

DR ANNA SUVOROVA (Moscow)

If I had read *Lahaur Ka Ek Vaqi 'a* by Shamsur Rahman Faruqi before this text was written I would have certainly included this excellent and mysterious short story in my book "Lahore: *Topophilia* of Space and Place" as the cultural and phenomenological image of Lahore re-created here is one of the best in the Urdu fiction. Anyway better late than never. Now I have a privilege to dedicate this chapter of the book to Shamsur Rahman Faruqi Sahib and congratulate him with his birthday and the highest civil award of Pakistan conferred on him.

Lahore: "The City of Dreadful Night"

As it is the case with most ancient cities in the world, the historical and geographic image of Lahore has been taken up by literature and the fine arts, which have turned it into an artistic image. The artistic image of a city greatly augments the general capacity of *topophilia* to reveal the emotional connection between man and the surrounding environment and efface the phenomenological barriers between the subject and the object. Reflection and dream, allusions and associations, imagination and invention that are employed by creative thought considerably transform and expand the chorological notions of a city.

I have already mentioned that Lahore made its way into Western literature as far back as the 17th century in John Milton's work. In the national literary tradition (first in Urdu and then in Punjabi), the artistic image of Lahore took shape only in the late 19th century. Naturally, these "inner" and "outer" images of the city differ greatly. The latter are marked by exoticism, pronounced idealization, or, in contrast, demonization, while reflection and associativity predominate in the former.

The first "outer" artistic image of Lahore appears in the poem *Lalla Rookh* (1817) by Thomas Moore, who paints an exotic oriental picture in the spirit of European romanticism. The main plot line of Moore's poem has a pseudo-historic "Mughal colour": the poem's heroine is said to be Emperor Aurangzeb's daughter,¹ who makes a long voyage

from Delhi to Kashmir to marry the son of the ruler of Bukhara. It is known that the historical Aurangzeb-Alamgir had five daughters from three official wives² and that none of them was called Lalla Rookh or was the daughter-in-law of the Khan of Bukhara. On its way to Kashmir, the luxurious imperial procession makes a stop in Lahore in keeping with traditional Mughal practice. Moore gives here a brief description of the city, parts of which I have already cited in Chapter 4 in connection with Shalimar.

This description greatly resembles the pictures of ceremonial processions that were *loci communes* in Persian and Urdu tales: "The arrival of the young Bride at Lahore was celebrated in the most enthusiastic manner. The Rajas and Omras in her train, who had kept at a certain distance during the journey and never encamped nearer to the Princess than was strictly necessary for her safeguard here rode in splendid cavalcade through the city and distributed the most costly presents to the crowd. Engines were erected in all the squares which cast forth showers of confectionery among the people, while the artisans in chariots adorned with tinsel and flying streamers exhibited the badges of their respective trades through the streets. Such brilliant displays of life and pageantry among the palaces and domes and gilded minarets of Lahore made the city altogether like a place of enchantment; - particularly on the day when Lalla Rookh set out again upon her journey, when she was accompanied to the gate by all the fairest and richest of the nobility and rode along between ranks of beautiful boys and girls who kept waving over their heads plates of gold and silver flowers, and then threw them around to be gathered by the populace."³

In this excerpt, the city is depicted as a procession. No specific or characteristic features of Lahore occur here, because palaces, domes, and gilded minarets were part of the standard image of every eastern Muslim city among Europeans in the 19th century and later. Nevertheless, as he says in his notes to the poem, Moore made use of available historical and literary sources, even if they did not have a direct bearing to Lahore. For example, he got his information about the custom of scattering gold and silver flowers as alms from the English translation of Ferishta's chronicle published by Jonathan Scott in 1794.⁴

In the corresponding note, Moore writes, "Or rather," says Scott, upon the passage of Ferishta, from which this is taken, "small coins, stamped with the figure of a flower. They are still used in India to distribute in charity and on occasion thrown by the purse-bearers of the great among the populace."⁵ Speaking about "chariots adorned with tinsel and flying

streamers”, Moore refers to John Hoppner’s popular book *Oriental Tales* (1805), which was a digest of tales from the Persian storybook *Parrot’s Tales* (*Tuti-namah*) and the Sanskrit *Hitopadesha*.⁶

Thomas Moore also mentions certain details about the geographic location of Lahore – in particular, the surroundings of the Grand Trunk Road. He writes further on, “Fadladeen felt the loss of the good road they had hitherto travelled and was very near cursing Jehan-Guire (of blessed memory!) for not having continued his delectable alley of trees a least as far as the mountains of Cashmere.”⁷ Moore got his information about the Imperial Highway from Bernier’s book,⁸ which he cites in his notes: “The fine road made by the Emperor Jehan-Guire from Agra to Lahore, planted with trees on each side. This road is 250 leagues in length. It has "little pyramids or turrets," says Bernier, "erected every half league, to mark the ways, and frequent wells to afford drink to passengers, and to water the young trees.”⁹. Here Bernier makes a mistake that Moore unwittingly makes his hero (the courtier Fadladeen) repeat: the "little pyramids or turrets” (*kos-minars*) that were located approximately three kilometers apart on the Grand Trunk Road appeared during the reign of Akbar rather than Jahangir. One of these *kos-minars* still preserved near the tomb of ‘Ali Mardan Khan is a tourist attraction of Lahore.

Curiously, Moore’s description of Lahore as a procession coincides with the image of Lahore in the drawings of Moore’s younger contemporary, the Russian traveler and artist A. Soltykoff (1806-1859). Soltykoff visited Lahore in 1842 and made several sketches, of which *Lahore Street* housed in the British Library is of particular interest. A cavalcade with horsemen and mounted elephants quickly moving down a narrow street to a gate arch takes up the greater part of the sheet. A young person of noble descent leaning on a bow sits on the biggest elephant; he is apparently on his way to hunt. His mounted companions are armed to the teeth with bows, sabers, and spears. In the background, one sees a long building supposedly in the Lahore style with scalloped balconies and wide windows (which never existed in Lahore), in which viewers stand, including barefaced female dancers in whom Soltykoff took a particular interest. Local colour is also provided by a group in the foreground on the left consisting of two bare-chested dervishes and a bearded *akali* with a lance in his hand.

The following letter by Soltykoff can be considered as a commentary of sorts to his drawing: “You mount an elephant and make your way with difficulty through the narrow streets, constantly waiting for one of the rickety five-storey buildings to fall on you together with dwellers and balconies. On both sides <...> loiter creatures without clothing or in rags and with long beards: loathsome eunuchs and fakirs covered with ashes <...> Everywhere you hear the sound of knocking, roaring, and weapons clanking <...> Yet, if you look up, you see in the windows and on the balconies the impudent gazes of venal beauties and dancers covered with gems and gold.”¹⁰

Without a doubt, the frame tale of *Lalla Rookh*, which repeatedly mentions Lahore and other Indian toponyms, was neither central to Thomas Moore’s conception nor the main merit of his work. The tale of a “Mughal” princess who falls in love with the poet Feramors on the way to her wedding and finds out upon her arrival that he is in fact her groom, the Bukhara prince Aliris, is nothing but a frame in prose for four famous interpolated poems: *The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan*, *Paradise and the Peri*, *The Fire-Worshippers*, and *The Light of the Harem*. These poems made Moore famous and were often imitated and paraphrased.

The translations of Thomas Moore’s poems by Russian writers stimulated the development of Orientalism in Russia and the rise of interest in Eastern literature among readers. Moore’s work had a marked influence on Russian poetry in the 1820s and 1830s. Russian poets most often borrowed from the *Irish Melodies* and *Lalla Rookh*. Thomas Moore’s works penetrated into the awareness of Russian readers where they occupied a special niche thanks to the rise of the Romantic Movement, the strengthening of Oriental trends in literature, and the reception of Moore’s writings in a more general context together with the work of his friend and great contemporary George Gordon Byron.

Orientalism marked the development not only of literature but also of music, leading to the appearance in the mid-19th century of operas on Eastern and, in particular, Indian themes. The forerunner of this trend in European opera was Mozart’s Singspiel *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1782), which is set in Ottoman Turkey. Oriental exoticism readily penetrated into opera on account of this genre’s predilection for exotic scenery, vivid costumes, and pompous spectacle. Model Italian “exotic” operas were Domenico Cimarosa’s *Cleopatra*

and *The Sun Virgin* (1789) and Gaspare Spontini's *Nurmahal or the Rose Festival in Kashmir* (1829) based on *Lalla Rookh*.

However, the real founder of Orientalism in opera was the Frenchman Félicien David with his operas *The Pearl of Brazil* (1851) and *Lalla Rookh* (1862). They were followed by such classic works as Charles Gounod's *The Queen of Sheba* (1862), Georges Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers* (1863), Giacomo Meyerbeer's *The African Woman* (1865), Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida* (1871), and Léo Delibes' *Lakmé* (1883). This list also includes Jules Massenet's *The King of Lahore (Le roi de Lahore)*, which offers a fantastic and exotic image of Lahore.

The premiere of this opera took place in April 1877 at the Opéra Garnier (Grand Opéra) and was immediately acclaimed not only by the public at large but also by Massenet's most exacting musical colleagues. Shortly after the premiere, Massenet was appointed professor at the Paris Conservatory and elected to the Institut Français. This work made Massenet world famous as an operatic composer. After Bizet's early death in 1875, Massenet became the doyen of French composers.

In *The King of Lahore*, Massenet made use of the music of his earlier unfinished or unperformed works, especially his opera *The Cup of the King of Thule*, which had never been staged. *The King of Lahore* was performed at opera theatres in many European and American cities, including St. Petersburg in 1882. Pyotr Tchaikovsky was very impressed by Massenet's music and wrote to his brother Modest, "I play excerpts from *The King of Lahore* with immense pleasure. How much taste and chic these Frenchmen have! I recommend that you get yourself a copy."¹¹ Nevertheless, *The King of Lahore* still bears the mark of the style of the "grand opera" – a traditional genre of French musical theatre that had largely worn itself out by that time. This explains why music lovers today chiefly know Massenet for his *Manon* and *Werther*, in which he shows himself as a lyric composer that gives an intimate and chamber interpretation of the subject matter and a development of romantic female images.¹²

The plot of *The King of Lahore* (libretto by Louis Gallet) is set in the 11th century during the conquest of Mahmud Ghaznawi. At the same time, the plot makes use of many stereotyped and banal turns and anachronisms.

The first act of *The King of Lahore* opens with a scene before the Temple of god Indra in Lahore. People gather next to the temple to beseech Indra to save the city from the Muslim invasion led by Mahmud. Then Indra's head priest with the non-Hindu name of Timur and the head minister Scindia enter the stage. As we know, Scindia (also transcribed as Sindhia or Shinde) was the name of the Marathi dynasty that ruled the Gwalior Principality in the 18th and 19th centuries and had nothing to do with Lahore. This Scindia, who somehow appears in 11th-century Lahore, is the opera's chief villain. He is in love with his niece Sita (the only character in the opera with a "correct" Hindu name), a priestess of Indra who has taken vows of chastity (this motif mostly likely appeared under the influence of Spontini's opera *The Vestal Virgin*, 1807, that was fashionable at the time). Scindia wants to marry Sita, yet her vow can be annulled only by the king of Lahore, who bears, for some reason, the Arabic name Alim ('knowing, educated'). However, Sita rejects Scindia's proposal, as she and Alim love each other and meet secretly.

The second act opens with a scene in the Thol (Thal) Desert, where the royal camp has been pitched. Sita is anxiously waiting for Alim to return from the battlefield. She is consoled by the young servant of King called Kaled (more likely, "Khalid" – yet another Arabic name), who is sung by a mezzo-soprano. Alim, covered with blood, appears: he has been treacherously wounded by Scindia. Alim curses the traitor and dies. Scindia declares himself to be king and, taking the lamenting Sita prisoner, leaves for Lahore.

The opera's third act brings the viewer to Indra's paradise, where celestial maidens (*apsaras*) sing and dance. According to Hindu belief, the heavens or Indra's paradise (*Svarga*) are located on Mount Meru. Brave warriors that die a glorious death in honest combat come to *Svarga*. They take pleasure in the singing of celestial beauties and savour heavenly food. Alim appears and begs Indra to let him return to earth to Sita. Indra is touched by his love and allows him to go on two conditions: Alim will return to earth as a beggar instead of a king and his life will depend on the life of Sita. If she dies, he will die, too.

The fourth act opens with a scene in the royal palace, where Sita is languishing in captivity. She is ready to commit suicide to escape Scindia's advances. Dressed in rags, Alim is sleeping in the square before the palace. A crowd has gathered to greet Scindia, the new king of Lahore. It turns out that the threat of invasion has subsided: the Muslim army

has decided not to storm the city and disappeared in the desert. The inhabitants joyously celebrate victory and greet the new king. Alim awakes and sees Scindia, whom he loudly denounces as a traitor and usurper. The crowd is stunned by the remarkable similarity between the beggar and the late king. Scindia orders that Alim be arrested, yet the head priest Timur receives a revelation from Indra and intercedes on Alim's behalf, sheltering him in the temple.

The fifth act is set once again in the Temple of Indra, where Sita is hiding after having run away from the palace. She is listening to a hymn that the priestesses are singing and recalls the days when the king came to see her in the temple. Alim appears, and the lovers embrace each other. They decide to flee from the city through a secret passage, yet Scindia appears and bars their way. Seeing that the path to freedom has been cut off, Sita stabs herself with a dagger. Alim dies together with her, as Indra predicted. The walls of the palace disappear, and one sees Indra's paradise. Extolled by singing *apsaras*, Sita and Alim are resurrected next to the god's altar. In despair, Scindia confesses to his wrongdoings.

As we see, the image of Lahore in the opera is highly conditional and lacks all local colours. The librettist may have chosen Lahore as the opera's setting to relate the plot to early Muslim conquests; otherwise, the opera could have just as well been called "The King of Delhi" or "The King of Kashmir". The pseudo-Hindu colour of the action – temples, the god Indra, *apsaras*, and priests – is violated in the most absurd way by the Arabic-Muslim names of the characters (it suffices to recall the head priest Timur). Naturally, the "Indian" subject matter did not influence Massenet's music, which lacks Oriental-like melodies – in contrast to, say, Mikhail Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmila* (1842) with its stylized Eastern "Persian Chorus" and "Chernomor's March".

The King of Lahore is a typical "grand opera" with a quasi-historic plot, a bloody and tragic ending, pompous crowd scenes, depictions of processions and temple rituals, visions of paradise, choruses of priests, city dwellers, soldiers, and *apsaras*, ensemble singing, and a traditional five-act structure. As in other examples of this genre, the cast was determined by the necessity of including all the traditional vocal roles: the noble hero Alim (tenor), the true and tender heroine Sita (soprano),¹³ the villain Scindia (baritone), the *raisonneur* Timur (bass), and the travestite Kaled (mezzo-soprano).

One can apply to *The King of Lahore* the stern words that Leo Tolstoy wrote with regard to another opera on an “Indian” plot. On April 19, 1897, Tolstoy attended a repetition of Anton Rubinstein’s opera *Feramors* based on the same *Lalla Rookh*. After the repetition, Tolstoy wrote a brief description of the opera and then incorporated its expanded version into the first chapter of his famous treatise *What is Art?* (1897-1898).

The printed version of Tolstoy’s treatise does not mention the work on which the opera’s libretto is based nor the Russian composer who set it to music. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Tolstoy is referring to Moore’s *Lalla Rookh* and Rubinstein’s opera *Feramors* based on this poem. Tolstoy wrote, “I remember being once at the rehearsal of one of the most ordinary of the new operas which are produced at all the opera houses of Europe and America <...> The performance had already commenced, and on the stage a procession of Indians who had brought home a bride was being represented <...> The opera he was rehearsing was one of the most ordinary of operas for people who are accustomed to them, but also one of the most gigantic absurdities that could possibly be devised. An Indian king wants to marry; they bring him a bride; he disguises himself as a minstrel; the bride falls in love with the minstrel and is in despair, but afterwards discovers that the minstrel is the king, and everyone is highly delighted.”¹⁴

Tolstoy then proceeds to say something that is aimed against Rubinstein’s opera yet can be read as a denouncement of opera in general: “That there never were, or could be, such Indians, and that they were not only unlike Indians, but that what they were doing was unlike anything on earth except other operas, was beyond all manner of doubt; that people do not converse in such a way as recitative, and do not place themselves at fixed distances, in a quartet, waving their arms to express their emotions; that nowhere, except in theatres, do people walk about in such a manner, in pairs, with tinfoil halberds and in slippers; that no one ever gets angry in such a way, or is affected in such a way, or laughs in such a way, or cries in such a way; and that no one on earth can be moved by such performances; all this is beyond the possibility of doubt. Instinctively the question presents itself: For whom is this being done? Whom can it please? If there are, occasionally, good melodies in the opera, to which it is pleasant to listen, they could have been sung simply, without these stupid costumes and all the processions and recitatives and hand-wavings.”¹⁵

Tolstoy's invective attacks not Thomas Moore or his poem specifically but the art of opera in general, no matter on what subject matter it is based. Still, it clearly shows Tolstoy's indifference to the "Oriental" material that he uses as the grounds for his polemic. An abyss opened between Russian romantic poets, who were charmed by the themes of *Lalla Rookh* and took pleasure in the music of Spontini's opera *Nurmahal or the Rose Festival in Kashmir*, and Tolstoy, who rejected the genre of the opera, the "Indian" atmosphere, and, more generally, all conventionalism on stage.

Paraphrasing Tolstoy, "there never was, or could be," such Lahore as portrayed in *The King of Lahore*, for it is a real compendium of "the most gigantic absurdities". Nevertheless, Tolstoy was essentially outraged by the magic of opera – an art form that transforms life and enchants the viewer with its synthesis of music, singing, drama, and scenography in which the plot plays an important though not the main role. In the final analysis, the "phoney" Lahore of Massenet's opera differs little in its conventionalism from the Egypt of *Aida*, the Ceylon of *The Pearl Fishers*, and the Japan of *Madam Butterfly*, because the Oriental exoticism of classical opera only serves as a pretext for creating a colourful spectacle and a costume drama that should have as little to do with reality as possible.

It is no coincidence that the image of Lahore with its architecture and natural surroundings and the customs and costumes of local inhabitants made 19th-century Europeans think of opera. The founder of theosophy Helena Blavatsky wrote about the *darbar* of the viceroy of India in Lahore, which she attended in 1880: "Before us, almost at our feet, and seemingly at one and the same time, scenes from the greatest European theatres seemed to unfold, with their "Africans," "Aidas," "Kings of Lahore" and the tutti quanti of various operas and ballets portraying Oriental life. The most gorgeous decorations under the sun ever seen by Europeans were displayed before us."¹⁶ On another occasion, Blavatsky compared Shiite religious hymns to opera: "As we passed under the windows of the house where they had retired to complete their mysterious ceremonies, we heard their singing again, this time loud and sharp, resounding through the deep silence of the nocturnal air, like some invisible threat. For some unknown reason I was reminded of the scene and chorus from *The Huguenots*: "La bénédiction des poignards."¹⁷

With regard to Lahore, one can say that European 19th-century fiction was based on preexisting documentary literature – travelogues, memoirs, diaries, and letters by colonial officials that I have often cited in this book. Among the numerous British authors that wrote about India, women of the Victorian period play a special role. They astonish modern scholars with their tenacity in ordeal, benevolent curiosity, and unprejudiced attitude towards the culturally foreign inhabitants of India and their mores and customs. Whereas male British memoirists never forgot about their mission to criticize and improve “barbarian” colonial society, women wrote their letters and diaries for their kinfolk back home and treated everything they saw with spontaneity, compassion, and even admiration. Some of these books – such as those written by Mrs. Mir Hasan Ali (an Englishwoman that married an Indian Muslim), Emily Eden (sister of Governor-General Lord Auckland), Fanny Parks (who lived for twenty-five years in India and, in contrast to most of her countrywomen, had a fluent knowledge of Urdu), and Mrs. Harris (witness to the dramatic siege of the Residency in Lucknow) – are rightly considered to be classics in their genre.

The influence of this collective experience of British travelers and memoirists can be felt in the work of the main portrayer of colonial India and the creator of a vivid and authentic image of Lahore – Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936).

Kipling was born in Bombay, where his father taught at the J.J. School of Arts – one of the first arts schools on the subcontinent. As a child, Kipling grew up surrounded by native servants and began to speak Urdu earlier than he spoke English. One can say that India was in his blood. In 1871, Kipling and his younger sister were sent to England to get an education, and his happy Indian childhood came to an end. It was customary among English families working in India (who called themselves “Anglo-Indians”) to send their children to their home country for study: in India, children were brought up by local nannies and male servants, who spoiled and never punished them. This was in contradiction with Victorian notions about the correct (i.e., strict) upbringing of young ladies and gentlemen. Furthermore, children from colonial families spoke English badly and with a marked accent.

Kipling himself recalled at an advanced age in 1935: “In the afternoon heats before we took our sleep, she [*ayah* - a Portuguese Roman Catholic nanny] or Meeta [a Hindu bearer] would tell us stories and Indian nursery songs all unforgotten, and we were sent into the

dining-room after we had been dressed, with the caution ‘Speak English now to papa and Mamma.’ So one spoke ‘English,’ haltingly translated out of the vernacular idiom that one thought and dreamed in.”¹⁸

In 1875, while Kipling was in England, his parents moved from Bombay to Lahore, where John Lockwood Kipling was appointed curator of the Museum of Indian Art and became the director of the Mayo School of Art (today, the National College of Arts). After leaving school, Rudyard did not enroll in the civil service or the army on account of his poor eyesight. His parents lacked the means to send him to college. Thus, at the age of sixteen, he returned to Lahore, where he found work as an assistant to the editor in the evening newspaper *The Civil and Military Gazette*. The long title of the newspaper stemmed from the fact that the European part of Lahore (as of other cities in British India) consisted of Civil Lanes where the personnel of the Indian civil service lived and the Cantonment inhabited by the military. Each part of this vast British community had its own news and readers. Kipling wrote a fiction column in the newspaper. He quickly integrated into the Anglo-Indian society of Lahore and spent all his free time in the Punjab Club on the Mall, where he could learn all the details about the life of colonial civil servants, officers, doctors, and engineers – the characters of his early short stories.

Kipling was a born *flâneur* and strolled all around Lahore. While erring through the city and talking to local inhabitants, he learned many things of which most English people in India were unaware. Some traits of Kipling’s personality and his in-depth knowledge of the psychology and customs of different groups of Indian society were reflected in his favourite character – the policeman Strickland, a talented scholar of India, an actor who could assume any guise, and a clever detective.

In all, Kipling lived in Lahore for five years: in 1887, he was transferred to Allahabad to the editorial office of the larger newspaper *The Pioneer*. In Lahore Kipling was happy in his family circle, although he preferred his native Bombay to all other Indian cities.¹⁹ It was in Lahore that Kipling became a writer and that the short stories that made up his first prose collection *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888) were written and published in the newspaper.

As a well-defined literary and spatial image, Lahore appears in the very first short story in the collection. The story is entitled “The Gate of A Hundred Sorrows” and takes the form of a confession of an opium-smoker, who spends his life in a Chinese opium den called The Gate of a Hundred Sorrows. The choice of subject matter and style reflect the influence of an autobiographical tale by Thomas de Quincey (1785-1859) called *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1822), which was popular at the time. The opium den where the story’s hero lives out his days is situated deep in the labyrinth of streets of the Walled City behind the Delhi Gate: “It lies between the Copper-smith's Gully and the pipe-stem sellers' quarter, within a hundred yards, too, as the crow flies, of the Mosque of Wazir Khan. I don't mind telling any one this much, but I defy him to find the Gate, however well he may think he knows the City. You might even go through the very gully it stands in a hundred times, and be none the wiser. We used to call the gully, "the Gully of the Black Smoke," but its native name is altogether different of course. A loaded donkey couldn't pass between the walls; and, at one point, just before you reach the Gate, a bulged house-front makes people go along all sideways.”²⁰

This excerpt is marked by a descriptive style that is typical for early Kipling, stemming from his experience as a journalist, and a programmatic documentalism that is often found in his early prose and, more generally, in the English short story of the day. After becoming popular in the US and Europe, this genre lingered out its days in England. Kipling’s early short stories greatly resemble “physiological sketches” (whose model was Dickens’ *Sketches by Boz*) of Indian life, abounding in details and Urdu words that were understandable only to Anglo-Indians and vividly drawn characters that seemed to be taken from everyday life.

Even more importantly, beginning with “The Gate of a Hundred Sorrows”, Kipling systematically works out an infernal and demonized image of Lahore as a city of vice and death. This trend also marks his other stories set in Lahore: “Without Benefit of Clergy”, “On the City Wall”, “The City of Dreadful Night”, “In the House of Suddhoo” etc.

Whereas “The Gate of a Hundred Sorrows” depicts Lahore as a city of vice full of “stifling, sweltering chandoo-khanas” (i.e., Indian hemp dens), the short story “Without Benefit of Clergy” paints the portrait of a city of terrible diseases and epidemics that destroys the happiness of the Englishman Holden and his Indian beloved Ameera. They

settle in a secluded house in the outskirts of Lahore in an attempt to hide their love from the eyes of people and gods, yet the lethal air of the city reaches them and kills first their child and then Ameera herself.

In Kipling's stories, Lahore appears as a mortal foe of man, evoking dread through its frightening sounds and foul smells. In word, it is presented from the standpoint of *topophobia*: "They sat together and laughed, calling each other openly by every pet name that could move the wrath of the gods. The city below them was locked up in its own torments. Sulphur fires blazed in the streets; the conches in the Hindu temples screamed and bellowed, for the gods were inattentive in those days. There was a service in the great Mahomedan shrine, and the call to prayer from the minarets was almost unceasing. They heard the wailing in the houses of the dead, and once the shriek of a mother who had lost a child and was calling for its return. In the gray dawn they saw the dead borne out through the city gates, each litter with its own little knot of mourners. Wherefore they kissed each other and shivered."²¹

The story "On the City Wall" depicts Lahore as a city of violence and religious conflict that foretold the future partition of the subcontinent. In Lahore and, in particular, in Shahi Mohalla, one still sees tall and narrow old houses that adjoin the remains of the city wall. The upper floors of these houses formerly opened out directly onto these walls, projecting somewhat like birdhouses over the lower floors and constituting a scenic feature of the city landscape. Such a house, in which the courtesan Lalun lives, is the setting of the short story: "If you fell from the broad window-seat you dropped thirty feet sheer into the City Ditch. But if you stayed where you should and looked forth, you saw all the cattle of the City being driven down to water, the students of the Government College playing cricket, the high grass and trees that fringed the river-bank, the great sand bars that ribbed the river, the red tombs of dead Emperors beyond the river, and very far away through the blue heat-haze, a glint of the snows of the Himalayas."²²

This short description of the view from the window allows us to identify the narrator's location: in the south, he sees the Shahalami (or Bherwala) Gate, behind which the pastures lay; in the west, the campus of Government College on the Mall;²³ in the northwest, the Shahdara funerary complex on the other side of the Ravi; and, in the north, the glimmer of

Himalayan snows. This vast panorama can be seen only from the eastern wall of the city between the Delhi and the old Akbari Darwaza.

In contrast to the journalistic precision of his early prose, Kipling tries to “encrypt” city toponyms in “On the City Wall”. He calls Shahi Qila – the Fort Amara, Akbari Darwaza – Padshahi Gate, Sheranwala Darwaza – Kumharsen Gate, and Shahalami Darwaza – the Gate of Butchers (after the meat bazaar located next to it). However, this will not fool anyone who knows Lahore. After Lahore became British, the Fort was used to house the garrison artillery and served as an arsenal and prison for state prisoners. The story’s main character Khem Singh, an old fighter against the colonial regime, is detained in the prison. The story’s narrator, an Englishman, unwittingly helps him to run away, deceived by Lalun’s feigned affection.

In the narrator’s description, the fort is a gloomy place that preserves the memory of its rulers’ numerous crimes: “No man knows the precise extent of Fort Amara. Three kings built it hundreds of years ago, and they say that there are miles of underground rooms beneath its walls. It is peopled with many ghosts, a detachment of Garrison Artillery and a Company of Infantry. In its prime it held ten thousand men and filled its ditches with corpses.”²⁴ The toponym “Kumharsen Gate” (i.e., Potters’ Gate) is just as transparent. Khem Singh, who has not seen the city for a long time, passes next to it and says, “The Kumharsen Gate is new. Who pulled down the stone lions?” As the reader will recall, stone lions were placed at the Lion Gate (Sheranwala Darwaza) during Ranjit Singh’s rule.

The story is set during the period of the *Muharram* when Muslims organize mourning processions in the streets in memory of their martyrs and carry huge replicas of the tomb of Imam Hussain in Karbala (*taziya*). As it is often the case in our day, a religious conflict flares out between the Shiites and Hindus. Although the English and the colonial troops loyal to them try to put it out, the conflict escalates into a massacre, the city is overcome with panic, and people are wounded and die. As in Kipling’s other stories, Lahore appears once again as a city of violence and death.

“The six or eight Policemen with each tazia drew their batons, and struck as long as they could in the hope of forcing the mob forward, but they were overpowered, and as contingents of Hindus poured into the streets, the fight became general. <...> The priests at

the corners of the streets knocked the legs from the bedsteads that supported their pulpits and smote for the Faith, while stones fell from the silent houses upon friend and foe <...> Tazia after tazia, some burning, others torn to pieces, hurried past us and the mob with them, howling, shrieking, and striking at the house doors in their flight. <...> The clamor in the City redoubled. The Hindus had descended into the streets in real earnest and ere long the mob returned. <...> Everywhere men struck aimlessly with sticks, grasping each other by the throat, howling and foaming with rage, or beat with their bare hands on the doors of the houses.”²⁵

Still, the most expressive, memorable, as well as terrifying literary image of Lahore is found in Kipling’s short story “The City of Dreadful Night.” Kipling borrowed the story’s title from the poem of the same name by the Scotsman James Thomson (1834-1882) that was written in 1870-73 and read by Kipling during school vacation. Although a second-rate Victorian author, Thomson managed to convey in his poem devoted to London an atmosphere of deep melancholy and black despair, which were considered to be fashionable and “purely English” at the time. The poem’s title apparently appealed to Kipling a lot, for he used it twice as the titles of his short story about Lahore and a series of sketches of life in Calcutta. It should be said in passing that O. Henry also used this title for one of his short stories about New York.

Kipling’s short story also contains an unacknowledged quotation from Thomson’s poem. The story ends with the sentence: “So the city was of Death as well as Night after all.” This is a paraphrase of Thomson’s lines:

The City is of Night; perchance of Death,
But certainly of Night.²⁶

“The City of Dreadful Night” is a story without a plot – a sketch that arose from the nightly wanderings of the author suffering from the torrid summer heat. He describes Lahore as a city of the dead where sleeping people lie in the street like corpses, yellow stray dogs roam about, rats swarm in dark holes in courtyards, and vultures slumber on minarets waiting for prey – in a word, a real hell and a space that is inimical to man and frightening in its *topophobia*.

“Straight as a bar of polished steel,” the road brings the narrator through the Delhi Gate to the Wazir Khan Mosque: “The open square in front of the Mosque is crowded with

corpses; and a man must pick his way carefully for fear of treading on them. The moonlight stripes the Mosque's high front of coloured enamel work in broad diagonal bands; and each separate dreaming pigeon in the niches and corners of the masonry throws a squab little shadow."²⁷

Kipling writes that Gustav Doré could have depicted Lahore at night in his engravings; he was apparently referring to Doré's illustrations to Dante's *Inferno* (1885). Kipling himself sees Lahore in the changing contrasts of black and white, pallid moonlight and dark shadows: "The pitiless Moon shows it all. Shows, too, the plains outside the city, and here and there a hand's-breadth of the Ravee without the walls. Shows lastly, a splash of glittering silver on a house-top almost directly below the mosque Minar. <...> A small cloud passes over the face of the Moon, and the city and its inhabitants – clear drawn in black and white before – fade into masses of black and deeper black."²⁸ Truth be told, Kipling's descriptions recall not Doré's neoclassical engravings but expressive dynamic etchings as drawn, for example, by Kipling's contemporary, the famous Welsh artist Frank Brangwyn, who depicted the gloomy districts of London and other industrial cities.

The apotheosis of the dreadful night in Lahore becomes the narrator's encounter with a funeral procession: a woman that died at midnight from the heat is being carried to the burning *ghat* to be cremated. The City of Night turned out, indeed, to be a City of Death – death that up to then only appeared to the narrator in the immobile bodies sleeping in the streets.

Nevertheless, there were places on Kipling's "mental map" of Lahore that were flooded with *topophilia* – places connected with his beloved parents and his happy years of work in the newspaper. He recalls these places in his *magnum opus* – the novel *Kim* (1900). The image of Lahore transforms with the change of genre from short story to novel. Employing the traditions of the European "grand road novel" with its Quixotic pair (the noble idealist Lama and the cunning trickster Kim), Kipling unfurls before the reader's eyes a panoramic picture of the cultural pluralism of Indian life and the sensitivity and openness of the people of this country to all that surrounds them. In his novel, Kipling presents an image of India that is in keeping with the conception of "Unity in Diversity" that was subsequently worked out by the country's national leaders with respect to its cultural heritage. Naturally, in conformity with these new goals, Kipling could not permit himself to demonize Indian

cultural and geographic images as he did in his “physiological sketches” of Lahore and Calcutta.

The novel begins on the Mall, Lahore’s main street, next to the Museum across from which the old cannon Zamzama still stands today: “He [Kim] sat, in defiance of municipal orders, astride the gun Zam-Zammah on her brick platform opposite the old Ajaib-Gher—the Wonder House, as the natives call the Lahore Museum. Who hold Zam-Zammah, that 'fire-breathing dragon',²⁹ hold the Punjab, for the great green-bronze piece is always first of the conqueror's loot.”³⁰

The cannon Zamzama (‘Lion’s Roar’) was placed in its current position in 1870 on the occasion of the Duke of Edinburgh’s visit to Lahore. Often called the symbol of British rule (*Raj*) in India, the cannon was actually cast in 1757 by Indian gun makers at the order of Ahmad Shah Durrani and under the supervision of his vizier Shah Wali Khan. Zamzama is made of an alloy of copper and brass: a metal vessel was taken as Jazia, capitation tax for infidels, from every Hindu house in the city to manufacture the cannon.³¹ Ahmad Shah Durrani first used Zamzama in the famous battle at Panipat in 1761. When he left for Kabul, he left the cannon, too heavy to be transported, with his governor Khwaja Ubaid.

A year later, the Sikh military commander Hari Singh Bhangi launched a campaign against the Afghan governor and plundered the Lahore arsenal, taking the cannon as a military trophy. From this time on, Zamzama became known by the Punjabi name *Bhangiyan di top* (‘Cannon of the Bhangi Clan’), although it is more commonly called “Kim’s Gun” today. The cannon was kept in Shah Burj in Lahore Fort until the “Sikh Triumvirate” of *sardars* of the Bhangi clan seized power. Zamzama became the subject of discord between different Sikh clans that moved it from one military command post to another: from Gujranwala to Gujrat and from Rasul Nagar to Amritsar. Rulers began to treat Zamzama as a symbol of power and a talisman of sorts that brought military success; moreover, Hindus considered the cannon to be an incarnation of Mahadeva, the god Shiva. Ranjit Singh repeatedly used the cannon in his military campaigns. During the storm of Multan Fort, the cannon was greatly damaged and became unfit for military use. In 1848, the English returned Zamzama to Lahore and initially placed it next to the Delhi Gate and then brought it to its current place. A Persian inscription is engraved around the cannon’s muzzle:

ba amr-i durr-i daurān shāh walī khān vazīr

sākht tūp-i zamzama-nām-i qal‘a-gīr

At the order of the Pearl of Time (i.e., Durrani), the vizier Shah Wali Khan Made the cannon by the name of Zamzama, the capture of strongholds.³²

Next to Zamzama, fate brings Kim together with Lama, who came to Lahore from Tibet. Kim accompanies Lama to *Ajaib-Ghar* – the Museum where they meet a grey-bearded Englishman, the wise and kind “Keeper of the Images”, in whom Kipling portrayed his father. Lama is thrilled by the Museum’s Buddhist collections: “In the entrance-hall stood the larger figures of the Greco-Buddhist sculptures done, savants know how long since, by forgotten workmen whose hands were feeling, and not unskillfully, for the mysteriously transmitted Grecian touch. There were hundreds of pieces, friezes of figures in relief, fragments of statues and slabs crowded with figures that had encrusted the brick walls of the Buddhist stupas and viharas of the North Country and now, dug up and labeled, made the pride of the Museum. In open-mouthed wonder the lama turned to this and that, and finally checked in rapt attention before a large alto-relief representing a coronation or apotheosis of the Lord Buddha.”³³

Kipling’s father, who amassed this collection of the Gandhara art, wrote about it in 1860:

“Entering the arts and manufacture division, the visitor will find in the aisle to the left the sculptured remains from Yusafzai which are the chief and most valuable possessions of the Museum. <...> The Buddhist paintings and sculptures belong to the flourishing period of the Indo-Scythian rule. <...> The human form is delineated with truth, and occasionally with spirit and freedom of action; some of the heads are so vigorously and expressively carved that there can be no doubt of their being contemporary portraits; the details of costume are accurately rendered, and scenes of actual life are represented with considerable dramatic power. The vitality of style, the more remarkable from its contrast with the inane vagueness and monstrosity of ordinary Hindu sculpture, may be partly explained by the greater purity and simplicity of the early forms of Buddhist creed, but the influence of the Greek is still more plainly visible.”³⁴

The museum that Kim and Lama visited was located in an old building known as Tollington Market. This was a temporary exhibition pavilion that was built for the First Industrial Exhibition in Lahore in 1864. This exhibition was part of a vast program for demonstrating the technical and technological achievements of England and its colonies that was held in all the large cities of the British Empire after the 1851 World Exhibition in London. After the end of the exhibition in Lahore, the displayed objects were brought to Tollington Market, where they were kept until 1890. Meanwhile, the collection grew: it came to incorporate archaeological finds, inscriptions, weapons, cloth, decorative and applied art, and miniature painting. It became necessary to find new exhibition premises.

The Museum's current red-brick building with a white marble portico over the main entrance was built in the so-called "Anglo-Indian style" in 1887 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Queen Victoria's coronation. The Queen's grandson Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence (who according to rumours and gossip was suspected of being Jack the Ripper), came from England for the cornerstone-laying ceremony. The building was designed by Lockwood Kipling and the architect and designer Bhai Ram Singh, one of the first graduates of the National College of Arts and creators of the architectural style of colonial Lahore.

Standing next to Zamzama, Kim sees another building with which he (as well as the author himself) feels a certain affinity: "over yonder behind the Museum, in the big blue-and-white Jadoo-Gher—the Magic House, as we name the Masonic Lodge", where people engage in "great magic".³⁵ He is speaking about the Freemasonry that housed the Grand Lodge of the Punjab Province, which was also located on the Mall. Kipling father and son both were members of the Lodge. In the late 19th century, there were seventeen Masonic lodges from Delhi to Peshawar: "There is a Masonic educational institution maintained by the masons of the Punjab. <...> It educates, clothes, and maintains eight children <...> Such boys in its care as display special talent are sent to the Roorkee Engineering College with a view of passing out as civil engineers. In Lahore there are two lodges, 'Hope and Perseverance' and 'Ravi,' both thriving and popular bodies. There is also a lodge, 'Industry,' at Naulakha, and 'St. John the Evangelist,' at Meean Meer."³⁶

The Masonic code of behaviour with its strict secrecy, struggle for covert influence over political events, codes and passwords, solidarity and mutual assistance is reflected in many

places in the novel. The actions of its English characters, Colonel Creighton and Lurgan, and their influence on Kim, whom they try to turn into a “Sahib” or a participant of the “Big Game”, were motivated not only by the interests of the secret service but also by the traditions of the Freemasons.

Kipling’s description of Lahore in the novel is not limited to the official colonial Mall and its elegant buildings: Kim brings his Lama to the very heart of the Walled City – the Kashmiri Gate – where they find an abode in the caravansary which I already mentioned in Chapter 2. Just as his hero, Kipling was attracted by the “hot and crowded bazaars” blazing with light and the crowd with “all manner of Northern folk”; far from frightening the writer, they gave him new material for his descriptions of Indian mores, customs, and characters.

Kim and Lama set off for their long voyage across the country from the Lahore Railway Station: “They entered the fort-like railway station, black in the end of night; the electrics sizzling over the goods-yard where they handle the heavy Northern grain-traffic. 'This is the work of devils!' said the lama, recoiling from the hollow echoing darkness, the glimmer of rails between the masonry platforms, and the maze of girders above. He stood in a gigantic stone hall paved, it seemed, with the sheeted dead third-class passengers who had taken their tickets overnight and were sleeping in the waiting-rooms. <...> The lama, not so well used to trains as he had pretended, started as the 3.25 a.m. south-bound roared in. The sleepers sprang to life, and the station filled with clamour and shoutings, cries of water and sweetmeat vendors, shouts of native policemen, and shrill yells of women gathering up their baskets, their families, and their husbands.”³⁷

The Lahore Railway Station was designed by the British architect William Brunton at the commission of the British government. The Station was meant to be a real fort with a walled courtyard and bastions with towers from whose loopholes one could fire at the enemy. In a state of emergency, the Railway Station could easily be transformed into a fort. Government officials did not like the building’s façade, and so Muhammad Sultan Chaghatai, a direct descendant of the Great Mughals and the owner of the majority of caravansaries along the Grand Trunk Road, rebuilt the façade at his own expense. The Railway Station stands near the Delhi Gate and is always packed today, as the

overwhelming majority of Pakistanis cannot afford traveling by air. It is interesting to note that, after the Partition, only one train travelled between Pakistan and India – *Samjhota Express* (Express of agreement) – that always departed from and arrived at the first of the Station's eleven platforms. This train appears in many works of Indian and Pakistani writers as a symbol of the fragile ties between relatives and friends living on either side of the border.³⁸

Kipling's image of Lahore is without parallel in European literature. Precise down to the smallest detail yet vividly exotic, this image is made up of direct impressions (in the short stories) and recollections (in the novel *Kim*) stemming from the writer's youth and passed through the idealizing prism of memory. Kipling did not create his novelistic image of Lahore immediately after his stay in India; he postponed it and let it ripen before returning to it during the most productive (American) period of his work. Over the decades, he managed to keep this image so alive and full-blooded as if he were still living in Lahore. This was the case to a certain extent: Kipling called his house in Vermont "Naulakha" after the famous palace-pavilion in Lahore Fort.

Lahore is rarely mentioned in subsequent 20th-century European literature, in which it figures, at best, simply as an exotic toponym. In the works of Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986), who often set his short stories in Indian towns that are little known to the general reader (such as Jaisalmer or Bikaner),³⁹ Lahore appears in the short story "Blue Tigers" (1977), a philosophical parable about the choice between the "abnormality" of the miracle and the norm of common sense. Before speaking about Lahore,⁴⁰ Borges justly recalls Kipling: "When the Jungle Books were revealed to me I was upset that the tiger, Shere Khan, was the hero's enemy. As the years passed, this strange fascination never left me; it survived my paradoxical desire to become a hunter as it did all common human vicissitudes. Until not long ago (the date feels distant but it really is not), it co-existed peacefully with my day-to-day labours at the University of Lahore. I am a professor of Eastern and Western logic, and I consecrate my Sundays to a seminar on the philosophy of Spinoza. I should add that I am a Scotsman; it may have been my love of tigers that brought me from Aberdeen to Punjab."⁴¹

Obsessed by his search for the legendary blue tiger, the story's hero comes to a remote Punjab village where this tiger lives (or so rumour has it) and finds strange blue stones that

have the magic property of reproducing themselves. As he marks and counts the new stones appearing in his pocket, the narrator becomes convinced that he is going insane, because he is incapable of understanding what is taking place.

Salvation comes to him in the Wazir Khan Mosque: "I did not sleep the night of 10 February. After a walk that led me far into the dawn, I passed through the gates of the mosque of Wazir Khan. It was the hour at which light has not yet revealed the colours of things. There was not a soul in the courtyard. Not knowing why, I plunged my hands into the water of the fountain of ablutions. Inside the mosque, it occurred to me that God and Allah are two names for a single, inconceivable Being, and I prayed aloud that I be freed from my burden."⁴²

The narrator's prayer was heard: a blind beggar in the mosque takes the stones as alms. Yet what the narrator considers liberation from nightmare and trouble is, according to the beggar, a return to the indigence of the everyday and a rejection of the miracle granted from above. "I do not yet know what your gift to me is," says the beggar, "but mine to you is an awesome one. You may keep your days and nights, and keep wisdom, habits, and the world."⁴³

Borges' choice of Lahore and the Wazir Khan Mosque is not accidental. His parable echoes Sufi notions of the advantages of insanity, which liberates the mystic from the hardships of the phenomenal world, over the banal common sense of spiritually unenlightened people.

Lahore, a beggar, and the Wazir Khan Mosque appear once again in one of Borges' last short stories entitled "Shakespeare's Memory": "In Punjab," said the major in the course of our conversation, "a fellow once pointed out a beggar to me. Islamic legend apparently has it, you know, that King Solomon owned a ring that allowed him to understand the language of the birds. And this beggar, so everyone believed, had somehow come into possession of that ring. The value of the thing was so beyond all reckoning that the poor bugger could never sell it, and he died in one of the courtyards of the mosque of Wazir Khan, in Lahore."⁴⁴

The story's hero is a modest man of letters that devotes his life to reading and solitude. With the help of a simple ruse (a technique that Borges often uses to make the action seem

more fantastic), he gets hold of Shakespeare's memoirs, which turn out to be similar to "Solomon's ring" – a priceless yet useless and cumbersome gift. Shakespeare's recollections gradually replace his own memory, and he loses his personality, sensing himself to be on the verge of insanity. Many of Borges' stories treat this theme of the unreliability of recollections, the inventedness of life, and the fabrication of experience. The key to Borges' universe is not amnesia and forgetfulness but the manipulation of memory and personality.

Yet what do Lahore and the Wazir Khan Mosque have to do with it? Possibly, before Borges' hero took on "Shakespeare's memory", he used the "memory" of Kipling. Borges wrote about him in the "Blue Tigers": "Surely one of the pages of Kipling contains that village of my adventure, since all of India, all the world somehow, can be found there."⁴⁵ The spiritual shock that the narrator experiences in the Wazir Khan Mosque in Lahore is a hidden yet recognizable reference to "The City of Dreadful Night", and the fact that Borges, who often created his works out of others' books, twice places his characters in the same setting cannot be a simple coincidence - all the more as the image of Lahore in the "Blue Tigers" coincides with Kipling's view of Lahore as a city of paranoid and insane night.

There is nothing extraordinary about Lahore's evolution in European literature and art in the 19th and 20th centuries: every age and generation of writers – from Thomas Moore to Borges – had its own Lahore that corresponded both to changing cultural and geographic notions of the world and to new types of artistic thinking. From the decorative city of festive processions ("Lalla Rookh") to the phantom city of paranormal events ("Blue Tigers") lay a long-long road that stretched from Early Romanticism to Postmodernism.

In conclusion, I would like to say a few words about the literary image of Lahore created by Urdu writers and poets, i.e., Lahore as seen from within the tradition. This theme could be the subject of a separate research, which would go beyond the framework of my book. One of the first Urdu prose writers to recreate the image of Mughal Lahore is the classic author and enlightener Muhammad Husain Azad (1830-1910), who wrote the book *Akbar's Court (Darbar-e akbari, 1898)* that combines fiction and historical prose.⁴⁶ In the

20th century, many outstanding Urdu authors wrote about Lahore: most of Saadat Hasan Manto's short stories including his famous *Toba Tek Singh* are set in Lahore. Nevertheless, Urdu literature mostly consists of poetic works, and poetry is more authoritative than any other literary genre in this language. For this reason, it may be best to compare the images of Lahore created by Europeans with the images of the city found in the work of the 20th century Urdu classic poets – Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) and Faiz Ahmad Faiz (1911-1984). Such a comparison also fits into the temporal framework: Iqbal was a younger contemporary of Kipling, and Faiz a younger contemporary of Borges.

In the poem "On the Bank of the Ravi" (*Kinar-e Ravi*)⁴⁷ from the collection *The Sound of Caravan Bell* (*Bang-e dara*, 1924), the poet-philosopher Iqbal employs the image of Lahore as a starting point for profound meditations about the world, time, and human life:

In the evening's serenity the Ravi melodious is
Do not ask me what the condition of my heart is

This became message of prostration's rise and fall to me
The whole world became precincts of the *haram* to me

I am standing at the bank of the running water
However, I do not know where I am standing

The red wine has colored the skirt of the evening
The aged sky is holding wine cup in its trembling hand

The day's fast moving caravan is advancing to its end
The evening's twilight is the sun's flower so to say

In the distance those solitary structures are standing
They are the minarets of the Mughal emperors' tombs

This place is the tale of revolution's tyranny
This place is some book of the bygone age

This place is a silent orchestra so to say
Not trees! But it is a serene assembly so to say

A fast moving boat is sailing on its surface
Whose sailor is fighting fiercely with the waves

This boat is in fast speed like the sight
Getting out of sight, it has gone far away

The ship of Man's life is sailing in the same way
It is present as well as hidden in eternity's sea

It never gets acquainted with defeat
It is concealed from sight but is not effaced!⁴⁸

Iqbal's lyrical hero, standing on the bank of the Ravi, sees the same landscape as the narrator in Kipling's short story "On the City Wall" – the Shahdara memorial ensemble on the other side of the river. Yet what were simply "the red tombs of dead Emperors beyond the river" for Kipling are for Iqbal the remains of the former glory of his motherland, i.e., the Great Mughal Empire, with which he feels a genetic tie. Shahdara is described as "the minarets of the tomb of the magnificent horseman [from the kin] of the Chaghtai", i.e., of the Great Mughal Jahangir (*minār-e khwābgah-e shahsawār-e chaghtā'ī*). The "solitary structures" of the minarets remind the poet of the frailty of worldly glory, the inexorable progression of history, and the vicissitudes of human fate:

fasāna-e sitam-e inqilāb hai yeh mahal
ko 'ī zamān-e salaf kī kitāb hai yeh mahal
This place is the tale of revolution's tyranny
This place is some book of the bygone age

Although *nazm* – the genre in which Iqbal's poem is written – is certainly not descriptive, the image of Lahore found here is extremely precise emotionally: relicts of the Mughal capital have always led viewers to reflect about the past greatness of its rulers and the faded splendour of its glory. This is particularly true of Shahdara with its abandoned architectural monuments that were barbarically stripped of marble decoration (this was already the case in Iqbal's time) and gardens that stand desolate for most of the year.

Faiz' poem "City of Lights" (*Ai roshniyon ke shahr*)⁴⁹ from the collection *Book of Jail* (*Zindan-namah*, 1956) was written in 1952 in dramatic circumstances: in 1951, Faiz was arrested and sentenced to prison for participating in the so-called Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case. He served time in Sargodha, Karachi, and Montgomery (today Sahiwal) as well as in Lahore Prison, located in the Fort. From his prison window, the poet looked at the evening lights of Lahore, of which he had so many happy recollections:

On each patch of green, from one shade to the next,
the noon is erasing itself by wiping out all color,
becoming pale, desolation everywhere,
the poison of exile painted on the walls.
In the distance,
there are terrible sorrows, like tides:
they draw back, swell, become full, subside.
They've turned the horizon to mist.
And behind that mist is the city of lights,
my city of many lights.

How will I return to you, my city,
where is the road to your lights? My hopes
are in retreat, exhausted by these unlit, broken walls,
and my heart, their leader, is in terrible doubt.

But let all be well, my city, if under
cover of darkness, in a final attack,
my heart leads its reserves of longings
and storms you tonight. Just tell all your lovers
to turn the wicks of their lamps high
so that I may find you, Oh, city,
my city of many lights.⁵⁰

In the Urdu original, Faiz compares the state of depression in prison with “a dull wave of cheerless pain that looks like mist” (*kuhar kī sūrat be-raunaq dardon kī gadlī lahr*) and the “poison of solitude that is licking the prison walls” (*dīvāron ko chāt rahā hai tanhā ī kā zahr*). The inner despair is echoed by the bleak view from the window: “Flaccid withered plants. Dull yellow noon” (*sabza sabza sūkh rahī hai phīkī zard dopahar*). The prisoner is lured by the “City of Lights” (*roshnīyon kā shahr*) in the distance – a name that recurs in the poem like a refrain or spell. Even if one did not know where and in what circumstances the poem was written, the “City of Lights” is a generally accepted name for Lahore that derives from the annual religious festival *Mela-yi chiraghan* (Festival of Lights) celebrated here every year in honour of the Punjabi saints Shah Hussain and Madho Lal.

In the “City of Lights” live beautiful women that wait for their lovers with burning lamps – among them is probably the poet’s beloved, also waiting for him. However, he is unable to enter this city of love on account of “guards of passion” and “gloomy walls of separation” (lit. *shahr-panāh* ‘city wall’) – euphemisms of real guards and fortress walls. As the lyric hero is unable to go to the City of Lights himself, the stream of his longings may well

manage to enter if these longings are strong enough and unafraid of taking the city by storm at night (*shabkhūn se munh pher na jāye irmānon kī rau*).

As we see, Faiz gives no description of Lahore at all, even in such a laconic way as Iqbal did in a few lines. However, the poetic image of a city that is illuminated by lights and populated by beautiful beloved women and to which the poet's "longings" go, was so precise and universal from the emotional point of view that it expressed the feelings of many despite its subjectiveness. Later Urdu poets that wrote about Lahore after Faiz, such as Munir Niyazi and Kishwar Naheed, spoke, whether consciously or not, in Faiz' tune about the city of love or beloved city that was the object of their desires.

Clearly, the images of Lahore in the Urdu poems cited above accent its *topophilia*, i.e., the profound emotional tie between the city and the poet's inner world. Poetic Lahore is a chorological concept that is not just an object of the poet's consciousness and imagination (like Indian toponyms in Kipling's poetry) but also acts as a subject that sets down certain parameters of the artistic image in the widest sense of the term. In Iqbal's poem, it is a leitmotif of co-belonging and cultural/historic memory that brings together time, society, and individual; for Faiz, it is an omnipresent theme of the City as a symbol of liberation and the abode of light, i.e., the city of one's dreams.

NOTES

¹ Aurangzeb became a hero of English literature long before Thomas Moore. He is the subject of the tragedy *Aurang-Zebe* (1675) by the famous English playwright John Dryden (1631-1700).

² Their names are Zebunnisa, Zinatunnisa, and Mihrunnisa from Aurangzeb's marriage with Dilras Bano; Badrunnisa from his wife Nawab Rai Bai; and Zubdatunnisa from his relationship with Aurangabadi Mahal.

³ *Moore, Thomas*. *Lalla Rookh: an Oriental Romance*. London: Darf, 1986: 128

⁴ *Scott, Jonathan Captain*. *Ferishta's History of the Dekkan*. London: J.V. Eddowes, 1794

⁵ *Moore, Thomas*. *Lalla Rookh: an Oriental Romance*: 232

⁶ *Hoppner, John*. *Oriental Tales*. London: J. Hatchard, 1805

⁷ *Moore, Thomas*. *Lalla Rookh: an Oriental Romance*: 129

⁸ *Bernier, Francois*. *Travels in the Mogul Empire: A.D. 1656-1668*. Trans. A. Constable. 1914; rpt. Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1979.

⁹ Moore, Thomas. *Lalla Rookh: an Oriental Romance*: 233

¹⁰ The Punjab a Hundred Years Ago as Described by V.Jacquemont and A.Soltykoff. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 1997: 138

¹¹ <http://www.classic-music.ru/massenet.html>

¹² Ewen, David. *Encyclopedia of the Opera: New Enlarged Edition*. New York; Hill and Wang, 1963: 297

¹³ The first performer of the role of Sita was the French singer of Polish descent Josephine de Reszke (1855-1891), a lyric-dramatic soprano and a prima donna at the Grand Opéra. The best performer of the role of Sita in the 20th century was considered to be Joan Sutherland in a 1977 production at the Vancouver Opera (Canada) on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of Massenet's opera. The most recent production of *The King of Lahore* took place at the Teatro La Fenice (Venice) in 2003 with Annalise Raspagliosi in the role of Sita.

¹⁴ Tolstoy, Leo. What is art? - http://www.archive.org/stream/whatisart00tolsuoft/whatisart00tolsuoft_djvu.txt

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Blavatsky, H.P. *The Durbar in Lahore* - <http://www.scribd.com/doc/21184316/The-Durbar-in-Lahore-Blavatsky>

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Kipling, R. *Something of myself and other autobiographical writings*. Cambridge University Press, 1990: 4

¹⁹ In his poem "To the City of Bombay", Kipling wrote:

(Neither by service nor fee
Come I to mine estate --
Mother of Cities to me,
For I was born in her gate,
Between the palms and the sea,
Where the world-end steamers wait.) –

<http://www.daypoems.net/poems/1825.html>

²⁰ <http://www.readbookonline.net/readOnline/2450/>

²¹ <http://www.readbookonline.net/readOnline/2421/>

²² <http://www.readbookonline.net/readOnline/8181/>

²³ Government College (founded in 1864) is Pakistan's oldest and most prestigious university. Among its alumni are the poet and thinker Muhammad Iqbal, the poets and writers Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Pitras Bukhari, Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum, Khushvant Singh, the actor Balraj Sahni, the premier ministers Indar Kumar Gujral, Nawaz Sharif, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali and the Nobel prize winners in physics and medicine Abdul Salam and Har Gobind Khorana.

²⁴ <http://www.readbookonline.net/readOnline/8181/>

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Thomson, James. *The City of Dreadful Night*. London: Watts & Co., 1932: 71

²⁷ <http://www.readbookonline.net/readOnline/2429/>

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Here Kipling cites the chronogram of the cannon's manufacturing date that is written on its pedestal: "A weapon like a fire-raining dragon" (*tup paikari azhdaha-i atishbaz*).

³⁰ Kipling, Rudyard. Kim. Chapter 1. - <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2226/2226-h/2226-h.htm>

³¹ Latif, Syad Muhammad. Lahore: History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities. Lahore: New Imperial Press, 1892; rpt. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1994: 383

³² Op.cit., p.384

³³ Kipling, Rudyard. Kim. Chapter 1.

³⁴ Kipling J.L. & Thornton T.H. Lahore as It Was. Travelogue, 1860, reprint. Lahore: NCA Publications, 2002 : 76-78

³⁵ Kipling, Rudyard. Kim. Chapter 1.

³⁶ Kipling J.L. & Thornton T.H. Lahore as It Was. Travelogue : 102

³⁷ Kipling, Rudyard. Kim. Chapter 2. - <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/2226>

³⁸ Nevile, Pran. Lahore: A Sentimental Journey. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2006: 91

³⁹ In a number of short stories, such as "The Approach to Al-Mu'tasim", Borges cites Indian toponyms as a rhythmic technique: "The story begun in Bombay moves on into the lowlands of Palanpur, lingers for an evening and a night before the stone gates of Bikaner, tells of the death of a blind astrologer in a Benares sewer; the hero <...> prays and fornicates in the pestilential stench of the Machua Bazaar in Calcutta, sees the day born <...> in Madras, sees evenings die <...> in the state of Travancore, falters and kills in Indaur. The adventure closes its orbit of miles and years back in Bombay itself <...>" -

http://www.digiovanni.co.uk/borges_papers.php?section=the+garden+of+branching+paths&article=the+approach+to+al-mu'tasim.

In the same story, Borges cites Kipling's short story "On the City Wall" in connection with Muharram.

⁴⁰ Borges, a man of encyclopaedic learning, used other sources of information about Lahore besides Kipling. Among them was Thomas Moore's poem: Borges' short story "The Masked Dyer Hakim of Merv" was a paraphrase of Moore's interpolated poem *The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan*.

⁴¹ Borges, Jorge Luis. Collected Fictions.. Tr. Andrew Hurley. New York: Penguin, 1999: 494

⁴² Op.cit, p.501

⁴³ Op.cit, p.503

⁴⁴ Borges, Jorge Luis. Collected Fictions: 509.

⁴⁵ Op.cit., p.497

⁴⁶ Azad, Muhammad Husain. Darbar-e akbari. Lahore: Kapur art printing works, 1910

⁴⁷ Iqbal, Muhammad. Kalam-e Urdu-e 'Allama Iqbal. Bang-e dara. Mukamal aur salis farhang ke sath. Hyderabad: Khusami buk depo, n.d.

⁴⁸ Translation by M.A.K. Khalil - <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/poetry/urdu/bang/translation/index.htm>

⁴⁹ *Faiz Ahmad Faiz. Zindan-namah (Book of Jail). Karachi: Maktab-e karawan, 1977*

⁵⁰ Translation by Agha Shahid Ali - <http://jannah.org/madina/index.php?topic=454.0;wap2>