Home, City, Nation: Re-shaping Spaces in Sorayya Khan's *Five Queen's Road*

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Abstract
The paper proposes a reading of Sorayya Khan's novel *Five Queen's Road* as a way of interrogating how Partition literature represents the territorialisation of Pakistan and India and the consequent manifold reshaping of conceived and perceived spaces that took place in public as well as private domains from August 1947. The discussion places the novel within the context of Pakistani Anglophone literature that has developed since the beginning of the new millennium and has emerged as a critical space where socio-political issues relevant to the Pakistani community are dealt with. It argues that the literature written in English by Pakistani authors provides a platform for the development of narratives that reveal the complex and multi-layered nature of the nation, thus opposing monolithic portrayals of Pakistani society. More specifically, the study considers the novel's depiction of the redefinition of Muslim-Hindu relationships after Partition and the author's representation of the characters' role in re-configuring the places they inhabit, resisting imposed definitions of spaces in post-partition Pakistan. The analysis examines how the characters relate to the spaces of the home they inhabit, as well as of the city they live in, and focuses on the Hindu protagonist who decides to stay in Lahore, thus rejecting the new interpretation of spaces that appears to be imposed on him by others. The study maintains that by developing a story centred on the resistance opposed by a Hindu who refuses to leave Pakistan the author opposes a nationalist narrative that portrays Hindus as the sole perpetrators of violence during Partition and voices their right to live in the country as citizens enjoying equal rights.

Key-words: partition literature, spatial theory, Pakistani anglophone novel.

The first twenty years of the millennium have witnessed the development of Pakistani literature in English. For some decades after the foundation of Pakistan, only a few Pakistani novelists chose to write in English in a context where the dominant literary production was, and still is, in Urdu. Critics have defined such

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writers, namely Ahmed Ali, Mumtaz Shahnawaz, Abdullah Hussain, and Bapsi Sidhwa, as the first generation of Anglophone authors. Younger writers whose works were published from the last years of the twentieth century onwards are known as the second generation of Anglophone authors. Writing during different periods implies that the two generations have different perspectives on society and on the events that characterised the birth of Pakistan. The absence of a considerable number of publications in English explains why the works of the best-known author of the first generation of Pakistani Anglophone writers, Bapsi Sidhwa, published in the Eighties and Nineties, have been discussed for some time in the frame of the studies concerning Indian Anglophone fiction. A change has occurred following the emergence of a group of authors, among which are Kamila Shamsie, Mohsin Hamid, and Mohammed Hanif, born in the 1970s and who share a similar background. Indeed, they come from the middle and upper classes, speak English as their mother tongue, and have studied and worked in England or the United States. Since their first works started to be published in the last years of the century, these writers have received national and international acclaim, fostering an interest in Pakistani literature in English as well as in Pakistan when addressing readers from outside the Indian subcontinent. While on the one hand, this has seen a growth in international publishers' interest in literary voices from Pakistan, on the other hand, the success of these prize-winning authors has induced more people to write in English, rather than Urdu or any other local language. In more recent years, the appearance of new and younger authors, among which are Kanza Javed, Awais Khan, and Faiqa Mansab, has allowed the field to expand further. Given its characteristics and trajectory, the mainly novelistic Pakistani Anglophone literature has come to be regarded by Aroosa Kanwal and Saiyma Aslam as having developed as a canon of Anglophone literature. In the companion they have edited, the two scholars highlight that one common feature of the literature written in English by Pakistani authors is that it "is a product of multi-ethnic, multilingual, transnational, transcultural, and trans-local literary traditions of Pakistan, the subcontinent, and the Muslim world (and also in dialogue with other Anglophone literatures from around the world)" (2018: 381). Thus, incorporating and elaborating elements derived from diverse local and foreign cultures and literary

traditions, and talking to an equally composite public, it is a product of dynamics operating at a national and global level. Furthermore, Kanwal and Aslam state that this literary canon, whose works are commonly read as postcolonial and world literature, has the characteristics of a national literary canon, this being determined not only by the cultural references that are constitutive of each text but also by the fundamental role retained by national history within this body of work.

A homogeneity of themes and approaches can be noted in a literary production that seems to feel the need to address historical, political, and social issues internal to Pakistan while adopting a broader perspective that considers the interaction between the local and the global. The frequent choice of dealing with recent political events or of looking towards the country's past seems to answer fundamental questions concerning national identity. The roots of Pakistan's identity issues are to be found in the reasons that led to the creation of an independent Muslim majority state in 1947 and in the violent and chaotic ways in which the partition of the Indian subcontinent took place. However, the political developments the country has witnessed in its seventy-two years of life have made such issues more complex. As a consequence, Pakistani society finds itself unable to recognise a definition of Pakistani identity shared by its variegated population. Moreover, in Pakistan, political and religious actors have tried to resolve the crisis by promoting a nationalism that has nevertheless deepened the fractures between different sectors of the society, making it more difficult to find a shared definition of "Pakistaniness", as Cara Cilano calls it (Cilano 2013: 1). This discourse, internal to the country, develops in peculiar ways when it encounters the migrant identity issue, that is when Pakistanis living in other countries find themselves in need of dealing with both the fundamental problems faced by their fellow citizens and the fact of finding themselves within a different society and culture. With the discourses concerning identity emerging as inextricably related to social, political, and historical questions, Pakistani literature in English is characterised as a narrative production that responds to an urge to discuss themes relevant to the Pakistani community, be it the one that lives within the borders of the state, its diaspora or both of them. As Cara Cilano points out, when the authors address this issue in various ways what emerges from their texts is

not a unique and static definition of Pakistani identity but rather a complex and multifaceted one (2013: 1). Thus, English writing in Pakistan has developed into a literary and linguistic space in which it critically disengages and re-engages with socio-political issues and this creates new voices that produce multi-layered and articulated representations of the nation that resist mainstream political and mass-mediated narratives.

A feature of Pakistani literature in English is a tendency to narrate stories set during moments perceived as decisive in Pakistan's history, like the 1971 war through which East Pakistan became the independent state of Bangladesh or General Zia's dictatorship whose Islamisation program left a mark on Pakistani society. It is not rare that the stories develop over a long period that includes various events or that allows us to consider the effects produced over the ages by one of such facts. Partition being the foundational event for Pakistan and the one that has affected collective and personal lives the most, artists have felt an urge to represent and discuss what unfolded during the months preceding and following the creation of the two independent states of India and Pakistan. Already in the immediate aftermath of those events, literature was narrating them. The Urdu writer Saadat Hasan Manto's short stories[1] are to be mentioned as some of the most poignant representations of the consequences that Partition had on people's lives. Other direct witnesses of Partition, such as Mumtaz Shahnawaz[2] and Bapsi Sidhwa[3], wrote about it in English followed, in later years,

[1] Two of the most powerful stories written by Manto on Partition and accessible in the English translation are 'Open it!', about a woman abducted and raped by men belonging to her religious group, and 'Toba Tek Singh', which highlights the absurdity of Partition through the story of a lunatic's desperate attempt to make sense of the new border.

[2] Mumtaz Shanawaz was author of *The Heart Divided* (1957) a pre-Partition novel focusing on the political and social developments that resulted in the creation of two separate states. The novel was published posthumously after her death in a plane crash.

[3] With a focus on the violence perpetrated by members of each community against women belonging to rival religious groups, Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* (1988), later published with the title *Cracking India* (1991), narrates through the eyes of a child the clashes that erupted in Lahore in the months that followed the declaration of Independence and Partition.

by writers like Kamila Shamsie[4]. The younger authors have not experienced Partition directly but recognise it not only as an event that has dramatically touched the Indian subcontinent but also as an unresolved issue that continues to affect the lives of individuals and collectives. This happens both because 1947 is so close that young people grow up listening to first-hand accounts of the difficulties and horrors faced by their parents and grandparents, and because society has been unable to collectively process those facts and the feelings they generated to overcome them. By putting Partition in a historical perspective writers tend to reflect on the long-term effects that the 1947 event has on contemporary society and, while doing this, they establish a relationship between the microscopic and the macroscopic by representing individual experiences of Partition and its consequences at both private and public level.

This paper refers to Sorayya Khan's *Five Queen's Road* (2009) and analyses the novel's portrayal of the territorial reorganisation consequent to Partition that emerges as fundamental in the process of redefinition of the coexistence of the Muslim majority and Hindu minority in Pakistan. It argues that in the text the physical configuration entailed by the creation of the new state is depicted through the characters' inhabiting of new spaces, as the author suggests reading the redefinition of private and public spaces vis-à-vis the nation. The analysis considers how the characters re-signify the spaces they live in and examines the resistances offered against the political and social conditions consequent to the new order of things. At the same time, fiction being a means of producing ways of understanding and imagining how spaces are and can be conceived and lived, the novel seems to voice the minorities' right to live in the country they have chosen. Indeed, notwithstanding the changes society has undergone, it highlights the existence and possibility of interreligious solidarities and friendships between individuals that recognise each other's right to be members of Pakistani society. Thus, the novel presents a representation that opposes nationalist portrayals that both present the Hindus as the sole perpetrators of violence during Partition and exclude minorities from accounts of Pakistan's everyday life.

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[4] The author represents Partition and its consequences in novels such as *Salt and Saffron* (2000) and *Burned Shadows* (2009).

Set between the year of the Partition of India and Pakistan and the 1960s, Sorayya Khan's *Five Queen's Road* adopts a literary device often recurring in Pakistani Anglophone literature and narrates the history of Pakistan through the personal history of the characters populating the story. As the British are departing from the Indian subcontinent, Dina Lal, a wealthy Hindu, determined not to leave the city he belongs to, buys the house Mr. Smithson is selling and moves there with his wife and two children as inter-religious violence erupts. After witnessing the departure of his two sons, who consider it safer to move to India, and realising that his security is at risk, Dina Lal converts to Islam and rents part of his house to a Muslim family. Thus, the house is partitioned so that the front rooms will be inhabited by Muslims whose presence will protect Dina Lal and his wife living in the rear rooms. However, this does not save Dina Lal's wife from one day being kidnapped by a group of Muslims and disappearing forever. Years pass, marked by never-ending quarrels between the Muslim tenant, Amir Shah, and the Hindu owner, that lead the former to claim the legal ownership of the house where he and his children, Javid and Rubina, have become the main occupants. However, the two men do not seem to be moved by a real hatred because in moments of crisis the Muslim and the Hindu inhabitants of the house support each other and over the years a friendship is born between Dina Lal and Javid.

In the 1970s Henri Lefevbre's *The Production of Space* (1974) inaugurates a critique that moves from the idea that for centuries studies and theories elaborated in the humanities and social sciences had adopted approaches that privileged the temporal over the spatial dimension. Challenging a perspective that sees space as nothing but an inert container of circumstances that happen within the productive dimension of time, theorists like Michel De Certeau (1980), Michel Foucault (1980, 1986), and Edward Soja (1989) follow Lefevbre conceiving space as a dynamic and relational environment. From Lefevbre onwards space is understood as socially produced, as a material as well as a social and imaginative environment within which bodies move, ideas and values are formed and circulate, and social relations and subjectivities are shaped. Lefebvre reads it as a product of the dialectical tension existing between spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space. Spatial practice refers to the everyday activities that people put in

practice within the space they inhabit thus shaping it. Maps, plans, or drawings created by cartographers, engineers, or architects generate representations of space. Representational spaces are those that some of its inhabitants, such as artists, try to subvert and appropriate through the use of imagination when they realise they are experiencing them passively. Viewing space as a product, the French philosopher sees it as being characterised by the domination of one social group over the other where the former sets the values that are universally accepted. The interaction between "the three moments of the perceived, the conceived and the lived" (Lefebvre 1991: 46) changes with time and, therefore, space is not stable rather it is continuously produced. During periods of social struggle and change, also spaces are modified. Thus, being a product of social activities, space is historical. For example, Lefebvre states, the Renaissance town is a consequence of the end of the feudal system and the birth of merchant capitalism. The city is indeed the space *par excellence* in which such dynamics can be recognised and analysed. Space being understood as a social product, the city appears planned to favour unequal power relations that allow some to retain control over society. However, individuals move within the city and appropriate spaces revealing their agency over the places (both private and public) they inhabit and, thus, a possibility to challenge methods of social control. The subject's participation in determining the nature of urban spaces is also affected by the image of the city individuals produce as they move within its spaces and read them.

The term 'partition' used to indicate the division of a once political territorial unit, has in itself a spatial reference. The process that gave birth to India and Pakistan saw the concrete redefinition of spaces that had been previously imagined as such. The Muslim League and the National Congress discussing and producing new representational spaces was a part of the anti-colonial struggle and thus a way for indigenous people to regain control over colonised spaces. The two-nation theory implied the drawing of lines on a map where the new territories of a Muslim majority and a Hindu majority state were first represented. The territorialisation of the newly imagined and designed states was actualised through a chaotic and violent form of spatial practice that saw each religious group claiming a right over a certain piece of territory by forcefully

evicting and killing the members of other communities. The consequent mass migrations across the new borders meant that public and private spaces were inhabited in new ways and witnessed new spatial practices. In that part of the Indian subcontinent that had become Pakistan, the properties left behind by Hindus that had migrated to India were now occupied by Muslims who had arrived from the other side of the border. As private spaces witnessed different everyday practices, public spaces were also redefined by the establishing of majority-minority relations with groups that once had been numerous in a neighbourhood or city being evicted or resisting as a minority aware of the risk of discrimination. As Cara Cilano notes, the name of the new state, meaning 'land of the pure' "connects space and concept (here, religious identities)" (2018: 13). The space contained within the borders of Pakistan is meant to be inhabited primarily by Muslims, and this will affect the production of spaces, while other religious groups are allowed to live in the country in an implied state of minority. However, in his first presidential address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Mohammad Ali Jinnah emphasised the egalitarian condition of all its citizens:

> You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion, or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the State. […] We are starting with this fundamental principle: that we are all citizens, and equal citizens, of one State (Jinnah, 1947)

Jinnah's speech at the dawn of the new state produced, as Cilano highlights, a spatial representation for Pakistan that was inclusive of all minorities. To produce this representation he used two images, that of the concrete existence of places sacred to Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians, and that of non-Muslims moving about in public spaces while going to their places of worship. However, this inclusive vision of Pakistan has not been reflected in the politics pursued in later years and in the social relations that have developed between the communities. If in economic, cultural, and political life non-Muslims have remained at the margins of society, political discourse has changed since Jinnah. This is demonstrated by the following excerpt from a discourse General Zia ul-Haq gave in 1977 that, while

emphasising the Islamic identity of the country, seems to not leave space for minorities: "Pakistan, which was created in the name of Islam, will continue to survive only if it sticks to Islam. That is why I consider the introduction of [an] Islamic system as an essential prerequisite for the country" (Zia cit. in Talbot, 1998: 251).

In *Five Queen's Road* Sorayya Khan reflects on the effects that Partition had on the lives of people that did not move from Lahore but saw the city modify around them. Her perspective shows that the Hindu-Muslim tensions persisted long after the months in which Partition took place. The protagonist of the novel is a Hindu that participates, however in unconventional ways, in the changes going on in his city, and by doing so tries to avoid the risk of being a victim of Partition and of being excluded from the new order of things. The author sets her story in Lahore, a city that, located a few miles from the border separating Pakistan from India, has been among the centres most affected by the partition of the Indian subcontinent. It has witnessed the violence that characterised that event but also a dramatic change in its population, losing its multi-religious identity when Hindus and Sikhs left. Khan associates Pakistan's foundational event with the urban centre, thus pointing out a relationship between the nation and the city. It is within its spaces that the citizens of Lahore, as Pakistani citizens, experience the concrete effects that the end of the British rule and Partition have on individuals and on the spaces they inhabit. However, in the novel, it is the house where the characters live that is presented as the main mirror for the nation. Thus, the space of the new country is perceived, conceived, and lived as the characters act in the overlapping dimensions of nation, city, and house. Through such a representation of the reorganisation of spaces, the novel highlights the role played by common people whose agency was a manifestation of diverse kinds of resistance to forms of power imposed on them. The protagonist of the novel is indeed stating his right to live in Lahore as an act of resistance to both colonial power and the religious discrimination that accompanied and followed the creation of Pakistan.

Because rapture and reconfiguration of spaces are constitutive of the territorialisation brought about by Partition, the literature produced on the topic by Pakistani and Indian writers contains frequent references to the ways private spaces change. Furthermore,

the house tends to be presented as an equivalent for the belonging and rootedness that have been eradicated; the owners leaving and losing their homely space, new occupants arriving to change the identity of the place. According to Partha Chatterjee (1989: 623-24), as a way of opposing Western ideology and safeguarding traditional local views, the nationalists' ideology that promoted the independence of the Indian subcontinent proposed a representation of the West as associated to materialism and of the East as related to spiritualism, the former being presented as superior to the latter. Because materialism was associated to the external world against the inner spiritual dimension, nationalist rhetoric also distinguished the public realm, as the space of the material, from the private realm where the spiritual dimension was cultivated. Therefore, home was presented as a space preserved from the social and political life going on in public. However, Partition literature contradicts the portrayal of the opposition between private and public domains showing how homes were deeply affected by the political and social events that were reshaping the subcontinent. Hence, such depictions adhere to Lefebvre's conception of both private and public spaces as historical. In Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961), the family house mirrors the transformations and the tensions that pre-partition Indian society is coping with. At the same time, after Partition the derelict state in which the protagonist finds the house makes it into a place of the memories of a world that has disappeared. In Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* the house a neighbouring Hindu family leaves behind becomes a shelter for rescued women – thus spatialising the violence its hosts have been victims of. In Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) the Muslims that leave the village to reach Pakistan entrust their homes and the goods that they cannot take with them to their neighbours, vainly convincing themselves that the forced separation from the motherland will be temporary. Following this literary tradition, *Five Queen's Road* begins ten years after Partition, with Amir Shah receiving a telegram announcing the imminent arrival in Lahore of his European daughter-in-law, Irene, and, consequently, deciding to refresh the house where his family lives to receive the foreigner that will be living with them. From the inception, the house appears to be central to the narration, indeed with this paragraph titled 'Doing the House' we start following the story of how it changed

owners and therefore went through a considerable transformation. The next paragraph takes the reader back to 1947, where the events begin to unfold. Dina Lal, a wealthy Hindu, buys the house in Five Queen's Road from an Englishman, John Smithson, Chief of North-West Railways, as the latter is obliged to leave it and return to England after Independence. The house is known in the city for its beautiful external appearance and good location: "everyone in Lahore knew the man, if only by his house, which sat on a slight hill close to the important intersection of Lawrence and Queen's roads in downtown" (p. 17). When Dina Lal visits the place, he has in mind "the tall wrought-iron gates […] the uniformed men who stood guard, the Troups of malis […] sprinkling water on the grass" (p. 17). What he finds inside is a rich and delightfully organised and kept house where part of the furniture comes directly from England and he thinks: "it was obvious that Five Queen's Road belonged to the British. The grandeur of the house, the colonial architecture, and the stream of servants made it clear" (p. 21). The house of an official representative of the colonial government, beautiful and ordered as it is, has been shaped to stand for the grandeur of the Empire, and for all that the British have done to improve their own living conditions in the colony so that living in Lahore can signify being at home in a bright, clean and odourless place (p. 21). John Smithson's spatial practice is thus developed so that the lived space of the house mirrors the conceived space of the colony. On selling the house Smithson asks the buyer to keep it in the same state in which he is leaving it and, more than anything else, to take care of a model of the railway routes he had helped to construct. In the following years, the Englishman will send one letter a year to Dina Lal reminding him to take care of the house and the model. As the British man refuses to accept that the spaces he has left behind have undergone a revolution and are being reshaped by other people and another social order, he keeps imagining the house as untouched over the years. Smithson's rejection of the idea that the house, as well as the city and the whole subcontinent, have changed since his departure, and thus his denial of the historical nature of space, voices his refusal to acknowledge the end of the British Raj. To him, the railway model represents his contribution to the modernisation of the region, while to Dina Lal it is sign of an occupation that is eventually over. Moreover, Five Queen's Road symbolises the

difficult heritage the British have left to the newly independent states of India and Pakistan. Both countries must deal with a dramatic expression of communal violence originated and fomented over the decades under the British Empire and complicated further by the arbitrary definition of borders that seem to disregard the composite nature of the people inhabiting the regions crossed by the border:

> The first time Dina Lal walked into Five Queen's Road after it became his, Smithson's ship was sailing the Indian Ocean. […] Days earlier the first train loads of massacred bodies had rumbled down the intricate tracks of Smithson's railway system from one side of the border to the other and back again. […] Madness had descended when the line of Partition, inexact and incomplete, was pencilled in on the Englishmen's maps (p. 23).

Although Dina Lal had lived as a subject of the Empire never thinking to react and oppose it and even admitting that he "had profited from the railway lines expanding across his village land" (p. 15), when Independence arrives his attitude towards the British changes and he decides that "he would teach them all a lesson" (p.15). The way he puts this into practice consists in asserting his ownership of the spaces he inhabits. Indeed, what he thinks while the "Goddamn English" (p. 17) outlines his conditions for selling the house is: "Soon you will be far, far away, Johnny, in your country – nothing but an island – and I will live in your house any damn way I please" (p. 23). The house is not the only space on which Dina Lal is claiming his rights because when he thinks that the time has come to "teach them all a lesson" he decides to do it "on this side of the lines" (p. 15). As a Hindu, he refuses to leave Lahore, as his wife and children are asking him to do and accepts the risks implied by his choice. With this act, Dina Lal affirms that belonging to the city is such a constitutive part of his identity that he cannot afford to lose it. At the same time, he thinks that he can profit from the situation to improve his status. Thus, he refuses to accept the reality around him, not just that Lahore is a dangerous place for Hindus, but also that he will soon belong to a minority in the city. Queen's Road is a large, straight road intersecting the larger Mall Road, one of the arteries of Lahore, on whose premises many important public buildings were and are located. This road crosses the area of the city that the British developed outside the so-called Walled City where

the local population lived and that the English avoided, regarding it as insalubrious because of its narrow streets and lack of hygiene. When the protagonist leaves his house in the narrow streets of the old city to move to Five Queen's Road, through spatial practice he is asserting his improved social status as well as his personal victory over the British. Indeed, his new condition as a citizen of a newly independent state gives him the possibility to establish his presence over the once-British part of the city. Walking is another everyday practice through which the character lives the city spaces and establishes a personal relationship with them. Through this act, he manifests his decision to stay and the way he intends his relationship with Lahore – "Lahore, in flames or not, was his" (p. 14). Amid chaos and violence, he rediscovers the pleasure of moving on foot:

> Even as the city took on an anger and urgency all its own during the summer of Partition. Dina Lal wandered the streets with little fear of vigilante groups who, for the moment – ignored him in their quest to set things right. He did not cower from the streets even after he witnessed a neighbour being dragged into a busy thoroughfare and pummelled to near death with a child's cricket bat. […] He did not expect such misfortune might one day find him (p. 16).

Through the practice of walking, of repeatedly pressing his feet on the ground – "Walking the seething city that summer of Partition, Dina Lal moved slowly. His feet were heavy with conviction" (p. 14) – the character witnesses what happens around him, proves he is not afraid of staying and, passing unnoticed to Muslim squads, resists the eviction of Hindus from the city: "Dina Lal wasn't moving. He wasn't going to be pulled towards make-believe lines […] towards a make-believe border" (p. 14). He opposes his notion of the physical dimension he inhabits against a territorial re-organisation and re-signification that is arbitrarily imposed on him and his fellow citizens. By doing this, he declares that the new borders are products of the imagination of people retaining the power to draw lines that create nations and affect peoples' lives. Thus, like buying the Englishman's house, walking is a way in which he tries to oppose his perception of a place that has become suddenly dangerous for Hindus and concretise his image of a city, and of a country, where once independence has been obtained, all religious groups can

coexist: "the city, goddamn it, belonged to him as much as it did to anyone" (p. 52).

However, he pays for his act of resistance, firstly by losing his children. Not long after the family has moved to the new house, Dina Lal's sons, feeling that their lives are in danger, decide to oppose their father's will and one afternoon, when he is not at home, leave the house to get on a train to India – their father will never learn of their fate. Tension not subsiding in Lahore, the man decides to take some safety measures that result in a compromise between his will to stay and the need to protect himself and his wife. Dina Lal converts to Islam, changing his name to D. L. Ahmed and rents part of his house to a Muslim family. To share Five Queen's Road he arbitrarily partitions it: "There would be a front house and a back house. […] There was no question. Dina Lal and Janoo would live in the back house as far as possible from the road and the driveway" (p. 54). If the arbitrary portioning of the house, with the individuation of a Muslim and a Hindu side, mirrors the division of the Indian subcontinent, Dina Lal deciding to live in the smaller and rear part of the house is representative of the place the Hindus will occupy in the new state of Pakistan. The arbitrary nature of the lines established within the house is underlined by the fact that the main character assumes his right to change those boundaries, giving and taking more space, whenever he wants and apparently without following any logic. One day, after Dina Lal has been the victim of an assault likely perpetrated by some Muslims, Javid and his wife come home to find its spaces reduced: "where the spacious dining room had been, they were met with a space no wider than a corridor […]. Dina Lal, transformed by gashes and stitched insides, had reconfigured the partition of Five Queen's Road and reclaimed the dining room as his own" (p. 40). When faced with the reality of his difficult position in society he reacts by stating his power over the house. Thus, the organisation of the space of the house both mirrors a representation of space imposed on the citizens of the new states and expresses Dina Lal's desire to subvert such a definition of space in order to appropriate it.

When the protagonist decides to divide the house, he is aware of the fact that in just a few days he has shifted from his original position and is looking for a compromise in order not to lose his right to the city and, before this, not to risk his life. Nonetheless, the

new name chiselled in stone at the gate and the Muslims appearing as the real inhabitants of the house do not protect Dina Lal's wife from her tragic fate. One day she is abducted by a group of Muslims who enter the house when both he and Amir Shah are not there. Amir Shah's young children are the only frightened witnesses at the scene. This event modifies the protagonist's relations with the world around him and with his tenant. For a very long time, he solicits the police officers to rescue his wife, but his pleading appears desperate and doomed. At the same time, the man accuses Amir Shah of not absolving a tacit agreement according to which he was to stay in the house on very convenient conditions to protect his tenant from Muslim assaults: "Where were you? This afternoon? When they came for Janoo? […] His rage was not motivated by a sudden hatred of Muslims, but by the recognition that this skinny, too-tall man […] had not lived up to his bargain" (pp. 90-91). In the mirroring of the house and the nation, the protagonist's allegation is recrimination against the Muslim majority's behaviour towards the Hindu minority in the country both in the immediate aftermath of Partition and in the long run. Indeed, ten years after Partition Dina Lal is the victim of an assault; just outside the house, some Muslims attack the man, leaving him wounded and unconscious. The spaces of the house, the city, and thus of the nation turn out to be something other than what the protagonist, as well as Jinnah's speech, had envisioned when imagining Pakistan as a country whose spaces would be equally occupied by its majority and minorities. Moreover, when the tension of the ongoing fight between the two parties in Five Queen's Road rises, Amir Shah tries to become the legal owner of the house, through an act that appears as a betrayal of Dina Lal: "Amir Shah had launched formal proceedings to evict Dina Lal from Five Queen's Road. Amir Shah utilised the Evacuee Property Commission rules and regulations […he] had never sought compensation for his property in Amritsar" (p. 72). Using the norms regulating the distribution to Muslim refugees of the properties abandoned by the Hindus that had left Pakistan, the character attempts to deprive Dina Lal of his house.

Like the house, the garden of Five Queen's Road also changes over time as different actors shape it, making it into another mirror of the mutations taking place in the city and the country. Smithson's garden is big and perfectly kept. It is a "spectacular

garden […] framed by purple bougainvillaeas climbing the […] sky" (p. 23); when Dina Lal shares the house with Amir Shah, he begins to modify part of the garden for practical reasons, installing a kitchen in a gazebo. The fragrance of spicy South Asian food prepared in the garden filling the air "where the scents of jasmine, lavender and late summer roses had once ruled" (p. 58). As time passes, the garden does not simply lose its splendour because those who live in the house do not care for it as Smithson had, but it is radically changed when the big front lawn begins to be occupied by unauthorised people that, because nobody asks them to leave, settle there permanently. Due to its success, the first small car repair shop to appear without permission in the garden soon begins to expand, occupying more space and hiring more workers. "Soon the car shop owner's brothers and uncles and nephews relocated their car repair shops to the garden of Five Queen's Road" so that to return home it took "an extra ten minutes to navigate the driveway and greet (all the) new neighbours. […] there was no denying […] that a village of sorts had sprung up in the garden" (p. 98). Although a sweepers' settlement is added to the car shops and the occupiers of the garden do not pay any rent, the inhabitants of the house seem not to worry about the space changing around them because, after all, as one of the characters says: "Welcome to Pakistan" (p. 66). Thus, the author suggests a common tendency to adopt behaviours that are both chaotic and self-regulating, as people find ways to navigate a spontaneous organisation of spaces that is not based on an agreed-upon principle. At the same time, the new country appears as being regulated by rules that are different from those that were respected during the British empire. The lower classes that had been prevented from entering the spaces where the British lived are now able to settle there symbolically claiming, as citizens, the ownership of those spaces as belonging to the city and its inhabitants once the colonisers have left. Thus, the author provides another example of Lefebvre's understanding of spaces as continuously modified and produced by social change. Because the sweepers that have settled in the garden are Christians – "a Christian nativity scene […] had sprouted at the top of his driveway" (p. 175) –, and thus belong to another minority, the fact that none of the inhabitants of the house opposes their presence is a symbol of an understanding of the country as inclusive of all the groups living there. The idea that it is not only one the

group that can claim a right to the country is expressed also when Irene's enquiry about who is the owner of the house is answered by Rubina's husband with the affirmation that it is "no one's" (p. 66). At the same time, the sweepers' occupation of the front part of the garden happens in a chaotic way and without respecting the basic rule of private property, as that space now belongs to a Pakistani. Such an appropriation of space, which is never questioned by Dina Lal, seems to reveal a spontaneous and shared conception of boundaries as labile as one of the characters explains: "in Lahore, above all, boundaries, like borders, were fluid, living things subject as much to people as the passing time of day" (p. 186). If the country's borders were imposed as lines redefining the life of individuals and of society, the fluid conception that Lahoris' have of lines and boundaries suggests a non-static understanding of lived spaces that can be continuously redefined through individuals' actions and social interaction. Hence, the protagonist's fluid conception of the division of spaces within the house can be explained similarly. The novel represents post-Partition spaces in Pakistan as being subject to a change produced by the interaction between the three axes individuated by Lefebvre. The creation of new representational spaces constitutes the input for a social change driven by people that live and give meaning to the territories they inhabit according to their understanding of the concrete, everyday implications of the formation of a Muslim majority state. Thus, people's agency retains a determining role in territorialising and defining the nature of the new state.

When Dina Lal dies, Amir Shah finds in his bedroom a collection of newspapers, the oldest dating to back to 14 August 1947: "the only newspapers stacked were *Pakistan Times* […] fifteen years and ten months of newspapers meant that the bedroom contained almost four thousand newspapers, one for each day since Partition" (p. 194). The discovery that the house was an archive of the country's history reveals that the protagonist thinks of himself as a Pakistani. Dina Lal's fight to stay, his choice of land over religious ties, is representative of the members of the minority groups that decided not to leave and thus to participate in the foundation of a new society, and in its consequent life, moved by a sense of social and cultural belonging to their neighbourhood, city, and region. Furthermore, notwithstanding the difficulties faced by the protagonist, the novel

highlights the existence of social interaction and solidarities between Muslims and Hindus through the relationship that is born between the characters living in Five Queen's Road. Beyond the quarrels and tensions, the characters help and support each other, Amir Shah sends Dina Lal cooked food every day, the latter helps the pregnant Rubina when none of her family members is at home and she goes into labour, and he backs Javid's dream to study abroad against his father's wishes. When Dina Lal dies, he has no relatives in Lahore and the people living in the house mourn him and take care of the funeral rites: "Amir Shah's court colleagues, Rubina's and Javid's friends and parents and, without needing an invitation, the people and their children in the car shop and the sweepers' colony attended" (p. 194). People from any background attending his last rites symbolises how Pakistani society recognises him as its member. Space being conceived as the dimension in which history takes place, *Five Queen's Roadue* represents the reshaping of the political geography of the subcontinent through individual and collective everyday practices of adaptation and resistance to a new spatial order. As it narrates Partition from the perspective of a character belonging to the Hindu minority in Pakistan, the novel proposes a conception of the nation as inclusive of its minorities, thus opposing a more common narrative that excludes minorities from national history as well as from accounts of daily life in the country.

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