

THEORIZING THE SOUTH ASIAN CITY

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Abstract

Cities are considered as man's creation without the aid of god. Accordingly, Arnold Toynbee argues that history of cities is an integral part of the history of human affairs as a whole. The cities have also been hailed as the embodiment of human achievement and modernity. Despite this American Urban Sociologists led by Louis Wirth, Lewis Mumford, Georg Simmel and others have characterized the cities in negative terms. The modernist movement also delineated the cities as the breeding centres of alienation, anomie and anguish. This paper tries to reexamine the entrenched notions of city in the light of theoretical formulations developed by cultural studies, postmodernism, globalization, feminism and so on. While trying to distinguish the modern city with its pre-modern predecessor, the paper also tries to reconsider the antagonistic relationship between the city and the village which largely contributed to the demonization of city. As the forces of globalization, international capitalism are radically redefining the spatio-temporal contexts of postcolonial cities the paper tries to question the traditional coordinates of the city which define it in terms of its size, density of population, economic prospects and so on. While simultaneously interrogating the traditional perceptions of city it also tries to posit a new city which has become a site consumption than the place of industrial production. It also shows how the new city has become a site of heterogeneity, cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism.

Key Words: City, Country, Modernist City, Postmodern City, Western City, Indian City, Modernity, Postmodernism

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Positing a New city

Though the city stands as an interminable point of reference to human experience at different stages of human history, the urban experience has not been received in unequivocal terms. The eternal distinctions between good and evil, civilized and primitive, colonized and the colonizer, collective and the individual, centre and periphery, modern and postmodern are outlined, in a larger sense, around the configurations of city. Despite that modernist movement of twentieth century painted city as draconian and dangerous and portrayed it as a place of anomie, alienation, isolation and existential angst. However with the advent of Post modernism, Cultural Studies and the discourse of globalization the cities have, once again, firmly rooted themselves in the contemporary social and cultural theory. Particularly, the interdisciplinary phenomenon such as Cultural Studies, which forays into various areas like race, history, ecology, colonialism, nationalism, modernity, popular culture, communications and so on invokes the city as a metaphor of the modern world. Because the discipline of Cultural Studies itself developed as a result of the diverse processes like modernization, industrialization, urbanization, the unprecedented growth of technology and mass communication during the latter part of twentieth century. It is engaged in analyzing how these diverse processes are interrelated and how they impinge upon the production of literary texts, cultural experience and the actual lives of individuals. Without belittling the mass media as ideologically degenerate and a means of mass delusion it endorses the mass/popular culture which resulted as a consequence of globalization and massive technological development. The contemporary city/metropolis finds itself as a grid where these processes are interconnected paving a way for new social and cultural configurations.

Iain Chambers' illuminative essay "City without Maps" provides a 'metropolitan aesthetics' by considering the city as a metaphor of contemporary social reality. According to him it is genuinely a living and fluid entity, and by virtue of its collective size and concentration of humanity it forces us to make new cultural connections and risk our lives to live without maps. Cities challenge us to surrender portions of our identity in order to experience yet other, previously unrealized transcultural regions of our selves. He further argues that

The city, the contemporary metropolis, is for many the chosen metaphor for the experience of modern world. In its everyday details, its mixed histories, languages and cultures, its elaborate evidence of global tendencies and local distinctions, the figure of the city, as both a real and an imaginary place apparently provides a ready map for reading, interpretation and comprehension.....The idea of cultural complexity, most sharply on display in the arabesque patterns of modern metropolis-and that includes Logos as well as London, Beijing and Buenos Aires-weakens earlier schemata and paradigms, destabilizes and decenters previous theories and sociologies.....(The City) is a part of a mélange that stretches from Bronx to Brixton, to Barbès, to Brazzaville. Composed of connective rhythms and local inflections, it proposes instances of mixing, remixing, translating and transforming a shared tonality into particular voices and situations. It helps to articulate the dissonance of the experiences of a particular time and place: to be Arab and French, to be black and Parisian (Wolfreys 611-613) (Brackets mine).

According to him the labyrinthine and contaminated quality of metropolitan life not only leads to new cultural connections, it also undermines the presumed purity of thought.

One of the major implications of such an argument would be it helps to abolish the artificial distinctions, which have been cultivated since the beginning of Romantic movement with its fierce opposition to industrial London in favor of the pastoral, the distinction between culture and industry, art and commerce. Such a perspective insists that the contemporary cultures, identities, actual lives and literary texts are embedded in the interconnections between industry, commerce and urbanization.

Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson in their book *The Companion to the City* consider that cities are the sites of complex global/local interconnections producing a multiplicity of social, cultural, political and economic spaces and forms. They argue that the narratives of the city in recent times foreground cities as the spaces of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. The description of city available in these narratives is markedly different from the modernist perspective of cities. Drawing upon the post modern writings of Foucault, Lyotard and Baudrillard they do not represent city as the place of individual alienation, fragmentation as the traditional conception of modernity and city would have it. Rather it is considered as a site of excitement, abundance, fluidity and vibrancy where the boundaries between the real and unreal collapse. The post modernist theories have radically redefined the notion of fractured self from being a negative element to a positive one. Such writings have given new insights and new paradigms to analyze the experience of cities.

The modernist conception of city largely considered it as a symbol of evil, a place of alienation and anomie. In stark contrast to this, Postmodern Urbanism celebrates the multicultural, multilingual and the polyglossic ambiance of cities like Los Angeles. The hybrid, heterogeneous and multicultural character of a metropolis like Los Angeles has become a definitive expression of contemporary human civilization. It undermines the basic tenets of modernist thought because of the cultural values it embodies. According to the modernist thinking, the domain of culture was meant to be pristine, independent and autonomous and always to remain beyond the reach of dirt and filth of industry, commerce and the city. Prominent Postmodern thinkers like David Harvey and Frederic Jameson in their discussion of 'new urban

spaces', argue that the postmodern city, in opposition to the modern/industrial is more known as a site of consumption, but less as the place of industrial production. The Foucauldian notion of 'heterotopia'- the multiplication of centers and the dissolution of totalizing narratives-is best understood in the discussion of hypermarket, the shopping mall, the motorway network and telecommunications developed by David Harvey in the contemporary urban setting. For Harvey the condition of postmodernism can be seen in the 'time-space compression' made possible by the urban environment in the late capitalist period. The rapid ease of spatial mobility of people, between different places is characteristic of postmodern urban condition. David Harvey suggests that once you are in a shopping mall or on a motorway interchange or surfing in the Internet one can be anywhere in the world constantly crossing the fixities of time, culture and place. In this sense for the Postmodernists cities are extremely important for redefining the boundaries of society, culture and individual identity. Further, the globalization of economy has weakened the national boundaries facilitating the free flow of information, products, labour, money and people. The decline of colonial empires and communist economies has also contributed to the creation of single global market and the integration of cities into the global network.

Traditionally the city has been defined in terms of its size, density of population, industrialization and economic prospects; however, today it has come to be known as the site of heterogeneity, cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. All over the world the social pattern of human population is rapidly changing. According to the estimate of United Nations (UN) available in its report "Cities in a Globalizing World: Global Report on Human Settlements" (2001) more than the half of world's population resides in cities. With half of the world's population now residing in cities there is a phenomenal growth of urban population, especially, in developing countries. Though many Social Scientists have identified this extraordinary growth as 'urban explosion' in the postcolonial world, nevertheless, some sociologists differ in this regard. In his extensive study of cities, Aidan Southall identifies that "In late capitalist economies the influence of the city penetrates the remotest places to such an extent that they become in a sense urban and thus

the antagonism of town and country seems to transcended in the final absorption of the latter by the former. The deepest 'rural' countryside is now, in its primary function, an urban playground for the urban consumption of leisure, while the productive activities of agriculture, formerly considered by definition rural, have been mechanized, industrialized, monetized and commoditized and thus also urbanized" (Southall 7). However quoting Weber, Durkheim, Marx and Engels and P.Suanders, Southal doubts whether a distinctive study of the city is possible in the context of advanced capitalist society. The traditional coordinates of urban sociology relating to size, density of population, economic opportunities and so on have proved to be insufficient to understand the bewildering variety of questions that city as a society poses in the contemporary world. As a result, traditional urban sociologists like Aidan Southall find it difficult to admit the urban phenomenon approximating the many complex issues of society thereby the city losing its distinctiveness and the disciplinary focus as an object of theoretical study. Therefore he concludes

Urban Sociologists have also been much exercised by doubt as to whether any coherent body of problems and theories really exists which can properly be called urban sociology, just as urban anthropologists have constantly worried because their studies seems to be in the city purely by common sense,....., rather than of the city in any viable conceptual and theoretical sense.

Such a view attempts to define the city within the limited boundaries of national context and does not acknowledge the large-scale socio-economic changes that have transformed the basic fabric of city societies. As Anthony D. King has argued, any colonial city in this globalized world, could be termed as "multiple nations" because, London is as much a Caribbean city as a British one (qtd. in Schwarz and Ray 137). Since the cities of today's globalized world are not linked to any individual nations but linked to a grid of urban spaces and they undermine the neat demarcations of nation-state. The impact of globalization has thoroughly denationalized the city thereby demanding a

different theoretical apparatus to analyze it.

City in different phases and contexts

A brief reappraisal of cities in different phases of history would be useful to understand the changing character of cities. This would also enable us to develop different approaches to city instead of understanding them in uniform terms. In ancient times the cities were basically considered as religious centers than being the focal points of administrative, political and economic activity. In the ancient cities of Greece or in medieval Italy the temple was the nerve centre of social activity controlling the agricultural products and workforce. As a result both the city and society are firmly integrated with each other which, however, could never be achieved in the latter stages of evolution of cities. More importantly, the seemingly archetypal differentiation between the town and country was not to be seen in this period. However, only during the feudal period the town and the country developed antagonistic to each other. Later in the capitalist phase with the establishment of textile mills, factories and the import of raw materials a systematic and steady urbanization of country was inaugurated.

However, there are fundamental differences between the Indian and the Western cities as the process of urbanization largely differs from one another in both the societies. In India the modern city principally differs from its pre-modern predecessor and the 'modern city' is generally mistaken for the 'Western city'. In India the process of urbanization resulted as a cumulative phenomenon simultaneously with the processes of colonization and industrialization. Therefore the modern South Asian city has evolved differently from its Western counterpart over the last four centuries. The four largest cities of India which developed in nineteenth century have either been developed for the expansion of trade and commerce (Bombay, Calcutta, Cochin and Madras) or for setting up administrative machinery by the colonial rulers. It is to be noted that, as argued by Kenneth Ballhatchet and John Harrison, the city in South Asia is the product of Western, industrial and colonial forces. More importantly these cities developed as the extension of traditional country

and the town thereby establishing a dual link between tradition and modernity. Consequently the city in South Asia, especially in India is a site of diverse blend between traditional, urban, Western, industrial and colonial characteristics. Therefore the social character of South Asian city, especially in the postcolonial context, is a hodgepodge of tradition, modernity, urbanization and westernization assimilating the diverse elements of native and cosmopolitan. In this sense, the polyglossic, heterotopic, multivalent reality of Postmodernism and the multi cultural and multidimensional social fabric of Post colonialism can be effectively understood in the context of contemporary city only.

Though the modern/Western cities are known as the places of treachery, deceit and debauchery, in traditional sense of the term, the cities have got a venerable position in the Indian societies. They are variously well known as *puram/prastha/nagara*. The word *puram* actually meant an organized city and accordingly most of the cities across India developed as the hubs of power and religion. Most importantly they are the places where the normal routine of human life, all the *purusharthas* of *kama*, *artha* and *dharma*, attain their ultimate fulfillment. To achieve all the noble virtues of civilization in Indian life is to become a *nagarik*, a dweller of town. As it is mentioned earlier, historically before the dawn of mechanization, the so called devil incarnate, cities seemed to be associated with divine aspirations both in the East and the West. The book of Genesis describes Cain as the founder of the first city and in the East; Hindu holy books describe Indra (lord of heaven) as the possessor and the breaker of cities. In ancient Greek, cities were the hub of gods who acted as the guardian spirits of each of these cities. Most of the Greek gods had their own cities to live in. In India the holy cities of Kashi, Varanasi, and Banaras are forever steeped in the cycle of rituals and ceremonies. The ancient city which is in communion with holy gods is useful to make a significant distinction between the pre-industrial/ modern city and the industrial city of early nineteenth century. More importantly the distinction between the pre-modern, which has divine connotations and the modern, which is equated with evil and deceit, compels us to rethink the negative characterization attached to urban societies.

With the advent of colonial modernity, the ancient *puram/nagara* is

transformed into the stronghold of modern industrial capitalism in recent times. The forces of colonization, modernity and urbanization thoroughly revamped the basic features of the city and with the steady accumulation of wealth and consolidation of power they were transformed into the centers of imperial authority. As they developed into the centers of power, administration, industrial and economic activities, they attracted people belonging to different socio-cultural and economic backgrounds, eventually transforming the cities into the sites of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism.

Therefore the contemporary cities need not be described with the same inventory of thoughts prevalent in the modernist era. Various developments in socio-cultural fields have necessitated a rethinking of the totalizing statements of modernist project in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The broad contours of modernism in which it had developed the discourses of subjectivity, representation and identity, have been seriously challenged with the launch of Postmodernist discourse. David Harvey in his book *The Condition of Post modernity* (1989) delineates how the modern metropolis of the late twentieth century transforms into an exciting place of abundance, liveliness, multiplicity and intensifying diversity. The contemporary cities are no more the melting pots of the erstwhile era, where the distinct identities are dissolved but the actual salad bowls in which diverse cultures can still retain their autonomy paving a way for the exiting blend of peoples and cultures.

Theories of City in Sociology and Literature

According to Dirk Kasler Max Weber's observations on city have paved the way for the growth of Urban Sociology as a discipline of study. However, Urban Sociology as a field of study developed in the University of Chicago during World War-I. In its early phase it emphasized on the social problems of the city, it later focused its attention on the relationships between communities in the metropolis. Prominent sociologists like Louis Wirth and Lewis Mumford characterized the city absolutely in negative terms considering the urban world view as worldly, impersonal and antagonistic to social integration. Louis Wirth in his classic exposition "Urbanism as a Way of Life" considers that city is a

workshop and even a cosmos in itself which can attract diverse communities into its fold. Nevertheless his descriptions of cities are not free from the tinge of cynical pessimism. (Waters 2:47-62). He argues that they are characterized by 'social breakdown'; weakening the foot holds of traditional communities eventually making the city a space of alienation, individuation and normlessness. Lewis Mumford in his book *The City in History* denounces the city for breeding segmentation and irregular social norms. Georg Simmel's essay "The Metropolis and Mental life" shows that the metropolis has always been the seat of money economy developing materialistic attitude towards life. He delineates that an individual in metropolis is affected by blasé attitude (Waters 2:35-46).

The essence of blasé attitude consists in the blunting discrimination.....Money with all its colourlessness and indifference, becomes the common denominator of all values; irreparably it hallows out the core of things, their individuality, their specific value. All things, float with equal specific gravity in the constantly moving stream of money.....That is why cities are also genuine locale of the blasé attitude (Waters 2:35-46).

However, with the advent of Postmodernist notion of subjectivity and fractured self the negative attributes of city which have been accepted for a long time have been turned into positive ones. Simmel's theories of over stimulation and blasé attitude have been substituted by the creative enthusiasm of heterogeneity and multiculturalism. The phenomenon of globalization and the large scale migration of people belonging to different nationalities to metropolis have diversified the social character of city spaces. In Postmodern cities, the much accused social breakdown is replaced by the assimilation and diffusion of various occupational groups, people belonging to different classes, different cultures and ethnic groups.

The anti-urban attitudes expressed by many sociologists are not necessarily prompted by the discontents of urban societies rather such

conclusions are to be understood as a part of the gradual collapse of feudal order and the disintegration of class relationships. Referring to the discontents of urban societies, Malcolm Bradbury and Mc Farlane suggest that

It was no accident that the nineteenth century is both the great century of western urbanization and the century in which writers and artists, freed from dependence on patrons and particular cultural stratafound themselves in that paradoxical position of independence and social indeterminacy that we often today call alienation (98).

Further, the new theoretical schools have reexamined the modernist trope of alienation. As Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson succinctly put it “.....there is no self to be estranged from. We could also argue that the notion of the self is a Western problem or at least a Western conceit when set against life on the Bombay pavements or in the squatter settlements of Manila” (10). By and large, the dominant school of Urbanism had drawn its conclusions about city, to some extent rightly, on the basis of industrialism, capitalism and modernism. However, in the Indian context without making any reference to the colonial economy and its resultant cultural implications an autonomous understanding of its cities would prove to be insufficient. Hence the discourses of colonialism, Post colonialism, globalization and Post modernism provide different contexts to understand the issues related to urbanism.

Precisely for these reasons, as the cities are becoming increasingly complex, global, diasporic and hybrid it is difficult to develop unitary perceptions about them. They have developed into the spaces cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism and hybridity in the present context. Postmodern theorists such as Foucault, Lyotard and Baudrillard have redefined the contours of city from the traditional economic and material determinants to the cultural notions of difference, heterogeneity, vitality, mongrelization, hyper-reality, simulacra and cyberspace.

Apart from the observations of urban sociologists Walter Benjamin’s elaborate analysis of cityscapes have provided valuable insights to develop a

different perspective about cities. Benjamin's work stands apart from the sociological analysis of the modern city as it focuses on its architecture, spaces, crowds, street life, the inhabitants and daily routines of people. In both of his works *Illuminations* and *Arcades Project* his concern is towards the physical structures, buildings their interior and exterior, their relationship with the social groups, the shared space between the people and the buildings and the suitable literary forms to capture the city experience. However, Benjamin's observations can be still bracketed within the modernist imaginary as they characterize the experience of city as fragmentary, ephemeral, commodified and shocking. Benjamin's critique of city is quite different from others as he includes the marginal humanity of cityscapes such as crowds, the aimless *flaneur*, the miserable beggar, rag picker and the prostitute. Both the *flaneur* and the pedestrian who finds delight in strolling aimlessly through the labyrinthine ways of the city is the leitmotif of Benjamin's writings. For the *flaneur* and the pedestrian the labyrinthine ways and the jostling crowds provide a refuge to escape from the loneliness and dislocation which is very peculiar to the experience of modern city. Relating the jostling crowds to the poetry of Baudelaire, Benjamin shows that the crowds of the city are simultaneously the source of creativity and the ultimate metaphor for the transitoriness of modern experience. The crowd, undoubtedly, does negate the individuality of the self but at the same time it offers a choice to remain unnoticed and gives the freedom to get lost as a *flaneur*.

City as a male domain

However, feminist thinkers like Helen Jarvis and others have rigorously criticized the discipline of Urban sociology of Chicago school as a typical domain of the male. They argue that the observations of these sociologists on the city are essentially androcentric and even occidocentric as they do little justice "to the lived realities of men and women in either the global north or the global south"(p.12). They argue that the Chicago school led by Lewis Mumford, David Harvey, Manuel Castells, Mike Davis and William Cronin are basically 'macho' and 'macro' in their approach , as they do not address the question of

gender in the analysis of urban experience.

The traditional conception of city as being detrimental to the organic, stable community of the village is also subjected to severe criticism. According to them, when the city is accused for the breakup of traditional values, what is being lamented in real sense is the disintegration of traditional order which was fortified by patriarchy, male domination and control. Further, commenting on the pleasures of *flaneur* propagated by Benjamin, Baudelaire and others they argue that the characterization of *flaneur* basically refers to a male, who can wander at his will throughout the city making it an exclusive domain of the male. Such evaluations by feminist scholars are useful to revisit the traditional writings of Georg Simmel, Lewis Mumford and Walter Benjamin and provide new insights to redefine city in different terms.

City as a projection of Empire

Apart from being the sites of modernization, urbanization and colonialism the cities during the colonial period articulated the might of imperial empire. Nirmala Rao in her illuminative essay "Projections of Empire: India and the Imagined Metropolis" shows how building a city with massive monuments, phallic towers, huge domes and buildings is an act of underlining the imperial authority. By building huge cities the "colonial rulers sought to transform the mysterious and exotic sub-continent according to European image, and so claim a right to rule" (162). Quoting architectural historian David Johnson she illustrates that building New Delhi was intended as a "crowning achievement in colonial architecture and colonial planning, a Capital worthy of British Empire". David Johnson further mentions that "New Delhi's precise location its structures, its design, its rigorously controlled road grid, its monuments commemorating important imperial persons and events were artfully combined to make the Capital a new temple of Empire, the quintessential statement of what British Imperial rule had meant and continued to mean for Britain and for India"(167). Commenting on the spatial layout planning of New Delhi and its architectural styles designed by two architects Edwin Lutynes and Herbert Baker Nirmala Rao argues that they "...used the

colonial built environment to express the imperial social order. Created at the turning point between the high tide of Empire and the ebb tide of independence, the Viceroy's palace-today, the Rashtrapati Bhavan, the seat of the President of India-provided the final and firmest statement of British authority in built form" (167). Even the efforts of British architects to synthesize the oriental with the western styles of architecture "would confirm the ability of a Western power to transcend the "native" divisions and produce a new and superior synthesis" (166). The synthesis of styles they achieved was highly eclectic, "merging them at will with European conventions" (166). Nirmala Rao mentions the combination of Rajput and Mughal forms in Mayo College in Ajmer and Madras University's Senate House and the Muir College in Allahabad as the examples of bizarre and mélange of styles. The significant aspect of this eclectic synthesis was that "it sought to present an idealized vision of society, expressing at one and the same time local, national and imperial identities-sometimes successfully, sometimes not" (166).

The dichotomy between City and the country

Strangely enough, though the traditional city is in communion with the holy deities, in modern India the city is always defined as an opposite to the village, which stands as the repository of tradition, religious faith and rituals. City is also projected as an entity which is severed from the past, tradition and community. But such stereotypical depictions of the city are to be carefully considered in the light of city's long term association with religion. The distinction between the modern and pre modern cities would challenge the conventional depictions of city which have been popularized by both sociologists and the modernist thinkers of West. Urban sociologists of like Max Weber, Georg Simmel and others seem to be obsessed with the growth of individualism and its other attendant ills like disenchantment and fragmentation which have been resulted by the steady citification of the world.

In Indian society, the city is portrayed as an agent of change and destruction which ultimately proves to be detrimental to the stable, organic world order of the village. One of the reasons for the vilification of city is also because of the predominance of Gandhian influence and his insistence of building a nation on the basis of *gramaswaraj*. Further the antagonist perceptions held by Gandhi and Nehru about nation building also, to some extent, solidified the divide between city and the country. On the one hand, Gandhi with his *khadi* programme and *charkha* personified the virtues and ethos of the village; quite oppositely Nehru was seen as the embodiment of metropolitan fetish with his penchant for big dams and factories. To a large extent, the issue of national identity has become a contested terrain because of the dichotomy between the village and country strongly endorsed by both of them. But the apparent dissimilarity between the Gandhian and Nehruvian ideologies cannot be overstretched. The nationalist movement headed by Gandhi and others emphasized on the rural ethos of India. The new nation that he was dreaming of was rooted in the agrarian vision which took the ordinary village folk towards the path of progress. Ironically, the whole nationalist movement was concentrated in the cities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, which made the subaltern historians to question the foundations of nationalist leadership itself. To consider village as the only prototype of the modern nation is to negate the continuum of socio-economic and cultural transformation. The tendency to describe the whole of India exclusively in agrarian terms implicitly justifies the colonial stereotypes of civilized and barbaric; native and alien; colonized and colonizer and so on. In this sense the facile opposition between the city and the country is not to be accepted. It is to be noted that what happens in the town is also generated/ precipitated by the needs of rural community. Despite the rural virtue and the urban greed there have always been functional links, mutualities between the two apparently dissimilar systems. Raymond Williams in his book *The Country and the City* shows that human experience cannot be simply broken into such distinctly 'singular forms' rather they can be seen as the spaces of social organizations which mediate and coordinate between the two for various reasons. Moreover, the neat

demarcation between the village and the city is no longer tenable in the colonized/globalised/diasporic world. Instead of emphasizing the ruptures between the village and the city it is useful to study the dynamic interrelationship between the two.

Ashis Nandy explicating the complicated bondage between the two, laments that village has declined in the imagination of Indian mind. According to him, for the new generation of Indians the village has “increasingly become a demographic or statistical datum” (22). Though the rural population significantly contributes to the national income, he confirms that village is no longer a living presence in the mainstream Indian intellectual life. Contrarily, the Indian city has reemerged in the psyche of the common people despite the fact that it has not stabilized itself as in the case of village. Nandy also shows how the city/metropolis has a determining influence on the village system and quite oppositely he also concludes that the cultural logic of Indian city cannot exist without the presence of village (20). Developing the dialectical relationship between the two he also suggests that all the developmental projects of rural upliftment take place in the board rooms of metropolis. In this sense, it is not the village which is reconceived by the city and even its opposite is also possible in the Indian context. The dialectic relationship between the village and the city compels us to rethink about the permanent rupture between tradition and modernity in Indian society. Though it is not possible to demarcate the ‘modern present’ from the ‘distant tradition’, there have always been consistent efforts to uphold the relative difference and the superiority between the two. With the growth of international capitalism and the advent of globalization the spatial, social, economical conditions of postcolonial societies have been thoroughly revamped. In this context the multifarious, polyglossic social reality of these societies cannot be described within the traditional apparatus of binary axis of tradition-modernity, city and the country and so on.

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