incommunicado so far, returns home. Situation at home has changed beyond recognition. His father has lost all his wealth and is now in debt. Even the house is mortgaged. Suhra is married. And Majeed himself has not earned anything so far, except for the years of experience wandering with different people, doing several tasks to keep himself alive. Majeed is depressed by the turn of events. But Suhra comes to meet him. Soon they are back to the memories of their old days. But poverty forces Majeed to go to a city one thousand five hundred miles away from home, on his mother's insistence that she had heard that the city has wealthy Muslims who will look after their own. Majeed however doesn't feel like begging. He finds a job for himself in the city with a decent salary, and he could send hundred rupees home a month. But soon tragedy strikes as Majeed loses a leg in an accident. This leads to his losing the job too. Even while Majeed keeps his family uninformed of this tragedy, he soon learns from his mother's letter that the house has been confiscated; and that Suhra is dead. The novels ends with Majeed asking himself what might have Suhra been trying to tell him, which she was, when he was about to leave home for the city.

A major part of *Balyakalasakhi* is autobiographical – the exile from home, the wandering with *sufi*s and saints, the many jobs as clerk and as restaurant worker, as a

comrade and as a believer in many religions; the affluence of the family before exile, the poverty on return, all these are leaves taken from Basheer's own life.[9] However, my attempt here would be to read *Childhood Companion* as a symptom of the Muslim imagination of the nation that it found itself in.

It has been pointed out by Karasseri (1998) and Azhikode (1998) that *Balyakalasakhi* signals Basheer's caution of religion being an effective rallying point. Though autobiographical notes suggest that the novel was written after a vision the author had when he was in Calcutta where the dead Suhra, who was his childhood friend, appeared to him informing him of her own death (Ashraf, 1999), Karsseri's observation carries weight in the

[9] It is interesting to note in this context that in real life the accident which cost Basheer his job and also the functionality of one of his limbs for a while occur not in Calcutta or in any other cities where he had wandered in his long nine years of exile, but Eranakulam, where he had returned to after his wanderings. This then prompts us to enquire into the imagination of city space itself in Basheer. One could see both in *Balyakalasakhi* and in *Sabdangal*, two stories in which city is almost a character, that city is presented as a space of difficulties, of uncomfortable truths of modernity – the space of unbridled desperation. "There are only five millionaires in this city. Otherwise, it is six and a half lac people of varying fortunes. All of them live. In between some of them die too. What Majeed has lost is just half a limb. There are those who have lost both their legs. The ones who have lost both their hands, both their eyes...even they live. In life there is happiness and sadness; in life there are the greater ones and the lesser ones too. One could actually laugh thinking of such things, one can cry too. Shouldn't care too much – Majeed decided. He should strive for comfort and security. After all, that is his responsibility." There are no baubles of modernity here, there is no cityscape of emancipation. All that we have is a debilitating thought of the vast pettiness of a city, the struggle of the city. There is only the final handicap, the final death of the loved one. This city is tragic. The available explanation for this representation of the space of city as one of destitution and desolation is to see in them the Gandhian celebration of the rural. Dilip Menon (2006) in his study of subaltern novels from Kerala has argued that they traverse a different space other than the national – their journeys are on the mythical and the colonial landscape. I argue that rather than a consensus of the realist tradition, the Muslim novels always had to content with the national form thrust upon them. Their journeys were from the mythical to the national, the city being the space where it was constituted through a crystallisation of identities. City space here is not the other of rural where real India is seen, but the space of identity itself. According to E.V.Ramakrishnan, the city experience in *Balyakalasakhi* is Basheer's demonstration of the unviability of the idea of community in the context of modern society (2010:138). One wonders if community could not rather be the very wound that city drives deep in to you.

light of developments then happening in Malabar, where Basheer had been active as a Congress volunteer. Dilip Menon (1994) has dubbed this period as the time of "becoming a Hindu and a Muslim". Many changes propelled this identity formation – the erosion of the rural shrine based worship in which each community had a part to play, the increase in the urban floating population, the formation of exclusive identities around urban shrines, the rise of a Tiyya elite, the assertion of a Hindu identity by a section of younger Tiyyas, and the conflicting trade interests between Mappilas and Tiyyas. Not to forget was the fact that unlike the metropole, individual as the basic political entity did not exist in British India. Community was considered to be the minimum unit in terms of governance. Communal riots soon broke out between Muslims and Tiyyas or Hindus–Tellicherry in 1915 centered around a Tiyya festival; 1921 in Malabar when the anti-British riots soon were construed by some sections as Muslim atrocity on Hindus and had repercussions all over India with even Gandhi calling the Mappilas "mad"; 1936 in Cannanore again on a Tiyya festival... State soon became the arbiter in religious festivals, and each festival became a matter of law and order. It is also the time that Madras Presidency witnesses the emergence of Muslim organizations. All Travancore Youth Muslim Association was founded in Travancore in 1924. Muslim Majlis was established in Malabar in 1930. The Muslim League won all the Muslim majority provinces in the election to the Madras Presidency.

Ntuppuppakkoranandarnnu was to follow, in 1951. Controversies did not spare Basheer at the publication of *Ntuppuppakkoranandarnnu* either. Basheer writes with characteristic humour on the reception it received. First it received a 500 rupees award from the Congress Government of the Madras Presidency, then the Communists dubbed it anti-Communist. Then, when Kerala state was formed and Communists came to power, the Minister for Education, Joseph Mundasseri, who was also Basheer's friend, prescribed it as a

non-detailed book for schools. By then the novel was already acclaimed and was translated into some fourteen languages. The sales were not bad either. So, when faced with the reality that a non-detailed prescription would require lowering of prices and royalty, Basheer opposed the idea; but finally gave in to his friend. Then the Congress, the Muslim League, the Catholics, the Praja Socialist Party (all of these parties were in the Opposition) – all of them opposed the book citing various reasons.

> I learn from the newspapers that the Opposition has made me a member of the Communist party. Style! I learn that the Opposition says I will get a sum of four lac rupees through this book. Well, why do I need all that money? After discussing with the publishers let them be given what was spent by them. Do leave a fifty thousand for me. The opposition may take the remaining three and something lacs. I request the Communist government of Kerala to kindly distribute that money in this fashion. Let the Opposition prosper! Stinking politics!! (Basheer, 2009*b*: 11)

Both *Ntuppuppa* and *Balyakalasakhi* have often been termed as reformist novels. M.N.Karasseri (1998) reads the latter as an instance of internal reform in the Muslim community (also Srisharan, 2009; Meerakutty, 1998). He compares Majeed's mother to Ayisha's mother and states that the former, through her resilience and belief in fate, is a figure who lives in the present as opposed to the latter in whose nostalgia and vanity one can read a figure stuck in the past (96). Similarly, *Ntuppuppa...* has been projected by Basheer himself as a mission "to project the glory of the bygone days of Islam and at the same time to point out the failure of present-day Muslims to adjust to the modern life because of this mythical past. Every beggar and every butcher even now claims that he is a direct descendant

of Akbar the Great. The elephant is the symbol of that obvious past" (Basheer, 1980: x). R.E.Asher, Basheer's translator, also sees the reformist zeal, though he observes it to be tangential to the story (Asher, 1999: 47). E.V.Ramakrishnan has called, with regard to this novel, "a native informer for the national elite" (2010: 147) whose subsequent realization of the impossibility of representing community through the novel form with its collusion to nation led him to write *Pathummayude Aadu* where his introduction to his own madness allows him to cross the super-generic boundaries(150).

The novel is crafted as a *bildungsroman*, featuring Kunjupathumma. She is the only daughter of Vattan Adima and Kunjutachumma, a well off family. The family wields enormous economic resources and is well placed in the community with their hold on activities connected to the mosque. In relation to religion, Vattan Adima even acts as the arbiter of truth. Kunjupattumma grows older with the myth of an elephant, a tusker that her mother's father owned. She is told by her mother that the black mole on her cheek is the proof of her belonging to the great lineage of someone owning the elephant, and hence she is different from all other Kunjupattummas in the world.

This world of economic and social security is lost as Vattan Adima loses a court case against his sisters and is forced to vacate. All they were left with was a hut in a far off place, away from the known people. As the family stability worsens and fights between the spouses become common affair for the people to joke about, Kunjupattumma is exploring her surroundings. She soon meets Nisar Ahmed, the city-bred poet, though he remains anonymous to her. Soon Kunjupattumma befriends his sister Ayisha, without knowing it to be his sister.

The new family from the city has enormous impact on the family and especially on Kunjupattumma, first as a shock, and then as objects of desire. Ayisha wears bodice under her clothes, flowers in her head, knows how to read and write Malayalam, all of which was earlier forbidden to Kunjupattumma, for they were supposed to be the markers of *kaffir*s, the infidels, and a Muslim was always supposed to show his/her distinction from a *kaffir*. All the more shocking, this family, consisting of Zainul Abid, a college professor, the father, his wife, Ayisha the daughter, and Nisar Ahmed her elder brother, all of whose names themselves were so alien to Kunjupattumma, claimed that they were the true Muslims. The family then sets about reforming Kunjupattumma's household, which starts with building a toilet for the house and ends with Nisar Ahmed marrying Kunjupattumma.

> It was not the Kunjupattumma who went in that came back. She had on a slip and a bodice. She wore a blouse and a green sari. Her hair was beautifully done and had flowers in it. Her head was covered with one end of the sari. In addition to all that she was wearing a pair of slippers. She was made to walk a hundred times back and forth in the room, so that she would know how to walk properly, before she went back. (Basheer, 1980: 117-8; Asher's translation)

Basheer and the Impossibility of Mourning

Priyamvada Gopal (2005) has shown with reference to the early members of the Progressive Writers' Association, most of who were Muslim, that the reform turned inwards, towards their own community, as a means of breaking the binary of colonial oppressor/native

oppressed and instead to focus on the myriad agencies of oppression in the colony. Basheer can be said to belong to this trend. However, my effort in this section would be to show that rather than being an easy narrative on the need to reform in the Muslim community or as a warning against communalism, Basheer's narration is also marked by an undercurrent of the difficulties of passing from one symbolic order to the other. Satish Poduval (2002) has argued, borrowing David Lloyd's (1994) terminologies, that the *Ntuppuppa*, rather than being an anthropological account of Muslim life in India, is also an instance of "minority discourse" (Poduval, 2002: 269).[10] My effort, as mentioned earlier, is to read in Basheer not just a minority discourse, but also a minority cosmopolitanism, a new imagining of possible formations grounded in the blindspot of the nationalist paradigm.

It is my opinion here that the question then still comes down to a question of realism, and if Basheer was in fidelity to this genre closely allied with a reformist agenda. How did Basheer undermine formally the realist structure, and what could it be saying of the project of modernity in Kerala for the Muslim community?

Both *Balyakalasakhi* and *Ntuppuppa* are of isomorphic structural features. Both of them proceed in cycles of two and then followed by an incomplete third cycle which connects to the very beginning of the respective novel. First there is the short separation between Majeed and Suhra, as Majeed gets circumcised and Suhra's ear piercing ceremony is also underway. That episode ends with them kissing each other and the narrator for the first

[10] David Lloyd's makes a distinction between "ethnic culture" and "minority discourse" – ethnic culture is turned centripetally towards "its internal differences, complexities and debates, as well as to its own traditions or histories, projects and imaginings" whereas minority culture is articulated along "the lines of its confrontation with a dominant state formation which threatens to destroy it by direct violence or assimilation…[It] at once registers the loss, actual and potential, and offers the means to a critique of the dominant culture precisely in terms of its own internal logic…[It] forms in the problematic space of assimilation and the residues it throws up" (Lloyd, 1994, quoted in Poduval, 2002: 269).

time proclaiming that they were in love. Next we have Majeed joining school while Suhra couldn't do the same, and then the exile from home, forcing an even greater period of separation, which ends with Majeed coming back, and his mother, in principle, agreeing that it would be a good thing if Majeed marries Suhra, though she is quite apprehensive of the public castigation that will follow. This is followed by separation again, as Majeed, unwilling to let those back home know of the tragic turn around in his career – a lost leg and job – comes to know of Suhra's death through a letter from his mother. Majeed relapses into his last memories of Suhra. What was it that Suhra wanted to tell him at the moment of his departure from home?

The novel thus ends with a question. There is no resolution to the novel. The question echoes, haunts. It requests us to go back, it requires it. Go back to memories. Repeat the story, find out what it could have been. The narration acquires its reticent hysteria here, incessant interrogation of one's own place in what has happened. The unbridgeable gap of desire propels the author to go back in circles, in cycles of impossible fillings to this last one question confronted by the narrator. The author gives way to the narrator and the authorial resolution is kept in suspension. It is then a logical extension from this moment of hysteria to the very first sentence of the novel: "Though Suhra and Majeed had been friends since childhood, what was peculiar about their friendship was that they were sworn enemies before they were friends" (Basheer, 2009*b*: 13). One needs infinite remembrance here, an infinite and cyclical remembrance. Time takes on epic dimensions in Basheer's novel.

In *Ntuppuppa*, again, the novel proceeds in a cyclical manner. The novel has three parts; the first, from the introduction to Kunjupattumma and their secure and bounded existence to their exile from the familiar world; the second, from the starting of life in the

new neighbourhood and life conditions to the marriage between Kunjupattumma and Nisar Ahmed; and the third, the incident of the children making fun of the memory of elephant ending with the paragraph:

> Kunjupattumma asked again. She looked at Kunjupattumma, standing gorgeous. She thought of the able Nisar Ahmed. They have just stepped into the bright future by the grace of God. The Lord, Master of the Universes, Rabbul Aalameen, will set everything right. History is definitely history...In the end umma, tearful and stammering, said, 'They s-s-say your uppuppa's...huge elephant...was an elephant ant!...an elephant ant!' (Asher's translation with my modification; Basheer, 1980: 119)

A quick reading of the first part gives an impression that it is not just an introduction to Kunjupattumma's life, but also to the shared beliefs of Muslim life. There are detailed descriptions about the creation of the world, the original disobedience of Satan, and the end of the world. These descriptions, I argue, is more important than just an indulgence in exoticisation, or a programme to educate the readers of the closed world of Muslims. Rather, this is the very structure in which the novel is framed, a frame rendered invisible by the frame of modernisation and nation building.

Let us take the first section and look for correspondences: the elephant precedes the arrival of Kunjupattumma on earth and is symbolised by the mole on her cheek, the elephant being the reason for her distinction; the Prophet is prefigured by the creation of his light

which precedes his corporeal existence[11], this very pre-existence certifying his eminence. The disobedience is narrated through the incident of a boy who crops his hair against religious sanctions and is punished; and the final destruction of the world, symbolised by the exit of the family from the world of their familiarities, their turn to deprivation and insignificance, and more importantly, the exit of Kunjupattumma from the closed spaces to the open fields. But here is the interesting twist, in the paragraph following their exit from the house:

> Nothing has happened to the world. But...their past, present and future are all shattered. Yet...the river and the sands lie glittering in the moonlight....people are bathing in the water....On the sand some are sitting together and enjoying the fun of gossip....nothing has happened to the world. But Vattan Adima's and his wife's and his daughter's life seemed shattered.
>
> Nothing has happened to the world. (Basheer, 1980: 31)

Let us then take a detour to the explanation on the end of the world given by Basheer in the novel.

> One day this world will be destroyed. There are some signs by which one can know about it in advance. Kunjupattumma will go into this in detail...Those of low estate will rise. Those of high estate will go down. Evil will prevail. Faith in God will fade. Religions will disappear. Parents will not be obeyed. Teachers will not be respected. Old people will be mocked. Women will lose

[11] The translators overlook the fact that "olivu" is just the light and not the body itself. See Basheer (1980: 61). The reference here is to a popular belief, first propounded by the *sufi* mystic ibn A'rabi (1165-1240) that Muhammad was the first creation, and what was created then was the light of Prophet.

> modesty and shame. Nobody will have respect for anyone. Love will disappear. Jealousy will increase. There will be terrible wars....Even then the world will not be destroyed. Only Allah can destroy it. Very many years before qiyamat, men will fall into the confused state of forgetfulness...Then one day, as soon as the sun is up, while men are in the midst of getting ready for their daily work, the people of the world will hear a long protracted sound. (Basheer, 1980: 65)

And a few paragraphs later:

> Everything will perish. Not a trace of the heavens or the earth will remain…Like this millions of ages will pass during which God alone will be…Again he will create the world. There will be sun, moon and stars. He will raise all souls to life again. Then punishment, salvation…Kunjupattumma will recite all this in detail. She knows all of it by heart. (Basheer, 1980: 66)

Indeed, the apocalypse is followed by the resurrection. This is what allows the story to continue in its cycle of creation, disobedience and apocalypse. Now let us take the second portion. The arrival in the new world corresponds to creation; the disobedience is narrated through a whole lot of incidents –the fight between the spouses, the refusal of Kunjupattumma's mother to pray, indeed her fading belief in God, the low estate of the once influential family, the desirability of those activities which they earlier considered below them…; and the apocalypse is the marriage itself, the destruction of all known ways of life, the conquest by the regime of slips and bodice and flowers.

But what exactly is the potential of a recreation? Where is the absolute negativity that will allow this dialectic to freeze and then take a rebirth? Wherein lies the possibility of a paused

time and the potential of redemption? Where exactly is the suspension of movement in a homogenous empty time of the conquerors and the replacement of it by the incessant repetition of a beginning *ex nihilo* in which the past itself is restricted towards a redemptive future? Here we come back to the first paragraph of the novel:

> It all seems to have happened countless thousands years ago. For, isn't childhood a long way off? Since then many things have happened. Kunjupattumma can recollect it all only as some kind of a joke. Raw, green life. These are of course eternal, irresolvable mysteries. Nothing is really in one's grasp, is it? What does one do? One feels like heaving sobs; and also to laugh one's heart out. Isn't laughter better than weeping? So recollect and smile. (Basheer, 1980: 53; translation modified by Poduval, 2010: 366)

It is my argument that these novels are far from being simple projects at reformation. Rather, their cyclical nature points to the trauma of a loss and simultaneous irony of the difficulty to mourn. History is definitely history! It is the invention of "certain" (in both its meanings, selective and claiming as true) histories that nation states projects itself into the past, gains its essence. While history seeks for itself the knowledge of what is known, the claim of memory is its communitarian nature, its shared valency. History is that which validates the question "What is the proof?" The advent of history is the advent of rationality/modernity. But even rationality hides beyond its facade certain unquestioned beliefs, the kernel which drives it forward. The story of the Prophet's light, of the gilled fish, stays questioned, in the very modern spirit. But there is another myth that lies unquestioned in the story –the myth of the elephant. What exactly is the veracity of this elephant other than narratives. But this unquestioned myth is crucial exactly because it is the very identity of

Kunjupattumma. It is the mole, with its link to the ancestral glory that separates her from all other Kunjupattummas in the world. It is indeed the hidden myth behind the very history. The moment of arriving at the alienated space is also the moment of arrival of new possibilities of memory. "History is definitely History" will then speak volumes of the perpetuation of identity even when the subject makes a desperate attempt to move from the primary identification of the community to the secondary identification of the nation.[12] Instead of reading the final words of Kunjupattumma's mother as the farcical second death of the elephant, it would then force us to read it as exactly that point of frozen time where all past significations resurface in an attempt of redemption.[13] This empty space of signification where the verifiable elephant of the myth is cast in a temporary limbo between the old and the new generation is also the moment which allows the narration of the story in its cycles. It is this moment which engenders the possibility of alternate identifications. The characteristic trait of minority cosmopolitanism, as we have discussed it, is in evidence here, in the

[12] Kalpetta Narayanan reads in the tearful and stammering Kunjutachumma the tears of joy rather than anguish. According to him there are very few instances in Malayalaam in which the joy of transition is recorded as it is in *Ntuppuppa* (30). He reasons this joy to be due to the assurance which comes with modernity that "history is definitely history" (Narayanan, 2013). One wonders then if modernity is also about preserving grandeur in museums and mocking them in folklore. Such a contradiction, not always unwelcome, owes more to the resistance of the folk, of which Kunjutachumma is preeminent figure, than of the devises of modernity. But here it is the folk memory which is the subject of ridicule, and it is "the new generation" (the title of the last chapter is "The New Generation is Talking"), the time which has come and is to persist, who is the ridiculer.

[13] Meenakshi Mukherjee (1985) notes that since it was in the sphere of love and courtship that Indian reality stood in stark contrast to the reality of the English novels available then, the Indian realist tradition have often deployed women protagonists mainly to signal the unfinished project of individual autonomy in India. While the fate of the women protagonist hardly sway to her desires, O.Chandumenon's *Indulekha* from Malayalam is a rare realist novel which "combines individual fulfilment, social sanction and material benefit" (71). Seen in this light, Kunjutachumma's final bereavement even as individual fulfilment and material benefit is finally accrued from the marriage at the end could again be seen as the remainder of this unfinished, indeed impossible, project.

interpellation of the modern subject and the very novel, through its insistence on a reiteration of memories, as its blindspot, the place which resists being interpellated.

K.M.Sherrif's study focussing on the translation of *Ntuppuppa* by Asher is alert to the rich cultural context in which the various signifiers, seemingly innocuous in the translation, operate to marshal historical memory as well the fractures within Kerala's modernity. According to Sherrif, Kunhupaathumma's is the dialogic voice in the novel in what is otherwise a sterile register of standard Malayalam (Sherrif, 2005: 34).[14] The concern, other than the accuracy of translation, which occupies Sherrif is whether Basheer can be called, borrowing the lexicon of James Clifford, an "indigenous ethnographer", one who undermines the duality between the colonial ethnographer and the native informer. Sherrif answers in the negative, because Basheer seems to have imbibed many of the prejudices of the mainstream culture about his own marginal culture. However, what comes through in Sherrif's study is a question of how much of an empirical observer was Basheer – questions like 'did the educated take dowry?', 'did or did not Kunhupaathumma get educated in a Madrasa where she would have heard some of the reformist talk on hygiene already?' A possible answer to the question of veracity of Basheer's observations or the prejudices involved in his language is provided by Poduval (2010) who prefers to see in Basheer's language a mimicry of the mainstream culture and a display of the disjunct between one's life-world and the dialect of literature, an alley the minor literature is forced to. Poduval finds in the stutter and silence the inability to account for the loss that is no longer knowable.

My effort in pointing out the isomorphic cyclical structure of the two novels has been to point out a decisive way in which the impossibility of mourning has been presented in

[14] Though it privileges Nisar's and Ayisha's point of view, according to Ramakrishnan (2010: 146)

Basheer. Derrida has pointed out the aporia of mourning. It is the failed mourning, a mourning which refuses to bury the dead, that is also the successful mourning. It is here that the alterity of the other is maintained (Derrida, 1989). In Basheer we come across this failure to mourn – a sense of being only partially affected, a reluctance to narrow the world to one's own tragedy. Freud, in his "Mourning and Melancholia" (1971 [1925]) says that the inability to let go off the lost object in mourning, the condition of which is called melancholia, leads to the incorporation of the lost object within oneself, such that an other starts to reside in the self. Derrida too is pointing out the failure of mourning as an ethical attitude in which the Otherness of the Other is preserved. In the circular characteristic of the Basheer novel, with its shift of the position of enunciation, from the narrator to the character and then circularly to the narrator again progresses such that the narrator as he makes a come-back already lodges within him the melancholy of the lost object, lost not to the narrator but to the character. In other words, the circularity in Basheer's fiction is an indication of the survival of a lost element itself, such that the subject of reform lodges deep within it an element of grief for what was lost but also continues to live. It is this incorporation of a foreign element which translates the particular voice of the character to the universalist authorial voice. The grief of the character turns itself into the memory of the author who prefers to smile rather than grieve over all those memories which has now become his thanks to the Other within himself. Beyond the level of the individual narrative, this is also a feature of Basheerian world, the return of the irreducible. On hearing the news of Suhra's death:

> Majeed sat stunned for a while.
>
> As if everything has gone silent.
>
> The university is (was?) empty.

> No! ... Nothing has happened to the universe. The city is milling. Sun is bright. There is wind. Just that Majeed was wet with the cold steam rising up through the follicles of his skin. Everything was orphaned. Has life lost its meaning? Gracious Lord of the universe! (Basheer, 2009*b*: 86-7)

E.V. Ramakrishnan (2010) reads the void at the end of *Balyakalasakhi*, the inability to know what Suhra had wanted to say, as the silence of minority within the formal framework of novels (140). One could also read in the circularity of the form an attempt to bypass this formal rigidity such that the silent minority, if minority be a position of markedness, can then be easily transported to the beginning of the novel where Majeed's and Suhra's friendship is marked by the particularity of their being sworn enemies first.[15]

The inability to mourn can be seen in *Ntuppuppa* too. On having to leave their house which has so far been the centre of their resplendent universe and prominent social status, Kunjupathumma along with her parents leaves the village in the dark of night. A similar sentence can be seen in *Pathummayude Aadu* too. This novel was also the last of Basheer's novels. It came out in 1959. The novel is also noted for its self-declared autobiographical nature, as Basheer notes in his introduction. Though the novel did not release into much critical acclaim, with those like Asher (1999) even unsure if it would count as Basheer's better works[16], the novel is known for other reasons. For one, it is supposed to be the only work which has not been subjected to subsequent modifications by the author. Secondly, and

[15] The novel begins by stating how he friendship of Majeed and Suhra is different from other friendships because before they were friends, they were sworn enemies.

[16] Asher notes that this is the only novel that Basheer introduces as a comedy. However this is hardly a reason for the seriousness of the work to be discounted.

what is quite celebrated about it, is the fact that it was written in a mental hospital when Basheer was undergoing treatment. Basheer's introduction makes an inventory of his daily routine and we are not spared of the details of medication either. Narrating the harrowing experience of madness knocking at his door, Basheer writes:

> By then the sun had burnt itself out. There was no sound – neither of men, or of cars, or of birds. The world is (was?) silent. Earth alone stood. By then they had inserted the funnel (with medicines) to the left nostril too. The medicine was poured in. Phooo!! the well known blow. Blunkosdum!! And so has the world perished. Everything has ended. Only the primeval eternal darkness! (Basheer, 2009*c*: 16)[17]

[17] It is perhaps in order to stress this other layer of dis-identification that Basheer has made many changes to the initial text of *Ntuppuppa*. Basheer's perseverance with re-reading his own works, not to mention studies and speeches on him by others, is legendary. It is often opined that *Balyakalasakhi* was subject to more than 20 times of rewriting. It is also interesting that Basheer did not limit himself to changes in the pre-publication stages, but indulged in them even when the novels were going into successive editions. Asher has listed out the many changes that Basheer has made to the text of *Ntuppuppa* after the former's English translation of the three Muslim novels came out in 1980. It is interesting to note that Basheer has made the text more introspective of the Islamic traditions themselves. Below I provide a few examples of such changes. The translation is by Asher. The sentences in italics were added in 1982 or later, and are translated by me. The text is taken from Basheer (2008*a*):

> This was before the creation of the world. the story that has been handed down goes like this: before all other living beings Allah created the light of Muhammad Nabi. *Where is the source of this knowledge? It is not in Qur'an. No one had asked the mullahs. They believe what they hear.* (Basheer, 1980: 61)
>
> During his last days, in accordance with the commandment of God Almighty, Ali threw his sword into the ocean. It cut the necks of all the fish. That is why a cut is seen on either side of the gullet of all fish. It is from that day that fish has become 'halal' to the Muslims and so can be lawfully eaten. *So weren't there fish with gills before Caliph Ali? It is said that God asked him to throw the sword. But does God speak? May be it is a myth. What is true and what is a lie? Kunjupattumma doesn't know.* (Basheer, 1980: 18)

Basheer presents us with an ambiguity of identifications, as if the narrator is unable to decide, or is caught in eternal bind between the individual and the universe itself. The refusal to die makes its presence in the repetitions of many life cycles. M.P.Paul (2009) suggests the tendency towards life in Basheer's *Balyakalasakhi*. He observes in Basheer the dislodging of death as the ultimate tragedy – "there is more in life of pain and suffering than death" (2009: 7). This dislodging reminds one of the Brechtian hero as delineated by Walter Benjamin. After discerning the non-tragic character of epic theatre, Benjamin likens the heroes of the Brechtian theatre to the water which shapes the rock over centuries rather than the rock itself (Benjamin, 1998). The similarity between the Brechtian and Basheerian protagonists is, I argue, much more than coincidence. Rather it is a testament to the times of being confronted with a much superior force which dislodged the earlier ways of life. For Brecht and Benjamin, that threat was symbolized by the rise of fascism, for Basheer the new force was imaginary of nation-state[18] as it dislodged the earlier certainties and brought forth a new ordering which commanded one on one's right place. Basheer, however, did affirm the new community, but brought in a twist to the tired formulas of nation formation, as we shall see in the next section.

At the very end of the novel, Basheer adds some very crucial sentences in 1992:

> Kunjupattumma asked again. *She looked at Kunjupattumma, standing gorgeous. She thought of the able Nisar Ahmed. They have just stepped into the bright future by the grace of God. The Lord, Master of the Universes, Rabbul Aalameen, will set everything right. History is definitely history...*In the end umma, tearful and stammering, said, 'They s-s-say your uppuppa's...huge elephant...was an elephant ant!...an elephant ant!' (Basheer, 1980: 119)[17]

[18] But Fascism and attendant misfortunes of Europe were not far from Basheer's immediate vicinity either. M.N.Vijayan remembers his years of staying in the same lodge as Basheer , in 1945, as the time in which Eranakulam, being a port town, was getting empty because of the probability of an attack (Vijayan, 2013).

IV

The Blindspots of Realism

In the dawn of the Nehruvian era, at the height of the nationalist euphoria, with the statist bureaucracy in place for more than a decade and the Republic *enacting* the final cut on the umbilical cord that connected India to the British Parliament, Basheer set himself up as the chronicler of intersecting events and people. Proclaiming these to be the "true history" and claiming to offer hitherto unknown facts behind incidents that shaped a place that is simply called "The Place" (or, *Sthalam*, in Malayalam)[19], Basheer's *Mucheettukalikkarante Makal* (1951), *Sthalathe Pradhana Divyan* (1953), *Anavariyum Ponkurishum* (1953) and "Ettukali Mammoonju" (published in the short story collection *Oru Bhagvad Gitayum Kure Mulakalum* in 1967) enact not just a parody of historical narration and construction of a national past, but is also an interesting inversion of the national present. This section of the chapter is a discussion on the "Stahalam Narratives", as these chronicles are referred to, to delineate in them a subversion of the politics of concession and consensus, and a restaging of the national public. It is not my intention here to recount the incidents of the various chronicles. Nevertheless, when required, I shall provide the relevant facts. What follows in this discussion takes these narratives as a whole rather than analysing the narratives one by one. The incidents referred to therefore are chosen across the narratives.

[19]There are however, even if rarely, reference to the Place as Kaduvakuzhi or Chattankeri Mana. But 'Sthalam' remains the most frequent throughout.

Populating the Popular

Sthalam narratives revolve around a bunch of characters at a remove from the genteel precincts of the ideal citizenry – Thorappan Anthru, Driver Pappunni, Anavari Raman Nair, Ponkurishu Thoma, Mandan Muthappa, Undakkan Anthru, Ettukaali Mammoonju, Veerapandyapandaram, Sainaba, Miss Lachi Pandaram, *et al* traverse a world of theft and honour, thrift and philanthropy, all at the same time. Thorappan Anthru and Driver Papunni are the absent centres of this universe. Known and revered for their skills in the art of robbery and vandalism and absent mostly due to their exile or in Basheer-ese "undergrounding" themselves, they often provide the hypervisible moral compass of this world. Anavari Raman Nair owes his epithet "Anavari" (The Elephant Grabber), now his official name as in the "books of the Police Station and the *kitab*s of the jail" (2009*d*: 19), to an incident in which he was availed of his skills to abduct an elephant; Thoma becomes "Ponkurishu" Thoma (The Golden Cross Thoma) after his stealing the impressing golden cross from a Church outside 'The Place' for humanitarian purposes, for after all, the Lord who was crucified on a wooden cross can do without a golden one. "Mandan" Muthappa (Muthappa the idiot), the pickpocket and Ettukaali Mammoonju (Spider Mammoonju), called so thanks his scrawny features, prominent limbs and the long whiskers spread out to both sides to rustle with the bodies of the female passers-by (2012), both assume themselves to be the disciples of Anavari and Ponkurishu (2009*d*). Ottakkannan Pokkar (Pokkar the One-eyed) is the card sharper of the Place whose place of business is the weekly bazaar and towards the uninterrupted exercise of which a rupee is proceeded to the local police station (2008*b*). The Police Station has two policemen, whom the narrator describes as the "agents of the foreign government", "reactionaries", "war-mongers" (epithets that are most repeated throughout the narratives") are the crucial outsiders against whom every once in a while the

"progressive", "peace-loving" (repeated as frequently as the foreignness of the police) inhabitants of The Place rise up in revolt with the objective of pickling the noses of these "foreign agents". Veerapandyapadaram is the snake charmer and Miss Lechi, his beautiful daughter chronicles to have developed a feeling for Ponkurishu (2011). Sainaba, "the most prominent of the beauties of The Place" (2008*b*: 13) is the daughter of the card sharper and herself not a novice in the art of stealing, as was found out by Mandan Muthappa to his dismay (2008*b*). The Place draws its ideological sustenance and morale from the memory of the martyrdom of Karumban Chennan, whose talent to be invisible as he strikes houses for burglary is attributed to his skill in stealing foetus out of pregnant women and melting them for their fat and applying it on himself before his escapade. The memory of his martyrdom at the end of a long chase by "the reactionary foreign government and the war-mongering foreigners" is immortalized by his dagger, now a relic in the history of The Place.

> His dagger is now in the possession of Thorappan Avaraan. The inhabitants of The Place could not preserve Karumban Chennan's body in the service of the people of The Place or their foreign sympathisers as a source of eternal inspiration to Revolution. The foreign reactionary government draconically buried it at an undisclosed location. (2011: 37-8)

Basheer's language, as can be observed from the quote above, parodies the language of the world historical movement, the literary commonplace of an ambience consciously embedding itself in the concerns of the class struggle. The careful disposal, distribution and juxtaposition of epithets – reactionary versus progressive, war-mongering versus peace-loving – often slips into ecstatic incantations of abuse, letting loose at once the full weight of

a parody towards the arbitrariness of not just epithets considered to denote and describe the world-spirit but also of the arbitrariness of significations themselves:

> ‘Coward! War-monger!’ Anavari continued, brushing off the soil, ‘you donkey-skinned, run away! You reactionary puppet of a lout!’ (2011:18)

It is in these frenzies of cross-cutting registers that Basheer’s Place comes alive. Basheer pleads to be taken seriously as the chronicler. He assures us repeatedly of the factuality of the incidents he is narrating. Through such devices as the footnotes, and through such conceits as “evidence”, “confession”, etc., Basheer’s discursive technique is at once an attack on the nationalist history with its gallery of saints, heroes and conquests. The universe is strewn with a vocabulary indebted to the world wars and revolutions: the puppet governments, the allegation of war-mongerings, Lenin’s embalmed body, all jostle in the grand revolutionary imagination of the people whose revolutionary uprising aims to pickle the noses of the policemen. “Comrades” and “sympathisers” lend themselves unto this moral environs. If the imaginary of the world historical movement in its communist inflections seem to be one coordinate of the Basheerian mimicry, its other coordinate is provided by the peculiar realization of Indian nationalism. The luminaries of The Place are not just notable for their distribution across the communal spectrum, but the inhabitants of The Place are primarily denoted by their religion-caste affiliations.

> But Ponkurishu Thoma did not present himself at the People’s Court. He was discussing some inter-political affairs with Kochuthressia. So the People decided that the Christians of The Place be punished. Beat up those bony Christians who pass! As the matter stand, the Court was composed of many Nairs and many Nambudiris, with a few Varriers and Marars. There was not

> even a whiff of the Musalman or Ezhava, Tiyya, Ullada, Mukkava or Pulaya. When the decision of the Court was known, the fat Christians gave their verdict against the Court…
>
> Ezhavas, Tiyya, Ullada, Mukkava, Paraya and others split into two. One group joined the Nairs. The others joined the Christians…The Muslim almost fought within themselves. Finally the Nairs, Nambudiris, Varriers, marars, Ezhavas, Tiyyas, Pulayas, Parayas, Ulladas, Mukkuvas, Christians and Musalmans decided - they will have a massive all-out fight. Anyone can beat anyone. (2011: 23-25)

The obsessive reiteration of the different castes and communities that make up "the people", irritant to a discourse of nationalism and Revolution cast in the moulds of binaries of insider-outsider or progressive-reactionary are instances of not just the rupture of the category of people with the aim of uncovering the real agents of power, they also parody the communal-consensual politics of paternalism that was built into the nationalist motto of "Unity in Diversity"[20]. The choice of "mussalman" is a gesture towards the governmental language, characterised as it is with the Hindi/Urdu inflection of the Indian Union rather than the plain Malayalam/Arabic "Muslim". The two policemen in this parody are representatives of the foreign powers against whom the category of the people, here the people of "The Place" is constituted. In the absence of these policemen, the category splits itself into communities, the splintered nature of which such spectacles as "People's Court" fail to conceal.

[20] Basheer's "Swarnamothiram" [The Golden Ring] is an extreme example of this variety where the characters are identified only by their castes.

Citizenship as Impersonation: The *Sthalam* Narratives

Sumita S. Chakravarty (2012) argues that while in the western traditions Realism is considered to be the other of Impersonation, that is of disguised identity, and is about depicting the social conditions of not just how it is but also how it should be, the Indian realist tradition is also at the same time an act of Impersonation, claiming to be the nation itself. The realist tradition in India performed the crucial function of translating the need for and the reality of capitalist development and the attendant social dilemmas into the space of representation, such that the ironies of national life could be virtually resolved.[21] I have adopted the term impersonation from her, but in order to show how this crucial pedagogic and performative function was overturned by Basheer at various levels – at the level of representation, and at the level of motivation. I argue that Basheer overturned the realist representation of the world of novels favouring the mode of epics, retained the function of representation to imagine a nation space, and was motivated not by the need for a constitution of a positive entity but by the desire for the constitution of a positive non-entity.

The unavailability of the category of "the people", in its particular trajectory in India, has led to the constitution of the citizen as the citizen-pedagogue. The cleaving of the nation into the realm of rights and the realm of claims also implied a continuous process of induction of newer population into people, educating them in citizenship. Literature and films in postcolonial India have, for example, been shown to be lodging within them a pedagogic function in which voyeuristic pleasures have been jettisoned at least partially for

[21] Chakravarty however assumes a universal hegemony in India of Hindu textual traditions to which the realist traditions have to correspond to, to smoothen the serrated edges of modern transition.

direct addressal of the "masses".[22] The last leg of the independence struggle in India is marked by insistence on two classes of people, one which teaches and the other which is taught (Chatterjee, 1986). We thus have two binaries with two inclusions and two exclusions. On the one hand, in the binary of the native versus foreign, the native is privileged. On the other hand, the native is further split into the citizen and the mass in which the citizen is privileged. The citizen is supposed to be an embodiment of the state while also constituting the nation. It is this interiority of the state that is made unavailable by conflating both the state and the nationalist cause to "the foreign agents." The organizational terrain that is consequently obtained upset the deep structures of the nationalist literature in which the hierarchy of the terms are clearly established. The result of the nation-colonial conflation results in the absence of the contrary. The rogue element, the only available polity, is characterized by an inherent difficulty, that of assuming the position of the state. This inability is at once the result of two absences, the absence of the state as well as the absence of a people as is dreamed by the state.

It is in the disavowal of binaries that The Place achieves its crucial subterfuge in its function as the terrain of community-formation. Indeed the *Sthalam* narratives have even been called representation of primitive communism by some Malayalam critics (Meerakutty, 1998: 25, 28). Except as serving in their function as the crucial constitutive exception, the two policemen do not present us with any positive programme. Their function in The Place is reduced being the discursive counterpoint. The picaresque protagonists of The Place are not posited against a similar sociological category. Nor is there the existence of a parallel society. Rather, the picaresque constitute the people, whose discursive opposition, the policemen, then crucially subsumes two different registers, that of the State and Nation. The

[22]See for example Tharu (2000), Rajadhyaksha (2000)

presence of the rogue elements as the protagonists of the story is not an attempt at imagining an alternate form of nationalism, rather it is the disavowal of nationalist model itself. The policemen are at the same time representatives of the foreign power as well as the discursive counterpoint with reference to which the category of the people is constituted. A negation of this fantasy does not lend itself into constituting a new imaginary, rather it is the dissolution of the imaginary itself. The foreign power is at once also the guarantor of the people. The policemen are the state and the nation fused into one. The consequent subjective destitution then requires us to imagine the community newly.

Towards the end of *Sthalathe Pradhana Divyan*, when the people of The Place decide to attack the Police Station; the policemen abandon the station which is then occupied by 'The People'. Anavari Raman Nair makes himself the Head Constable and Ponkurishu is the new constable. The policemen are apprehended on their way to "underground" themselves by Kochuthressia and are, much to the Policemen's disbelief, arrested by her and led to the Police station where they are imprisoned.

> Constable Ponkurishu Thoma locked up the two old Police reactionaries. Head Constable Anavari said:
>
> "Hey Ettukaali! Ask Mandan Muthappa to serve the masters two tea!' Then he looked at this humble chronicler: "Ask him to make it three."
>
> "Yes Sir"
>
> Constable Ponkurishu acknowledging Kochuthressia, said, "Hey Ettukaali, six tea. Two for those in the lock up."
>
> "Yes Sir"

> "Hey, Constable Ponkurishu! Are you the Head or me? Ettukaali, go, and get six tea." (2011: 95)

The inability to transform is glaring here. From settling for nickname in calling 'Ettukaali' ('spider' – his name being Mammoonju) to the rash nature of the ego clash between the Constable and the Head Constable, the assumption in one moment of their new-found stations as 'Masters' to the immediate blurring of boundaries between those locked up and those outside (so contrary to the imagined relations of mind-games and pressure tactics identified with Police Stations), the rogues are found to be blatantly unfitting in their new robes. This inability to assume the new identity leaves us with a crucial absence – the contrary of the rogue. While the contradictory of the rogue would be, in a Greimas square, "non-rogue", the absence of the contrary, the absent term that can be common-sensically called as the opposite of rogue (in the sense akin to 'woman' being opposite of 'man')[23] throws open the challenge of imagining newer ways of organization, or what is, within the terms of our thesis, referred to as *cosmopolitanism*.

The arrival of two *sants*, one Muslim and one Hindu, in The Place, in *SPD* is occasioned by the turn towards what is seen as the project of modernity – towards health and education.

> The Holy Saints assumed the leadership of The Place. They submitted before the people some revolutionary programmes.

[23]An easy way of explaining contrary and contradictory: "old" is the contrary of "young", while the contradictory of "young" would be "not-young". Thus while the contrary of "young" has a positive entity, the contradictory is actually a generative term in which there is a wider range of positions available. For Greimas Square, see Greimas (1987)

> The stink of the bazaar should be brought down. Goat, cow, buffalo, pig, dog, duck, bull, rabbit, hen etcetera should not be reared in the houses. Fish – raw, dry, rotten – should not be kept in the house forever. Intestines, blood, bones, etcetera should be buried afar. Rotten leather should not be kept in the house either. Every house should have a minimum of one toilet. Every community should toilet-train their young ones. (Men and Women) should take bath at least once a week.
>
> If the men and women do not adhere to this programme, the Holy Saints will punch their nose in. (2011: 63-4)

The detailed instructions insinuating the high sounding nationalist programme is undercut by the silliness of the punitive. The sublime paternal authority that is the Citizen-State turns into the obscene figure of a bully. The Holy Saints are juxtaposed with the filth and the stink, their holiness descending into the unruly. The Basheerian parody however reserves its subterfuge for a later moment – the two saints are, and were always by the knowledge and blessing of the people of The Place, the thieves Thorappan Avaran and Driver Pappunni! The citizen project is transformed into an orchestrated attempt at impersonation, that of disguising thieves who are on the run. The crucial subversion here is in the register of hegemony itself. The detailed direction towards modernity is effective not because of its association with the enlightened – rather enlightenment itself is a project of collusion in crime. The crucial absence of the citizen figure is supplanted by the rogue reproducing itself in disguise without assuming their subject positions. Rather than effecting a divide between the rational citizen and the pathological subject of emotion and passion (and implied criminality), citizenship itself is seen as in the active connivance of the pathological. If the

unruly crowd is the counterpoint of the citizen constructed in the former's bid to control and discipline, the two saints are akin to the dream within the dream which is then the short circuit to the nationalist reality – that the universal rationality is at once caught up with on the one hand recourse to idolatry, and on the other, plain bullying.

The Narrative Function

The full force of the Basheerian subterfuge is to be appreciated when the peculiar function of the chronicler himself is recognized. The narrator makes entries into these chronicles as the repository of information armed with the verifiability of proofs and authority of conversations he has had with the parties to the incidents.

> Let me tell you the moral of the story, which I have called "The Card Sharper's Daughter" right now. But it is generally not very amenable for the well-beings. Generally speaking, daughters, whatever their age be, should be murdered.
>
> Oh no, do not be provoked by my statement! Please do not hold this opinion to be mine. I am innocent. (2008*b*: 11)

> This humble historian will now record presently the history of Thoma before he was honoured by the epithet "Ponkurishu" [Golden Cross]. (2009*d*: 19)

> What to do now? Whom shall I ask? I decided to get out and indulge myself in the affairs of the world. There was no omen. But is it a good thing to set out without a good omen? (2011: 88)

The humble historian of *The Place* presents himself at once the authority of his tale but also a character who is as much affected by the developments around him as any other. Particularly in *SPD*, the excess knowledge in him, the knowledge of the future, is employed as the page-turner, as chapters end with such invocations as "So do you know who was approaching?" (2011: 62). Inspite of his authority, he also presents himself as the distant chronicler, the one to whom the moral of the story cannot be attributed. The detachment is then presented as the movement of history itself, in which his contribution is void. In his comparative study of the epic and the novel, M.M.Bakhtin fashions the term "epic distance" to characterise what separates the contemporary reader from the epic. The epic is always presented as the revered past of whose descent the contemporary reader claim. They are supposed to be based on a national epic tradition. The epics also belong to another time, not just in their divergence of ideological standpoints or location, but also that each point in the epic is equidistant from the contemporary reader. The linearity of time is substituted by the circularity of time, such that the author of the epic may begin and end anywhere, totally indifferent to a narrative closure. The characters lack interiority and are just functions of the plot (Bakhtin, 1981).

While the chronicles of The Place chronicle the great events that shaped the place and lend consistency to its internal order, the very act of chronicling with the simultaneous presence of the chronicler upsets the time frame of the narration. Are we witnessing history being made? Or is it the contemporary? It is in this temporal limbo that the events unfold themselves. But crucially, across the years in which the chronicles were published, the events nevertheless are presented as equidistant, which has helped its current publishers, DC Books based in Kottayam, to add additional footnotes that refer to the other books in the series, obscuring the time lag in the actual production of these chronicles. Rather than being

an epic past or an active present, this equidistance is rather the equidistance of the narrator itself. By being a part of the narration himself, the narrator does not just open his role as the disinterested and distant historian to interrogation, he also presents the plot with a crisis that the absent citizen-figure, the one subverted in subterfuge, is reclaimed by the long arm of discourse in the figure of the narrator. The narrator can be the counterpoint to the irrationality of the objects of the study. Basheer himself then can occupy the role of the citizen. In such a schema, the narrator can be said to belong to a zone of invisibility, a metalanaguage that will then order the relationship between the various discourses available within the story. This crucial classical realist textual function is also an ordering of the world (MacCabe, 1974).

The ambiguity in which the role of the narrator is suspended in time and space can be seen to solve this rather unpleasant hitch in this ecstatic-yet-indifferent (indifferent as in indifferent towards beginning and end, as in Bakhtin, 1981) narration of a parodic epic. The temporal limbo does not just erect the wall of separation between the linear time of the reader and the in-betweenness of Basheerian fiction. Rather, by the narrator himself being present in the narration, it displaces the narrator himself at an epic distance. The narrator is a co-inhabitant of the in-between time and simultaneously of the present. His temporal ambiguity is also his unattainability.

The Basheerian subterfuge here in this particular exercise where the narrator is present as well as closed off is an extension of the project of citizenship-as-impersonation. The narrator, rather than faced for blessing, is interrogated for proofs, that which he is unable to produce except by being an embodied present in the other-time. The narrator has no entry to the thoughts of any of the actors. Rather, the chronicle is a narration of incidents with no interiority. The eye of the narrator is severely limited. Rather than transmitting knowledge

from a higher realm, a knowledge that only the protagonist is privy to, the narrator of the chronicle is devoid of any fetishist value. His sources are to be located and recounted. This seemingly rational order is the formal inversion of the postcolonial deployment of aura in the service of making a people, as in the mode of direct addressal.

Udaya Kumar, in his study of Basheer's works, has pointed out this closing off of the narrator in the unreachable time as a crucial technique in Basheer's role as not just a passive witness to the history, but also as an active testifier (Kumar, 2005). The testimony, when reduced to the actions, point out "the insufficiency of polity as a site of foundational meanings" (317). The lack of interiority of the characters, their lives merely represented through their actions, do not just lend an air of grotesque in which their paper-thin presences appear to be 'making history', it also performs another crucial function – the "possibility of community founded on performative elements" (324). Udaya Kumar's wider observation is that Basheerian works points to a primal space (like the deserts in *Sabdangal*[1947]) and a primordial time ("the beginning of time" in *Ntuppuppaakku…* for example) of creatureliness that cannot be subsumed under interpellation. Basheer's engagement with partial objects can be seen to demonstrate this lingering in a pre-linguistic state. The pre-linguistic embodiment of the ember of life in which men are created beyond the linearity of history, their etching in a primordial memory, requires the flashing in of other sublime spaces, like the deserts. These spaces and times, alien to the discursive violence of identities, is an experiment in counter-formations (Kumar, 2005). It is my argument that rather than treat the Basheerian obsession with partial objects, one would rather see these objects not as the disjointed elements in the life-world of the pre-linguistic state, but as objects suffused with enjoyment, as *sinthome*, objects which linger outside the structure of differences that constitute meanings. In these objects one can then discern the excess of pure signification, those signifiers which point

nowhere but to themselves. These are signifiers in a mythic time, signifiers of another linguistic system lost to the rationality of the postcolonial space. In its enunciation they point to, in fact inaugurate, a new space. The elephant is such a signifier, pointing to a mythic past whose present has never been, but at the same time inaugurate the present in its own impossibility. Basheerian cosmopolitanism can be seen to lie, in *Stahalam* narratives as well as in *Ntupppuppa* and the other novels discussed here, in these performances of the impossibilities of integration – and hence the difficulty to mourn – at one hand, and the inaugural gestures of another imagination of community, on the other.

Style and the Coming Community

The insistence on performativity and the disavowal of an inner plenitude can be seen to be a modality of imagining communities when the minority – understood here not in numerical terms but as circumscribed by an alien structure– is confronted by the tension between integration and separatism. In his study of the discursive slippage of the 'Jewish Question' into the postcolonial, Aamir Mufti has shown how in the eighteenth century when the Jews were at once accused for being particular (because they follow certain rituals which obstruct their equal partnership in the public space and therefore not amenable to universalism) and cosmopolitan (because they belong to a supranational entity and therefore not amenable to national belonging), the Jewish intellectual Moses Mendelssohn enacted an upturning of the familiar sides of the argument by insisting on the action-centeredness in Mosaic Law (Mufti, 2007). If Enlightenment was understood to be a project of de-fetishization, Mendelssohn's presentation of the Mosaic Law as not a religion of revealed truth but rather a natural religion, one that is in accordance with reason, which concerns itself with actions and not with thoughts was a strategy which lodged Judaism at the very core of the Enlightenment

project (61). Mendelssohn crucially introduced a third term too, one that would resolve the tension between the fetishization involved in the hieroglyphs of the pre-modern and the abstraction of the alphabet. This third term is Judaism's ceremonial law, which by focussing on actions, could imagine a community based on actions, and thus "checks the opposed tendencies to myth and to atomism" (62). In the language of our thesis, Mendelssohn's introduction of this third term could be said as the act of imagination (or, the politics of civility), that of carving out of an identity between the opposed processes of totalization and absolute deterritorialization (Balibar, 2002).

Contrary to the situation faced by Mendelssohn, the historical juncture at which Basheer finds himself is not one which threatens to disintegrate into abstraction. Rather, Indian nationalism had acquired a positive content, on the one hand, that of a newly defined cultural identity which borrowed liberally from a Hindu tradition fashioned under the gaze of the colonialists, and on the other hand, that of abstract citizenship which had in turn fetishized itself as the identity of a small nationalist elite whose function it would be to educate and discipline the masses. The lack of a principle of organization of the actions in The Place, its randomness, its riotous pomposity in its paper-thinness, is therefore an inversion of the problematic in which nation-state-ism was conceived of. Rather than becoming an abstraction, the citizen was itself the result of another zone of actions, a zone in which personal relations offered simultaneity of actions and communal identification – just like how Anavari Raman Nair is at times just Anavari and at other times *the* Nair. This communal identification, rather than being demonstrated in cultural practices or spaces of inhabitation (of *puja* and mosque, for example), is a speech act, one which inaugurates it at the moment of enunciation. The citizenship here is not an effacement of its cultural location, but a loud identification with it which also affords a relation of equivalence. The minor here

is non-existent not because he ceases to be the particular, but because it is only the particular which exists.

The Basheerian citizen here is Original in its particularity, to take recourse to Gilles Deleuze's terms in his study of Melville's Bartleby (Deleuze, 1997). Deleuze draws a distinction between three terms, the particular, the general and the Original. While the Particular is determined by its milieu, its situatedness as well as the dynamics of its various actants, and hence do retain some particularity in them; the General is characterised by its abstraction or equivalence (82-3). The Basheerian citizen of dissimulation is free at once of the inflection of cultural nationalism (the particular 'nation' in the nation-state) but at the same time do not inhabit a position that can afford the universality (that of state and governance). What we see is an Original formation, one that insists on extracting resources rather than deploying them. The absence of a model to copy gives rise to a peculiar condition in which the particular, in the absence of the universal model, proximates the universal, bringing to suspension the hierarchy assumed. It is this lack of hierarchy which then enables the imagination of a new community.[24]

> That is when the saints thought: shouldn't the Place have a school? After all, education is a good affair.
>
> "I shall be the first teacher," Muzhayan Nanu came forward. So he shall be the Headmaster.
>
> "And," one of the saints asked, "how many more do you want?"
>
> "Just one more person," said the other saint.

[24] However, unlike Deleuze, we might want to stop ourselves from calling it a community of brothers. Rather, what unites the community is its lack of a uniting principle other than being located in a no-space.

"My wife too is of immense scholarship," Muzhayan Nanu informed. That graceful lady is known by the name of Yashoda-the-lame.

"Enough," said the first saint. "Now we need a school."

The who's who of the Place came forward.

The rich man Kunnothazhatha Kutyali donated the Chennan ground for the school. Stones and lime for the school came from Kariyil Pathrosu Mappila. These things were carried from the bazaar to the ground three quarter of a mile away under the leadership of the saints by Anavari, Ponkurishu, Muthappa the idiot, Pokkar the one-eyed, Pachu the drunkard, Ettukali Mammonju, the two reactionary policemen, Kochuthressia, and Lechi. The people were shouting *Inquilab*s throughout.

"School Zindabad !"

"Kunnathozham (Kuttyali) Zindabad!"

"Kariyil (Pathrose) Zindabad!"

But no one raised any slogans for Kochu Narayanan Namboodirippad of Chathankerimana or Chandanatharayil Vasu Kaimal. After their labour, when the people were treating themselves to the gruel offered by Pathrose Mappila, Chandanatharayil Vasu Kaimal walked right into the midst of the people and announced,

"If someone could offer wood and palm leaves, I can take care of everything else needed for the school."

> Then one of the saints shouted, "Chandanathara Vasu kaimal Zindabad." (2011: 65-6)[25]

What we have here is a community of actions, one that is not abstracted to just being a sign among many, nor is it filled with an interiority that will give it essence. Or, as Deleuze puts it:

> Originals are beings of Primary Nature, but they are inseparable from the world or from secondary nature, where they exert their effect: they reveal its emptiness, the imperfection of its laws, the mediocrity of particular creatures…the world as masquerade…(1997: 83)

The community here, operating in that realm of absence which nationalism desperately tries to fill in with an essence projected into past, is the community of dead father. The Law, one which requires adopting a subject position, of subjectivization, looms in a limbo because of the unavailability of the symbolic. The peculiar position of the narrator in the *Sthalam* narratives, one which we have previously sought to position within the coordinates of Bakhtian epic, can be translated into the Deleuzian world as the availability of the eccentric whose task is to fabulate. In Rancière's exposition of Deleuzian politics in poetics, the

[25] Is this not just a case of the oft-repeated prescription "Do not ask what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country"? No. What is missing in the Basheerian universe is the subject of this enunciation. There is simply no agency which demand the sacrifice. This lack of demand is a consequence of the particular formation of this community itself, one which does not have desire due to its lack of interiority, and one in which need is primarily a dissimulation. Udaya Kumar's observation of the *Sthalam* being akin to a plaster work on an immense primordial space and time (Kumar, 2005) can also be taken to mean this strangeness of being itself, one whose needs are just masquerades to hide its own surplus, the space outside the Law.

eccentric is defined as "not just embodiments of literary production, they are mythic characters who destroy the community of fathers, the world of models and copies" (Rancière, 2004:159). In order to break away from a world of fathers and to depict a world that insists on a new community, one has to break away from the mimetic model of the world in which literature is a copy of a world, and that of symbolism, where literature is taken to mean something. To do this, Deleuze effects style as the molar feature that will hold together the molecular elements of the narrative. Style is then a metonymy and is embodied in the correspondence between the lead character and the form of the story. In other words, the deterritorialization, or the self-minoritization of literature is effected in Deleuze's analysis by a fusion of the form and content, which Rancière calls "fabulation" (158). When analysed through this paradigm, the function of the Basheerian narrator is, though not the central character, in destabilising the temporal coordinates of the narrative, to move away from what is called *Bildungsbürgertum*, or the becoming-citizen narrative, to a narrative which would thematize the masquerade itself, in the absence/annihilation of ideals. The function of the style is to effect within the literary a coming community. The indifference towards the opening and closing of the narrative, which in the study of epic is attributed to the fact of the story being popularly known, in the chronicle becomes a aesthetic-political device to move away from a mimetic model with the availability of the writer outside, to a fusing of the writer and the written.

The ultimate Enlightenment, the freeing oneself of all fetishism of aura and authority is ultimately the negation of the aura of the citizen-narrator himself. If the function of a realist fiction is to lodge within the reader the rational structures of the Law of the Father, the very ecstasy of Basheerian language with its displacement and profanation of registers replaces for the realist reader a reader caught in uncertainties of discourse and plot.

The Basheerian style of the *Sthalam* narratives invites us to think beyond the success or defeat of the different discordant discourses within a text. It is, on the other hand, a questioning of that point of judgement itself. Its strength is in its distanciation, in its abstinence to perform through its style a position to look from. The narrator and the narrated fuse and repel. It is the inability to be subsumed that characterises this politics. It is the confusion, for example, in the number of teas to be served in the Police Station (*Sthalathe Pradhana Divyan*, 2011) that qualifies this new imagination. It is towards this new organization, founded on actions of the paper-thin quality, one which upsets the binaries of the deep structures of postcolonial nationalism, one in which the unruly is not the self-evident contrary of citizenship, but in which the latter is unhitched from the holy and the ideal that The Place assumes a cosmopolitan character.

V

Basheer's *Ormayude Arakal* (1973) [Basheer, 2013] is an exposition of his views on religion and politics. Its exaltation of Gandhi vis-à-vis the eradication of untouchability, dignity of labour and even of the need to lead virtuous lives can make the contemporary reader squirm, taking into account the absence of Ambedkar in his imagination as well as the conformism of his opinion to the hegemony of the nationalist discourse. This book of recollections follows the familiar pattern of the novels we have discussed such that the beginning of the memories is not from his own birth or of family background but of the birth of the world from the endless void. The book ends too in a similar fashion, contemplating the death of the world, thus reiterating a familiar trope in Basheer in which the narrator is indistinguishable from the

universe. This universe is not a universe of exception of the transcendent God. Rather, as we saw from the examples in the first section, this universe is caught in a web of immanence.

Basheer's views on Islam in this book are also his bold assertion of his Muslim identity. For most of his views on Islam Basheer depends on views more consistent with presenting it as a life system in which the distinctions of religion/politics/culture does not inhere. For this he depends on articles written from the West (2013: 112). However, Basheer's introduction of Islam in the beginning, which is direct as opposed to the reported speech used towards the end of the book, equates Islam's antiquity with the antiquity of the universe (2013: 20). Basheer's Islam does not have an outside, which is why he refuses the need for conversion from any religion to any religion (107). While arguing for Islam as the religion of not just peace but also of education, enlightenment and gender equality, Basheer also castigates the event of Partition. Basheer is sure that if the Prophet Muhammad was alive at the time of Partition, the Prophet would have never let it happen. Basheer's turn towards religiosity is not often well remarked upon. Basheer's had written a short story titled "Anal Haq" in 1945 [2009*e*]. The story was a historical on the *sufi* Mansoor Al-Hallaj who was derided, hunted and finally executed for his claim of "ana-al-haq" – "I am truth" – by the religious establishment. Forty years later (1983 – first DC Books edition of the story) when the story appeared, Basheer had added a note at the end of the story:

> N.B. This was written by me forty years ago. I believe that man being a creation among many of God's, it is wrong on his part to claim *ana-al-haq* or *aham brahmasmi*. This history of Mansoor I have written is not right either. Please consider this a fantasy: *Ana-al- Haq.* (Basheer, 2009*e*: 50)

Commenting on this note, Sukumar Azhikode writes in 1998:

> Can a work of art be changed according to the changing beliefs of the artist? The writer has no right to change a story written forty six years ago based on a peculiar vision and character at a different time when he finds his determination, character and situation altered. It is not the Basheer of then who has confessed now. It is not the Basheer who confessed who was the author of "Anal Haq". Just because he says that the story is not right and that it is a fantasy does not mean that the readers will accept it so. (Azhikode, 1998: 19)

What Azhikode misses here, to one's puzzlement, is the very last word of the note itself – "ana-al-haq"! Far from being a confession, it is rather the guffaw of condescension at the self-declared arbiters of beliefs. Basheer has once again with characteristic reticence performed an irony. It is this feminine character of writing, one which sides itself with immanence, declares itself to be the truth, for it being the carrier of truth itself, impossible to posit for itself a closed world, that lets Basheer to mount a critique of nationalism. Read in this context, Basheer's opposition to Pakistan should be read not as a pain in the separation of "one people", but rather in the act of separation itself, in that it posits exception – Pakistan – on which subsequent nationalism will be built, just like how the binary of pedagogue/masses was a relation of constitutive exception where the nation could be imagined, as it were in reformist zeal, only by positing the unruly as its antagonists. Basheer's idea of homeland is to be read in conjunction with this feminine idea of God, the Sufi idea of immanence, where the subjective and the truth dualism is substituted by the unity

of Truth within the self, the point of which is to will out the exceptions all notions of belongings will have to engender to retain its cohesion.

In our next chapter we look at quite a different person, CH Muhammad Koya, who would again deploy Islam in imaging the nation, but in quite different ways.

CHAPTER 4

A Present of the Past:

Through the Geographies of CH Muhammad Koya

Basheer's *Ormayude Arakal* [1973] was originally published as a series in Chandrika Weekly. CH Muhammad Koya was the editor of the weekly then. Basheer, later in his life, found it necessary to acknowledge this fact (Kamaludheen, 2011: 28). Basheer also found it necessary that when *Ntuppuppakkoranandarnnu* came out and the Muslim League termed it anti-Muslim, it was CH Muhammad Koya, who was very young then, who had the courage to publicly support not just the author but also the merit of the book (29). It has been said that when the two met each other Basheer launched volleys of questions on CH:

> Basheer: Why is it that the Muslim Leaguers oppose my book?
>
> CH: Because they have not read it.
>
> Basheer: And the Congressmen, why do they oppose it?
>
> CH: Because they have not understood it.
>
> Basheer: Even the Communists are against it!
>
> CH: Because they saw religion and the Prophet in it! (Kunhimoossa, 2010:14)

CH Muhammad Koya (1928-1983) was an extraordinary figure in the Muslim politics of Kerala. He became an active participant in the programmes of the Muslim League since 1940. The party itself was very young in Malabar, just three years then into entering

Malabar. Rising through the ranks of Muslim Students Federation, he became a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Madras in 1952, the first general elections to be held in India. He was re-elected in 1957 and later was elected to the Parliament as well. In 1961 he became India's youngest Speaker, chairing over the Kerala Legislative Assembly. In 1967 he became the Minister for Education in Kerala, and in 1971 he responsibilities covered half a dozen portfolios including Home Ministry. For a short time, in 1979, he was the Chief Minister of Kerala, and subsequently was the Deputy Chief Minister in 1981-2.

CH Muhammad Koya is chiefly remembered as the one who led his party from a minimal presence in 1952 to the role of king makers. Muslim League has shown itself, in the period of our study, adept at switching alliances, landing mostly in winning ones, though it cannot be said that they were the first to break alliances. However, at present the position of Muslim is synonymous in the state with the Congress led United Democratic Front, but the general culture of parties switching alliances continue. The strong presence of communists from the early years of Independence ensured that the state was not a Congress monopoly. The Congress and the Communist party (after 1964, parties) battled out for dominance while the partners often alternated between them. Added to this, the presence of numerous parties ensured fractured verdicts and bigger role for smaller players. The state regularly suffered from political paralysis. In the period of our study, the state of Kerala, formed on the 1st of November1956 by merging the erstwhile princely states of Cochin and Travancore with the Madras Presidency district of Malabar, had been subjected to President's rules four times.

In a party which was cleaved into the spiritual and the parliamentary, CH Muhammad Koya's career was nourished under three of the spiritual (and supreme, typically occupying the post of the President of the Kerala state committee of the Muslim League) leaders of the

Muslim League – Sayyid Abdu Rahman Bafaqi Tangal (1906-1973), Sayyid P.M.S.A.Pookkoya Tangal (-1975) and Sayyid Muhammad Ali Shihab Tangal (1936-2009). Starting as a junior to Seethi Saheb (1898-1961), CH Muhammad Koya's early years marked him apart for his literary career, through his editorials in *Chandrika* (the mouthpiece of the party), his travel writings, and his literary columns in other periodicals like *Mathrubhumi*. He was a member of literary organizations and in some way crystallised a particular way of being for the average Muslim. He shared Basheer's sense of humour, and often wayward jokes find home under his name. Many landmark projects, like the establishment of a university in Malabar as well as the formation of a new district in Malabar, were attributed to his industry and vision. It is no wonder then that CH Muhammad Koya remains the most iconic of League's political leaders. CH Muhammad Koya is the second exemplary writer who we deal with to map the negotiations of the Muslim public in Malabar to the shifts in their political horizons.[1]

In 1959, when almost every other party other than the Communists had joined together to oust the latter, on the streets as well as through Parliamentary means (what was, ironically referring to China, called 'The Liberation Struggle') CH Muhammad Koya set out from his village Annasseri to perform the holy Hajj; on the 1st of April, 1959. Travelling first to Madras and from there to Bombay by train; greeted throughout the journeys by supporters

[1] For a meticulously researched political biography of CH Muhammad Koya which also charts the political career of Muslim League till CH's death, see Badakara 2007 [1985]. In the recent years Olive Books based in Kozhikode have brought out books written by CH Muhammad Koya. These will be referred to in the course of this chapter. Other than these, there has been a collection of essays on CH Muhammad Koya's travel writings [Thayalangadi (2011)], memoirs on episodes in CH's life [Poonoor, (2012)], a collection of select speeches made by CH in the Kerala Legislative Assembly [Kuttikkulam (2013)], a collection of select speeches on different occasions [Kamaludheen (2011)], and a collection of his writings [Abdullakoya (2012)].

who had gathered in different stations en route to meet their beloved leader, he reached Bombay on the 4th of April. He attended numerous meetings there, partly to do with Hajj, and partly concerned with the political party he belonged to, and sailed to Makkah aboard "Saudi Arabia" on the 12th of April, 1959. On April 19th the ship reached Yalamlam, a region in Yemen, where those pilgrims who have come from Bombay by ship are supposed to change into the customary two pieces of seamless white cloth[2], where they did so. The ship halted at Jiddah, the port city of Saudi Arabia the next day from where they travelled to Makkah[3] by road. CH performed Umra, or the lesser Hajj in the following days and then visited numerous sites in the twin holy cities of Makkah and Medina. He entered the stages of the holy Hajj on 14th of June, 1959, and sailed back on the 28th of June. He reached Bombay of the 8th of July, Madras on the 11th and then back home on the 12th of July, 1959.[4] His experiences on the holy trail were published even as he was still at the journey in *Chandrika* and was subsequently brought out as a book. This book, titled *Ente Hajj Yatra* [My Hajj Journey] will be our principal point of discussion for next section.

[2] Otherwise called the *ihram* cloth; the act of entering *ihram* includes other obligations concerning personal upkeep too.

[3] The more commonplace transcription of the Arabic name is 'Mecca', but considering that the term is not generally well received among Muslims, I am sticking throughout, except when quoting, to "Makkah".

[4] The Communist Ministry had only a few more days in office, as it was dismissed by the Centre on the 31st of July, 1959.

I

Travel writing's association with the rise of novel and that of nationalism is well known as exemplified by the success of *Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe,* the works of Walter Scott, etc. However, it was only with the 1978 publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* that the writing on the Other beyond the borders could be studied as a discourse deeply implicated in knowledge/power, such that Orientalism, a corpus of study over the time about Orient, for Said chiefly Arabia, produced the Orient "politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" (Said, 1978: 3). Said observed that rather than produce new knowledge about the still-being-explored Other, Orientalism produced repetition that drew sustenance and legitimacy from itself. It is a case of mutuality in citation and consolidation. Said's intervention, in the footsteps of Foucault's work on discourse has ever since been digging for the archaeology of the rhetoric of domination implicit in the metaphors and etymologies of the terms of travel writing, right from Herodotus.[5] It was also shown that the entanglements between the self and the world in the Western philosophy of the eighteenth century could accrue a climate which could give rise to a particular idea of travel, one which could neatly separate the traveller and the travelled to and could subject the latter to the knowing gaze of the traveller, 'knowing' as in a continual sense of being processed, quantified, measured, etc., but also in the sense of being certified as with knowledge, culture, that is, not a barbarian, cannibal, et al.

> [Descartes'] ideas about the separation of mind and matter and the ability to think of oneself as a reasoning entity (the result of one's own inward journey)

[5] For a survey on studies on travel writing, but also on differently produced knowledges out of the cultural Other, see Campbell, 2002.

> created a climate in which travel writing could come of age. A narrative that combined inner and outer voyage was not only possible but even predictable. This shift has two consequences for travel writing: the emotions, thoughts, and personal quirks of the narrator become more accessible and more dominant within the narrative and the world itself, its plants, animals, and people, also become a source of knowledge for their own sake. (Blanton, 2002: 11-2)

It was in the eighteenth century that travel writing could consolidate itself as a genre, and it was by the end of that century that the subjectivity of the travel acquired more prominence than the previous objectivity which had gained prominence in the light of scientific treatises such Carl Linné's *Systema Naturae* of 1735. This tendency of privileging the subjective feelings of the traveller reached its peak during the Romantic age, and continued in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The self and the other nevertheless have undergone transformations. While the other has exchanged its place as the repository of knowledge –as in Lockean philosophy – it has turned itself into property under mercantilism; colonialism turned the other into possessions and gateways to one's own pasts, glorious or bestial, and a new era of hitech wars has turned it into a realm to find celestial harmony. Travelling itself has become traversing a disenchanted space. The self too has changed - the self conscious author of Renaissance, the imperial self of oceanic discoveries, the ordering, measuring, quantifying self beginning from the eighteenth century, the sentimental hero of the late eighteenth century and the self-discovering self from the early nineteenth century, etc. The Descartian body-mind divide has however withstood these changes. (Blanton, 2002: 1-29)

The postcolonial wedge-work on travel writing was soon shown itself to be androcentric. An important study on travel writing, Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes*, published in 1992, touched upon the subtlety required on studying travel writing and brought to the fore the question of gender and location. Though thus with much variation and complexity, Paul Smethurst has nevertheless observed there to be a common imperial form for the travel narratives of the western world about its Other:

> This imperial form is binarist in nature and so the construction of binaries in the context of imperialist travel writing might be considered a discursive and rhetorical strategy consistent with imperialist ideology. Conversely, the deterring and deferring of binaries could be regarded as post-imperialist/postcolonial move. Imperialist travel writing, as a form, organises binaries particular to the construction of imperialist worldviews and locates these in places which are to be incorporated or maintained within the empire. The primary mode of this form is *referential* – that is, same and not-same – and *incorporating*, and its main strategy is to harness the mobility and potential waywardness of travel under the order and control of systematic imperial mapping. In this case, the *motion* of travel is spatialised in a form of travel writing whose main aim is to fix potentially itinerant geographies into a stable, imperialist scheme. (Smethurst, 2009)

Even as the Western eye travelled to primitive lands and converted to sympathy rather than condescension, it was in the interest of knowledge and translation (Torgovnick, 1990). So is there any way out for travel writing to free itself of this acquiescence, if not active collaboration? This is the question which Bill Ashcroft seeks to answer. Ashcroft identifies

modes of travelling/travel writing which performs alternative tasks, those which go against gaining epistemological certainties. His examples of such travelling are ways to avoid definitions, and/or to deflect the privilege of readership and thereby breakdown the binary between the narrated and the narrated for. Thus "slow travelling" is more of staying in a place and observing it intensely for the life it opens up such that the place cannot be subject to any easy definitions. This he calls "Slow Travel". His category of "bearing witness" is a representational performance in which the past is dramatized as if it were now and we were being witness to it. "Genre Parody" is similarly a representational technique of upsetting the privileged position of the knowing reader because what is narrated is purely imaginative, but armed with the inventories of objectivity – photos, maps, testimonials, etc. the category of "Reconciliation Travel" involves the narrated in the narration such that the narration becomes a story for the narrated as well as the narrated for. The act of past inhumanity is thus a memory of guilt for the past perpetrator, but it is also a memory of loss for the Other. The category of archiving, which is Ashcroft's another representational technique of subverting the knowledge/power nexus, is an exercise of suspending memories of a place in epistemological ambiguity, casting it in a space which allows bungled interpretations (Ashcroft, 2009).

It was shown, from postcolonial locations as well as from the metropolis itself that other accounts were possible, accounts of other lives as well as accounts of oneself as others. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988) is read as an encounter with the Other to register the Other as would upset the categories of received knowledge (Campbell, 2002: 272). Muhammad Iqbal, the Persian and Urdu poet's verses on travel have been shown to break down at once many registers of received travel writing. His *Javid Nama* takes travel out of absolute spaces of this world and imitates the ascension of

Prophet Muhammad to the heavens. At the same time this vastness of the outer space is seen to be corresponding to one's own interiority, thus questioning the colonial commonsense of essentialising the communal identity. The travels are ultimately to find one's station. Thus the binaries of mobility and stability, of inner and outer and that of space and mind have been put to question here (Majeed, 2009: 90-115). Travel writing could thus be a movement against fixity in time, place and registers. The experiences noted by Abdul Majid Daryabadi (1892-1977) as he performed the Hajj in 1929 in which he characterises himself as a runaway slave returning back to his Master has been, similarly, read by Sugata Bose as characterising a resistance against the colonial image of the pilgrim as a victim frequently imparted through their reports on sanity and security reports (Bose, 2006: 221-32). Even in the metropole, travel writing can militate against the charting of ipsiety. London novelist Iain Sinclair's Lights Out of the Territory, a novel set in London, is read by Campbell as an anti-ethnography, one which foregrounds the Other in oneself (2002: 273).

Jacques Rancière (2005) too is concerned with the discovery of the Other in the self, but he also calls for a proper appraisal of travel as a political factor. He calls for a rediscovery of travel, not just to substitute travelling to the other in the self for travelling to the same by travelling to the Other, but also for a revision of our theories of travel which has been accumulating sameness in its analysis. Rancière would like to see in travel modernity's tryst with Utopia. "Utopia for me is not the distant island the place of which is nowhere. It is the power of mapping together a discursive space and a territorial space, the capacity to make each concept correspond to a point in reality and each argument coincide with an itinerary on a map" (2005:29-30). Rancière reads Wordsworth's travel to France to such a strangeness in oneself – the Revolution was not a promised one, it was not announced. It just happened. Wordsworth's travel was thus a travel to a place where he could see "things and

people identical to their concept" (33). Rancière is here making a re-reading of a period which Casey Blanton, for example, had identified with the "imperial self" (Blanton, 2002: 16). Travelling therefore for Rancière is, borrowing the biblical lexicon "but making the slight move which shapes the mapping of a 'there' to a 'here'. That mapping is the additional way, that is to say the human way of making flesh with words and sense with flesh" (2005: 28).

Travel Writing in Malayalam

Unlike novels and short stories, travel writing has been less forthcoming in Malayalam literature. The first Malayalam travel-writing is considered to be Paramekkal Thoma Kathanar's narrative of his arduous journey to Rome to meet the Pope interspersed with many of the miracles that he witnessed in the trip. The journey, which started from Madras in 1778, and traversed Italy and Portugal, took him eight years before he landed in Goa in 1786. The next travel writing to appear in Malayalam was Govinda Menon's "Kashee Yatra Report" [A Report on the Kashi Journey] which appeared in 1872. But considering that Kathanar's travelogue was published only in 1936 (titled "Varthamana Pustakam" [The Book of the Present] and published by Luka Mathai), Govinda Menon is to be considered as the first travel writer in Malayalam. However, it was the publication of Kathanar's journey that led to a slow but certain (in hindsight) beginning in the yet unformed genre of travel writing in Malayalam.

Travel writing proliferated in Malayalam exactly at a time when Waugh, referring to travel writing in English, lamented in 1945 that he did "not expect to see many travel books in the near future" (quoted in Blanton, 2002; 23). From the forties to the seventies,

Malayalam produced a number of travel writings from authors like K.C. Peter, K.P.S Menon, Vaikkom Chandrasekharan Nair, Dr.K.Bhaskaran Nair, Dr. K.C. Chacko, N.V. Krishna Varrier, E.M. Kovoor, Dr. M.K. George, et al. However, none of these writers were exclusively travel writers, and most of them have just one title that could be listed under travel writing. K.P.S Menon was primarily a diplomat, Vaikkom Chandrasekharan Nair was a novelist, dramatist and scriptwriter, Dr. Bhaskaran Nair was a science writer, etc. In the three years from 1958 to 1960, *Mathrubhumi* weekly, to cite an example, had published at least three series of travel writing, and a much larger number of individual articles on places in Kerala and outside from a tourist point of view[6]. The period is also marked by translations of earlier travel writers who visited Kerala and India, like Al Idrisi from 12th century (*Al Idrisiyude India* [Al Idrisi's India], 1964), Marco Polo from 13th century (*Marco Polo Indyayil* [Marco Polo in India],), Ibn Battuta from 14th century (*Keralam Aranooru Kollam Mumpu: Ibnu Battuthayude Drishtiyil* [Kerala Six Hundred Years Ago: Through the Eyes of Ibn Battutta], 1962) – all of which were translated by Velayudhan Panikkasseri.[7]

CH Muhammad Koya too has to his credit more than the piece of travel writing under discussion. He has published eight travelogues, *Ente Hajj Yatra* being the first.[8] *Ente Hajj*

[6] The series are: P.V. Mahmood's "Persian Ulkadaliloode Oru Yatra" (Sep. 28- Oct. 19, 1958), K.C. Peter's "Sahara" (Dec. 7, 1958- April 19, 1959), Mridananda's "Himayalathil Oru Theerthayatra" (Dec.7 – Dec. 21, 1958). Other than these it also had B. Madhava Menon's "Oru Kashmir Yatra" (January, 11, 1959), N.V. Krishna Warrier's "Amerikkayiloode" (Sep. 25, 1960) and coloumns about places in Kerala like Peechi, Wayanad, Thalasseri, Calicut, Mattanchery, etc.

[7] This is not an exhaustive list. For travelogues in Malayalam, see *Sanchara Sahityam Malayalathil*, Sahitya Akademi

[8] The other travel writings are *Co-London-Cairo*, *Jnan Kanda Malaysia* [The Malaysia I saw], *Lokam Chuttikkandu* [Wandered around the World], *Sri Lankayil Anchu Divasam* [Five Days in Sri Lanka], *Soviet*

Yatra is however special and will be the sole travel book under discussion here. The book was immensely popular – the first edition got sold out in just three weeks (Thayalangadi, 2011: 23), and has been commented on as being CH's finest (Thayalangadi 2011; Bevincha 2011; Ponoor 2012). The book had an English translation too – *Hajj Pilgrimage*, published by McMillan (Ponoor, 2012: 194). The book is important for generic reasons too. Hitherto travel writing from the Muslim community in Malabar has been in verse. These were called the "Sarkeet Paatukal" [Circuit Songs][9]. The other popular model of dissemination of travel narrative was that of Kathaprasangam, a stylised narration of stories interspersed with songs. But these were, as a genre, often fantasies and allied more with the likes of *Arabian Nights* (which was itself a product of early nineteenth century travel)than a travel writing style which mixed ethnography and subjectivity as in the twentieth century. CH Muhammad Koya's *Ente Hajj Yatra* thus might be the first travel narrative from among Muslims in Kerala to appear in prose, or at any rate the most popular first.

Traveller and the Travelled to

CH Muhammad Koya's narrative is primarily that of a pilgrimage, though it begins right from the beginning, the beginning from home. The beginnings are important, as Edward Said would remind us. Not every culture in the world privilege the ending, not every culture is a performance of the cunning of reason. As Said reminds us, the novel form could not flourish in Arabia because it was an act of creating, but the most perfect of creations have

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Unionil [In the Soviet Union], *Libiyan Jamahariyil* [In the Libyan *Jamahiri* (Republic)], and *Gulf Rajyangalil* [In the Gulf Countries (translated to English as *From Camel to Cadillac)*]. All these travel writings have been now compiled by Olive Press and brought out in 2011 as a single volume titled *Yatra*.

[9] For a discussion on Sarkeet Paatukal as well as for a few songs from this genre composed by Pulikkottil Haider (1879-1975), see Karasseri (1979)

already been made, and the most perfect of society already lived (Said, 1975*b*). To begin the travel narrative at home, as CH does, is also to privilege home. The journey leads towards the pilgrimage, the holy sites, the trails of a past, but the inner being nevertheless feels homesick already, for a reason unbeknownst to itself :

> 'Dad going peppe?' (peppe- car); my voice broke as my daughter Fousia asked if I was going away. I could not stay in that plaintive air for long. I somehow managed to say my goodbyes. Why do people cry at moments like these, even in these times? I do not know. May be parting is painful, even if for a short time. (Koya, 2011: 31)[10]

CH Muhammad Koya thus travels to the holy site, with the painful need to get back home. He is travelling as a father to his daughter. It is between these two injunctions that the generic affiliation of the narrative is mixed. On the one hand there is the holy site, a shared history, a common past. On the other hand there is the very individuated traveller, the father, the husband, the leader. Between these two allegiances the narrative strives to find anchor: "I do not know to which genre this book belongs. This is not a religious text. Is this travel writing? I do not think that term will exhaust this book. From spirituality to Suleimani, a variety of tea, all sort of things are discussed here" (22).

The traveller is also a generic category, he has common needs. But the comforts of the road, and so the needs of the road are not generic either. Class cuts through them, social location marks mobility, social-situatedness traces the trajectory of the roads at home. CH Muhammad Koya must speak to his class of people, his village:

[10] Unless otherwise indicated, all the quotes in this section is from Koya (2011); page numbers will be indicated against. All translations are mine

> The 'Janata' train runs only twice a week. One of its special feature is that it has only the third class. This train has rooms with amenities for sleeping. On reserving in advance by paying three rupees, you will get a seat where you can lay your back to rest…There are also very long rooms in this train. (34)

The translation here fails to convey the sense of excitement. Though established in the 19th century in these routes, railway is still a marker of privation. There is transcendence when privation is marked for its bauble. The vocabulary of Annasseri, his 'backward village' (31) slips into the travelogue – a dish is still 'basi' for him (95), rupturing the prose for a while in its seamless flow of print Malayalam. But CH Muhammad Koya is also a leader, and the leaders are to be exemplary, the example, the transcendence of an example, removed from the ordinary, to be desired by the ordinary, and to be emulated by the ordinary – part of the group, the part which is picked out leaving the group in limbo while firmly rooting the part. CH Muhammad Koya should here set the terms for others, he should be the leader-citizen:

> Got vaccinated for cholera and smallpox and secured the certificate stating so. That some of the friends here try to avoid this vaccination amazes me. The chances of getting infected is much high in a place where many thousands will be assembling. 'Prevention is better than cure'. Is it so tortuous [that one should try avoiding it]? For just five rupees one can get vaccinated and certified. (30)

"Just five rupees" - CH knows that money matters, especially from his precincts. He should also be part of the group, set to the common suffering, and therefore to be armed with the same strategies, and to find support in mutuality. He should carry words of caution:

> Clothing needs the most attention. As there won't be enough conveniences for washing and so, it would be good to bring along at least a dozen clothes. The inventory should also list soap, comb, mirror, emergency medicines, tiffin carrier, thermoflask, a small umbrella, pair of spectacles, etc. (30)

The price of things have to be listed out – of laundry, radio, fountain pens, watches, slippers, silk, perfumes… (82-3). CH Muhammad Koya is also a leader, not just of a political party which announces itself to be particularistic (the Indian Union Muslim League), but also of the universality of spirit within its boundedness, that of being Indian. There are moments when the assumed readership crosses over into the refined Malayalee who finds in Sanskrit the language of modernization – thus a joint photo becomes "samyukta photo"(73). But the faultlines do not take long to come clear:

> There are people from all states and all districts staying in groups in Musafarkhana. There you can see a Bengali family right next to a Malayali family in the same room. If the next one is a Memon, the next is a Bohra. There are Assamese, Sindhis, Tamils, Telugus, Kashmiris, Chinese… I could see many long shirt and skullcap clad Tibetans this time. A lot of lit stoves. Malabari's rice-gruel, Hindustani's *chapatti*, Bihari's pulses, cooked and smelling. The odour of coconut oil and groundnut oil. And added to that the leftovers and dirt, the stinking toilet, and the unwashed clothes. The combined stench is suffocating. Though people are not very cooperative, I am trying my best. Those from the interiors of UP, Bihar and West Bengal are unaware of the first thing in cleanliness. (38-9)

> It was this author who was nominated as the *Amirul Hajj* [the leader of the Hajj contingent] for 'Saudi' [the ship's name]. Like many other positions, this too was accidental. It was [however] difficult for me to set myself to the task as I could not handle Hindustani. But the Hindustanis are able to look after their own business. The Hindustani *Qadimul Haji*s (heads of various groups and intermediary between the pilgrims of a contingent and its leader) were also effective in looking after the needs of the *Haji*s from their regions. (43)

There is a need to gather, to keep pace:

> The women from places other than Malabar were seen to be feisty. It was the same in the ship too. When our women are mostly dozing off in Musafirkhana, the other women collect food, cook food, collect water for ablutions. And our *ithatha*s [literally elder sister, denotes Muslim women] need their men even to go and take a pee. (39)

The backwardness is not limited to his people or their women alone. The backwardness is not limited to matters of deed alone, they impinge on faith too. There is need for reform even in matters of faith. There are differences which even occasions of unity bring forth:

> Now a bigger joke. Some Bengalis were drinking and pouring on themselves the rainwater draining down the roof of Haram [grand mosque in Makkah]. Those simpletons felt some (unIslamic) holiness in that water. Their ignorance, of course. The story at Ka'aba [the black cube structure at the centre of the grand mosque in Makkah] is even more horrible…I felt like laughing at the thought of naivety in seeking shortcuts to paradise. (73)

The primary address of the traveller asserts itself in the face of such cleavages, in its mutually antonymic moorings, those who share a common historical memory. Thus numerous mosques are described, among them the two holy mosques of Makkah and Medina, the Kaif, the Quba, the Kausar; but barely with enough details for the unaccustomed. The same goes with names – Ayisha, prophet's daughter, for example. The historical battles of Islam (Badr, Uhud, Khandaq)are explained in minimal terms, the assumption of knowledge already being there.

CH Muhammad Koya is also not merely a father, a husband, a Muslim, a leader of Muslim League, a Member of the Legislative Assembly, he is also – and this a strategy that spans the length of the text – someone who is capable of commenting on the Saudi government: "King Saud should be congratulated for getting such a good road constructed in that desert" (65); he could even speak to the Saudi government. After visiting a handloom workshop he notes: "The poverty and unemployment in Arabia can be solved if the Saudi government could establish a few centres like this in Makkah, Medina, Riyadh, Dahran and such places" (73). After all, he is also a world-citizen. He has words of praise and even excitement at the progress, the big buildings, the air conditioners he sees in Jiddah. He is marvelled at the wonders of science and art as he witnesses the grandeur of King Saud's palace, that it is "impossible for the poetry in [him] to describe" what he sees there (105), yet he has left a few words, on the cushions worthy of emperors, chairs of gold, chandeliers… But the scales can slide too. Describing the scene of education in Medina, he notes:

> There aren't many modern educational institutions here – only the elementary school for girls. As against the primary Madrasas in Malabar, one can see in Haram only schools of the old type [*othupalli*]. The Mullahs sitting at one

> end of the room teach their pupils by writing on wooden boards and by reciting from books, and the pupils parrot them. How long will these kids take to learn! Even the style of punishment is ancient. I witnessed a pupil being held in the air by the others while his feet were being caned. I was amazed – "so they are still here!" (72)

The traveller has progressed much more in his journey. He can afford to advice and caution the Saudi government, on the need for better Musafirkhanas (65), on the need for proper signboards (63), on employment plans (73), on the need for proper disposal of carcasses after the sacrifice (79-80).

The travelling self thus dons many garbs, he is a pedagogue as well as a practical guide, he is a leader and a father, a pilgrim as well as one who longs to be back, a citizen of the world as well as a religious reformer. In other words, the traveller is the transcendent traveller. He is at ease with referentiality, the question of same or not same – are these cities clean as ours are, are these things expensive, are the people kind and loving or thrifty and looting, etc. He is also appropriative, he can commit the scenes to language, to their worth and to judge on what is worth writing down and remembering, and what is best left out. In other words, in factors such as these the works neatly fits into the genre. The known traveller is nevertheless an act of resistance too. Colonialism deems certain cultures travelling and certain others to be travelled to. The assertion of the garb of the transcendental traveller is to recover the category of the individual, thus escaping the communal logic of consensus. It is an enactment of selfhood.

Makkah is however a strange place for the knowing subject to travel to. Because Makkah is known – exhausted. Makkah belongs, theoretically, to all Muslims.[11] Makkah is known as an absolute space towards which the Muslims world over turn themselves to while offering prayers. Makkah is also known historically in its relativity, on the religious history, on the trade maps, on the prosperity of its traders. All these facts are disseminated throughout the Muslim world by the Qur'an, their holy book[12]. Its relational value is assumed, it is after all ensuing from its absolute and relative positions.

Between the transcendental knowing subject and the transcendent space of the House of God lurks another unknown. It is the inexplicability of enthusiasm itself. Tearing asunder all these knowns is another statement, made quite early in the book:

[11] Though in reality the place is highly policed by the Saudi state. CH does not make references to this, may be also because it was not as stringent in the '50s. He does mention the Saudi government's efforts to "discourage" improper ways of worship. Sugata Bose, who has studied reports and narratives of Hajj pilgrimage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, notes six factors which came in, in 1926, as part of the Wahabi rule incumbent since just the previous year: (i)Guards were on duty at the cemeteries and holy shrines and beat any wayward criminals denouncing them as idolaters and infidels, (ii) only Wahabi imam were permitted to lead prayers in Ramadan, (iii) the celebration of Prophet's birthday was abolished, (iv) special pulpits were erected for preaching Wahabi tenets, (v) pilgrims were prevented from calling out to the Prophet (the implication thereby being that the Prophet is alive, in whatever form), (vi) those around the Kaaba were cleared when the king's father and family arrived. (212-3) These new regulation caused widespread disaffection among the pilgrims from India.There were relaxation in these by 1933, from punishment the strictures came down to discouragement, and guards could often be bribed. See Bose (2006: 193-232). Hajj continues to be a ritual under heavy surveillance of the state. For a recent account of a Hajj Pilgrimage, see Hammoudi (2006)

[12] Verse 96 of the third chapter (Aal Imran) of the Quran announces the first home built for the guidance of human being to be situated in Bakkah (Makkah). The succeeding verse announces the obligation of Hajj for those who can afford it. Chapter 106 of the Qur'an is solely on the blessings that God has showered on the Quraish, the merchants of Makkah, making them amenable to the journeys of summer and winter, protecting them from fear and hunger.

> Having stayed in Makkah for a few days, we started off on the 28th of April to Medina Munawwara [Medina] where the Prophet's Rauda [the enclosing where the Prophet is buried] is located. In the recent times there have been an effort by some to discourage the trip to Medina. They have not succeeded in it at all. It is their exhortation now that if one is at all going to Medina it should solely be to offer prayers at the Masjidunnabawi [Prophet's Mosque] and that visiting Prophet's Rauda should not be part of the plan. It is rewarding to offer prayers at the Masjidunnabawi, but is even more rewarding to pray at Masjidul Haram (the grand mosque in Makkah]. Then isn't the trip to Medina a wasteful exercise?
>
> It was not rubbing against the touchstone of such logic or weighing the rewards that I decided to go to Medina. Medina, where many enthusing chapters of Prophet's and his companion's lives were written was the capital of the Islamic Commonwealth for a long time. It is also the final resting place of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), Abu Baker (God be pleased with him), Umar (God be pleased with him) and others. Any Muslim will have a new lease of enthusiasm on visiting Medina, and Uhud, and Khandaq. (61)

This is the ethical moment which surpasses the knowns. It is here that the complicated nature of CH Muhammad Koya's journey present itself to us for what it is – a shimmer of reflection on the secular world itself. We have here a situation in which the religious duties are neatly codified, a language in which the weights and scales of the judgement day are to guide our actions in this world. But CH Muhammad Koya is also concerned of a worldly home, somewhere where the scales have to be substituted for decisive action. Here, for a

very brief moment, there is the decision making involved as when faced the Other. The Other is a cut within.

The Impossibility of Mourning

In Islam, the difficulty of mourning has to do with its peculiar nature of Utopia itself. The Islamic utopia, where concepts can align with territories and people, is a past utopia. The journey to utopia is a journey to the past, at once one's own, but also never attainable. The impossibility of the Utopia has to be compensated by the strife to ersatz, or a commendable copy. The past is one's own, but it is also an Other, for in its unattainability is its infinity. The infinite Other however is also the past. The past has to be lived through, but the past refuses to vacate its lodgings. Mourning gives way to its impossibility; and seeks decision.

Travellers from the period from 1850 to 1950, a group whom Ali Behdad calls "belated travelers" (Behdad, 1994) broke off from the earlier tradition of representing Arabia as a wildly sexual realm, and instead saw in the desert and its tribal life, harmony, "redemptive and purifying powers" (Melman, 2002: 115). But here, it is not in the desert that one seeks redemption. In other words, the travel writing has been sliced through here. In its double life, the one life speaks about the place, the prices, the conveniences, and the other half barely manages to speak. One should be clear here that it is not in CH's description of the various mosques and their history or the battles of the past that the second travel writing unfolds. The second travel writing unfolds precisely by being folded, unable to convey what it seeks. It has to find refuge in metaphors.

CH Muhammad Koya forsakes the scales. The scales are themselves of this world as much of the other. The word for scale, which is used to weigh the good deeds against the bad deeds of each individual on the day of judgement is called *Meezan*, or simply the scale. But *Meezan* is also this worldly, as in when God declares that He has risen the skies and set the scale, that the humans may not tamper with it (Qur'an 55: 7-9). CH is making a move from the other-worldly to this worldly, a move, not necessarily exclusive, from the needs of the next world to the enthusiasm of this one. In keeping away the discourse of the scales, CH Muhammad Koya displays a deeply ethical action, one which at the face of it defies logic. His situation is thus one of pure ethics, where ethics should give way to duty, "the absolute duty that obligates her with respect to God cannot have the form of generality that is called duty" (Derrida, 2008: 64).

The indeterminacy of CH's utopia has to be refracted through other metaphors. The place has given rise to a unity among differences within religion:

> The people who belong to various Madhabs [schools of thought in Islamic jurisprudence] and those who do not adhere to any Madhab are joined in offering their prayers here[13]. The African dark as coal, the Syrian, fair like snow, and the yellow Japanese, all of them say that we are one. The Hanafi's hands are joined below (the stomach), the Wahabi above and the Maliki doesn't even hold their hands. But no one accuses each other of being a kafir (infidel). (84)

[13] This sentence can be appreciated once we know that people of different Madhabs have much objections in praying together and usually avoid so, one of the reasons being the differences in the rules regarding the exact performance of the prayer, including the position of hands, the time spent in different positions of the prayer, the rules regarding recitation of Qur'an and other litanies, etc.

The coming together also gets rid of other barriers, those of hypocrisy:

> We are now in an international conference beyond the divisions of race and class. That conference has a history of centuries. The message of that conference is peace, brotherhood and security. That is not a peace conference convened, after having dropped atom bombs and burnt people alive, to bide more time to devise more catastrophic weapons. That is not a conference which waxes eloquent on brotherhood after ensuring that the Blacks are at a safe distance. That is neither a conference convened by those adorned in luxury, to call out "poor workers". This conference is a practical demonstration that we are all created by Allah and that we are all equal before Him. If those who participate in this give some thought to it, then they would definitely earn many a spiritual lesson off it. (96)

However, this is hardly anything new. In fact it is one of the most hackneyed picture of the Hajj[14]. In the very act of listing it, ironically, the differences stay too.[15] But it is nevertheless

[14] A quote from Muhammad Asad is representative:

> And, again, there were people of all races, garbs and expressions, some with turbans and some bareheaded; some who walked silently with lowered heads, perhaps with a rosary in their hands, and others who were running on light feet through the crowds; supple, brown bodies of Somalis, shining like copper from between the folds of their togalike garments; Arabs from the highlands of the interior, lean figures, narrow of face, proud of bearing; heavy-limbed, thickest Uzbeks from Bukhara, who even in this Meccan heat had kept to their quilted caftans and knee-high leather boots; strong-clad Javanese girls with open faces and almond-shaped eyes; Moroccans, slow of stride and dignified in their white burnooses; Meccans in white tunics, their heads covered with ridiculously small skullcaps; Egyptian fellahin with excited faces; white-clad Indians with black eyes peering from under voluminous, snow-white turbans, and Indian women so impenetrably shrouded in their white *burqas* that they looked like walking tents; huge Fulani Negros from Timbuktu or Dahomey in indigo-blue robes and red skullcaps; and petite Chinese ladies, like embroidered butterflies, tripping along on

important to see the counterpoints of the scale to which Islam is subjected here. On the one hand there is the liberal democracy of the United States, and on the other the Soviets. Islam is here being compared not to religions but to state structures. It would be however wrong to assume that CH Muhammad Koya is obliquely (or even a bit bluntly) calling for an Islamic state[16]. For any state draws boundaries, that of ethinicity or religion:

> Now, when Nasser advocates meaningless Arab nationalism and even Arabia seems to sway to it, Prophet's declaration that no Arab is more privileged [before God] than a non-Arab or a non-Arab over Arab. Has any who believes so blindly in Arab nationalism remembered this? Though it was the

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> minute, bound feet that resembled the hooves of gazelles. A shouting, thronging commotion in all directions, so that you felt you were in the midst of breaking waves of which you could grasp some details but never an integrated picture. Everything floated amid a buzz of innumerable languages, hot gestures, and excitement – until we found ourselves, suddenly, before one of the gates of the Haram, the Holy Mosque. [Muhammad Asad in Wolfe (1997: 377-8)]

[15] Or, as Abdellah Hammoudi notes:

> Under the sign of the Kaaba, differences didn't disappear, as apologists never tired of claiming. On the contrary: they stood out clearly and gained strength. They were recognized and simultaneously subjected to the values of solidarity and justice. These values did not imply that conditions had to become equal. Around the black cube, the circle consecrated the equal dignity of all Muslims, but it did not eliminate differences in class or status. People accepted these differences; at the same time, they subordinated them to religion and to testimony, which placed them in the realm of contingency. Equality was expressed in contingent difference, not through measures that would impose it by a universal (and abstract) definition of humanity. I felt this intuition of contingency sharpen in my mind and others'. Injustice that threatened dignity was refused here more firmly than elsewhere. (Hammoudi, 2006: 183-4)

[16] Which seems to be the easiest conclusion but hardly a position put forward. Malcolm X, for example, saw in the Hajj a solution for the problem of race and thus essentially a social version rather than a political version. While for Muhammad Asad, who worked towards building Pakistan which was defined as a nation defined by ideology rather than birth, Islam seems to be the principle of unity rather than system of governance.

> Prophet's last speech in [this] mountain, it echoes across seas and lands. I have come here as one who has understood that message (97).

Travelling is here an act of giving answer to a call from the past. The call is clear but the answer is muffled. It would be wrong on our part to assume that CH had a readymade answer to this call, which, more than being a question of the other world, was preoccupied with this world. It was preoccupied with dignity and equality. It was concerned with theory and praxis. The answer to the call had to be negotiated and performed. It did not lend itself to an easy answering, but had to be experimented against the mottled background of the postcolony. Its worldliness had to alternate between worldly and other-worldly language.

II

The politics of dignity had to be performed in mixed registers, as amenable for its concretization. CH Muhammad Koya's party held up the slogan of "For Honourable Existence". Yet honour and dignity are empty signifiers which require concretization, and as a requisite a translation into real world terms. CH's Hajj pilgrimage, in its slicing of the two movements that I have noted in the last section, one between the journey in the absolute space of the self-asserting knowing individual, and the other, the temporal, scaling, vainly, out of breath and words, the infinity of the Other, is itself an act of concretization, an absolutization of the space of the Hajj. The detailed narrative of the arrangements in the ship, the measures to be undertaken, the articles to be bought and secured etc was also an act of rediscovery. Journeys in the Islamic lexicon are of four categories, according to Eickelman and Piscatori (1990). These are Hajj (pilgrimage), Hijra (emigration), *rihla*

(travel for learning), and *ziyaret* (visiting shrines). All of these are primarily physical travel, or travelling in absolute space, though it might be accompanied by spiritual or temporal movement (xii). CH Muhammad Koya was making the first of these. Yet, Makkah had to be taken out of this generic familiarity and re-presented as an absolute space.

Makkah has been long available to the people of Malabar, as the centre of not just spiritual power, but also as the mistaken (by colonial authorities) centre of political legitimacy too. In 1922, the Chief Secretary of the Government of Madras, for example, thought it best to obtain a *fatwa* from King Hussain who was now reigning over Makkah to put a leash on the post-rebellion activities in Malabar. The move was aborted as the Secretary of State in London felt that it would set a bad precedent and that the rebels too would get *fatwa*s from abroad which the British administration would be in no position to overrule (Gangadharan 2008: 189). Makkah was also, in political terms, one of the places of exile, self-imposed or otherwise, and one of the most important icon of the pre-1921 Malabar Mappila rebellion to be exiled there was Syed Fazl Tangal (1824-1900), deported in 1852. The efforts to bring home his family, who were also in exile, had continued unabated, and as late as 1937 there were mass petition to the Government of Madras demanding their return[17]. Hajj has also been associated with other political tumults, such as the one when the Ulema declared Jihad on the Portuguese in 1502 after a ship returning from Hajj was set to fire by the Portuguese and each of the 240 pilgrim was charred to death.[18] Makkah and Hajj was thus cast in a cast of relationality of emotions associated with the glories of the past and the losses of the present. It was also cast in the relativity of political conspiracies and resistances

[17] For a rare English biography of Syed Fazl Tangal, see Sathar (2012)

[18] For a more detailed study of the Portuguese period in Malabar, see Bahaudheen (n.a.)

to those. Makkah had to be discovered afresh, concretized as a space and rescued from the fogs of clogging memory of past grandeur and present privation. It had to be shown for what it was, for its squalor as well as plenty, for its stench as well as scale.

Ali Shariati (1933-77), the liberation theologian of the revolutionary Iran describes Makkah, “Mecca is called "Baite-Atiq". Atiq represents being free! Mecca belongs to nobody. It is free from the reign of rulers and oppressors; therefore, no one controls it. Allah is the owner of Mecca while the people are its residents.” (2004: 27). The statement is more programmatic than a description of reality, as his own countrymen have not just realized but also tried to put across. In reality Hajj was a much policed affair, beginning in the nineteenth century by the colonial might of Britain who ruled over India and thereby a considerable chunk of the pilgrims (though until the Depression of 1933, pilgrims from Dutch East Indies was double of that from British India) (Bose, 2006: 204). At the beginning, the claim of Makkah being the land of every Muslim and that every Muslim has a right of access to Makkah dissuaded the British from enforcing a passport system on the pilgrims. The access to Makkah was understood not just as a way of proving one’s benevolence to colonial subjects but also as a tacit way of extending one’s influence over the Arabian heartland (Singha, 2013). The cholera epidemic of 1865, which, originating in Java and Singapore spread as far as Europe via Hijaz was a turning point in the policing. Soon the plague of 1896 brought forth another manifestation of the dangers of congregation. The port in Calcutta, one of the three ports from which the pilgrims could embark from British India (the other two being Karachi and Bombay) was consequently closed for thirty years (Bose, 2006: 202-3). The battles fought against the Ottoman suzerainty in Arabia by Arabs and aided by the British (who were *inter alia* miffed by Turkey joining the Germans in World War I) brought new political settlements to Makkah. Sharif Husayn ibn Ali, the chief Arab rebel

leader became the ruler of Makkah with the defeat of the Ottomans and the British held sway. The Sharifs (Sharif being the family title) were soon taken over by the Sauds, who, allied with a stringent version of Islam, made Makkah an ideological ground zero where the pilgrims could be persuaded by sermons and disciplined by guards, as we have already seen.

The last chapter in CH's *Ente Hajj Yatra* is an encyclopaedic entry on the present state of Saudi Arabia. After briefly narrating the biography of the present ruler and his father, CH goes on to list the allegiance of the Saudi king to the Palestinian cause. What follows this is however a detailed description of Saudi Arabia's educational and health policies, their source of income with statistics, their diplomatic ventures abroad, etc. CH Muhammad Koya's Makkah was this new Makkah. It had to be taken out of the fuzziness of memory and cast anew as a site that was empowering. It was empowering spiritually, but it was also empowering the formulation of a Muslim self who could transcend not just his own backward village and class position, but also the weighing scale of religious duties and even his own national boundedness in thought and action. Makkah also was to be shown as linked to one's own present. It had to be commented on and drawn from, and thereby the commenting, admonishing and appreciating self had to be concretized out of the stereotype of the pilgrim lost in spiritual transcendence. Makkah was empowering because it was empowered by 'us'. After noting the paucity of doctors and nursing staff in Makkah inspite of the availability of medicines and hospitals, CH Muhammad Koya goes on to describe how the dispensaries set up by India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Sudan, Malaya, United Arab Republic and others were offering valuable services to the pilgrims. He notes that the Assamese doctor was good enough to attract even Pakistani pilgrims. He also notes the services of a Naeematunnisa from Madras. He is respectful to the care and concern of Dr. Jamaluddin from Kerala who attended to his patients even after a crippling car accident (81-82).

Makkah as a place itself is then shown to be not far from those in Malabar. CH Muhammad Koya notes that Makkah has many Malayalis who either did not return after their Hajj or were exiles from the 1921 Malabar rebellion. Many of them are now well settled there. He lists out a few of them – Bakruqayath at the Telegraphs, Muhammad Ahmed with the wireless department, another Muhammad Ahmed who works in a hospital, a Muhammad Backar who also works at the hospital… He notes that they are an endogamic lot as marrying to Arab families is an expensive affair. He also notes that brides are now being imported from Malabar (85). Those from Malabar have also established two Musafirkhanas in Makkah too (though CH would like them to merge) (87).

Makkah is thus taken out of the relationality and presented here as a space to be explored. Honorable existence demanded concretisation of memories, such that memories did not turn out to be oppressing. Past had to be freed of ceremonies and infused with fresh life. CH Muhammad Koya's words cannot be divorced from the political career he and his party under his leadership had undertaken. CH Muhammad Koya has been serving as a Member of the Legislative Assembly from 1957. In 1962 he was elected to the Parliament from Manjeri constituency. By then he had emerged as the undisputed leader of the Muslim League, next only to Bafakhi Tangal, who was also the spiritual leader.[19] After the President's rule in Kerala from 1965 to 67, the elections to the State Legislative Assembly and the Parliament were simultaneous. This time CH Muhammad Koya contested to the Legislative Assembly and went on to become the Minister for Education of the south Indian

[19] Though not official designations, the Muslim League politics in Kerala has maintained an informal distinction between the spiritual and political leaders, of which the spiritual leader, who is also a repository of the values of the party and is usually above condemnation even from other political opponents, is the supreme leader. The spiritual leader belongs to Tangal families (Syeds). CH was thus the political leader of the party, but was accountable to and ordained so by the spiritual leader.

state. The Muslim League was again in alliance with a section of the Communists, the CPI (M), who had broken away from their parent organization, the CPI, in 1964. In the term of the Ministry from 1967 to 1971, CH led his party to fulfilling two major landmarks of its career. The first one was the establishment of the University of Calicut, which was formally inaugurated on the 13th of September, 1968. The second one was the formation of the Malappuram District.

Conjuring a Place: Malappuram District

CH Muhammad Koya passed the resolution stating Muslim League's demand for a new district in Malabar in the state conference held in Calicut in the month of February 1968. Sub-nationalisms in India have been primarily discussed in terms of linguistic states, while a district is just a revenue collecting unit for the state. This might eventually help us in identifying some of the ironies and misperceptions of memory itself when we locate in a district an imagination of a separate cultural identity.

The story of Malappuram district is not that of a routine drawing up of maps. Though just another district in India, it was formed amidst a forceful popular movement on one side and bitter acrimony on the other. The new district would have 64% Muslims, and the there were allegations on the future state of the district given such a chunk of minority population and the dominance of Muslim League. The district was formed on 16th June, 1969, by the E.M.S. Ministry of Kerala, under pressure from the Indian Union Muslim League, whose

support was crucial to the coalition government. The term "mini-Pakistan" used even to this day to derogatorily refer to the district, dates back to that period.[20]

In the words of Hargrave Jr.:

> In 1969, in response to the demands of the Muslim League in Kerala and as a reward for its political support, the United Front Ministry of E.M.S. Namboodiripad redrew the boundaries of Kozhikode and Palghat districts so as to carve out the new, predominantly Muslim district of Malappuram. Denounced by its opponents as 'the illegitimate child of the Two Nation theory', Malappuram – 'Mopalastan' to its critics – combined within a single district those taluks which forty eight years before, in 1921, had been the scene of the Mapilla rebellion. (Hardgrave Jr., 1977: 57)

The demand for the creation of the new district was also a demand for concretization. The memory of the 1921 rebellion was still fresh as a nationalist struggle though its ramifications have been communal. It was a necessary act of claiming an honourable existence to demand

[20] A website, hindubooks.org puts it this way: When the Communist-led United Front Government succumbed to the League's pressure tactics and acceded to the carving out of the Muslim-majority district of Malappuram, the entire national press denounced it in unequivocal terms. Hindustan Times, in a special article, termed it as a 'dubious' and 'sinister' move which was bound to create a communal problem where none existed before. The Times of India feared that pampering the League, 'a chronic divisive force in Kerala's affairs', by the creation of Malappuram may 'give rise to similar demands not only within the State but alsc, outside'. Hindustan Standard of Calcutta bluntly said: "The creation of Moplastan is a security risk which could become a fertile ground for Pakistani propaganda." The Free Press Journal of Bombay carried a special article titled: 'Kerala's Mini-Pak Plan Spells Danger'. It said: "The Communists and the Muslim communalists have joined hands in a conspiracy to disrupt national unity by constitutional means."

http://www.hindubooks.org/Vision/ch2.html retrieved on July 30, 2013

a space of one's own. I have elsewhere analysed the parliamentary debates around the creation of Malappuram district and documented in detail (Shafeeq K., 2014) how the need for an honourable existence also needed to be translated to the language of the postcolony. It had to be translated to a case of economic backwardness. That the language of economic backwardness was one which made sense only in the protocols of legislation is attested to by the enthusiasm the demand aroused as well as the condemnations it generated.

The demands of honourable existence needed to be translated into the language of the world. It had to, in the process, undergo the gain and the loss of any process of translation. The gain was the absolutization of memories in space. But the loss is that which is exactly to be lost in order for the desire to turn into a demand. In other words, the concretization of memories required one to discover the self afresh, but at the same time resort to masquerade with the loss of any original substratum.

Malappuram District was in real terms just another district, and if at all anything, bringing the structures of the state closer home. The performance of the formation of this district has to be seen in its double life, one as a rhetorical device which brought home closer to the state and the other as the only possible way of translation of a relational concept into an absolute one. Within Malappuram existed another Malappuram, one which was framed by memories of the rebellion, its tragedy and sacrifice, and this other Malappuram at once allowed the hegemony of a governmental logic while also allowing oneself to see as the logic's arbitrator rather than its receiver. It is my endeavour in this section to flesh out the rhetorical logic in CH Muhammad Koya's literary works towards the fashioning of this arbitrating self.

Barely two years after the formation of Malappuram District, the ruling coalition, which had consisted of seven parties, collapsed. In 1971 the Muslim League returned to power, this time allied with the Communist Party of India (CPI). The alliance had suffered from mutual distrusts. Congress filled in for the lack of strength provided by CPI (M) who now occupied the opposition benches. CH Muhammad Koya rose in ranks in this ministry, with his office now handling the portfolios of Home Ministry, Civil and Criminal Justice Administration, Election, prevention of corruption, Hajj, Tourism, Printing, and the earlier portfolio of Education. It was in during the tenure of this Ministry, in 1971, that the government recognised the 1921 Malabar Rebellion as part of the freedom struggle and granted pension to the fighters. Theodore P. Wright Jr. , who studied the career of Muslim League since Independence, wrote in 1966 that these frequent realignments of power that the party engages in is a minoritarian tactic (Wright Jr., 1966). In order to evaluate the efficacy of this tactic, it would be worth our while to know the logic of the state in India.

The Problematic and the Thematic of Indian Nationalism

In his earliest work, Partha Chatterjee tries to write a history of the ideology of Indian nationalism, retrospectively breaking them into moments as would explain the ideology of the contemporary Indian state, which is passive revolution (Chatterjee, 1986).[21] The question that he tries to answer is, to put simply, 'What is Indian in Indian nationalism?

[21] Gramsci argues that when faced with historical impediments of three levels –named the objective limit, the political limit and the politico-military limit – the bourgeoisie aspiring for hegemony has to undertake a war of position. The three limits are (i) the objective limit, referring to the undeveloped nature of the material forces of production and classes such that a rapid emergence of a developed capitalist system is ruled out, (ii) the political limit, the condition in which the bourgeois hegemony in its twin aspects of the state and associated coercive

Chatterjee studies the history of Indian nationalism as effected by three key moments, which he calls the moment of departure, the moment of manoeuvre and the moment of arrival. The moment of departure is when, in the beginning of bourgeois nationalism, the nationalist, represented here by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, conceives of a split between the cultural/spiritual and the material/scientific. The superiority of the West was conceded in material matters and matter of the outer world, including statecraft, but in the realm of culture India was deemed superior. The effort at this moment is to re-organize the culture so that Indians could out of their subjection. As explained by Chatterjee elsewhere (2012), another feature of this split was that the foreign ruler was considered illegitimate not because of the failure in governance, but that it was a foreigner who was at the helm. However, the moment of departure had its failure in reaching the masses. It was elitist in character and was reliant on a post-Enlightenment thought of history to arrive at its own conclusions.

It was at the moment of manoeuvre that the nationalist bourgeois could effectively challenge the colonial administration at a politico-military level. It was the moment, as Chatterjee repeatedly stresses, when the thesis incorporated a part of the antithesis for its own advancement. The thesis here is bourgeois nationalism, and the antithesis is the peasant communal-consciousness which did not have any positive programme, but was marked by the negative consciousness of being anti-capitalist. It was the often puzzling and disturbing (from the bourgeois standpoint) character that was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who could take this moment to its desired conclusion. Gandhi's thought were marked by anti-capitalism and a constant call to moral salvation. It was under Gandhi that the masses would

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power as well as the intellectual-moral leadership is fragmented and the society is not homogenous, and (iii) the politico-military limit, in which the nation is currently occupied by foreign forces and the only way is to thin out the forces of occupation by widespread insurgency, a condition not yet available. (Chatterjee, 1986)

become a part of the national movement, but yet be kept outside the decision making process. The relation was marked by its pedagogic content. The mode was articulated in a language of 'responsibility': "Peasants were 'ignorant' and subject to 'passions'. They were 'dull certainly, uninteresting individually, but in mass they produced a feeling of overwhelming pity and a sense of ever-impending tragedy'. They needed to be led properly, controlled, not by force or fear, but by 'gaining their trust', by teaching them their true interest." (quotes from Jawaharlal Nehru, in Chatterjee, 1986:148)

In retrospect, the Gandhian experiment's historical task was to incorporate the vast multitudes of the agrarian masses who constituted the majority of the population within a movement which aimed at the establishment of the bourgeois hegemony while keeping the peasants away from the state structure.

The genius of the moment of arrival, exemplified through the writings of Jawaharlal Nehru, with its insistence on planning, centralization and in the process a more powerful state structure was that it could reduce Gandhism - which had aimed at a stateless society – to the level of a morality, such that the appeal was no more to his ideas but what thought or moral inclination – self-respect, sustainability, removal of poverty – would have gone beyond those ideas. When formulated so, Gandhi could be incorporated as the guiding light of idealism who had to be read in to the organizational structures immersed in the realpolitik of interests groups, castes, religions and regions. The primary target at this moment was the capture of state power and its ideology is the state ideology. Once the state power is captured, problems of communalism and casteism can be solved; for these are problems of economic nature with communal colouring and can be removed with the legal guarantee of full and equal rights of citizenship. The need for equality was a pre-requisite of progress, for only equality would

ensure participation from all sections of population in the entire range of new economic activities. Universal Reason, with the primacy of economism and a belief in the eradication of age-old problems through central planning forms the thematic of this moment.

Chatterjee is careful to state that this is a study in retrospection. One need not then assume the inevitability of the present. Rather, the post-colonial state that we live in today is the product of a certain dialectic of each moment in which the result of the dialectic between the two opposing elements –the bourgeois and the masses – were contingent, in a relation of a dynamic uncertainty with the subsequent moment. In each of these moments we have a problematic – the idea of a nation that is autonomous, active and capable of self-determination; and a thematic – the idea of a national culture that is originary and essential and its susceptibility to objectification by a Western epistemology. In each of these moments there are assertions as to what the nation could achieve, and the justifications for these assertions, and these structure each other.

"And is mine one?" : Governmentality and Politics in the Post Colony

So what is it that of the present that makes these three moments the key moments in the form that the Indian state exists in today? The first is that of the division which the educated elite nationalist section instrumented between the realm of culture and the realm of politics. It is this cultural inner domain which would become what is specifically 'Indian' in nationalism. The second split is that which the modern nationalist bourgeoisie saw as separating them from the ordinary masses of Indians – a commitment to the modern ideals of equality and liberty – this is in Chatterjee's scheme the statist function.

It was a shared belief of the Indian ruling elite that for the transformation of the masses from their habits unlettered in the culture of equality and liberty and caught in their pre-modern associations and shackles of superstitions, it was necessary for the state to engage in pedagogic and welfare activities. Towards this end, the postcolonial state appropriated the ethnographic knowledge that had conditioned much of the colonial state's programmes. However, in the narrative of the postcolonial state, we witness this project of republican citizenship was soon superseded by the Governmental state.[22]

> This regime secures legitimacy not by the participation of citizens in matters of state but by claiming to provide for the well-being of the population. Its mode of reasoning is not deliberative openness but rather an instrumental notion of costs and benefits. Its apparatus is not the republican assembly but an elaborate network of surveillance through which information is collected on every aspect of the life of the population that is to be looked after. (Chatterjee 1998*a*: 279)[23]

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[22] One could notice how, having started with passive revolution in (1986), Chatterjee shifts focus solely to Governmentality – a major point of later criticism, which we shall see. However, Foucault's power-knowledge serves as the backbone of *The Nationalist Thought* too. The shift was rather from the realm of republican ideals. On the other hand, Sudipto Kaviraj [1987] identifies the beginning of passive revolution with the insecurity that set in around Nehru as the socialist bloc of Congress left him to form regional groupings which would brandish the scepter later. Governmentality, on the other hand, makes an appearance in Kaviraj's analysis of the career of passive revolution in India after Nehru's period where the arrangement of Planning Commission enjoyed much less autonomy thanks to the precarious situation which the till then secure Congress party found itself in. See "The Passive Revolution in India: A Critique" pp.100-43, in Kaviraj (2010).

[23] Foucault enumerates the characteristics of Governmentality:
" 1) The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security.

Governmentality worked through a regime of difference. Thus the arena of politics, which is understood to be the civil society, is a 'walled in' realm of a minority, mostly of similar sociological conditions. The national leadership belonged to this arena. Citizenship though true formally, was not a real condition of engaging with the majority of the population. Instead they were divided into determinate, multiple and cross-cutting population groups, the relation with whom for the state was that of policy. Thus there is a realm of theory and the realm of policy. (Chatterjee, 2002)

Civil society as an ideal realm of equality and liberty continues to energize an interventionalist political project, but it is demographically limited. The legitimacy of the state could therefore not be based on its promise of delivering republican values, but on taking care of the population, addressing poverty, etc. An important feature of Nehru's thought was that the problems facing the nation was often thought of as, at its root, economical problems (Chatterjee 1986).

The opposition between the universal ideal of civic nationalism based on individual freedom and equal rights and the particular demands of cultural identity which calls for differential treatment is symptomatic of the transition that occurred in modern politics from a conception of democratic politics grounded in the idea of popular sovereignty to one in which democratic politics is shaped by governmentality.

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2) The tendency which over a long period and throughout the West, has steadily led towards the pre-eminence over all other forms (sovereignty, discipline, etc.) of this type of power which may be termed government, resulting, on the one hand, in the formation of a whole series of specific governmental apparatuses, and on the other, in the development of a whole complex of *savoirs*. 3) The process, or rather the result of the process, through which the state of justice of the Middle Ages, transformed into the administrative state during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, gradually becomes 'governmentalized.'" (Foucault, 1991:102-3).

Ruptures of the Suture

Chatterjee's universalisation of the governmental logic does not sit pretty with many other commentators on the logic of state in India, only the most relevant of which I shall refer to here. Primary among these is Thomas Blom Hansen's (2001) criticism, which is of a fundamental nature and is an observation on the nature of the state. Hansen argues, after detailing the use/abuse of Shiv Sena activists of the Municipal offices when they are in power, that Chatterjee's assumption of a state that is separate from the other two domains is a non-existent state. The triad state-civil society-political society has to be rethought. State, which in Chatterjee's scheme is supposed to legitimize itself by welfare measures, does not have such a positive quality, but is rather dependent on who occupies its offices. The political society, as it acquires power, converts the state to one's own persuasion.

Dipesh Chakrabarty (2005) draws out how the everyday political culture in the postcolonial India as it still persists is a direct continuation of the modes of popular protest in the colonial India. Politics then as well as now consists in undermining the legal structure, even when it was constitutional in its mode of activity. The state is seen as an adversary, and often the popular protest has its climactic moment when a representative of the state, who stands in for the state itself, comes down to meet the people, and offer promises (regardless of whether they would be kept at all) thus asserting people's sovereignty as against the state. State has to keep down the principle of sovereignty before the people, thus fragmenting the idea of sovereignty itself. Chakrabarty further claims that the Foucauldian scheme does not operate in India because India does not have a Society yet, that is a condition in which internal wars have been externalized, a condition central in the transformation from mere

Sovereignty to Governmentality. What we obtain instead is a state of constant war between communities.

Susie Tharu et al.(2007) have, in a perceptive essay on the issue of reservations for the Other Backward Classes (OBC), put to question the validity of the concept of governmentality as an all-encompassing feature. Unlike Hansen's concern, the point at stake here is not the fragmented quality of governance, but the very idea of governance. That is, from whose viewpoint is it governance and therefore a question of crisis management? The authors argue that reservations are an end in itself when viewed from the policy approach, but is a question of furthering the idea of the Republic itself when viewed from the side of those asking for reservations. Moreover, as against the assumption that the nation-state adopted the governmental form of the state, it is reservation, what can be called a governmental measure, that founded the Republic. To constitute the idea of a minority and a majority, in essence to claim for the state a majority and thereby present itself eligible to be a sovereign state, reservations were inevitable. Today reservations are an active site of political struggle itself. One could see, as they show, if one follows the curious case of debates that followed the implementation of reservation, that the arguments were not between the state and the political society. Rather it is between different communities. The state therefore (in my words) does not have to be treated as a separate entity. Rather, the state is (as the authors say) larger than the nation (Chatterjee's elite). The state is an inorganic complex of communities with no specific character except its necessity to provide an illusory wholeness, a community effect, to itself. "From the other side, the struggles for and over reservations are struggles to reconstruct the national citizen subject and reconfigure the state, and it is imperative that we represent them as such. They articulate a politics that exceed the formal modernity of the state and make claims on a future democracy." (Tharu et

al., 2007:45) The authors are laying out a field in which the state form is open to reconfiguration and there are ways out of the mere formality of democracy into future real ones. The state form, as it exists today, is not the end of a road, there are possibilities of change, possibilities that, when it is underway on the ground, escapes the gaze of governmentality which sees it as yet another crisis-management. In other words, what is pointed out here is that of another realm itself, not open to the governmental gaze, but responding to and even actively undermining the other sphere.

Allying more with Thomas Blom Hansen is Gopal Guru, who, in his essay "the Idea of India: Derivative, Desi and Beyond" (2011), referring to Ambedkar, shows how Dalit's position in the hierarchical structure of the society contributed to an oppositional idea for the nation to the more prevalent notions of the 'Brahmin-nationalist' and the 'capitalist-nationalist'. This discourse of the Beyond (the dalit idea of India) offers at first a position of negativity inasmuch as its first task is to oppose the other currents, but subsequently to also provide a positive content which was intimately informed by one's own spatiality. To quote him:

> Since Gandhi's political existence operates through a seamless spatiality, it tends to create only corresponding concepts like "seva" or trusteeship. In the Gandhian case it is seamless because for Gandhi, every space becomes quite hospitable and receptive. That is to say Gandhi can move in and out of any space, even the "Bhangi colony". This choice to walk in and out has a bearing on Gandhi's thought. It changes the character of his thought thus making it more placid. Ambedkar, on the contrary, does not have a choice and hence has to open up spaces that are not only hostile but are also fragmented around

> social stigma. Thus physical spaces which are otherwise empty get constructed through negative or positive meaning depending upon who is assigning this meaning. (Guru, 2011)[24]

Guru is problematizing here the very taken-for-granted-ness of the governmental structure. The greater point he would be driving would then be that rather than speaking of governmentality as the default way of governance, one should take it as the result of the very specific social location of who got to constitute the very idea of India itself. Taken along with our previous commentators, this opens a new line of inquiry into the governmental state.

Fractions and the Governmental State

The above-cited criticisms point to certain overlapping factors of the Indian polity, one that governmentality is not an inevitable logic; two, the state logic is itself at the mercy of those at the helm; three, sovereignty is fragmented in India which brings to question the fairness of the very process of distribution; and finally, what is governmentality on one end could also be rightly construed as a furthering of the Republican principles.

In the south Indian state of Kerala, certain other factors too accrue. One of this is that unlike most other parts of India, the state polity is almost neatly divided between the religious-caste fractions, they being the Nairs, the Ezhavas, the Muslims and the Christians. While the Indian political scenario can be seen as an alliance of the bourgeoisie, the landed elite and the intellectual-managerial class (Kaviraj, 2010: 101-43), the realignments suggested a bid to outdo other classes for ascendancy rather than a change in class

[24] Accessed through http://bahujannews.blogspot.de/2011/09/zestcaste-idea-of-india-derivative-desi.html

allegiances. The fractional nature of Kerala politics when aligned with a multitude of political parties engendered a coalitional politics in which numerical minorities could still play a big role. It would be remembered that the 1967 Ministry which founded the new district had seven parties. Kerala continues to stick to the coalition politics, though many of the parties which were prominent at the time under our study are non-existent. Muslim League has been able to play a major role in the Ministries (though in the recent years is losing the battle for cultural hegemony) primarily due to its ability to consolidate the Muslim identity in Muslim majority areas. The creation of the Malappuram district, the establishment of the University of Calicut, the pension for the fighters of the 1921 Malabar rebellion could be articulated as gains for the community, the specific ways in which these were opposed (as being "the little Pakistan", for example) only led to the consolidation of the party. From the five MLAs elected to the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1952, it stood at thirteen in the Kerala State Legislative Assembly and two in the Indian Parliament in 1977, which covers the period of our study.

The politics of the Kerala state thus worked in a logic of difference, where the clear dividing line between the state and the masses were absent. This absence is not a given but was to be performed. The founding of Malappuram district was such a performance where the governmental logic could be tilted to afford a consolidation and concretization of memories such that further growth could ensue. In other words, the logic of emancipation can now give way to the logic of freedom. In the classical case of emancipation there has to be a clear dividing line between the oppressor and the oppressed. He oppressed would then be cast away by the oppressor. There is an aporia between the universal project of emancipation and the particular agent of emancipation. The particular is at the same time a characteristic of the totality as well as its radical transformer. The universal project of

emancipation, thus being an attribute of the particular – in the sense that it is imagined and acted out by a particular – is universal only insofar as the particular can claim to be the universal. This claim is acted out through the act of incarnation, a concept which short circuits the particular to the universal (Laclau,1996). The conditions of incarnation does not obtain in a postcolonial society where class is substituted by hierarchical ordering of caste with religions like Islam and Christianity playing a role fitting into the structure. The colonial logic of communal representation too discursively produced other topographies of congregation and consolidation. In other words, a condition in which "established a correspondence between two levels: a formal structural analysis of the tendencies of capitalist society and of the social agents resulting from them, and an intuitive identification of those agents" (Laclau, 2000: 298) was not available.

The logic of difference suggests that other universalities are in play (Laclau, 2000: 305). This other universality had to be performed through rhetorical strategies as would make ready for the Muslim League a rank and file which would not cast the state in opposition but would assume its mantle. This required a masquerade, and I am calling this impersonation.

State, Sovereign and Benevolent

The focus of attention in the rest of this section is on two books which CH Muhammad Koya published somewhat towards the end of his career.[25] These are *Mughal Bharanakaalam*

[25] The original publication year of these remain elusive even after some effort on my part. The probable period of its publication was indicated to me in personal conversation by Abdul Rahman Mangad. There is a

Kathakaliloode [The Mughal Era through Stories] (MBK) and *Nabiyum Sahaabimarum* [The Prophet and His Companions] (NS). Before I turn to discuss the books under question, I would like to draw your attention to the speech made by CH Muhammad Koya in the Legislative Assembly of Kerala supporting the Land Reforms Bill. The Bill, introduced by the Communist Ministry, fixed a ceiling for landholdings, and, at the least symbolically, ended feudal landholdings in the state of Kerala. The Muslim League supported the Bill[26] and CH Muhammad Koya articulated their support in the following terms:

> The decision made by the party (to support) is not made after a survey of the number of landlords in the party. In fact this legislation is meaningful only when those who have such holdings undertake it; then there is a sense of sacrifice in it. There is no point in such a legislation when made by those for whom the earth is their floor and the firmament their roof. (Koya, 2013: 86)

The Land Reforms Bill in Kerala is widely celebrated to be the single most important piece of legislation of the Kerala Legislative Assembly to this day, such that the hegemonic sway of the Communists have been largely built on such credibility and it has been subjected to revisions as to show the partisan nature of it. Rather than terming the struggle as one, or indicating the landmark nature of it or acknowledging the Republican and revolutionary change this might signal in the politics of the state, CH Muhammad Koya supports the Bill yet discounts from the proposers of the Bill the moral efficacy. When the struggle for land is cast in terms of sacrifice, what is reformulated is the relation with the state itself. CH claims

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possibility that these books were published post 1977, but in view of the broad consistency of the books with the events mentioned so far, I am not giving the probability much of a concern.

[26] Though they had reservations about the status of coconut which came under the ceiling, while rubber and other cash-crops were exempted. See Koya (2013:90)

for his party, one which does not have many landlords either, a moral claim of giving, of being at the arbitrator's position. It is this that I call impersonation, and this act of masquerade involves not transparency but being a stain inasmuch as the state itself is a stain. In other words, governmentality is but a particularism which has to be further stained by another particularism.

Impersonation simultaneously marks both being and not-being. It is negative in its tone, the positive term being personification. But one would, as I do, rather settle for this negative term for it marks the arrogation to oneself of a place. At the same time it asserts the arrogation as a need in the postcolonial state. 'Impersonation' assumes that there is an original to be occupied. But this original had to be brought forth.

MBK is a collection of anecdotes, mostly from the Mughal era but not exclusively so. It starts with incidents as recorded in Babur's autobiography and extends the Mughal line to Aurangazeb. But it is not exclusively Mughal. It narrates stories from Sher Shah, Deccani kings and others too. It is may be due to this that when it was reprinted (2010*a*), the book was titled *Muslim Rajaneeti Kathakal* [Stories of Muslim Statecraft]. CH is undertaking a bold and self-assertive mode: first of all, ever since the communal periodization of Indian history, starting from James Mill, the Mughals have largely been a disconcerting topic, except for the regular paeans to Akbar's secularism and the period's architectural opulence. Secondly, and ironically, of the Muslim population of any considerable size in India, those in Kerala were completely outside the Mughal heritage – except for a brief period under Tipu Sultan, the Muslim rule in Malabar was next to nil.[27] This being the case, the task of the book is circumscribed in the present: first of all, one could argue, it is to effect the category

[27] Though the Arakkal family had some holdings in northern Malabar.

of a national Muslim, now to be bound within national memory. The Muslims in Kerala were otherwise loosely connected to their Indian counterparts. While leading mostly isolated lives, their leaders were typically educated, now for centuries, in various parts of Arabia. The spiritual leadership was secure in the hands of the Ba'Alawi family, who claimed their ancestry in Hadramawt[28] in Yemen, and Mappilas themselves are etymologically understood to be born of marriages between Arab traders and Malabar women.[29] Ironically, one may wonder if it was not the relative isolation of Kerala which could sustain Muslim League (apart from other factors, of communal distribution, leadership, etc.) even as it withered away in the other parts of India under the sustained attack by the detractors for its parent organization's (All India Muslim League – led by Jinnah) role in the partition of India.

The anecdotes in *MBK* typically display not just the benevolence, wit, wisdom and just nature of the sovereign, but also his sovereignty in display. Here is a typical example:

> Malik Fais Sherwani, the Governor of Badaun, murdered one of his guards; the former was inebriated. After many years it so happened that Sultan Ghiyasuddin visited Badaun. The hapless widow of the murdered guard complained about the incident to the Sultan. Sherwani was tried by the King, sentenced to death, was executed in public and his body kept for public display. (2010*a*: 28)

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[28] Sayyid P.M.S.A.Pookkoya Tangal (-1975), Sayyid Muhammad Ali Shihab Tangal (1936-2009) and the present incumbent Sayyid Hyderali Shihab Tangal belong to the Kodappanakkal House which trace its ancestry to Ba'alawis. For a magisterial study of the career of Hadramis along the Indian Ocean, see Ho (2006)

[29] However, considering that the population of Mappila Muslims saw an unusual upward swing in the nineteenth century, this would rather be a case of communal memory than empirical fact. The unusual rise in population is registered in William Logan's *Malabar Manual* [1887].

The premise of the book is that these are stories from history. But one could see that these stories perform in the present. Other than remapping the Kerala Muslim public, they were also moral instructions, on how to behave in a position of power. Here is another example:

> Once Hyderali of Mysore was on an evening outing. An old woman fell on feet crying. When asked the reason for her state she replied that Agha Muhammad, kotwal of Hyderali has abducted her daughter. Hydersha who is now in the post of Agha does not heed her plea either.
>
> Hyderali returned to his palace. Hydersha was sentenced to 200 lashes. The soldiers who proceeded on the King's orders returned with the abducted woman and the severed head of Agha Muhammad. (2010*a*: 41)

Giving much more stress to the question of personal conduct are the stories and anecdotes from *Nabiyum Sahabimarum* (2010*b*). The peculiarity of the stories of the Prophet is that, even if he is materially lacking, his position is always that of a higher being. His sufferings and his forgiveness for those who made him suffer are made from a position of power rather than from helplessness. But inspite of this, this book too has a fair share of stories from stories of material power after Islam had acquired prominence. The stories bring forth not just elements of sacrifice, like the story of Abu Backer who sacrificed every last bit of his possession for Islam (2010*b*: 31), simplicity in life (39), justice (42), decision (32), etc.

CH Muhammad Koya's historical characters display determination and is not shy of using power. But in reality the Muslim community's material status did not correspond to anything like the sovereign power that was displayed in these anecdotes. The function of these stories is then to configure an alternative universality where the rationality of governmentality has to be substituted for a rationality that clearly privileged the discretionary

power of the individual. What characterises these stories is their negative modality, that is, they cannot be a model, they cannot set a precedence. Rather they concretized a particular self, a self which is ready to take up reigns. This person is an impersonation.

Between Governmentality and Sovereignty

CH Muhammad Koya's discursive universe is propelled by individuals who derive their energy from a Utopian past. The energy so derived, spiritual in its trope, are deemed to be deployed in concretization of a simulacrum of that utopia, for after all the utopia is an impossibility. The transforming horizons of the symbolic structure in Malabar, when negotiated through a masquerade that derives its energy from the Other lodged within, creates an alternative universality within which the logic of the postcolonial state is transformed into an arena of individual achievement. The postcolonial individual operates in different discursive registers. On the one hand it is the subject of realism, the one who makes sense of it. But the reality so imbibed reveals the particularism behind the universal assumptions of nationhood. The individual is also an assertion against the governmental logic with its insistence on populations rather than people. Perhaps CH Muhammad Koya's achievement, in the world of his letters, is the creation of a world in which each individual could aspire to be a law-maker. And perhaps this is why he has dedicated an entire book, *Niyamasabha Chattangal* [Protocols of the Legislative Assembly] (2013), as a know-how for functioning as a legislator.

Conclusion

This dissertation is on a period recent enough, a past nevertheless for many reasons. The migration to the countries of the Persian Gulf has altered the landscape of Malabar and has made the days of privation a distant memory for many. In the period that followed CH Muhammad Koya's demise Muslim League has made even more gains in the electoral scene under the spiritual leadership of Sayyid Mohammedali Shihab Tangal (1936-2009) with Kunhalikutty (1951-) as its most visible leader. Currently it holds an unprecedented 20 seats in the Kerala Legislative Assembly, its second best being 19 seats which it could secure in 1991. However, while the Muslim politics in Malabar had always been centred around the Muslim League, with breakaway factions adopting a name which would sound almost similar, the latest of them being Indian National League (which broke away from the parent body protesting the continued alliance with Congress after the demolition of Babari Masjid); the last decade has seen Muslim politics adopting newer names – names that signify the broad trends of minority politics on a pan-Indian level. Thus Solidarity Youth Movement, an organization which draws its bulk from among the Muslims, has aligned itself with ecological causes and localised protests mainly for environmental justice. The Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), another organization which enjoys visibility in Malabar, has been advocating a broad alliance of the oppressed, primarily a Dalit-Muslim alliance. In terms of electoral performance these organizations pose no threat to the League and have found themselves fighting for a distant fourth place. However, the success of these parties

has been in forming a pressure group on Muslim League in matters of policy, often regarding the fate and fortunes of the Muslim population.

Malappuram district too lives on in absolute geography as well as metaphors of belonging. The district finds itself expressed through the metonymies of Muslim, football, and "KL 10" (Vehicle registration code formerly used to denote vehicles registered in the district). There have been demands made by SDPI to partition the district into two, though as of now the demand cannot be said to have transformed into a popular movement. The last few years have seen an increased visibility for the category of Malabar as a specific geographic location. There have been discussions at least in some quarters on the discrimination the region faces as opposed to Travancore-Cochin. "Forum for Malabar Rights" brought out a document recently which highlights the infrastructural and cultural marginalization the region faces (Kunnakkavu, 2013). There is a hint of a suggestion for a separate state, like and especially in the wake of Telangana. The case for a separate state has been, again, suggested, in "Malabar Rajyam", a visual documentary on the discrimination faced by the people of Malabar from the Kerala government, produced by Solidarity Youth Movement.

In the 1980s Basheer turned to a phase of memoirs, putting his own stories in context and recounting tales of youth, a trend that was initiated in 1973 with *Ormayude Arakal*. Basheer was, to borrow from Calvino, showing the world how he turned the whole universe of his travels into icons spilled across his stories, and was turning himself into an icon.

This dissertation has argued that any conception of minor cosmopolitanism has to necessarily take into account the asymmetry of the power relations between the two entities, the minor, or the stranger, and the state. In Kant this asymmetry was overcome by its premise that every individual necessarily belongs to a state. In the postcolonial situation a

minor subject finds himself an object of the nation, that is, it is on him that the nation should perform its self-legitimation. This performance has taken the form of pedagogy in which the particular is sought to be assimilated. At the same time, the minor subject in India also finds herself able to articulate a cultural difference. Both the assertion of cultural self as well as the pedagogy are instruments of governmentality which insists on the cultural difference as an artefact rather than have any real influence on the matters of the state. Assimilation of the minor subject would require relinquishing one's identity altogether for the universality of citizenship or maintaining oneself as a receptor of governmental policies. This requires the minor subject to rearticulate her cultural distinctness as part of the nation itself, contributing to its history, diversity. The other option for the minor subject is to seek sovereignty. Neither of these options allow the minor subject to imagine herself except in the national frames.

I have defined minor cosmopolitanism as the bid on the part of the minor subject to a claim on the past that would express itself in languages other than that of nationalism. I have read these expressions as a response of the minor subject to the injunctions of either separatism or assimilation.

I have shown, through a reading of selected works from Vaikom Muhammad Basheer's oeuvre, that Basheer expresses the melancholy of a lost community by incorporating the lost voice of history into the narratorial voice, such that the memories of the characters are transformed into the memories of the narrator. The cyclical structure of Basheer's reform narratives supports such a reading. While the loss gives way to silence in the character, it begins the story for the narrator. I read the *Sthalam* narratives as Basheer's decisive action in which the lost object is finally mourned, put to rest in a place. The

Sthalam narratives offer an alternate vision of a nation, one in which communities are formed of action rather than natal affiliations. The *Sthalam* narratives deploy the programmatic citizenship as a matter of masquerade. By projecting a community of marginal characters, Basheer undoes the hinge of pedagogy that characterises the performance of the postcolonial nation vis-à-vis its population.

CH Muhammad Koya has sought to respond to the postcolonial state by conflating religion and state. His writings seem to suggest his belief in the applicability of the Islamic utopia to the postcolony. CH Muhammad Koya belongs to a party, the Muslim League, which has found itself in the defensive for its role in the partition of India. However, one does not see in CH Muhammad Koya's writings a melancholy for the lost Islamic state, but rather an effort to translate that loss into conscious action. What we have in the formation of Malappuram district is a forceful redirection of object cathexes, the finding of a new object of love. Malappuram is not a stand-in for an earlier community, but a new object onto which the earlier bond is transferred to, even condensed. One does not see in the district the shadow of a lost community of Muslims, but a new community concretized in space which deserves as much love. CH Muhammad Koya's writing on the Muslim history of India is seen to fashion a Muslim self who can be the subject rather than the object of governmentality. Rather than opt for statehood or intensify one's cultural homogeneity, CH Muhammad Koya's response is to project individual action within the terms set by governmentality.

We have seen in our study cases in which the politics of dignity, when faced with the inevitability of the choice between sovereignty and governmentality, translates itself into the terms offered by the latter. Both these translations involve losses. While the losses in

choosing the path to statehood have been pointed out – losses of fuzzy identities, orality, heterogeneity, etc., my study focusses on the loss in the translation to governmentality – a language to speak about the past – and the ways in which the minor subject has sought to overcome this. Both CH Muhammad Koya and Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, two exemplary figures of the Muslim community in Malabar (and Kerala), have endeavoured to imagine communities in quite different ways. In CH the inability to speak about the past was overcome by narrating a past of governmentality. In Basheer it was by imagining a country of masquerades which dissolved the binaries to an unending and equivalent series of identities of performing the nation. CH tried to fashion a self which sees itself fit to govern, while Basheer tried to do away with any qualification that would be deemed necessary to govern.

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