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**Gazing at the Other: Representations of Slums
in Literature and Media**

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1. Abstract

This thesis analyzes the representations of slums in India through primary sources, such as Geoffrey Moorhouse's *Calcutta*, Gregory David Roberts' *Shantaram*, Vikas Swarup's *Q&A*, Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*, and various travel blogs. All these works are to be analyzed through a framework of the gaze theory and subaltern studies. The gaze theory is applied to determine the nature of encounters and the power dynamics between the slum dwellers and people who represent them in literature or media. The gaze theory will help establish that such representers (people from the Global North, or rather privileged Indian people) reaffirm their positions as the subject, whereas the slum inhabitants are reduced to being the object, resulting in an asymmetrical relationship between two sides, which is why it is argued that slum dwellers are still the subaltern subjects who cannot speak for themselves, as they do not have a voice of their own, and we depend on their representation by others to learn about them.

1. Introduction

Literature had always been a crucial element for the Empire to reaffirm and justify imperialism and Europeans' racial and cultural superiority claims, especially in the nineteenth century, and India was not an exception. Exoticism and dehumanization of colonial subjects were common in literature. However, after a long time of struggle, in 1947, India has gained independence. Thus, the nation of India ceased to be a British colony. The colonizers, however, left the country in dangerous turmoil, which has brought political and financial instability upon Indians. The centuries-long prejudices and racism towards people in the so-called third-world countries did not change overnight, as the colonies gained their independence. The colonial past has continued to affect the encounters between the former sides of imperialism: the colonizers and the colonized 'others.' In postcolonial times, Orientalism continued to prevail, and global capitalism and neoliberalism replaced colonialism as a means of oppression towards the subaltern. Therefore, literature and, of course, the digital media might function as great resources to grasp the current nature of this encounter and seek the traces of imperialism in postcolonial times.

In recent history, slums in numerous countries, including India, have sparked an interest in many people throughout the Western world, and they increasingly continue to do so. Both in literature or media, Indian slums have been an inspiration to many people; there is even a vast interest in slum tourism, where people pay to visit the slums and witness the poor living conditions of the residents. Since the residents are the ultimate subaltern subjects, their representation (or the question of whether they could be fairly represented and given a voice of their own) is quite interesting in terms of postcolonial discourses. Thus, this thesis research aims to analyze the representation of the subaltern people in slums and seek to comprehend both sides of this relationship (the author/artist and the represented) through the gaze theory.

Slums are usually referred to as informal urban areas, where poverty is common and extreme. The United Nations' definition for slums is based merely on the housing and sanitary conditions (or rather the lack thereof). The United Nations define slums as following:

a group of individuals living under the same roof in an urban area who lack one or more of the following: 1) Durable housing of a permanent nature that protects against extreme climate conditions; 2) sufficient living space, which means no more than three people are sharing the same room; 3) easy access to safe water in sufficient amounts at an affordable price; 4) access to adequate sanitation in the form of a private or public toilet shared by a reasonable number of people; 5) security of tenure that prevents forced evictions. (UN-HABITAT, "State of the World's Cities," 292)

According to the UN-Habitat reports in 2012, more than 860 million people around the world resided in slums, while from 2000 to 2010, the number of inhabitants in these urban spaces grew by six million people each year (UN-Habitat 2012a). According to another UN research in the same year, this proportion of slum residents go higher in the developing nations, as they have found that around a third of the urban population lives in slums (UN-Habitat 2012). More recently, the UN Statistics Division (UNSD) stated that this number had indeed increased in 2018, and it seems to have increased more rapidly than it had done between 2000 and 2010:

The absolute number of people living in slums or informal settlements grew to over 1 billion, with 80 percent attributed to three regions: Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (370 million), sub-Saharan Africa (238 million), and Central and Southern Asia (227 million). (UNSD, Goal 11)

Despite counter efforts by the governments in many developing countries, slum growth appears to continue. The most common triggers for this slum growth are poverty and unemployment. Urban areas in the developing world attract more immigrants from the rural parts of the countries, but neither do the cities have enough space to provide adequate housing for many people in such a short time nor do these immigrants have the means to afford adequate housing. This cycle of domestic immigration and the state of slums today can be attributed to the effects of colonialism, and by extension, globalization. The destabilization of rural life by globalization's industrialization and the subsequent urban concentration triggered by western imperialism in the 19th century, and more specifically, British rule in India from 1858 until 1947, led to extreme poverty and extensive human rights abuses. It also led to the growth of slum communities. Slums had, of course, existed before the end of colonialism, as they were to be found in many major North American and European cities during the Industrial Revolution, and they did have many things in common with the slums of the developing world today. In their paper titled "The Economics of Slums in the Developing World," the authors Benjamin Marx, Thomas Stoker, and Tavneet Suri write, "The well-known slums of the past were often on the outskirts of dynamic economic growth, which both attracted migrants and offered them some access to economic opportunities" (188). They point out the Whitechapel area of East London, as it attracted many poor rural immigrants throughout the eighteenth and the nineteenth century due to the new factories and shops there (Marx et al. 188). They also note that the Western countries had introduced "moderate to radical policy solutions to address the overcrowding and unsanitary conditions in these types of areas" (188 -189):

Examples of such policies include Baron Hausmann's revamping of Paris in the 1860s – 1870s, which involved altering more than half of the city's buildings and creating a sewage system and wide boulevards in lieu of slum neighborhoods. (189)

As a result, even though it seems like the Western slums of the Industrial Revolution era have so much in common with the ones in the developing world (such as rural immigrants, their practical locations, and sanitary conditions), the attempts to fix these so-called informal housing areas can be traced back to as early as the nineteenth century in Europe. India, however, used to be a colonial subject back then, and from 1947 on, when they became an independent nation, they still had to face so many problems of colonialism, such as poverty, political instability, and the partition of India and Pakistan; as slums were being cleared, or being adapted into the urban life in the global North, the conditions in the developing world were different, as "large-scale rural-to-urban migration was either still at full throttle or had merely started" (Frenzel 55)

The Office of Registrar General stated in 2011 that around 17 percent of the urban population in India reside in slums. However, Swastik Harish points out that this is likely to be false, and the actual numbers are probably much higher (Harish 185), as all states have different definitions of slums. Harish writes, "States like Bihar and Jharkhand report very few slums, while some states in the north-east report no slums at all," and she suggests that this implies the possibility of an undercounting of slums (185).

In their report titled "Broadening Poverty Definitions in India," the authors Subramaniam Chandrasekhar and Mark R. Montgomery study the results of two official surveys from the National Sample Survey Organization, and they find that the urban population can be divided into three communities: notified slums, non-notified slums, and non-slum neighborhoods (Chandrasekhar and Montgomery V). Notified slums are areas that the government officially recognizes as such. In contrast, non-notified slums have not been recognized as slums, even though they have similar or worse conditions than slums (V), such as "poorly built housing, mostly of a temporary nature with inadequate sanitary and drinking water facilities in unhygienic conditions" (VI). According to this report, 51.7 percent of the population in non-notified slums and 44.4 percent for notified slums, in contrast to 23.4 percent for non-slum settlements, live below the poverty line (VI). Throughout the report, Chandrasekhar and Montgomery continue to present the readers with reasons that deem slum houses unsafe, such as flooding, inadequate ventilation, and access to electricity and water, and all of these conditions are worse in notified slums and much worse in non-notified slums.

For instance, they point out that there are many households with no access whatsoever to drinking water in their buildings: the proportion of such households is more than 75 percent in non-notified slums, 60 percent in notified slums, and 27 percent in non-slums (VII).

The inadequate sanitary conditions pose health risks to many slum-dwellers, as they are forced to use the overcrowded public bathrooms or other public areas. For instance, Abdul Shaban writes about the slums of Mumbai:

About 72 percent of the population in slums depend on community toilets, and about 28 percent defecate in the open. Only 36 percent of the population is covered by an organized system of garbage collection and clearance. About 50 percent of the slums are covered through stand post based water supplies, 40 percent have supply from more than one source, and the remaining get from tube wells and community standpipes. Only about 5 percent have individual tap connections. (Shaban, 72)

Apart from the apparent health risks these sanitary conditions pose to residents (and putting them at a much higher risk than non-slum neighborhoods when it comes to the Covid-19 pandemic), this situation also results in safety risks, especially for women. Shivani Satija writes,

lack of proper functioning, clean and safe public toilets are also a major concern as women and girls are exposed to health risks, sexual harassment, and even violence, as highlighted by Centre for Civil Society (CCS) report in 2008 cited in the Delhi Human Development Report based on research conducted in slums and resettlement colonies in Delhi. Most public and community toilets are reportedly non-functional, and the ones that do work suffer due to chronic lack of cleanliness, forcing women to use open spaces to relieve themselves, which exposes them to the risk of physical and sexual violence. As a result of this fear, many women reported going out early in the morning or after dark to avoid being seen, all of which heighten risks to their safety. (Satija, 5)

Poverty and lack of opportunities lead, undoubtedly, to higher crime rates, which is a threat to all slum residents, but it affects, in particular, women the most. For example, in the newspaper Hindustan Times, Pratik Salunke writes that 127 rape cases were registered in 2014 against 72 in 2013; 356 molestation and sexual harassment cases were reported in the eastern part of Mumbai, where the biggest slum in the city; it is highly likely that there many more cases like this, of which we do not know.

In addition to inadequate housing and sanitary conditions, overcrowded population, and crime risks, another major issue in a slum resident's life in India is the fear of being relocated, or worse, being homeless. Homelessness is a risk that threatens many poor people worldwide, including the rich nations among industrialized countries. However, the situation in Indian slums is quite different, as the slum residents usually do not become homeless

because their financial status changes and they can no longer afford a place. Instead, in most cases, slum residents get evicted from their houses against their will because the Indian government tries to clear the cities from slums, and they push slum residents to places outside the city or places where there are simply no facilities. John Sudworth from BBC News reports about the ambitions of the New Delhi administration to make the city entirely slum-free before the Commonwealth Games in 2010. Sudworth writes, “In the last two years, more than a quarter of a million people have had their homes demolished along the banks of the Yamuna” (Sudworth 2006), and he quotes the former Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, where she says, “The clearance had to be done, and it has been done” (Sudworth 2006). In *The Affective Negotiation of Slum Tourism: City Walks in Delhi*, Tore Holst explains how between 34% and 58% of the people in the Delhi area used to live in slums or slum-like conditions in 2001 (Holst, 26), but nine years later, another report revealed that this number had dropped drastically. Tore Holst writes,

Ten years later, Delhi is a different city. A report published in 2010 on ‘Urban Slums in Delhi’ (Ali 2010, quoted in Holst, 26) sets the percentage of inhabitants living in slums in Delhi NCT (National Capital Territory) at only 19% and this figure is startling, given that Delhi experienced a population increase of approximately 50% (an increase of 5 million inhabitants estimated from the 2011 census). [...] This is important because slum clearance increased from 51,461 houses demolished in the 13-year period between 1990 and 2003, to more than 45,000 demolished homes in the next five year-period between 2003 and 2007 (Batabyal 2010, 106, quoted in Horst, 26), leading to an all-time crescendo around the time of the preparations for the Commonwealth Games held in Delhi in 2010. (Holst, 26)

Therefore, one could easily say that the government is in search of ways to push slum residents out of the urban areas, and interestingly, it seems that the slum demolitions and evictions increase significantly when people from other parts of the world turn their eyes to India, as it happened during the Commonwealth Games. Holst identifies the reason for this hostility as what Amita Baviskar calls ‘bourgeois environmentalism,’ which refers to how the middle and upper classes hope to have the slums demolished, as they claim that they are trying to improve the city (Baviskar 89). The privileged communities wish to see their cities ‘modernized,’ and according to them, slums represent the opposite of the modern world and civilization (89). However, Baviskar argues that it is not about creating a modern and sustainable environment in their cities because these people do not object to other environmental issues, such as thermal power plants and pollution caused by factories. Instead, they wish to have specific communities removed from the urban areas. Thus, Amita Baviskar calls it ‘bourgeois environmentalism.’ As a result, it is apparent that the more visible slums

are, the more threatened they are by their government and society. Therefore, the representation of slums is quite complex and tricky. Holst also asks, “How do we produce knowledge about slums that does no damage to the people that live in them or the organizations that try to faithfully represent them?” (Holst 35).

When it comes to the representation of slums, many scholars, writers, philosophers, and many others have tried to define these urban areas and study these places throughout centuries. For example, Carroll Davidson Wright, an American statistician, had studied such urban spaces in the United States (more specifically in Baltimore, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia) in the late nineteenth century, and he described slums as places of “dirty, black streets, especially when inhabited by a squalid and criminal population” (Wright 11). One could, therefore, suggest that the earlier definitions of slums focused on the morality of their inhabitants rather than the poor housing and sanitary conditions. In addition to Wright, a much more influential person has also studied such places in the nineteenth century; in *The Housing Question*, Friedrich Engels also states that slums are overwhelmingly dirty and filled with diseases and have deplorable living conditions. However, instead of pointing fingers at the slum inhabitants and blaming such living conditions on their lack of morality, Engels argues that the reason why slums exist is capitalism. As a result, even if we tried to demolish and get rid of slums, Engels says, “the same economic necessity that produced them in the first place, produces them in the next place” (Engels 77). Therefore, it could be said that, according to Engels, slums are only a by-product, an unwished outcome of the capitalistic system that the West has invented and spread to the whole globe, so instead of blaming this specific urban population of being “squalid and criminal” (Wright 11) like Wright, Engels blames the conditions that created them instead. As it seems, more people tend to agree with Friedrich Engels in our day, and they try to tackle the complex issues that lead to the formation and current state of slums. For instance, in *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*, David Harvey writes:

Only when politics focuses on the production and reproduction of urban life as the central labor process out of which reproduction of urban life as the central labor process out of which revolutionary impulses arise will it be possible to mobilize anti-capitalist struggles capable of radically transforming daily life. (Harvey XVI)

Moreover, slum-dwellers are not just poverty-stricken subjects within a class struggle in Marxist terms; they are complete outcasts, as they have almost no access to the institutions of their society, unlike the poor who live in other areas with adequate sheltering and access to utilities such as electricity and sanitary conditions. Referring to this, Slavoj Žižek argues that

slums are, in fact, a by-product of global capitalism, but it is somewhat more complex than a matter of simple economic exploitation. In his essay title “Nature and Its Discontents,” he writes,

The defining feature of the slum-dwellers is socio-political. It concerns their (non)integration into the legal space of citizenship with (most of) its incumbent rights – in somewhat simplified terms, more than a refugee, a slum-dweller is a *homo sacer*, the systematically generated ‘living dead’ or ‘animal’ of global capitalism. He is the kind of negative of the refugee: a refugee from his own community, the one whom the power is not trying to control through concentration, where those in power do the concentrating while the refugees do the camping but pushed into the space of the out the control. (41)

This is how Slavoj Žižek explains the “crucial break between slum-dwellers and the classic Marxist working class” (41), as the working class, in spite of all the exploitation and poverty, still exists within economic and social classes, so they do have a space and voice of their own, as opposed to slum-dwellers, who are entirely pushed out of those boundaries. He goes even further and calls them *homo sacer*, a term which Giorgio Agamben explains in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* as following:

The sacred man is the one whom the people have judged on account of a crime. It is not permitted to sacrifice this man, yet he who kills him will not be condemned for homicide; in the first tribunitian law, in fact, it is noted that “if someone kills the one who is sacred according to the plebiscite, it will not be considered a homicide. “This is why it is customary for a bad or impure man to be called sacred. (71).

Thus, *homo sacer* refers to someone who can be killed with total impunity. With this comparison, Slavoj Žižek suggests that the slum-dwellers cannot be placed within any social structure. In that sense, they are entirely free from it, so they have unique spaces and communities of their own.

Aside from influential thinkers and scholars who theorized slums, many have also shown interest in slums merely out of curiosity. Thus, even though the slum tourism and slum literature in the global South are unique and relatively recent, they still have their historical roots, which go further than the current phenomenon we see today. The first examples of ‘slumming’ date back to the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries (Seaton 22), those examples consisted of books and pamphlets that aimed to tell the people about the unemployed “low lifes” and criminals who come to London (22). Tony Seaton writes,

These cautionary tales were aimed partly at Londoners and partly at visitors. [...] In both cases, the aim was to alert them to the risks of crime and violence from strangers on the streets – a sort of printed ‘Crime Watch’ for the visitor. They were also almost certainly consumed, like true crime coverage today, as voyeuristic entertainment. (23)

The ‘slumming’ had started to evolve into its current form during the nineteenth century in London. The word ‘slumming’ itself is said to have evolved in parts of London where the upper-classes live, and it refers to the practice of visiting the East End region of the city, which had attracted many immigrants during that century (Steinbrink 219): Its population grew from one million to six million within one hundred years.

Its urbanization rates, which were due primarily to rural exodus and immigration from Ireland, were just as enormous as was the gap between the rich and the poor. In the course of urbanization and industrialization, the social classes were separated geographically in a typically European east-west divide. The blatant urban segregation pattern appeared like the spatial configuration of the deeply split social order of the time. (Steinbrink 219)

Due to this sudden change and division through urbanization, the Londoners had no longer known every part of the city. The East End had become a foreign place, a ‘place of the unknown Other’ to them (Steinbrink 219). A great example of this typical east-west divide and the practice of ‘othering’ the East can be found in William Booth’s *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, as he writes, “As there is a darkest Africa, is there not also a darkest England? [...] May we not find a parallel at our doors and discover within a stone’s throw of our cathedrals and palaces places of similar horrors to those which Stanley has found in the Equatorial forest?” (Booth 11–12). There were many examples of slum writing and othering throughout the colonial and industrial era based on ethnicity, morality, and poverty, including the ones by authors like Rudyard Kipling and George Orwell. However, it was not until the latter half of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that slum writing and tourism experienced a boom. Starting with works of literature like Geoffrey Moorhouse’s *Calcutta* and Dominique Lapierre’s *City of Joy*, the interest towards the slums in the global south has particularly started to rise. With the turn of the century, documentaries, films, blogs/vlogs, and even songs about slumming appeared, such as the British band Pulp’s song *Common People* about a rich Greek woman who wishes to experience life like poor people; the anonymous woman in the song is allegedly the Greek artist Danae Stratou, whose is married to the ex-Finance Minister of Greece, Yanis Varoufakis (Athens Voice 2015). In order to analyze this phenomenon of slum writing, this thesis project aims to study books, travel blogs, and a film about the slums in India through the framework of the gaze and subaltern theories.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. The Gaze Theory

Various philosophers and scholars have studied the concept of the gaze, and each has come up with a unique understanding and explanation for it. Even though they disagree on how the gaze functions and how it is utilized, one thing they seem to agree on is that there is, indeed, a difference between a simple look and the act of gazing. Gazing differs from the eye and seeing because it introduces objectification of the gazed individual, and it is often influenced by the gazer's own experiences, language, and culture. Michel Foucault is among those who have studied the gaze theory, and he also differentiates between the gaze and the glance, as he suggests the glance is pure and free of any predetermined knowledge and prejudices, whereas the gaze is, in a way, contaminated by one's own background (Foucault 1973, 122). In his comparison of the two, he argues, '[the glance] is not burdened with all the abuses of language. The glance is silent, like a finger pointing, denouncing' (Foucault 1973, 121). Thus, he states that the glance is rather spontaneous, whereas that is not the case in the gaze; Foucault suggests that there are other elements to consider while studying the gaze, which determine the nature of the gaze between one's self and the gazed one. In other words, the gaze is essentially characterized by intersectionality, as the factors mentioned above form our gaze.

In her book *Looking for the Other*, E. Ann Kaplan argues a similar distinction between 'look' and 'gaze.' She writes that she uses the term 'look' to refer to "a process, a relation," while using the word 'gaze' for "a one-way subjective vision" (Kaplan, xvi). She argues,

Looking will connote curiosity about the Other, a wanting to know (which can of course still be oppressive but does not have to be), while the gaze I take to involve extreme anxiety – an attempt in a sense not to know, to deny, in fact. (xvii)

Therefore, one might say that the glance or the look are simply a neutral space, but it turns into an objectifying gaze, since our look is constructed by the specific culture into which we are born. This learned culture, in a way, taints our glance and look, which results in a subject-object relation between the gazer and the gazed one. This means that both sides that look at each other do not necessarily have the power to objectify each other on equal levels. As one side is the subject, they get to determine the relation; the gazed one's role is only to be objectified by the subject. Thus, power dynamics are crucial when it comes to the gaze. For instance, Foucault specifically chooses a medical context to discuss the gaze, allowing

himself to highlight a doctor's authority and dominance over the patient, as a doctor would be the subject, whereas the patient is objectified into a set of organs with certain diseases. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre argues, "We cannot perceive the world and at the same time apprehend a look fastened upon us; it must be either one or the other" (347). While the act of looking occurs simultaneously, it is a set of intersectional elements that decides whether we come out as the subject or the object; whether we are white or black, woman, man or diverse, rich or poor, all of these factors decide how the gaze will function in a particular interaction; therefore the gaze, as Foucault and Sartre suggest, is innately asymmetrical. In his paper "Pleasure: A Political Issue," Frederic Jameson mentions 'the right to look' (7). Whether we have this right or not is decided by such factors. Sartre also defines the gaze as "the consciousness of being looked at" (347). This suggestion brings a notion of anxiety into the picture. It suggests that we suddenly become aware of ourselves through the gaze of others, and this anxiety of self-awareness through others is a significant part of our subject formation (as in the case of imperialism, where the Other serves as an object, and the European self recognizes and becomes aware of itself through this Other). E. Ann Kaplan gives an example from Freud on this matter, where he argues that the little boy's gaze at the little girl, the absence of a penis causes him to realize his own difference, and it becomes "a traumatic foundational moment in the boy's psychic (subject) formation" (Kaplan XI).

The very same dynamics of power and self-awareness (as in a doctor-patient relation, or the Freudian example) occur in the colonial or postcolonial relation of the European self and the Other, too. Sartre suggests the Other had not had a right to look at Europeans for a long time. He writes,

I want you to feel, as I, the sensation of being seen. For the white man has enjoyed for three thousand years the privilege of seeing without being seen. It was a seeing pure and uncomplicated; the light of his eyes drew all things from their primeval darkness. The whiteness of his skin was a further aspect of vision, a light condensed. The white man, white because he was a man, white like the day, white as truth is white, white like virtue, lightened like a torch all creation; he unfolded the essence, secret and white, of existence. Today, these black men have fixed their gaze upon us and out gaze is thrown back into our eyes. [...] By this steady and corrosive gaze, we are picked to the bone. (Sartre 1976, 7-11)

Sartre, in this excerpt, refers to a shift in the gaze. As people of color became more autonomous, they turned the same gaze, through which the white man asserted his dominance, against white people. As already stated, both Foucault and Sartre associate the gaze with power and argue that it all reduces us to subjects and objects, among whom there is a clear

hierarchy. Although it is common, this is not the only argument about the subject/object relation in the gaze. For instance, Lacan says, “In the scopic field, the gaze is outside, I am looked at, that is to say, I am a picture” (106). What Lacan suggests here is that both positions can be simultaneously experienced by each side. He does not give a specific authority to the subject, as Sartre and Foucault do. Shanon Bell writes, “For Lacan, both the I/eye and the object are looking. The gaze of the world, of the other, your gaze, turns me, the subject, into a picture – a picture negotiated on the screen between your gaze and my I/eye” (Bell 411). Therefore, the subject is also exposed to objectification, and his identity is, in a way, negotiated through the act of looking between the subject and the object, so the object has, in fact, autonomy.

Through these arguments on the gaze theory, this thesis work aims to look at the slums in order to comprehend how the gaze works in slums of the global South; what role do race, gender, economics (for instance, the international division of labor) and poverty play when a traveler gazes upon the slum-dwellers and tries to re-present them? In this context, *The Tourist Gaze* by John Urry is also important to understand why slums are specifically chosen to be gazed upon and how the gaze functions when travelers interact with these urban spaces. Urry compares the tourist gaze to Foucault’s medic’s gaze, and he suggests, “What makes a particular tourist gaze depends upon what it is contrasted with; what forms of non-tourist experience happen to be” (Urry 3). This contrast between the traveler and the locals is essential in our case, as slum tourism or literature is highlighted by the contrast between the slum inhabitants and everyone else. In short, throughout the thesis, it will be discussed whether there is a simultaneous act of looking, where both sides get to be subjects and objects at the same time, or is it, instead, a one-sided gaze that favors the subject, who holds ‘the right to look,’ because he was born into another race and class?

2.2 Subaltern Studies

The term subaltern was introduced by the Italian Marxist intellectual Antonio Gramsci ‘to denote the subordinate position in terms of class, gender, caste, race and culture’ (Singh 9). The word itself refers to a person who is inferior in rank and is derived from the Latin words *sub* and *alter*, which respectively mean “under” and “other” (Singh 9). Although the hegemonic work of Gramsci has provided the theoretical code for subaltern studies, what made it influential and more complex was the *Subaltern Studies*. This journal, edited by

Ranajit Guha, was founded by a group of historians, including Gyanendra Pandey, Shahid Amin, David Arnold, Partha Chatterjee, and David Hardiman. Gyan Prakash writes,

The formation of Subaltern Studies as an intervention in South Asian historiography occurred in the wake of the growing crisis of the Indian state in the 1970s. The dominance of the nation-state, cobbled together through compromises and coercion during the nationalist struggle against British rule, became precarious as its program of capitalist modernity sharpened social and political inequalities and conflicts. (Prakash 1476)

In light of this, the historians mentioned above sought to reconsider the historiography of Indian nationalism, along with the traces of imperialism and bourgeois-nationalism (Guha 1985, vii.). Despite being limited to the history of colonialism in India at first, Subaltern Studies (which began at the end of the 1970s) has soon after that become an international and interdisciplinary field of research, as it was, by the end of 1980s, “the most dynamic sector within the emerging disciplines of postcolonial theory and cultural studies in the Anglo-American academy (Chaturvedi VI).

One of the most central contradictions between the Subaltern Studies group and Antonio Gramsci’s ideas is the autonomy within subaltern communities. In *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci writes, “Subaltern groups are always subject to the authority of ruling groups, even when they can rebel and rise up” (Gramsci 55). As they fail to establish their own authority and break free of the hegemony of others, Gramsci does not recognize any autonomy within subaltern communities (Arnold, 34). Gramsci also acknowledges the existence of subaltern authority, but only prior to the centralization of power in Italy. He writes,

The State was, in a certain sense, a mechanical bloc of social groups, often of different race: within the circle of political-military compression, which was only exercised harshly at certain moments, the subaltern groups had a life of their own, institutions of their own, etc. (54)

The very same subaltern autonomy that Gramsci writes about can also be found in pre-colonial India, as the feudal political system meant that the power essentially laid with the local rulers. (Arnold 42). Ranajit Guha, however, argued that this subaltern autonomy had not ceased to exist with the introduction of colonialism and capitalism. During the British colonial rule, this ‘autonomous domain continued to operate vigorously’ (Guha 1982, 4). Despite having certain autonomy within themselves, it can still be argued that it does not bring them any equality as formal citizens within civil society. The transition from pre-colonial India to, first, the British rule, and then to global capitalism and division of labor meant that the subaltern could provide certain services, and they were, therefore, granted some recognition;

moreover, by the second half of the twentieth century, political mobilization within subaltern groups has emerged. For instance, in *The Politics of the Governed*, Partha Chatterjee writes about a colony of refugees in Kolkata, where the squatters had to immigrate from East Pakistan to the city after the famine of 1943 (53). Chatterjee writes that these refugees (or slum-dwellers) had no legal rights over the lands they occupied, but when the railway authorities tried to cut them off by building a wall around them in 1965, people have protested and successfully prevented it from happening (Chatterjee 54). Even more impressively, the same colony has, in 1975, “mobilized a member of the state assembly from the pro-Soviet Communist Part, then allied with Indira Gandhi’s ruling Congress Party, to intercede with the chief minister and dissuade the railway authorities from carrying out the demolition” (Chatterjee 54-55), which had worked, and the demolition was off the table. Therefore, one could say that this colony of slum-dwellers have a voice if we were to look at such examples, but do they, in fact, have the ability to stand against the hegemony of power or are they simply allowed by the elite to speak within the boundaries of cultural and political hegemony? In the first example that Chatterjee provides us, they could only prevent construction by building a ‘human wall’ (Chatterjee 54); they could only be seen by the authorities when they physically put themselves in the construction site to halt it. In addition to that, in 1975, it is still not their voice that is being heard, since a member of the state assembly is the one who speaks for them. Thus, it was not possible for the subaltern, in this case, to secure their existence up until the elite decided to speak for them; the political institutions that were established through ideals of Indian nationalism (in a way, a by-product of colonialism) had to be included in the process, so the subaltern alone had no power in deciding their fate at all. In “The Subaltern as Subaltern Citizen,” Gyanendra Pandey writes,

Over the course of the twentieth century, subaltern groups have commonly been granted formal citizenship across the globe. Even where they have not – as in the case of illegal immigrants, refugees, “guest” workers and floating assemblages of many other kinds – their existence as relatively stable populations has been secured (not to say necessitated) by the essential character of many of the services they provide, and they have been able consequently to make certain kinds of claims on state and quasi-state resources. (Pandey, 4738)

Although they may acquire a certain degree of recognition and support from the government, it does not necessarily mean that they can be “counted as members of civil society” (Chatterjee 17). As a result, it could be said that many scholars have studied the subaltern, and they have tried to figure out what sort of autonomy they possess and whether that autonomy gives them a voice and power of their own.

Although the Subaltern Studies group had brought the subaltern theory into the spotlight, it was, no doubt, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who has made it so popular, thanks to her influential essay titled “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Ranajit Guha and the other scholars have mainly focused on the history of the subaltern, for which, of course, they needed to study colonial discourses. However, Spivak’s work focuses mainly on the postcolonial aspect, and she directly engages with the Western intellectuals to question the knowledge they produce about the Other and the subaltern. In her essay, Spivak argues how European intellectuals project their knowledge onto the global South is ‘epistemic violence’ (Spivak 75). Spivak suggests that the clearest example of this epistemic violence is “the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogenous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other” (76), and she calls this practice “the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subject-ivity” (76). Therefore, the issue with the knowledge that is produced in the global North is that it reaffirms itself as the Subject, and it results in positioning the global South as an Other; the knowledge produced by the global North results, in a way, in oppression; hence ‘epistemic violence.’ The intellectuals of the global North, however, tend not to recognize this issue, as Spivak writes, “Although the history of Europe as Subject is narrativized by the law, political economy and ideology of the West, this concealed Subject pretends it has no ‘geo-political determinations’” (66).

Spivak uses the ideas of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze (more specifically, “Intellectuals and Power: A Conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze”) to prove her point as to why the knowledge produced by the global North fails to ‘represent’ the global South and results in epistemic violence. One of her major arguments revolves around the notion of representation, and in order not to equivocate and to be able to highlight the different meanings of representation, Spivak introduces the German words *darstellen* and *vertreten* (71); both are terms that Karl Marx uses to explain the political and economical/philosophical representation of the oppressed. *Vertreten* means a rather literal form of representation, as in representative democracy, where an elected politician represents the subject. Unlike this, *darstellen* is more of an abstract form of representation, where the represented subject might be brought back into the spotlight by a work of literature or a discussion by philosophers. In order to explain the difference between these two forms of representation, Spivak quotes Marx on *Vertretung*:

The small peasant proprietors ‘cannot represent themselves; they must be represented. Their representative must appear simultaneously as their master, as an authority over them, as unrestricted governmental power that protects them from the other classes

and sends them rain and sunshine from above. The political influence (in the place of the class interest, since there is no unified class subject) of the small peasant proprietors, therefore, find its last expression (the implication of a chain of substitutions – Vertretungen - is strong here) in the executive force (Exekutivgewalt - less personal in German) subordinating society to itself' (Marx qtd. in Spivak 71).

Therefore, be it the colonizers or Indian nationalists, whoever assumes the role of representing the oppressed would also be speaking for them. *Darstellung* is the act of re-presentation, usually by the dominant side, and this re-presentation functions as a signification of the oppressed; it is through such signifiers that we understand this oppression towards the Other. Spivak suggests that both forms of representation are related to each other, "but running them together," she writes, "especially in order to say that beyond both is where oppressed subjects speak, act and know for themselves, leads to an essentialist, utopian politics" (Spivak 71). However, the poststructuralist critique argues that individuals are accessible themselves, so the representation can be disregarded, which, as a result, means the oppressed can speak for themselves. Spivak disagrees with this idea. She writes,

In the Foucault-Deleuze conversation, the issue seems to be that there is no representation, no signifier, (Is it to be presumed that the signifier has already been dispatched? There is, then, no sign-structure operating experience, and thus might one lay semiotics to rest?); theory is a relay of practice (thus laying problems of theoretical practice to rest) and the oppressed can know and speak for themselves. [...] the oppressed, if given the chance, (the problem of representation cannot be bypassed here), and on the way to the solidarity through alliance politics (a Marxist thematic is at work here), can speak and know their conditions. (74-78)

In order to prove that subject is not always accessible and that we must, in some cases, depend on representation (and more importantly, re-presentation) to learn about the oppressed, Spivak mentions an Indian tradition that is called *Sati*, which refers to a practice of women throwing themselves in the funeral fire of their late husbands in order to sacrifice themselves. Under British rule, this practice was delegitimized, which, according to Spivak, led to the idea of "white men saving brown women from brown men" (93). However, the Indian nativist argument was that the women wanted to sacrifice themselves (93). The issue here is that both sides speak for women, and both sides generate a relatively homogenous voice for them, whereas the women themselves would have a more heterogenous voice; some would be against this practice, and some would not be against it. However, we cannot retrieve the truth about what women wanted for themselves now, since they had no power to speak for themselves, and their re-presentation is a voice of their representatives. That is why those widows were subaltern subjects, and they had neither a voice nor could they be reached on an individual level. Therefore, their voices cannot be retrieved, and they cannot speak.

One last major point in Spivak's essay is the international division of labor, which she calls 'the real mark of geographical (geo-political) discontinuity' (Spivak 85). The subaltern is the extremely oppressed and disenfranchised subjects. In our day, global capitalism and the international division of labor causes the subaltern to be disenfranchised; in this division, the global North provides the capital the global South provides labor. For instance, in the case of slum-dwellers who work as 'cheap laborers,' they have the means to produce certain items, but they do not have the means to buy and consume them. The goods they produce are shipped to the global North. Spivak argues that Foucault and Deleuze are not aware that the intellectual in the global North "can help consolidate the international division of labor" (Spivak 69), and she states that the reason why the fact that Foucault and Deleuze ignore "both the epistemic violence of imperialism and the international division of labor" (84) is that they study the 'third-world issues.' However, according to Spivak, ignoring these two crucial facts would result in not comprehending the global South, and objectifying them further as the Others of the European Subject.

Considering this theoretical framework, the question this thesis aims to raise and answer is whether the slums are still subaltern spaces (or are they emerging as an alternative subculture of urban lifestyle?). In addition to that, another critical point is the nature of the gaze upon slum and whether it is an objectifying and romanticizing gaze, or is it more of a neutral glance? Finally, when a person from the global North visits and tells the tale of slums, is the narrative of self versus the other an individualistic one (as in the authors only compare themselves to those, whom they come across on an individualistic level), or is it a geo-politically pre-determined Self?

3. The Traveler's Gaze: Indian Slums in Travel Writing

3.1 *Calcutta*: Writing Slums in the Twentieth Century

Formerly known as Calcutta, Kolkata is the capital of the Indian state West Bengal, and it is the third biggest city in India with a population of 14 million people in its great metropolitan region. During the colonial rule, Kolkata had been India's biggest city and political and financial capital for centuries before Mumbai and Delhi became even greater cities. However, the region of Kolkata was not always so important and populous. In fact, before the British traders from the East India Company settled in the region, there were only three villages in the area: Kalikata, Govindpur, and Sutanuti. The British merchants were eager to settle there to create a commercial link between Bengal and Bihar; however, their

attempts had failed repeatedly (Roy 244). After years of hostilities and aggression, Job Charnok finally settled in Sutanuti for a permanent stay “with a poor guard of thirty soldiers all told, scrambled up the steep, mud bank which was thenceforward, without a break to grow into the Capital of British India” (Hyde, quoted in Roy, 245) in the last decade of the seventeenth century. Job Charnok, who was seen as the founder of Kolkata throughout colonial history, might, at first, seem like an open-minded explorer who wished to engage in commerce. Geoffrey Moorhouse writes about how he met his Hindu wife Maria while she was about to sacrifice herself at the funeral pyre of her late husband to practice *Sati* and sacrifice herself. Charnok, who served as the factory chief at Patna, is amazed by Maria’s beauty and saves her from the pyre to marry her (Moorhouse 29). Charnok had children with her, and when Maria passed away, he is said to have sacrificed animals in her name every year (Moorhouse 29). Therefore, one could say that Charnok did not refrain from engaging with Indian people and adopting some of their traditions. Therefore, it could, perhaps, be said that the racial division and superiority claims were not as strong as they were in the nineteenth century when interracial marriages had become taboo. However, the fact that his wife was renamed and given a European name already shows a denial of Indian culture during the earlier days of colonialism in the seventeenth century. Moorhouse also refers to the marriage of Charnok’s daughter Mary as the “first English wedding of Calcutta” (Moorhouse 31), which, again, shows us that his daughter is raised as an English woman, ignoring her Indian side. Moreover, according to Captain Alexander Hamilton, Job Charnok was a fierce ruler “who had native whipped near his dining room, so that he could hear their cries as he ate” (Hamilton, quoted in Moorhouse, 32). As a result, it is obvious that from the seventeenth century on, the claim of superiority in terms of culture, and atrocities against natives were already a reality in the Empire, which also showed itself in Bengal and later Calcutta.

Towards the end of 1697, the *zamindar* (the right to rule the land on behalf of the Emperor and collect rent, impose taxes and fines on the land) rights were granted to the East India Company. However, the English were not the only European settlers in Bengal. In *The Indian Empire: Its Peoples, History and Products*, William Wilson Hunter writes, “Calcutta was the headquarters of the English, Chandamagar of the French, and Chinsurah of the Dutch. These three settlements were situated not far from one another upon reaches of the Hooghly” (381). Therefore, the English settlers felt threatened by the Nawab and other European settlers, which led to the building of infrastructure for defensive purposes, such as Fort William, which was built in Calcutta in 1712 (Hunter 381.). By 1735, the new free trade

infrastructure had already attracted a population of 100.000 to Calcutta (Baker 504).

However, the increasing military presence of the English had been a cause of conflict between them and the Nawab over the years, and finally led to war between the Nawab and the English in 1756, as the heir Siraj-ud-Daulah succeeded his grandfather as the Nawab of Bengal (Baker 504). According to William Wilson Hunter, the reason for the war was the new Nawab's 'ungovernable temper' (381). As a nineteenth-century historian in the British Empire, Hunter tends to portray the English as the rightful and brave side, ignoring the Indian perspective.

That being said, this conflict between the English and the Nawab of Bengal led to an incident called 'the Black Hole of Calcutta;' after the battle, the young Nawab orders that the English and the others who fought alongside them should be thrown into a dungeon for the night, and according to Hunter, 146 people were thrown into an eighteen feet square room, known as the Black Hole in Fort William, and the Nawab had no knowledge of the incident, however, only 23 people out of 146 had survived when he found out the following day (381). The year after that, in 1757, Robert Clive set sail from Madras, and the English took over Calcutta. Almost two decades later, in 1773, the Regulating Act made Calcutta the capital of British India (Baker, 504), and over the course of the eighteenth century, the population increased by three to four times, and it was as high as 500.000 people (Roy 255-256). By the nineteenth century, the city was also divided into two main parts as the European and Native quarters; Europeans lived mostly around central Calcutta, whereas the natives inhabited the northern parts of the city, and the part where the natives lived was called the Black Town (Hardgrave 32-35).

Throughout the nineteenth century, Calcutta continued to grow and serve as the capital of British India. However, by the late nineteenth century, Indians started to call for self-determination:

That movement became most violent in Calcutta, the commercial and literary center of the country. In 1905, the British had cleaved Bengal, a massive and powerful province centered on Calcutta, in to two portions in an attempt to weaken this opposition to their rule. The decision only inflamed nationalist sentiment, leading to a call for a boycott of British goods and, eventually, bombings and political assassinations in Calcutta. (Wright 2011)

The nationalist movements and the partition of Bengal have made Calcutta a threatening environment for the English. Therefore, the discussion about moving the capital had started, and in 1911, New Delhi became the new capital, ending Calcutta's central position in British India (Wright 2011). Finally, after the independence, Calcutta has started to be known as the cultural capital of India, due to the fact that there are many artists and Nobel-prized scholars in the city, which is when Geoffrey Moorhouse found himself in the city.

Modern-day Kolkata has inspired many to write about the city throughout its colonial and post-colonial history. Even Winston Churchill wrote a letter to his mother about Calcutta, where he noted, “I shall always be glad to have seen it – for the same reason Papa gave for being glad to have seen Lisbon – namely, that it will be unnecessary for me ever to see it again” and the only nice thing he said about Calcutta was that he could almost imagine he was London when the city was covered in fog at night and there was a cold breeze” (Churchill’s letters, quoted in Moorhouse 18). Another person who visited Calcutta was Rudyard Kipling, and he wrote *The City of Dreadful Night* to inform his readers how dirty, squalid, and corrupt Calcutta was. As a British Indian writer, Kipling had nothing positive to say about the city and highlighted everything negative about it. For instance, one of the first things he mentions is the heavy smell, where he says,

The reek of Calcutta beats both Benares and Peshawar. Bombay cloaks her stench with a veneer of asafetida and tobacco; Calcutta is above pretence. There is no tracing back the Calcutta plague to any one source. It is faint, it is sickly, and it is indescribable [...] The regular residents admit the disgrace, but their answer is: ‘Wait till the wind blows off the Salt Lakes where all the sewage goes, and then you will smell something.’ That is their defence! (Kipling 2-3)

Kipling, then, goes on to question how such a place could serve as the capital of British India. Moreover, he writes about how corrupt the police are, as they are aware of the crimes, such as robbery, taking place in specific locations, but they do not care to act on them (Kipling 41). Other obvious signs of imperialist ideas are that the city is wholly divided in terms of race (Kipling 37-38) and how Kipling refers to native people. For instance, he mentions Indian door-keepers and complains that they are not nice, as they do not rise when Kipling or others pass by, and he writes, “If he is sitting on his cot chewing sugar-canes, he does not think it is worth his while to rise. He has to be taught those things, and he cannot understand why he should be reproved” (Kipling 9). He also says how the people of Calcutta (presumably Europeans, and perhaps some *Babus*, who are upper-class Anglophone Indians in Calcutta) put natives “in a little lodge close to the gate of their house, in order that loafers may be turned away, and the houses protected from theft” (Kipling 10), and he complains that this gives those men a certain degree of authority. Finally, Kipling writes, “In the beginning, the police were responsible. They said in a patronizing way that they would prefer to take a wanderer round the great city themselves, sooner than let him contract a broken head on his own account in the slums” (Kipling 9), so his accounts of Calcutta belong to an era when the police mostly accompanied the slum tourists.

When colonialism came to an end, the narrative in travel literature has also changed. The travel literature was not necessarily shaped by colonialist ideas anymore, and the emphasis on race and the hierarchy between Europeans and Indians, as seen in Kipling's *The City of Dreadful Night*, was no longer there. In fact, colonialism was generally recognized as the reason for so much suffering and misery by authors like Moorhouse. Authors continued to reflect the severity of poverty and suffering they witnessed while in Kolkata, but, as opposed to authors like Kipling, that was not the only thing they chose to reflect anymore. Authors like Dominique Lapierre and Geoffrey Moorhouse tried to convince their audience that the city had more to offer despite all the suffering portrayed in their works. In fact, Lapierre named his book on Kolkata *The City of Joy*, where he portrays slum residents as hopeful and loving people. Not so romanticizing as Lapierre, but Moorhouse also maintains a somewhat optimistic tone, despite all the troubles he writes about. He writes,

The imperial residue of Calcutta, a generation after Empire ended, is both a monstrous and a marvelous city. Journalism and television have given us a rough idea of the monstrosities but none at the marvels. I can only hope to define the first more clearly and to persuade anyone interested that the second is to be found there, too. (13)

Moorhouse clearly aims to maintain an objective point of view towards the city, as he hopes to investigate the dreadful side of the city while not ignoring the 'marvels' to be found there. Indeed, he often seems to study the city in quite an objective way. For instance, Moorhouse shares a fair amount of statistical information with the reader instead of entirely depending on his observations. First of all, he writes that there are more than three million people living in the metropolitan area of Calcutta, and a third of them live in slums; according to official records, around 700,000 of them live in slums called bustees, which is where slum residents rent properties from a '*thika* tenant' (99). These tenants pay certain landlords to build dwellings on their lands, and they rent out these dwellings to the poor. Moorhouse writes that there were around 20,000 *thikas* who own about 30,000 dwellings in the slums (99). "As many as seven or eight sleep in one room of a shanty, for which they pay Rs 10 to 15 a month to their *thika* tenant" (99). Moorhouse also informs us about Calcuttans' average incomes, which, depending on their jobs, has a range between Rs 35 to Rs 120, with the exception of drivers, who earn between Rs 130 to Rs 165 (104). In case of slum-dwellers, it would also be safe to assume they have the responsibility of taking care of at least some of the seven or eight people, with whom they live in the same room, as they are most likely to be a family, so these amounts would nowhere be enough for them to take care of themselves. (In 1971, Vinayak Mahadeo Dandekar and Nilakantha Rath wrote the book titled *Poverty in India* and pointed

out that these people are so poor that they are not even 'able to afford a diet adequate even in terms of calories. [11] The government in West Bengal calculated that a person should at least take 2313 calories per day, and according to Dandekar and Rath, 48,53 percent of the population in West Bengal was lying below this level [11]). That is if they have any jobs at all, as Moorhouse writes that 400,000 men in town have no jobs at all (93).

When it comes to objectivity, another critical point is that Moorhouse does not let his British identity stand in the way of recognizing and acknowledging the tragedies caused by the colonial past in the city. Right from the beginning, he states, "[The story of Calcutta] is the story of how and why Empire was created and what happened when Empire finished" (Moorhouse 13). He also adds that anything a traveler might come across in Calcutta is 'creation and the legacy of the British' (17). Thus, he makes it clear that he will not let his own identity and subjectivity shadow his judgment in his observations of Calcutta. Instead of complaining about how horrible and disgusting Calcutta is, Moorhouse, for instance, points out that it was the British who created this city and questions why anyone would build a city in such an uninhabitable environment:

The whole area, thousands of square miles, is simply untamed tropical fen; 'new mud, old mud and marsh', as a geographer has called it. The only firm ground is by the riverbanks, so that villages straggle along the watercourses, surrounded by mangoes, palms, bamboos and endless expanses of swamp. When the rains come and the rivers flood, this delta becomes a gigantic inland sea. At any time, it is a perfect breeding ground for malaria and any other disease that thrives on moisture; some of Charnok's sailors found it so unhealthy that they christened their landing place Golgotha. Yet on this bog, the British created their capital in India. Nothing but commercial greed could possibly have led to such an idiotic decision. (26)

As a result, Moorhouse is free of the imperialistic mindset that instructed the rhetoric of the nineteenth-century literature, such as William Wilson Hunter's accounts, where he repeatedly mentions the heroism of the British, whereas he looks down on the natives. Therefore, Geoffrey Moorhouse does not hesitate to name the specific atrocities in and around Calcutta that occurred throughout the history of British India, like the summoning of Admiral Nicholson to Bengal, in order to teach the Muslim rulers, who became disturbed and belligerent due to the European presence in their lands, a lesson, and how the Admiral ended up cannoning and burning five hundred buildings (29). Moreover, Moorhouse points out another issue that affected the whole state of West Bengal, but especially the poor people and slum residents: the famine of 1943. Although there were local, Indian administrators appointed by the British (mostly the Anglophone *Babus* from higher levels of the caste

system), Moorhouse says that the British have done absolutely nothing to prevent and relieve the disaster until it was too late (120). He also adds, “Calcutta being what it was, some people could forgive themselves for not having observed this sooner” (121). What they failed to observe was a huge humanitarian crisis that took three million lives in West Bengal, and Moorhouse quotes a reporter (remains unnamed in the book), who describes a family living on the streets of Calcutta, to help us understand what it is that the rulers have failed to observe because it looked somewhat normal to them:

The wife looked slightly better than the husband but... I could count her ribs from a distance of ten feet. The intestines seemed to have disappeared altogether from the abdomen. She was not more than twenty-five years old yet there was no womanly breast. Only two nipples dangling from two parched sheets of skin, from which everything else seemed to dried up... One of the children, a girl, had swollen limbs. In some parts of the legs the skin had cracked and a liquid discharge was slowly trickling out. Her face was writhing in pain but she had not even the strength to cry. (121-122)

The fact that this amount of suffering had gone unnoticed up until a point where people started falling dead on the streets across the whole state shows us how distant they are to their own society, even though they mostly live right in the central areas of the city, and work for those rich people who could forgive themselves for not realizing it any sooner (121). In fact, even when a child's body, which was partly eaten by the dogs, was found in Calcutta, the Home Secretary to the Government of India, Conran Smith, said that there was a ‘tendency in some quarters to overdramatize the situation (123). Therefore, even when they realized it, they were seemingly not too disturbed by it.

Moorhouse can also pinpoint some quite specific issues in Calcuttan slums, where one could trace the root of those said issues directly to the imperial rule in Calcutta; namely, the goondas. The word goonda is defined as a ‘professional terrorist’ and an alternative to the word ‘thug’ by the dictionary (Meriam-Webster Dictionary). Moorhouse points out that the Calcuttan police officers who investigate goondas claim that they can be traced back to East India Company, and Moorhouse confirmed by quoting Macaulay:

The servants of the Company obtained, not for their employers, but for themselves, a monopoly of almost the whole internal trade. They forced the natives to buy dear and sell cheap. Every servant of a British factor was armed with all the power of his master, and his master was armed with all the power of the Company. Enormous fortunes were thus rapidly accumulated at Calcutta, while thirty million of human beings were reduced to the last extremity of wretchedness. They had been accustomed to live under tyranny, but never tyranny like this. (112)

Moorhouse states that the British rulers had employed armed servants to protect their wealth, who were called *paik*. However, when East India Company was disbanded, the Queen ordered to dismissal of *paiks*, but the dismissed *paiks* held on to their guns continued their way of life (112-113). In Moorhouse's day, these *paiks* turned into goondas. What makes goondas important in terms of slums is that these individuals tend to come from the slums. Moorhouse writes,

More likely than not he will live in a bustee... If he has a comparatively regular income, it will not often amount to Rs 250 a month, and more frequently, it will be less than Rs 100... The goonda is not always a splendid physical specimen. He tends to be more efficient with a medium build and he is very often handicapped in some way, minus an eye or a hand, or totally deaf. (113-114)

Not only do goondas live in slums, they also often use their guns in slums as well. Around the same time as Geoffrey Moorhouse published *Calcutta*, Amrita Abraham has written an article titled "Violence in a Bombay slum," where she points out the 'largescale caste-wise conflicts' (1789) in Dharavi, Bombay (modern-day Mumbai). During the clashes between different castes in Dharavi, the goondas on both sides terrorized each other so much to the point where people of both sides were afraid to go into each other's territories within Dharavi, as they were afraid that they would get beaten (1789). Goondas were no less active and effective in Calcutta:

The goondas have made profitable alliances with the party politicians of Bengal, who have found them extraordinarily effective in resolving any uncertainties that might linger in the mind of a peasant voter as polling day approaches... It is possible that that those who suffer most from his terrorism are the very poorest people in Calcutta, who must be bludgeoned or bribed into a political allegiance they will not otherwise follow. (Moorhouse 114-115)

On that note, it might be a good idea to mention Spivak's argument about the Marxist idea of re(-)presentation, namely *Vertretung* and *Darstellung* (71). Spivak refuses the individualistic approach of poststructuralism, and she suggests that we have no other choice than depending on their representation by others if we are to study the subaltern. As she differentiates between two types of representation, one of them, *vertreten*, refers to representation in a literal sense, as in political representation. As referred to earlier in the case of slum demolitions in Mumbai, rather privileged politicians might sometimes work in favor of slum inhabitants. However, Geoffrey Moorhouse presents us with the fact that slum residents in Calcutta do not even have this means of representation, as they are completely robbed of their voices by politicians who are wealthy enough to hire goondas. Moreover, Moorhouse points

out that there are also refugees from East Bengal among those victims, whose ancestors used to be *zamindars*, landowners before the Partition, but they are now reduced to poverty and vulnerable against the goonda (115). In short, British imperialism and Indian nationalism are the two pillars directly responsible for creating subaltern subjects who cannot speak for themselves.

Geoffrey Moorhouse provides us with statistical data and an overall constructive critique of the British Empire for all the troubles they caused in India and Calcutta. However, as a travel writer and a journalist, Moorhouse still depends mostly on his voyeuristic observations to tell the truth about this city, which is problematic. In “Truth, Lies and Travel Writing,” Daniel Carey suggests that acknowledging eye-witnessing as a criterion of objectivity, of truth is one of the key concerns in travel writing. He writes,

Of course, this is an insufficient guarantor for a number of reasons, not least because it presupposes that the reality observed by travelers is somehow pellucid... it is not so clear that describing the meaning and history of complex customs becomes any easier simply by being present at their performance. (4)

This ‘insufficient guarantor’ is also present in Moorhouse’s *Calcutta*, as he relies on his observations of individuals in the city, and in many cases, he tends to present these observations as the truth about Calcutta, and such information might, in some cases, not be very reliable. The reason for this is that it might result in stereotyping. Geoffrey Moorhouse is a British writer who, in this case, observes India and its people, which makes his observation even more complex, because there are already certain ideas, stereotypes, and prejudices about this place and its people due to the colonial past. For instance, Moorhouse writes about a certain slum and states how many families live there and how much money they make per month, but he then writes about the relations within those families for almost two pages. In fact, he provides rather specific details about some individuals and claims that this is how most of these slum inhabitants live.

A newly-married couple may go to the cinema two or three times in the first few months, but after that recreation together generally stops... The women do not often have friends, only acquaintances. The wives living in the same hut often cooperate in family matters, but it is usually for what each can get out of the other later on; they quarrel and fight a great deal. (106)

It is not revealed to us if Moorhouse acquired this information through his interviews with slum inhabitants or writes what he learned through reporters and scholars who helped him Calcutta during his research and observations, but whether this information is valid and to

how many people it applies are undeniably questionable. Such claims as most women not having any friends at all are nothing more than stereotypes, and it disregards the heterogeneity of slum-inhabitants; all we get to hear is either Moorhouse's or the rather privileged Calcuttans' voices who speak for them and package their experiences for us, the readers. However, such stereotypes can also be found in travel writing that aims to explore Europe or North America; such observations can be made about Europeans as well. As questionable as they are, such generalizations do not necessarily suggest discrimination, or rather an 'othering' of the natives. What creates this specific problem is highlighting differences between Geoffrey Moorhouse's self-versus-Indians and, more specifically, the slum-dwellers he writes about. In fact, the book heavily relies on highlighting this cultural difference from the beginning to the end. The very first sentence of the first chapter is "No traveler from the West is completely prepared for his first experience of India" (15), and he goes on to say that no European person can even manage to imagine the extremity of poverty in Calcutta, and even the ones who think they saw the most terrible kind of poverty in Southern Italy or Spain (15). In fact, "the traveler's confusion and the sick feeling he begins to detect in the pit of his sensitive stomach is liable to be increased, moreover, if he happens to be British" (15). In another chapter, Moorhouse argues that beggars are 'the commonplace figures of the landscape' (93) and then, he suggests that an average European would feel so bad for these beggars and he/she would simply give away money to all the beggars he/she comes into contact with (94). The issue here is that Geoffrey Moorhouse, even if that is not his intention, reflects his personal experiences onto every European and Calcuttan slum-dwellers. Instead of being subjective and pointing out that these are his experiences from the short periods of time he lived in Calcutta, he assumes the role of a European. Therefore, instead of simply reading about one person's encounters in a specific case, the reader is subjected to the differences between Europeans and Indians and slum-dwellers. He identifies all Europeans as privileged, wealthy, and kind people, Calcuttan as the exact opposite. This 'traditional insistence' on difference by the Europeans, argues David Spurr, creates a notion of the colonized people as the 'Other' and identifies this Other as the 'antithesis of civilized values' (7). Edward Said also writes, "The other feature of Oriental-European relations was that Europe was always in a position of strength, not to say domination... Knowledge of the Orient, because generated out of strength, in a sense creates the Orient, the Oriental, and his world." (2019, 40). That does not suggest that Geoffrey Moorhouse endorses imperialist ideas and looks down on Indian people. On the contrary, he denounces that ideology several times throughout the book. The concern here is the asymmetrical nature of relations between what is generally called the

global North and the global South and how that asymmetry is reflected in literary works. The negative comparison between a 'civilized' narrator and the 'uncivilized' natives creates certain power dynamics in literature (Bassnett 9).

The poverty in Calcutta and its slums is the main and most occurring theme of Geoffrey Moorhouse's accounts of the city. From one million refugees living in terrible conditions in slums (198), where people live in places that Moorhouse calls "boxes" (96), which do not include kitchens or toilets, forcing people to cook outside, to dogs eating dead bodies around the Hooghly (123), or a homeless, starving family that takes shelter under the shade of an air-conditioning advertisement in Calcutta (130-131), Moorhouse observes many people who suffer from extreme poverty closely. In fact, in the latter example of the homeless family, he observes them for a week until they are gone. However, as far as the reader is informed, he never makes any attempt to communicate, or help this family, even though he argues in one of the previous chapters that Europeans cannot help feeling sorry for all the poor people in the city, so they give out money to every beggar who comes asking for it (94). Once again, the narrator in *Calcutta* only relies merely on his own observations instead of engaging with the family and making their voices heard, and the fact that he is able to observe so many people from a distance. In contrast, many of those people do not even realize his existence, reaffirms the asymmetrical relations between the author Geoffrey Moorhouse and the slum inhabitants in the city. As already mentioned, the significant differences between fellow countrymen to whom Moorhouse addresses and the slum residents are already an issue, as it poses the risk of portraying the local subjects as uncivilized, as opposed to the civilized target reader. This, of course, suggests that the observer has authority over the observed subject. However, apart from such an analysis of the author's portrayal of his subjects, even the mere act of observation might point out to the very same authority. An authority that Moorhouse can only enjoy thanks to his background as a British person and a journalist. David Spurr writes,

Reporting begins with looking. Visual observation is the essence of the reporter's function as witness. But the gaze upon which the journalist so faithfully relies for knowledge marks an exclusion as well as a privilege: the privilege of inspecting, of examining, of looking at, by its nature excludes the journalist from the human reality constituted as the object of observation. (13)

David Spurr believes that literary journalism as a profession is innately associated with privilege and authority. Just as Foucault explains the nature of the gaze through doctor-patient

relations, Spurr argues that literary journalism provides the gazer with the same sort of power over the observed subject, which is arguably not what Geoffrey Moorhouse intended at all, as he, seemingly, tries his best to be rather scientific and objective than subjective and objectifying. In fact, Moorhouse even mentions how indecent it is to take photographs of poverty-stricken people in the city himself, and he says that they should not be “examined as a specimen by another human being” (128), but except for the specific information and numbers about the city that he gathered, that is exactly what he does throughout the book. Spurr also acknowledges that the journalistic eye does not have to be an instrument of colonialism, and just as Moorhouse attempts, it can even be used to resist it, but, he argues, “Even where the Western writer declares sympathy with the colonized, the conditions which make the writer’s work possible require a commanding, controlling gaze” (Spurr 20). Of course, Indians were officially no longer colonized at the time of Moorhouse’s visit, so it could be argued that Spurr’s statement is not quite valid for Moorhouse’s work, but the effects of the British rule in India had continued after the Indian Independence in 1947. One of those lasting effects in the aftermath of the British rule was, of course, extreme poverty, which is the main theme of Moorhouse’s work, but even though the British were no longer in charge of the politics, they still played a major role in maintaining the wealth. Moorhouse states, “...though their controlling interest in its treasure had to be abandoned on Independence Day 1947, the British continued and continue to play a very decent hand in the wealth of the city” (146-147). He also points out that the Imperial Tobacco Company changed its name to the India Tobacco Company (147) after the independence, but that does not change the fact that it was still one of those big companies that generated wealth amid poverty and most people who benefited from that wealth were the British. Therefore, even though it is not the author’s intention to emphasize the differences and pursue authority over the locals in the city, it seems to be one of the outcomes of his work. Furthermore, his observations are mostly about the slums and slum-like places, which reaffirms this outcome even further, because unlike the privileged and educated people in India, the slum inhabitants do not possess a voice of their own. Moorhouse writes about the Indian people who helped him with this research, but in most cases, we do not get to hear directly from the people whom he observes and writes about; the only time the readers are introduced to one of the slum inhabitants is when Geoffrey Moorhouse meets a member of a political party in the city named Sibsankar Jha, a farmer from the rural side. Out of all the poverty-stricken people he writes about, Sibsankar Jha is the only one Moorhouse fully introduces to the reader. He writes about his name, hometown, family, age, and the fact that Jha and his family had “last eaten meat so long ago

that he could not remember when” (143). Although we get to know Sibsankar Jha a bit better than the subjects he observes, apart from his name and age, everything we get to learn about this person is about his poverty. Even then, we only get to hear Moorhouse’s words about Jha’s poverty. Given that Jha is a political party member and is attending a political rally, one could easily assume that he would have many about poverty and politics in his country, but we do not get to hear it. This points out to another aspect of the asymmetrical relations between Moorhouse and the people whom he observes, as he is not only privileged enough to travel to another part of the world to gaze at them as a British man and a journalist, he also holds power to decide who has a voice and to what extent they can speak.

Spurr writes, “The journalist is literally on the lookout for scenes that carry an already established interest for a Western audience, thus investing perception itself with the mediating power of cultural difference” (21). This phenomenon in literary journalism, or travel writing by Western journalists, is also present in Moorhouse’s *Calcutta*. Even though he gives another reason for writing *Calcutta*, it is apparent that he had written this work about poverty in India for a British audience throughout the book, as he writes about how British people would feel if they were to visit, or how Europeans, in general, would behave in the city. Hence, he addresses to the British or sometimes European readers. Furthermore, Moorhouse also looks for certain places and things that might “carry an established interest for a Western audience,” as Spurr says (21). Apart from the colonial history and the British involvement in the economy, there are other moments he refers to places or situations that are directly linked to British rule. As mentioned, Moorhouse does this several times to acknowledge all the troubles that colonialism brought upon Indian people. However, in some cases, Moorhouse picks up certain images that have connections to the British, but he does not mention them to recognize this connection, which might serve as scenes that would capture the Western audiences’ interest. For instance, Geoffrey Moorhouse says that the city is both “monstrous and marvelous” (13), and he adds that journalism is usually only interested in the monstrosities, but he wishes to introduce his readers to the marvels as well. Although he focuses on poverty for the most of his book, he does, in fact, mention that there are contrasts to the extreme poverty around the city as well. One of those contrasts is the Marble Palace that is located in the heart of the city. The nineteenth-century palace is mentioned by Moorhouse as something marvelous that the travelers must visit during their time in the city. He writes,

Calcutta, indeed, is a mighty terrible and frightening place today. But there is another side to it, almost unheard of, rarely figuring in its reputation, sorely neglected by travelers from other parts of India as well as from farther afield, who dash in and transact their business, observe the miseries, then turn tail and run for it before they are totally overcome by violent claustrophobia. They go home and cry woe unto the city, take its taste out of their mouths with a gin and tonic or a Pepsi, and recall it thereafter only as an emblem of experience, to show that they now know the worst that Life has to offer. Yet to balance this conventional rumour of Calcutta, the traveler can do better than to spare himself a couple of hours from the commercial and social horrors of the city and take himself down to the Marble Palace. (20)

This extract is an excellent example of most travelers' attitude towards places like this and towards what is called slum tourism; they simply observe how people live in extreme poverty and go right back, claiming they have gathered a sort of life-changing experience, which is even a more prominent theme in today's (rather) amateur travelers' writings and vlogs when they visit slums around the world. Moorhouse argues that this palace represents the opposite of what such tourists (or armchair tourists) are interested in; he presents the palace as the city's good side. However, it is an interesting choice to do so. To elaborate on why it is interesting in the context of the gaze, one must examine the examples of the 'good side of Calcutta' provided to us by Moorhouse. For instance, Kolkata is generally known as the cultural capital of India. It is a city where there are important universities, many academics, and artists, and it is a city where there are locals who won the Nobel prize. This is, assumingly, something that the people of Kolkata must be proud of, and Moorhouse does not forget to include it in his book:

...the Bengalis are so proud of this side of themselves that they will quite solemnly assure you, and believe it to be true, that one of their scholars had translated Molière into their tongue before ever the English heard him in theirs. Nor do they fail to point out that the three Nobel prizes so far associated with India were each awarded for work done in Calcutta. (192)

Although he aims to tell people about the marvels that are to be found in the city, Moorhouse only explains this intellectual side of the city in about two pages, while he describes the Marble Palace and the British-made maidan for pages and pages. The Marble Palace was built in the nineteenth century by Raja Rajendra Mullick Bahadur. Moorhouse writes that the Mullick family were *zamindars*, landlords who were collecting taxes during the Mogul rule, so they were quite wealthy, but Raja Rajendra Mullick Bahadur was orphaned when he was just three years old, and the British court gave him to an English guardian, Sir James Hogg (23). Therefore, Raja Rajendra was raised by an English man, and according to Moorhouse's description of his palace, he was also quite influenced by Western culture. Moorhouse writes,

...in the middle of this towering mess you find, unbelievably, a real garden of maybe an acre with a Palladian mansion set square in the centre. This could easily be a luxurious pocket in Rome, not Calcutta, and there is a fountain in the garden that would not be out of place in the Piazza Navona or at the bottom of the Spanish steps [...] Beyond lie apartments and galleries, and in these the Marble Palace becomes a fantasy brought to earth. They are full as no building was ever filled before, with art and objects from Bangkok to Bristol and back, though almost everything seems to have been picked up from the auctions and markets and dispossessed households of Europe. There is a very old Queen Victoria in plaster standing large as life by the main stairway and a very young Queen Victoria in oak, somewhat larger, dominating a red marble room where another squadron of busts glare at her from the shadows. (21-22)

Moorhouse takes an interest in places and things that have certain connections with the British or Europeans. Whether he does that unconsciously, meaning those things can capture his attention because he has a connection to them, or he simply wishes to attract British and European readers by doing so is a question only Geoffrey Moorhouse would have the answer to, but it might be said that it draws a certain pattern when it comes what captures his attention in the city. Moreover, through the end of those two pages, where he points out the intellectual side of the city, he also argues that this city is culturally so improved because Bengalis would rather seize the opportunity of acquiring whatever they can from the British, as opposed to Delhi, whose only objective was to push the foreigners out and gain the right to self-rule (192). He also argues that the apart from the ‘appalling behavior of the badly-frightened foreigners in Calcutta after 1857’ (192), another main reason why the Bengalis favored independence against the British rule was the fact that the Bengalis acquired Western education, which is, according to Moorhouse, ‘bound to promote a fervent desire for freedom’ (193). This side of Moorhouse’s work serves as a great example of how the gaze predominantly depends on culture. The gaze is constituted while a child is learning about the culture he is born into; being an innate part of the gaze, the culture is what makes the child understand what to look at, whom to look at and who is allowed to look at whom (Kaplan, xvi-xviii), which is what we see in Geoffrey Moorhouse’s *Calcutta*. It is more precise than anything else that Moorhouse ultimately positions himself against imperialism and acknowledges its aftermath for the Indians. However, one must not necessarily be an imperialist or racist to reinstate the colonial gaze, as it is in the nature of the gaze to introduce an asymmetrical relation if two sides are not equal in social terms. Therefore, Moorhouse’s insistence on addressing to a certain type of British audience and his observations of the extremely poor and oppressed people are bound to create a (post)colonial gaze in Calcutta, as it creates the division of self versus the Other (the self here is rather the European-self than Moorhouse as an individual). Even though Geoffrey Moorhouse tries to be as objective as

possible, and he does not let himself be prejudiced because of his nation's shared history with the Indians, writing about the extreme poverty and slums in India is still a very delicate process that is highly likely to emphasize the differences between the two sides, the gazer and the observed subjects. Moorhouse, indeed, risks reaffirming the imperial narrative of travel writing by introducing two sides, a British audience (as he writes about how the British would feel and behave in the city if they were to visit) and Indians (mainly the slum inhabitants and the homeless people). By introducing those sides the way he does, Moorhouse risks recreating the imperial narrative of the civilized travelers versus the savage Other. He establishes this separation even further when he explains that he wishes to show people the good side of the city, but apart from the cases such as the slum residents' hospitality towards him, some 'marvels' he refers to are the remnants of the colonial past in the city, such as the Maidan. As a result, while slum residents are primarily associated with poverty, unsanitary conditions, cheap labor force, or violence, the marvels to be found near those slums happen to reflect a rather Western background or taste.

Although Geoffrey Moorhouse himself writes that pointing cameras at people's faces to document their misery and suffering is quite an indecent and inhumane thing to do (128), he, indeed, observes many people's suffering in order to turn it into a book, which raises the question of whether he is voyeuristic, as he is, seemingly, a rather privileged foreigner who gazes at people's suffering. Eventually, he even makes a profit out of it. However, through the end of *Calcutta*, Moorhouse shares his other goal in writing this book, apart from showing the marvels next to the monstrosities in the city. Moorhouse suggests, "There are several reasons for the terrible violence of Calcutta. One is the anger of excessive poverty confronted by excessive wealth, and all the complex and sometimes cynical things that follow it" (213). Throughout the book, Moorhouse elaborates on the poverty, wealth, and violence in the city and finally argues that these three are all connected, as one of the reasons that result in so much violence is the deep division between the rich and the poor. Something he refers to earlier in the book might serve as an excellent example for the radical difference between the two sides; Moorhouse refers to wealthy Indians visiting the city and their living conditions, as they stay at nice hotels and eat at a nice restaurant, but the Indian servants who serve them end up having to sleep on the floor (163). Moorhouse points out that there are marvels to be found in the city, but that does not necessarily mean one should ignore the misery there. He writes,

To point out and enjoy these things is not to ignore the real horrors of this city, or in some obscure way to plead mitigation of them. The poverty of Calcutta is an affront to the dignity of mankind and a mocking tell-tale against the achievement of nations. We must be rid of it. But before we can start to do that, we must come to terms with it; we must clear ourselves of the temptation to pass it by on the side because it is too awful to behold. (356)

Moorhouse argues that we can enjoy the good things about the city and acknowledge the suffering of the poor people who are homeless or poor people. In fact, he argues that we, first, must recognize it if we ever wish to fix it. He goes on to point out that the privileged people must acknowledge the injustice and the suffering there, or otherwise, it might be too late for them if the poor ever decided to start a rebellion, because, as Moorhouse points out, the poor are the majority in the city, and he warns that if it comes to that, “the time for compassion will be past” (357). Therefore, it can be argued that Moorhouse’s justification for his seemingly voyeuristic actions is that he wished to help people realize and acknowledge the extent of suffering those people face so that it can be fixed. As a result, it is apparent that Moorhouse’s look instantly objectifies slum residents and the homeless, and his gaze introduces a sort of superiority over them, but it might be argued that he is not consciously voyeuristic for enjoyment or profit, as he claims to have a specific purpose in writing this book.

3.2 Does Altruism Justify Voyeurism: Travel Bloggers’ Coverage of Indian Slums in the Twenty-First Century

As Geoffrey Moorhouse wrote his book *Calcutta*, today’s Kolkata was the biggest city in India, which also served as a capital to British India. Therefore, it is quite understandable why he would want to study this city in particular as a journalist and a travel writer. However, in the twenty-first century, things have completely changed in India. Still referred to as the country’s cultural capital, Kolkata is no longer the biggest city or the financial hub. Delhi and Mumbai have taken over, making Kolkata the third biggest city in India. Understandably, as Mumbai turned into the largest and the second most-populated city in India, it also became one of the financial hubs, perhaps the most important one in the country, meaning it started to attract more and more immigrants all around the country, as people from the other parts of the nation felt that there would be more opportunities to be found there. According to the 2011 Census, the population of Mumbai used to be over twelve million, and it is widely estimated that it is now over twenty million, which means the population has almost doubled in ten years. Although the city keeps attracting more and more immigrants who hope for better standards of living, it is, of course, not quite possible adjust to such a fast growth and provide

adequate living conditions for all the new inhabitants. As a city that has kept growing since the nineteenth century, it could not provide enough housing for many poor people who immigrated to the city. As a result, one of the biggest cities in the entire world has also become home to the biggest ever slum in Asia. This particular slum is right in the heart of Mumbai, and it is Dharavi. As Mumbai is a peninsula that consists of islands, it is understandable that there is simply not enough space in the city because the people who come for work and are forced to live in slums are poor, and they, therefore, need to live as close as possible to places where they might find a job and start working; even if the city kept expanding in its far-away outer regions, those places would not be the ideal spots to live for slum-dwellers, because it is highly likely that they would not be able to afford the long commute every day. As a result, a huge proportion of the population must live in extremely densely populated areas within the city to afford housing and find jobs. Although Dharavi has a population of around one million people, it only covers around 2.16 square kilometers of land (Ramanathan); a twentieth of the whole population in a huge city live in a space that has an area that is only a bit wider than 2 square kilometers. That is also why about sixty percent of the population in Mumbai lives in slums or shanties (Shaban 69). Thus, the slums in Mumbai, particularly the Dharavi slum, became the center of attention in the twenty-first century, which can easily be seen through tourism and works of literature and media. As the slums gained more attention, more people wrote and talked about slums like Dharavi, and as more and more people talked about such places, more people became interested, which still continues as a cycle. Perhaps, one can point out Arjun Appadurai's ideas about the global economy's fundamental disjunctures: ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, finanscaples, and ideoscaples (296), which explain how our globalized world works. Appadurai points out to the constant flow of people and information around the globe, which is made a lot easier by technology. Not only are there more immigrants, workers, and tourists each year, the access to information about different parts of the world also becomes easier every day. That is why slum writing in the twenty-first century is a widely different phenomenon than in previous centuries. In the earlier years, slum writing focused almost completely on race, poverty, and morality, which are still prominent themes when it comes to slums, but the earlier writers only wrote about it to pass on the news, and a number of them tended to judge such places and their inhabitants as well, just as Rudyard Kipling did in *City of the Dreadful Night*. Geoffrey Moorhouse, however, did not judge the poor who suffered. In *Calcutta*, he argues that he tries to help people learn about and recognize the suffering there, which, he thinks, is the only way to fix the problem. Moorhouse wrote his work on today's Kolkata in the 1970s when

technology and the flow of travelers were not nearly as advanced as today; in our day, for most people, especially for most people in the global North, it only takes seconds to reach an unbelievable amount of information about anywhere and anything, and all it takes is an internet connection. Therefore, it is harder for travel writers to claim that they intend to inform people about slums and their inhabitants. This is a result of both technology and the ever-growing interest in slums throughout the global North; there are so many books, videos, news articles, and blogs about slums, and it is so easy to access them all that it is almost impossible for a writer to find out anything new and inform us about something that we had not already known. Since they do not have the same justification as Moorhouse, slum writing has become an ethically questionable practice. The ethical dilemma of slum tourism and slum writing becomes even clearer, as one realizes that it is also seen as a sub-chapter of a phenomenon that is called dark tourism, which was a term that Foley and Lennon first introduced in the 1990s, and it is generally thought that dark tourism refers to all sorts of tourism whose destination is related to death or suffering, which means it might be a quite vague term, as anything from a Holocaust museum to an active war zone might be considered as dark tourism. No matter how vague a term it might be, it is still true that touristic experiences like traveling to Yemen for excitement or visiting North Korea are morally questionable. Therefore, the mere fact that slum tourism is associated with such things shows to what extent it might be considered unethical, indecent, and inhumane.

Slum tourism or slum writing is, of course, not all black-and-white. As already seen in the comparison of Kipling and Moorhouse, it is an individual's own approach that determines whether it is, indeed, dark tourism or not. In the twenty-first century, people's primary goal is not to inform people about the unknown suffering in slums, but they might still have different reasons why they would like to visit places that are so radically different from where they live. The main reason, as it is in any touristic experience, is that difference. Travelers like to experience things that are different from what they are used to. However, in this context, the difference between the tourist and the locals is extreme, as the locals are vastly disadvantaged and poor people. Therefore, it is hard to claim that such travels are not voyeuristic in the twenty-first century. In order to understand the travelers' intentions, it might be beneficial to see what slum tours offer to tourists who wish to see Dharavi. Manfred Roles, who studied "poverty tourism" and researched slum tourism in Mumbai, suggests that there are mainly seven points of interest that might sum up the course of a slum tour:

Notes on the socio-spatial and ethnic differentiation in Dharavi, and information about cultural variety and the coexistence of very different population groups; visit of recycling activities and a variety of small scale industries (tannery, embroidery, pottery, etc.); detailed information and explanation regarding the economic significance of Dharavi for the national and global economy; visit to the market and commercial and cultural centre of Dharavi; information on the partly provisional and insufficient infrastructure of Dharavi (especially waste-water disposal and electricity); living and domestic conditions of the inhabitants, visits to the homes of the inhabitants, enabling of close contact to these; visit to social and cultural projects. (436)

This draws a picture as though the slum tours aimed to show the tourists a rather ‘cleaner’ side of the slums. Roles also points out that the tour operators say their goal is the reverse the negative image of the slums (436), and in order to do that, the workers and the economy of Dharavi are essential, which is important because the economy is a recurring theme in many works of travel writing about the slums India. Although Moorhouse’s focus on the workers and the economy is rather scientific than sentimental (as he refers to statistical things like their working conditions and how much they make), but that seems to have changed in the twenty-first century. The reason why the focus on worker’s and the economy has become more sentimental is that it can now be seen that some writers and guides might present the cheap and exploited labor force in slums as hard-working citizens who create possibilities even in the hardest situations, which portray a positive image, even though it is obvious that the truth is not positive at all. Slavoj Zizek also warns against a similar situation in “Nature and Its Discontents,” as he writes that ‘one should resist the temptation to elevate and idealize slum-dwellers into a new revolutionary class’ (40). Perhaps not as revolutionaries, but travel writings about slums seem to idealize the slum inhabitants because of their hard-working nature, when it must be questioned whether it is their nature, or are they simply forced to adapt into inhumane conditions to survive? The way their work is idealized poses the risk of romanticizing slums and their residents and causing their sufferings to be ignored even further in order to suppress the negative image of the slums, which is the exact opposite of what Geoffrey Moorhouse does, as he fully recognizes the negative image, while still accepting the fact that it is not all there is to know about such places.

Ellie Quinn is a British traveler with tens of thousands of followers, and she keeps a travel blog named *The Wandering Quinn*. She visited the Dharavi slum and decided to write about her experience in a blog article titled “Mumbai Slum Tour to Dharavi Slum – The Positive and Unique Side of Slum Tourism.” She decides to visit Dharavi with a tour guide, and she pays a company called Reality Tours, one of the most popular companies that offer

slum tours in the area. After giving some details about how to get there and how much it costs, the very first thing Quinn mentions (or the very first stop where her tour guide from the slums take her) is the sort of jobs that the slum residents have in Dharavi; she and her guide Tavy's first-ever stop is the recycling area, where they witness people collecting and bringing in plastics and tins, for which, according to Quinn, they earn an average of between 300-350 Indian rupees (3.45 – 4 euros) a day. After writing about how the old items are being recycled, she says, "I quickly realized everything had a use in the slum" (Quinn), which sounds like a rather good thing to hear, as those items do not go to waste and cause pollution, which is another issue in such an overcrowded district of the city, but those slum inhabitants are not doing this in order to prevent waste and pollution; they are doing this in order to earn money from it. The fact that many people have to collect waste proves that those people either have no jobs or do not make enough to earn a living from their jobs. In addition to this, Quinn also writes about the seasonal workers who move to Dharavi to work and support their families when there is no work to do in agriculture in their villages. These seasonal workers tend to be men who move to Mumbai alone because the rents in Dharavi is too expensive for them, and the reason for that is, she says, "I believe [it] comes down to the fact that Dharavi Slum is a legal and safe slum rather than an illegal one with no certainty" (Quinn), and she says that although it might sound like a hard life, "they are earning money, they have money to send home, and they have a purpose" (Quinn). Apart from seasonal workers' families staying behind, the only other time women are mentioned is also in terms of working conditions, as it is claimed that women in Dharavi earn the exact same amount as men per day, "although they are allowed to work less hours" (Quinn). There are no sources provided for this information, so we can assume that this is how her guide, Tavy informed her. The fact that most travel bloggers do not cite sources, and they simply aim to inform people about what they have heard from certain locals seem to be an issue with this type of travel writing, as what one might learn about the slums might drastically differ, depending on to whom you are talking to; a tour operator, a landlord and a Muslim woman in Dharavi might have, in fact, very different realities even though they come from an area that is hardly wider than 2 square kilometers. Since her source of information is the tour guide, Tavy, it becomes more apparent that the tour operators from the slums aim to portray a somewhat positive image of the slums, as the blog article carries on. In addition to jobs and the various alleged opportunities in the slums, even the housing conditions seem to be interpreted in a way that would sound more like a choice than an obligation. Quinn writes that the government provides people with flats that are near the slums, but people choose to stay in the slums. She writes that some people

would rather stay in the slums because they could simply add another floor and expand their living space upwards, and another reason she gives is, “Although privacy is lacking in the slum lanes, I can imagine the sense of community is high and suddenly decreases if you were to move into a flat” (Quinn). Therefore, it is apparent that the tour operators would rather highlight the positive side of the slums. Another travel blogger, Alex Reynolds, a woman from the US, also visits Dharavi with Reality Tours and decides to write about it on her travel blog named *Lost with Purpose*. Reynolds mentions that her guide is also a slum resident, even though he does not live in Dharavi, and her tour of the slum seems to reflect a rather positive image as well. She writes,

The tour took us through an area of Dharavi much more developed than one would expect. Many pathways were tidy and smelled better than much of Mumbai. Machines and workers hummed industriously, producing all kinds of materials from suitcases to pappadums. We learned how Mumbai’s plastic recycling is all done in Dharavi, alongside many other businesses. Together, all of the businesses within Dharavi’s depths rake in a whopping \$665 million each year. Heck, there is even Wi-Fi. (Reynolds)

Judging by the experiences of the two travel bloggers who have been to Dharavi, Mumbai, with the same company, Reality Tours, it could be said that this specific slum tour seems to be, to a certain extent, staged. In *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, Dean MacCannell argues that there are guided tours, indeed, that usually come with staged authenticity. He suggests, “There is a staged quality to the proceedings that lends to them an aura of superficiality, albeit a superficiality not always perceived as such by the tourist, who is usually forgiving about these matters” (98). Indeed, despite mentioning that she is in a rather privileged position, Ellie Quinn seems to be quite forgiving towards this staged authenticity. It is not clear whether the company sponsored her trip, in return for a mention in her blog, which might be the case with travel bloggers who have an influence on many followers through social media, or whether she simply found this slum tour and decided to participate. However, Quinn writes, “I hope this has given you a good insight into a slum in India and convinces you to go on a tour with Reality Tours, or has changed your opinion on slum tourism” (Quinn). However, Reynold is not so quick to accept this staged slum tour as Quinn, as she notes,

It was worlds apart from what one would expect from slum life, but I think that’s the point. Reality’s mission is clearly to show the positive aspects of slum life and build respect for the community. It’s fair—everyone deserves a chance to share the bright side of their story—but is it *too* optimistic? (Reynolds)

Reynolds states that she believes she might have only been shown the most polished aspects of slums, because, during the slum tour, there was ‘no mention of issues such as women’s safety, child labor, or issues with tuberculosis and cholera’ (Reynolds), which are fundamental issues that one must not ignore when it comes to slums. Moreover, Quinn also notes that Reality Tours has an office on the edge of the slum, where they sell items such as bags, t-shirts, and photos as souvenirs to tourists. Again, Reynolds mentions the same office in her travel blog, but on a suspicious note: “Leatherworkers toiled away before us, working for about 200 rupees each day before we were taken into what felt very much like a gift shop, filled with bags and wallets going for thousands of rupees (eagerly snapped up by several tour members)” (Reynolds). As a result, it could be said that the slum tour aims to present a positive image of the slums. However, it is up to the traveler to decide whether they find it convincing or they would rather stay suspicious, as what the tour does poses the risk of whitewashing the slums, because slum tours are now the subject of academic studies, news articles, travel blogs and even shows (such as Polly Fryer’s *Dark Tourist* on Netflix). Due to such a wide representation, many people across the world might be led to believe in an image of colorful slums, filled with hardworking people who could not be happier because of the sense of community they have, and the problems the inhabitants face might be overseen.

In their blog called *Our Taste for Life*, Charlotte and Natalie, a couple from the United Kingdom, travel worldwide and write about their experiences. While visiting Mumbai, they also decide to visit Dharavi. However, what makes their visit to the slum different is that they decide to go on their own, instead of going there with a tour guide; they write, “We understood from online research, that it was possible to go with an organized tour; however, the idea of paying somebody to exploit poverty did not sit well with us” (Our Taste for Life). What makes their visit interesting is that even though they did not care for the polished slum tours not to exploit poverty, they have still come to similar conclusions in some aspects as people who go there with the tour. First, they mention the ‘informal economy’ in Dharavi and note that it equates to hundreds of millions of dollars. This informal economy is exactly what captures the attention of the other two travel bloggers as well, as they mention recycling and people working in workshops to make products like clothes and bags. Although they chose to go on their own instead of joining a slum tour, Charlotte and Natalie seem to come to the same conclusion as the travel bloggers who did the tour; the economy is not only the important aspect, but it also presented as a positive side of the slums in their blog, too. In “Without a Guide in Dharavi: India’s Biggest Slum,” after seeing the slum, they write in a

bold font that ‘happiness really does come from within you, not from what you have’ (Charlotte and Natalie). They also add:

And the success stories of the flourishing economy, prove that you can prosper in the most challenging of circumstances. It took us some time, but we can now understand why even those who have made enough money to leave, choose to stay within the slum environment. It would be a culture shock to leave the united community of the slum, for the disconnected society that most of us live in today. (Charlotte and Natalie)

The fact that the economic situation in a slum like Dharavi is the highlight of slum tours might not seem odd at all, but the way this poverty is interpreted is completely different from the slum writings in the past, such as Moorhouse’s or Kipling’s works. What sets travelers today apart is how they interpret the extreme economic challenges that slum inhabitants face as something rather positive, as they regard the slums as an alternative space to what they are used to; while some are suspicious and try to be cautious not to romanticize or exploit the challenges of the slums, some of them seem to believe that the slum inhabitants they see are somehow freed from the monotonous way of life in the global North. However, such an interpretation not only romanticizes the slum residents’ lives, but it is also false. It is wrong because we cannot see slums, in this case, the slum of Dharavi, as an alternative place with an informal economy because, after all, the slum residents’ cheap labor force is an innate part of global capitalism. They do not produce for themselves and maintain a domestic economy. Their labor is simply used as a cheap alternative, and their products are shipped off to places outside of the slums. Therefore, they are, in fact, not an alternative to, but a very crucial part of the system. In addition to that, this system disenfranchises them from the rest of the society, while still maintaining them in a place that is tucked away and kept hidden from anyone who does not specifically wish to see it. As a result, it can be seen that some of the travel writers in our day might fall into the trap of regarding the slum residents as authentic and elevating them into a sort of revolutionary class because they do not appear to live in a vastly different and free space, as Slavoj Žižek warns (Žižek 40 - 41). According to Žižek, the reason why the slum residents are idealized and romanticized is ‘how many features of slum dwellers fit the good old Marxist determination of the proletarian revolutionary subject’ (41). According to Žižek, the slum-dwellers have to invent some modes of solidarity to survive this place where they are ‘forcibly thrown together’ (41). This solidarity, this ‘mode of being together’ (41), is the reason why some travelers might romanticize slums and the slum dwellers’ way of life.

As technology improved, it became much easier to consume, produce and distribute new things in the twenty-first century, which means that the only means of reading about slums are not through professional journalists or authors like Geoffrey Moorhouse or Dominique Lapierre. Every traveler now has the means to write and the opportunity to attract a huge audience from all around the world. This also helps us see a more individualistic and sentimental side of travel writing, as travel bloggers tend to focus on their own experiences, whereas professional journalists and authors might try their best to make it as informative and objective as possible. It is also interesting that this brings out a rather old sense of travel writing, where the focus was on the tension that results in the journey into the unknown and dangerous. In *“Travel Writing: The Self and the World,”* Casey Blanton writes, “The traveler/narrator’s well-being and eventual safe homecoming become the primary tensions of the tale, the traveler’s encounter with the other its chief attraction” (2). Travel bloggers’ writing about the slums might be a good example of this; to keep their readers entertained, they sometimes go to places vastly different and strange from what they are used to so that they could spark an interest in their possible readers and followers. The reason why people travel to slums, or perhaps other places that might be considered as ‘dark destinations’ more often in the twenty-first century is not only technological advancement, such as more and cheaper flights around the world but this idea of doing something completely different and in a way, going off the beaten path is perhaps the main reason. In *The Tourist Gaze*, John Urry calls this ‘romantic gaze’ (64), and he explains,

...more and more people wish to isolate themselves from the existing patterns of mass tourism; the increased fascination of the developed world with the cultural practices of less developed societies; the development of tourist as essentially a ‘collector’ of places often gazed upon and experienced on the surface. (64)

Although people are driven to this mode of tourism (dark tourism, or slum tourism in particular), because it helps them escape the feeling that they are just another typical tourist. This might explain why some people tend to see a rather positive image, an image of an alternate kind of living in the slums, since people associate things that are different and less touristic with positivity. Therefore, Urry’s romantic gaze might be another explanation to why some travelers also end up romanticizing the slums, along with Slavoj Žižek’s suggestion. However, despite this idealized interpretation of slums that is common today, travelers who visit the slums cannot help but feel guilty and question whether it is ethically right to visit such places. Since they do not have an ultimate purpose or agenda like Geoffrey Moorhouse, the twenty-first-century travel bloggers cannot help but come off as one of those people who

take a photograph of others suffering and moving away; in a sense, they cannot help but feel like they are treating the slums like a zoo. This is, of course, a result of the asymmetrical nature of the gaze between the travelers and the slum-dwellers. The travel blogger Ellie Quinn writes,

...as much as I wanted to do a slum tour, I had a feeling participating in slum tourism in India was the wrong thing to do, not ethical or responsible, and after all I did not want to go and stare at thousands of people's poverty, feel helpless and then leave back to my privileged life. (Quinn)

Reynolds also writes on her travel blog *Lost with Purpose*, "Why do we want to see what these people live like? Do we really want to encourage poverty as a tourist attraction?" In addition to Reynolds and Quinn, Natalie and Charlotte also point out that they were aware of the organized tours, but they did not feel comfortable with paying someone to exploit others' poverty (Charlotte and Natalie). Therefore, travelers who visit slums in our day seem to be quite aware that this is, in fact, a voyeuristic experience; they do feel discomfort at the idea of visiting slums as tourists, but in the end, they all give in to the sense of curiosity and do the tour or go there on their own. This discomfort and moral dilemma make altruism a prominent topic when it comes to slum tourism and slum writing. The tour organizers seem to be aware that it is, indeed, a controversial subject. As one enters the website of Reality Tours (realitytoursanstravel.com) and clicks the "Dharavi Slum Tours" page, the very first thing they come across is this description of their slum tours in Dharavi:

Our ethical and educational Dharavi slum tours give visitors a unique glimpse into everyday life for many Mumbaikars while breaking down the negative stereotypes associated with slums. Eighty percent of the profits from every tour are invested back into the community through the programs of our NGO, Reality Gives and most of our guides are from the community. ("Dharavi Slum Tour" Reality Tours)

The first things they would like to mention are that their tours are ethical, the negative aspects of slums are just stereotypes, and finally, they are an NGO, to which they donate eighty percent of their profits. Being aware of people's questions, the tour organizers try to convince and put potential customers at ease by pointing out that the slum tour is ethical because the money a tourist will pay will be invested back into the community. Therefore, the potential customers would, in fact, be helping the slum residents by participating in a slum tour. This approach seems to work, as Reality Tours is a popular choice when it comes to slum tours. Tourists, travel bloggers, and academics prefer or study their company and their charity work in the slums. Although they decided to visit Dharavi on their own, even Charlotte and Natalie write that the organized tours give back to the community, so people should not necessarily refrain

from choosing to with an organized tour (“Our Taste for Life”). As for the charity mentioned, Alex Reynolds and Ellie Quinn mention on their blogs that they run a school in Dharavi. Reynolds says she did not enter the school or meet any students. She adds, “Perhaps suspicious, perhaps sensible – do not want to disrupt school in session” (“Lost with Purpose”). However, Quinn completes her own slums tour by seeing a classroom rented by Reality Tours, where they provide classes, such as computer courses, to the locals (“The Wandering Quinn”). Although it is apparent that they do, in fact, give back to the locals, whether it is true that they give eighty percent or not might not be clear to everyone. Indeed, there must be many people who are skeptical and cannot decide whether they should do it or not, as Reality Tours has a complete page dedicated to transparency on their website, where they have audited documents of their tax returns, where one can find their incomes, the amount of the taxes they pay and their donations. They write on their website,

Eighty percent of profits after tax for the whole company is put back into Community projects. We do this by supporting our sister organization and NGO (charity) Reality Gives. For most people, this is enough to know, but we understand why people might be skeptical of this claim, so the following information is for those people who would like to “audit” us properly. (“Transparency” Reality Tour)

The fact that they feel the need to dedicate a whole page to transparency and release documents of their income and profit to prove that they are, in fact, giving money to charity proves that it is imperative for people to feel that they are helping the slum residents by doing the slum tour. Otherwise, they might not do the tour at all. This, however, might also be interpreted as the company owners’ anxiety of losing customers. However, altruism seems to be consistent in slum tourism in the twenty-first century. For example, a Lithuanian travel vlogger, Jacob Laukaitis, visits Dharavi and creates a vlog about his experience on his YouTube channel named after himself. Laukaitis is a travel vlogger with almost seven hundred thousand followers, and he calls himself a digital nomad, not a tourist or a traveler. As a result, he tries a different approach than other travelers, and instead of doing a slum tour like Quinn or Reynolds or making a self-guided day trip like Charlotte and Natalie, he decides to stay at his friend Praveen’s place in Dharavi for five days to experience the slums like a real slum dweller truly; he meets Praveen on an earlier trip to India, and Praveen agrees to host him and show him the slum for five days. What makes Jacob Laukaitis’ trip to Dharavi different from the travel bloggers mentioned before is that his visit is not guided by any tour guides, and it is also not as short and self-guided as Charlotte and Natalie’s visit. Although his travel vlog does not aim to spread the word about the harsh and upsetting conditions in

Dharavi, like the crime rate and women's safety, he still manages to provide a more authentic experience than most travelers, as he stays with Praveen and experiences his way of living, from showering in the slums to entertainment. Following Praveen's steps, he witnesses some extremely polluted spots in Dharavi, which are not to be found in Reality Tours' itinerary. What is more interesting is that throughout this rather authentic slumming experience, Laukaitis does not seem to engage in anything that might be considered altruistic. However, he has uploaded another video, where he, about a year later, goes back to the slums of Mumbai, but this time, he goes there to clean the slums, not to visit them. Inspired by an Indian student's message on social media, Laukaitis asks people in Mumbai to help him clean a busy train station in the slums, and he manages to find more than 25 people to help him clean this polluted train station. Thus, Laukaitis chooses a more engaging way to help the slums, but he, too, cannot escape altruism like many others before him, even though he goes to Dharavi on his own, and stays there with an actual slum dweller. Therefore, it cannot be said that altruism is something that is only put forward by the tour companies in order to ease their customers' conscience and increase their sales. As people's true intentions cannot be known, it cannot be said for sure why such travelers engage in altruistic actions; it is highly possible that people are simply more caring today than they were a hundred or perhaps fifty years ago, so they feel that they must help people in the slums. However, it is also possible that some travel bloggers or vloggers with many followers on social might use altruism as a shield against criticism for visiting slums and exploiting poverty. That is why some people might regard such actions as rather self-serving, and such actions might even be criticized as voluntourism or white savior complex. On the concept of the white savior complex, Julio Cammarota writes,

“The white savior syndrome has the tendency to render people of color incapable of helping themselves – infantile or hapless/helpless victims who survive by instinct. [...] Any progress or success tends to result from the succor of the white individual, which suggests that escaping poverty or ignorance happens only through the savior's intelligence.” (Cammarota 244)

Therefore, some people see such altruistic actions by people from the global North as a continuation of the colonialist and racist mindset that undermines people of color in the global South. It is, in a way, a contemporary expression of Rudyard Kipling's idea of the ‘white man's burden,’ and therefore seen as degrading and offensive. However, this is a sensitive topic, as it may also be unjustifiably used to accuse people from the global North, even though they do not consciously or subconsciously have such a savior complex. Therefore, this thesis research intends not to determine whether such a complex lies beneath the altruistic

actions of each specific traveler who is mentioned. The intention is, simply, to point out that altruism has now become a solid part of slum tourism in the twenty-first century, and it is a possibility that travelers might be altruistic for their own benefits, rather than those of the slum dwellers,' as altruism rose as a result of morally questionable and voyeuristic nature of the slum tourism in the twenty-first century.

Considering the exploitation of poverty for tourism, the romanticization of life in slums, and altruism, the gaze between travelers and slum tourists, is obviously rather one-sided gaze. As previously quoted, Sartre thinks that 'black men' have started to look back into the eyes of white people, which scare them (Sartre 7 – 11), but reading about the slums, from Rudyard Kipling's day to our times, it does not seem like the 'black men' in slums have the ability to look back at the people who travel from all around the world to observe them, write about them and objectify them. "Looking relations are never innocent," as Kaplan suggests (Kaplan 6), but it should be discussed what takes away the innocence from the simple act of looking in slum tourism and literature. In Kipling's day, it was colonialism and the idea of racial superiority that people from the global North brought along with them. In Kipling's day, Indian people, especially those from the lower classes, were not free to look at them due to imperialism. However, they still seem to lack this ability, even though India is a free nation, where every citizen has the right to vote. Therefore, the inability to gaze does not result from a direct political or military oppression; the main differences that set these people apart are, first of all, ethnic and cultural differences. For instance, despite the existence of slums in Europe, in countries like Romania, people do not travel there to idealize those places as an alternative way of life; in literature or media, poverty is generally romanticized only if it is endured by people who are not white, people who are from Southeast Asia, South America or countries like South Africa. The second and most important element that makes the global North into a subject and the global South into an object in our day and takes people like slum dwellers' look and voice away is the international division of labor. As Spivak argues, "The real mark of 'geographical (geopolitical) discontinuity' is the international division of labor" (84). This is the most apparent line that continues to divide the two sides long after the end of colonialism, and people who live in slums of the big, industrialized cities seem to be victims of this division caused by global capitalism. Although Geoffrey Moorhouse acknowledges this and writes about how the British still maintained to keep their wealth after the Independence, while Indian workers were still a source of cheap labor, especially in the chapter "Wealth" (132 – 168), the slum writers in our day do not seem to acknowledge or recognize this issue at all. Therefore, all they do is reduced to observing poverty for the sake

of travel and entertainment, which is why it has turned into something that is much more voyeuristic than Geoffrey Moorhouse's *Calcutta*. Since this is a morally ambiguous practice, instead of ceasing to exist, it led to altruism as a solution to keep it going. However, the fact that all this charity does not stop people from questioning whether it is ethical to visit slums shows us that altruism cannot erase the moral ambiguity that comes with slum tourism.

3.3 Conclusion: *Can the Subaltern Speak in Travel Writing?*

From academic research to travel writing and media, every source makes it clear that slums are struck by poverty and extremely tough living conditions, but does that necessarily mean that they are subaltern? According to Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, the 'West' still maintains itself as the Subject and keep the 'East' as the Other (66), and this manifests itself through global capitalism and international division of labor, which is usually ignored by Western scholars such as Deleuze and Foucault when they discuss the worker's struggles (66 – 67). As a result, it can, indeed, be said that there is a class that is so far oppressed that they are not even visible to those who discuss the struggles of the oppressed like the proletariat. Not only disregarded in this subject and the Other relation, but they are also a direct making of the subject, as Spivak argues that global capitalism is the reason for 'the subject-production of worker and unemployed within nation-state ideologies in its Center' (67). This particular situation can be seen in the slums of India, and it is also reflected in the travel literature that is analyzed in this thesis. For instance, in *Calcutta*, Geoffrey Moorhouse writes how the British continue to 'play a very decent hand in the wealth of the city' (146 – 147) even after the Independence, and he also states how many companies the British still control, even though their names changed (such as in the case of the Imperial Tobacco Company of India which became the India Tobacco Company) (147), and Moorhouse also states that the wealth that originates in India through such companies are shipped back to India (148). Moreover, Moorhouse also mentions a district of the city with many offices and headquarters, a district where rather privileged Indians and British businessmen find themselves, and he calls this place 'Calcutta's Wall Street' (150). Therefore, in Moorhouse's work, it can be observed how many aspects of colonialism are manifested through global capitalism in India; the global North continues to export a political and financial system, through which they can still control a decent proportion of the wealth and ship it back to their lands. Meanwhile, Western concepts like Wall Street are also exported and recreated in India. Moorhouse points out that this city is 'by far the richest city in India' (133), and he elaborates,

...this is where, between 1956-7 and 1966-7, 49.6 percent of India's exports left the country and where 30.4 percent of the imports arrived. It is where, in 1964, 15 percent of India's manufacturing industry was based, where 30 percent of the nation's bank transactions occurred, where 30 percent of the national tax revenue was produced. (133)

Therefore, it is evident that within the framework of capitalism, Calcutta was, in fact, a vibrant and well-functioning city, but how do Indian people from lower-classes, people who live or end up in slums, fit within this system? Their part is to provide cheap labor that would not be possible in any countries in the global North. Moorhouse calls the West Bengali region that Calcutta is in 'the Ruhr of modern India' (134) and mentions how industrial the city and the area of three hundred miles of the city, "The industry is based upon an endless supply of manpower and a vast accumulation of natural sources" (134). Especially the people from the rural parts of India are drawn to urban areas because this situation means there is always need for workers in the cities. Therefore, a great number of these laborers are immigrants to the city, and although they can find jobs, these jobs never pay enough for them to be able to live in a humane way; Moorhouse notes that these workers cannot even find a place to live for themselves, so they often share small rooms with other men, and they are also separated from their families: "...the workman, though obtaining employment, has never had quite enough money to keep his wife and children on the higher cost of living in the city" (145). Thus, these people are forced to work in harsh conditions, for which they are not even compensated enough to find a decent place to live and keep their families together. Instead, they must share rooms with other men in the slums and send money to their families in the rural areas. According to Moorhouse, "Calcutta dispatches the equivalent of fourteen million pounds in this way" (145). Moorhouse also notes that Delhi and Bombay might provide better conditions than Calcutta, but immigrants from the rural areas have no access to any means of transportation, so their only option is to walk to the city if they wish to move and look for a job there. He adds, "He can walk to Calcutta if need be in a matter of weeks, but he would be dead before he was even halfway to the capital of India" (142); these people must endure such living conditions that even their own land is inaccessible to them, and they must walk for days and even weeks in order to reach the next city and find a job, which does not provide enough income for the workers. Therefore, the Marxist idea of division of labor in global capitalism that Spivak refers to is clearly found in Geoffrey Moorhouse's *Calcutta*, and indeed, it victimizes the lower-class people in countries like India and even causes them to live in the slums.

In our day, compared to Moorhouse's 1970s, not much has changed regarding the international division of labor and how it affects Indians and slums. For instance, when travel bloggers go to slums, one of the first and most important aspects of their texts is the labor force in the slum. On their travel blog *Our Taste for Life*, Charlotte and Natalie point out, "Despite the harsh living conditions, Dharavi beholds a thriving economy, equating to hundreds of millions of dollars" (Charlotte and Natalie). One of the first things that captures the attention of the travel vlogger Jacob Laukaitis is also the labor force, as he says, over the footage of laborers in Dharavi, "Since there is very little government regulation, it has become a hub for entrepreneurs and a place of incredibly cheap labor" (Laukaitis 1:04 – 1:10). Moreover, Ellie Quinn mentions how men from rural areas immigrate to Dharavi to work there, and they share rooms with other men who do the same thing. Quinn writes,

This, of course, sounds like a hard life and I will fully admit that seeing the men work in such hot, small, and hard conditions is hard, but it is better than feeling sorry for them because they have nothing. They are earning money. They have money to send home, and they have a purpose. (Quinn)

Therefore, it is obvious through travel writing that life has not improved for the slum inhabitants, and nearly half a century later, the same harsh living conditions that Moorhouse observed can still be observed by travelers today. On her travel blog "Lost with Purpose," Reynolds brings another aspect of the cheap labor into light, as she writes,

Leatherworkers toiled away before us, working for about 200 rupees each day, before we were taken into what felt very much like a gift shop, filled with bags and wallets going for thousands of rupees (eagerly snapped up by several tour members). (Reynolds)

This excerpt is also important because it shows us how disenfranchised the slum inhabitants are, as they do not even make enough money to buy the simple products they help create. As a result, it is seen that the international division of labor, which is, according to Spivak, usually disregarded while studying the global South, can be found both in the twentieth and twenty-first-century travel literature. Even though some scholars tend to overlook or ignore it, it can be seen through travel literature, as it depends on observations. However, the fact that global capitalism and international division of labor give these people a certain role and thereby turn them into oppressed subjects does not necessarily mean that these people cannot speak by itself. More specifically, although it is perhaps the most important aspect of the slums and the subalternity, reducing the subaltern into class struggles might not always be accurate.

Therefore, the Marxist ideas that Spivak refers to are very important, but it will not be enough to understand the subaltern subjects alone. For instance, the two travel bloggers who visit

Dharavi are guided by a tour guide from the slums, and people working for this tour company, especially the tour guides, have a huge effect on slum tourists and how they see the slums. Therefore, people from the slums who do have a voice and a certain authority (as the tour guide decides where they would go and if the tourists are allowed to take photographs or not) are to be found in some travel blogs. However, Ellie Quinn writes on her blog, “I took part in the two and a half hours slum tour that Reality Tours offer for 900Rs (just over 10.00 pounds)” (Quinn). Considering laborers such as leatherworkers earn only about 200 rupees a day, charging a single tourist more than four times above a workers’ income is, of course, not so cheap for the slums, and Reality Tours seems to donate a big portion of their profits to charity, but this excludes the salaries of people who work for them, so it can be assumed that the tour guides earn much more than a regular worker in Dharavi. Thus, the financial status might help someone raise above the people whose voices cannot be heard, but that does not seem to be the only way. The travel vlogger Jacob Laukaitis stays in Dharavi for five days, and he is hosted by a young Dharavi resident named Praveen. Even though Praveen seems to be going through the same struggles as everyone else in Dharavi regarding housing and sanitary conditions, he is still seen in the video, and just like the tour guide, he also leads the travel vlogger in his tour of Dharavi. He also speaks, saying, “No one can stop the slums, the slums will be forever with us!” (Laukaitis 11:49 – 11:53). Even though Praveen does not enjoy the same privileges as a tour guide at the most popular tour company in Dharavi, he still gets to make his voice heard. However, in both cases, what makes it possible for them to make themselves seen and heard is the existence of visitors from the global North. If it were not for the travelers’ interest in slums like Dharavi, Praveen, or the tour guides would have much less chance of making their opinions heard. In addition to that, almost everyone who directly or indirectly speaks through travel writing in both Geoffrey Moorhouse’s *Calcutta* and the travel blogs is predominantly males. Female slum inhabitants are mentioned, but they are not given a voice. Only Alex Reynolds very briefly mentions that there are many issues with women’s safety in the slums, but there are no women subjects who speak for themselves in any of the travel writings that are so far analyzed in this thesis. Apart from the gender question, while visiting slums in India, most travel writers focus on Hindu culture, even though the Muslim minorities in India are also significant for anyone who wishes to understand India. Moorhouse mentions the existence of Muslims and even gives some details, and also points out the conflict between Hindus and Muslims, noting “In some parts of the city, where Hindus and Muslims lived close together, pacts were made to keep the peace and to protect each other from mobs” (218). However, there are no visible Muslim people in any

of these works about the slums in India (Although it is not possible to know his religion, it is assumed that Praveen was born into a Hindu family because of his name and the Hindu symbol on his calendar that he hung on his wall). Moreover, Muslim women and children are never mentioned, and some assumably Muslim women in burqas can only be seen passing by in Laukaitis' travel vlog. Therefore, intersectionality must be considered when it comes to slums and the subaltern; a Hindu male might be able to rise above the harsh conditions in the slums to make himself seen, and perhaps a Muslim male in the slums might be able to do the same, but when the gender is involved, it is suddenly different, as women are much less visible. In addition to that, ethnicity and religion also play a major role. As a result, treating the Hindu males, Hindu women/children, and Muslim males, Muslim women/children the same way and trying to fit it into a framework of capitalism and class struggles will not be helpful. While it is crucial, it will not be enough to understand what makes these people unable to speak for themselves. For instance, it is not only the tour guides, that assumably earn more than average in Dharavi who can speak for themselves but also someone like Praveen; what gives these slum dwellers any voice is whether people from the global North provide them a platform to make themselves heard or not. In this internet age, where most of us can easily make ourselves heard, many people who live in the slums have limited or no access to electricity and the internet, and they have no other means of making themselves heard, either. That is why the subjects in slums are not directly accessible to us; we still have to either travel there and see it for ourselves or depend on others' representations of them, and those representations seem to leave many people out and include mostly a certain part of the demographics in the slums. That is why slum dwellers are subaltern, and they, indeed, cannot speak for themselves; just like the politician from the rural parts of India, Sibsankar Jha in Moorhouse's *Calcutta*, we only get to learn about them through people like Moorhouse and Jha's voice is, then, forever lost, and all we have left is what Moorhouse has written about him. Just like Spivak's example of the Sati tradition, where we only get to hear from the British and the Hindu men, we only get to hear from rather privileged people from the global North or the privileged Indians when it comes to people in the slums, not from the slum residents themselves (unless people give them a platform like some travel bloggers/vloggers do). Therefore, Marxist ideas of representation in the sense of *Vertretung* and *Darstellung* are still our sole options to learn about most of the slum dwellers, even in the internet age, and even then, some of them (mostly those who are more prone to oppression because of their gender, ethnicity, and belief) are still left out.

4- The Subaltern Space in Novels and Films: A Fair Representation or Postcolonial Exoticism?

We mainly depend on the literary or media representations of the slum dwellers if we wish to learn more about them. Travel writing is, therefore, a crucial means of such research, as it is a direct representation of real places and people by the writers. However, fiction in literature and media is also a very crucial part of representation; while writing a work of fiction, the writer will, of course, not be so insistent on objectivity as most travel writers. As travel writers both aim to be objective and cannot help but let their subjective ideas be a part of the narrative, it might be, in some cases, not so easy to figure out what is the truth and what is an interpretation of the writer. As opposed to this struggle, in works of fiction, the reader is already aware that it is the author's imagination of a certain place, time, and people. Such an imagination is also quite important because fiction can reflect and reaffirm certain ideas. In "Imperialism and Textuality," Elleke Boehmer points out to the importance of texts when it comes to the cultural aspect of imperialism. She says, "Imperialism is a thing of mind and representation" (24), and she writes,

Readings of imperial texts suggest [...] how it was possible for a world system which presided over the lives of millions to legitimate itself by way of myth and metaphor while at the same time masking suffering. Colonial writing is important for revealing the ways in which that world system could represent the degradation of other human beings as natural, an innate part of their degenerate or barbarian state. Overdetermined by stereotype, the characterization of indigenous peoples tended to screen out their agency, diversity, resistance, thinking, voices. (21)

Neither the two texts nor the film that are going to be subject of this chapter are colonial works of literature, but Boehmer's suggestion of how literature can be used to justify and make a horrible system seem acceptable applies to many works of literature and media that were created after colonial times. As mentioned in the earlier chapters, people, especially the Indian nationalists, did not use to be so fond of the slums, and politicians tried to have them demolished many times. Geoffrey Moorhouse was also trying to convince people to visit such places to see the wonders they have to offer, which means not many people were interested in them when he published *Calcutta*. However, as the upper classes started to realize how important places like Dharavi are for global capitalism, not only many slums like Dharavi gained legal status, but the narrative about such places also changed completely. The way it has changed was that slums started to be romanticized in literature and media; they started to be romanticized as places full of hardworking culture and a vibrant community that lives in solidarity. For instance, *National Geographic* called Dharavi "a place of audacious dreamers,"

and the *New York Times* recommended Dharavi as “hives of entrepreneurship” and suggested it as a destination to its readers (Brook 137). In “Slumming It: The Gospel of Wealth Comes for Dharavi,” Daniel Brook suggests that a romanticized image of the Dharavi slum was so successful because it serves to ‘one of the most durable fantasies of the business culture – the notion that the poor make better, tougher capitalists than the rich’ and how it pictures the poor ‘enthusiastically support the system that keeps them poor’ (Brook 138). Kalpana Sharma also writes about Dharavi as an Indian writer (who does not come from or live in the slums) in *Rediscovering Dharavi*, and she seems to let the slum dwellers speak for themselves and describe the extremely tough conditions that they must endure. However, it is debatable whether it is objective or not, because she takes their stories and gives it a positive tone, turning them into inspiring stories about hardworking people. For instance, she mentions how diverse Dharavi is; how there are many Hindus, Muslims, and others, but it is generally peaceful, and she thinks the only reason for this is the fact that all the slum residents are only able to care about their work. She quotes a slum resident named Ramjibhai Pithabhai Patel, who says, “We do our work. We are working people. We do not have time for anything else. We work from seven a.m. to seven p.m. If we do not work, we die” (70). Moving on, Sharma does not seem to be bothered by the fact that Patel believes he would die if he stopped working so hard, but she is only worried that the peace, which she believes is due to people not being able to focus on anything else but work, and she is anxious if that might change. In another chapter, Sharma refers to how Dharavi’s so-called informal economy works, and she writes,

No one here has ever heard about labor standards or occupational health hazards. Such concepts have never interfered with a day’s work in these production units that hark back to the beginning of the industrial era. All you need is a room, a hole, some coal, some sand and motor oil and poor men willing to destroy their lungs. (103-104)

The words Sharma chooses to use are interesting, as she perceives certain regulations for working conditions that would ensure them to work in humane conditions as ‘interference,’ while believing that the poor men are doing this out of willingness. Like the tour guides from Reality Tours, Sharma also seems to strive to draw a rather positive image of the slums, assumably for nationalistic reasons and probably reasons related to social class distinctions. However, one does not need to have such reasons, nor do they need to have such a goal. Because such romanticized and exotic images of places like Dharavi run wild in many people’s imaginations due to our cultures, many people tend to reproduce and help continue

such images, which can be seen in *Shantaram*, *Q&A*, and *Slumdog Millionaire*. Not only do such works of literature or media help reaffirm certain images and ideas, but they also wake an interest towards slums in people and inspire slum tourism. In *The Tourist Gaze*, John Urry writes,

Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos, which construct and reinforce that gaze. (5)

For instance, one of the reasons Dharavi is so popular for travelers is Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*. The travel blogger Ellie Quinn also notes, "Dharavi is also famous because it is where *Slumdog Millionaire* was filmed, a film which locals do not like. The first scene has the boys running through a small alleyway, and this is where we walked down" (Quinn).

4.1 *Shantaram* the International Bestseller: Slums and Exoticism

Gregory David Roberts is an Australian writer who was convicted of armed robbery during his heroin addiction; he escaped prison after taking advantage of a renovation that was taking place, and he fled to India with a fake New Zealander passport that he made for himself. Many years later, Roberts was captured in Germany and extradited to Australia to serve his remaining sentence, which is where and when he started writing his best-seller novel *Shantaram*, which introduces the protagonist Lin, who is a fictional character based on Gregory David Roberts' own experiences, and Lin's story from the time he sets foot in the old Bombay (from the setting in the novel, such as the war in Afghanistan and the Soviet involvement, it is understood that it took place in the 1980's when the city was still called Bombay) until the time he leaves India to fight a guerilla war in Afghanistan, and then, finally escaping to Pakistan.

Roberts' *Shantaram* offers an exciting adventure in every chapter. However, the way his protagonist Lindsey, or Lin perceives his surroundings while living in the slums makes it seem like the slums and the horrible conditions mentioned in the novel are somewhat whitewashed and even romanticized. First of all, Brigid Magner argues that in the Australian literary scene, "India is seen as a testing ground, or place of initiation for rough and ready colonials" (214). Alison Broinowski also suggests,

...nothing reminds us so much of the fictional Asia we used to know and love (or know and fear) as an Australian thriller about a past crisis in some Asian country. The questing Australian male (usually) who was tempted and challenged, and muddled

through mayhem, has been around in fiction and fact about Asia for over a century.
(Broinowski qtd. In Magner)

Magner and Broinowski's arguments suggest that there is a sense of colonial nostalgia in Roberts' novel. Starting with Lin's adventure into this dangerous and unknown 'eastern' land, Roberts' *Shantaram*, indeed, provides many orientalist images and thereby romanticizes and exotifies the Indian culture, and the slums of Bombay serve as the dangerous, unknown place, where Lin manages to create certain standards of living much easier than any Indian slum dwellers, arguably thanks to his criminal, but also Western background. Therefore, *Shantaram* has a parallel with colonial works of literature such as Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, in terms of its tone and setting, as the protagonist from the global North goes on an adventure to find himself and repent for his sins in a mysterious and dangerous land.

When Lin arrives in Bombay, he gets on a bus that takes him to the city center, and the bus drives through the slums, which is his first encounter with the slums in Bombay, and meets Prabaker, who offers to be his guide as soon as he steps out of the bus. When asked by Prabaker, what he thinks of the place, Lin answers,

Bombay was free – exhilaratingly free. I saw that liberated, unconstrained spirit wherever I looked, and I found myself responding to it with the whole of my heart. Even the flare of shame I had felt when I first saw the slums and the street beggars dissolved in the understanding that they were free, those men and women. No one drove the beggars from the streets. No one banished the slum dwellers. Painful as their lives were, they were free to live them in the same gardens and avenues as the rich and powerful. They were free. The city was free. I loved it. (21)

In this excerpt, it is obvious that Lin idealizes chaos in the slums of Bombay. He does not think they are forced to live in such terrible conditions. Instead, he believes they are free to do so. Being outside of the conventional society provides them with the privilege of not having to adhere to their rules. Through this excerpt, it can be seen that what Zizek has argued, 'the temptation to elevate and idealize slum dwellers into a new revolutionary class' is present in Roberts' *Shantaram*. Furthermore, Lin's culture shock is also another sign of how cultural differences shape his ideas about this new place he finds himself in. Lin says,

I knew nothing of the cultures there, clothed in robes and saris and turbans. It was as if I had found myself in a performance of some extravagant, complex drama, and I did not have a script. But I smiled, and smiling was easy, no matter how strange and disorienting the street seemed to be. (21)

The emphasis on how 'extravagant' and 'drama-like' is clearly a sign of exoticism. There is a 'process of domestication' here, where the narrator takes something that is strange and unknown, and translates it into something he can make sense of (Wasserman qtd. In Forsdick

14), an extravagant performance. It is rather an ‘old-style exoticism’ where only strange and superficial things like unusual costumes and habits are taken into account (Lebel qtd. in Forsdick 17).

Shortly after he arrives in Bombay, it seems like Lin does not act like other travelers there. He sees Prabaker as his friend; Prabaker also starts to treat him as such, and with him, he sees parts of Bombay that he most likely would not if he were to stay in a circle of travelers and expats in central Delhi, as Prabaker tells him that he will take Lin to the ‘real Bombay,’

“Real will be full, baba,” Prabaker assured me, “and deal will be plenty also. Now you will see it the really city. Usually, I am never taking the tourists to these places. They are not liking it, and I am not liking their not liking. Or maybe sometimes they are even liking it too much, in these places, and I am liking that even less, isn’t it? (65)

Since people living in slum-like conditions make up most of the city (Shaban 69), Prabaker’s suggestion of what is ‘real Bombay’ might perhaps be somewhat right. Moreover, Prabaker is also aware of most travelers’ reaction to the slums; they either cannot handle this side of the city, or they enjoy it too much in a rather voyeuristic manner, but Prabaker thinks this would not be the case with Lin, as he says, “Now my Bombay, with your good heads and your good hearts, you will see it all” (65). It is clear that Lin, a character who is based on the author himself, does not see himself as a tourist, and from what he tells us as a first-person narrator, it is also clear that he believes the real Bombay locals do not see him as a tourist, either. Although Lin does not look at India as a tourist, it could be said that the narrative about India and Indian people seems to be heavily influenced by the author’s background as an Australian white man; since Gregory David Roberts fictionalizes his own experiences, it is hard to say what is based on a true story and what is fiction in *Shantaram*. The author Roberts has a YouTube channel, where he answers his readers’ questions, and on a video titled “Shantaram – How Much of the Book is Real?” he explains that all the key events, such as the facts that he escaped from prison, ran away to Bombay, lived in a village, moved to slums and went to Afghanistan are all real, anything that occurred within these settings could potentially be fiction. Therefore, his depictions of the slum life must be taken with a pinch of salt. One of Lin’s very first experiences of the ‘real Bombay’ is a visit to a child slave market, and it is not possible to know if there was such a slave market in the middle of Bombay, where people could just go and bargain to buy a child as a slave, as Lin’s narrative portrays such a mysterious and dangerous image of the slums and India that might be considered stereotypical. As Lin gets to the slave market, it can be seen that he behaves in a similar way

to most slum tourists in India; the guard at the entrance of the slave market does not let Lin in at first, but Prabaker says, "I have told him that you are not one of these tourist fellows. I have told him that you have learned the Marathi language" (78), and when Lin speaks in Marathi, the guard is suddenly very pleased, and he lets them in. Although the author makes sure to let the reader know that Lin is not another traveler in Bombay, this is the beginning of Lin's experience of the real Bombay, so Lin visibly tries to adapt to what he thinks is the culture in this real Bombay. For instance, after he arrives in the slave market, he goes through the ethical self-questioning process most slum tourists do. In fact, Lin even calls this tour to the slums and the slave market 'Prabaker's dark tour of the city' (81), and he questions how one can see such a place and do nothing and not feel guilty about it. He then proceeds to justify it immediately by saying he cannot call the authorities to help the children, as he is a wanted man, and he also thinks the slave market would just appear in another location, even if he stops at this one. Here, Lin acts like a typical slum tourist; he engages in dark tourism and explains the reason behind his voyeuristic actions. Moreover, he implies that it was Prabaker's tour, so Prabaker is the reason why he is there, and he justifies his inaction towards what he sees, even though he is free to leave, but Lin, instead, stays and goes through the market like every other potential 'customers' there. In addition to that, Lin also says that Prabaker argues slavery is the better option for these children, as they are usually children who are taken from disaster zones or parents who have no means of feeding their child (81). Lin says, "But they were alive, Prabaker, said, those boys and girls. They were the lucky ones. For every child who passed through the people-market, there were a hundred others, or more, who had starved in unutterable agonies and were dead" (82). Thus, as in most works that are related to slum tourism, Lin's dark tour of the slums also includes an aspect of altruism, as it is argued that this practice, in fact, supposedly helps the victims there.

As Lin is being introduced to the slums by Prabaker, Lin is shocked by the things he witnesses there, and as already mentioned, he questions himself for his inaction towards the violence and crimes he sees. One of the reasons Lin argues for not intervening is also somewhat problematic, as he believes the illegal things he witnesses are simply part of Indian culture. For instance, Lin finds himself in a moral dilemma as he tours the slave market, but he tells himself, "It was not my country. It was not my culture. I had to know more" (81). Since claiming that this is their culture suggests willing participation of the slum dwellers in violence and crime, this argument by the narrator is quite problematic, and it also hints at how he views the slums and Indian people and culture in general. It is also not the only time Lin

makes this particular suggestion. In fact, as they make their way to the slum in a taxi with a very aggressive driver who is not very careful on the road, involved in a car accident (67). Right after the accident, Lin realizes Prabaker is anxious to leave, and he believes it is due to the risk that the car might catch on fire, but Prabaker explains that is not the reason. The reason why Prabaker is anxious to get away from the taxi as soon as possible is that he is sure a mob will attack the car whoever is in it, and right after Prabaker manages to pull Lin out of the car (69), a mob forms immediately, and attacks the taxi driver. Lin describes the attack as following,

The crowd reacted as one. They dragged the dazed and injured taxi driver from his cab in an instant and flung him on the bonnet of the car. He raised his arms in feeble pleading, but a dozen, twenty, fifty hands punched and tore at him. Blows drummed on his face, chest, stomach, and groin. Fingernails scratched and ripped, tearing his mouth open on one side almost to the ear, and shredding his shirt to the rags. (70)

After standing by as this horrific attack occurs, Lin has a similar reaction to how he would also react to the slave market. After watching the mob, Lin assures himself that he did not act, because he was taken by surprise, and then, he tells himself, “And I might have done more, I might have done something, anything if it had happened in Australia. ‘It is not your country,’ I told myself, as I watched the beating. ‘It is not your culture’” (70). Indeed, there seems to be a pattern of this sort of violence in the novel, as Lin witnesses another car crash later (355), but he is ready to help this time. First, he pulls his knife to cut the victim loose and help him (355), and then, just like he experienced in his first dark tour to the slums, a mob forms immediately to attack the driver whose fault caused the accident. However, this time, Lin decides to step in, and he shouts in Hindi, “Brothers! Brothers! Do not hit! Do not kill!” (356). He decides to be involved not because he learns that violence is not an innate part of these people’s cultures. On the contrary, as he has been living in the slums, working as a slum doctor, and befriending the slum mafia for a while, he believes he is a part of this culture now. Lin remembers how shocked and ashamed he was when he had seen such a mob during Prabaker’s dark tour almost eighteen months ago, and he says,

I remembered how helpless and cowardly I had felt when the crowd had carried the man’s broken body away. I had told myself then that it was not my fight. Eighteen months later, the Indian culture was mine, and that part of the city was my own. It was a black-market beat. My beat. I worked there every day. (356)

Just like Kalpana Sharma, who normalizes extremely tough working conditions in the slums and portrays it as the workers’ willingness (103) in *Rediscovering Dharavi*, the issues such as violence in Bombay’s slums are also normalized in *Shantaram* by claiming that this is Indian

people's culture. However, most slum dwellers are, in fact, people who are forced to live in those places because they are the only places where they can afford accommodation and the commute to work. Therefore, all the violence and illegal activities are not embraced by the slum dwellers; they are forced to live with them, as they have nowhere else to go. That is why Robert's presentation of the slums in the novel as 'the real Bombay' turns a bit controversial when it is revealed that Lin believes this is their culture; as he believes he is part of what he thinks is the Indian culture, Lin positions himself morally and intelligence wise higher than Indian people in that culture, as Indian people in and around the slums are portrayed as people with mob mentality as a culture, but as soon as Lin is part of that said culture, he, seemingly, makes it better. Therefore, this can be interpreted as an expression of white savior syndrome through the character of Lin. As Cammarota argues, "The white savior syndrome has the tendency to render people of color incapable of helping themselves – infantile or hapless/helpless victims who survive by instinct" (244). Indian people in Roberts' *Shantaram*, especially those in the slums, fit this description quite well. Furthermore, these incidents are not the only times when Lin's do-gooder character can be observed. In fact, the whole time he spent in the slums is characterized by it. Precisely, the reason why Lin finds himself in a mostly illegal slum is that the Indian visa on his forged New Zealander passport is about to expire, and Prabaker asks Johnny Cigar, someone who is close to the head of the *zhopadpatti* (the slum where he lives), to give Lin a place to live in the slums (147). However, right after Lin moves to the slums, a fire breaks out, and Lin tries to help the injured people, as he has a big first-aid kit which was a gift from his friends in New Zealand (167). The morning after the fire, Prabaker shows up in Lin's place and tells him that his patients are waiting for him (165). Just like that, Lin suddenly finds himself treating his fellow slum dwellers as a slum doctor throughout his time in the slums, even though he is not a doctor, and the only medical training he has ever got was a first-aid class when he was a teenager (167). As a result, Lin, as soon as he moves to the slums, finds himself working towards the benefit of slum residents, making their lives better, which also serves as his repentance for his crimes, as he, later in the novel, makes enough money to move out of the slums but decides to stay there to continue helping people. Even though Lin is a fugitive and has no money, he is positioned higher than other slum dwellers right away when he enters the slums as a slum dweller. Therefore, it can be said that Gregory David Roberts' *Shantaram* serves, in a way, as a rewriting of certain colonial themes, such as the 'East' as an unknown, messy, and dangerous place, and people there requiring help and guidance of those who belong to scientifically and technologically more advanced cultures. Additionally, the fact that the time he spends in this far away and

mysterious place also serves as Lin's repentance for the crimes he committed in his own land, so there is not only a sense of adventure, but also a sense of punishment, just like Robinson Crusoe being punished by God for not obeying his father, or indentured servants who were sent to the colonies to work for some years as a punishment for their crimes.

What seems to reflect a colonialist way of thinking in Roberts' *Shantaram* are not limited to an exotic and mysterious description of the slums and his repentance as a slum doctor. Other elements in the novel could also confirm this argument. For instance, the Indian friends that Lin makes in the underworld of the slums all happen to be very wise people who happen to enjoy discussing mysterious subjects such as religion and belief. Apart from that, they also serve as a mentor to Lin in many cases and provide spiritual guidance to him; according to Peter Pierce, these are the "usual eastern mentor figures" (Pierce quoted in Magner 215). For instance, one of the characters that inspire Lin with his unique wisdom is Qasim Ali Hussein. Qasim Ali Hussein is the head of the slum where Lin lives in. Lin says,

As head man in the slum, Qasim Ali Hussein was involved in every plan and decision in those preparations. His authority was clear and unquestioned, but it was subtle, unobtrusive leadership. An incident that occurred in those weeks before the rain brought me into the ambit of his wisdom, and revealed to me why it was so widely revered. (217)

What makes Lin realize the wisdom of Qasim Ali Hussein is yet another mob in the slums, but this time, the fighting is between two men: Faroukh and Raghuram. The two men start fighting while working to help Prabaker gather poles and lengths of wood (218) as part of their duties in the slums. When Qasim Ali asks the reason for the fight, they reply, "'The Prophet, may Allah grant him peace!' Faroukh shouted. 'He insulted the Prophet!' 'And he insulted the Lord Ram!' Raghuram shouted. The crowd supported one or the other with shrieks and condemnations" (218). Qasim Ali, then, reminds them they are close friends and demands that they stop immediately. When they fail to do so, Qasim Ali says that they need to be punished for what they have, and he will decide on a proper punishment with their parents (218). Later, Qasim Ali decides that Faroukh and Raghuram will work in the latrine, but they will do so, while their legs are tied to each other; he takes off his scarf and declares that he will tie them together with it: "It will remind you that you are friends and brothers while cleaning the latrine will fill your noses with the stink of what you have done to each other today" (219). Lin describes what happens next,

...the young men tried to walk, but they stumbled at first, and soon realized that they had to hold on tightly and walk in step if they were to make any progress at all. They

clasped their arms around one another and hobbled away on three legs. The crowd watched them walk and began to chatter in praise of Qasim Ali's wisdom. Suddenly there was laughter where a minute before there had been tension and fear. People turned to speak to him but discovered that Qasim was already walking back to his hut. I was close enough to him to see that he was smiling. (219)

It is evident that Qasim Ali's wisdom has an important influence on Lin. In addition to that, it is also important to note that what is being described here is a sort of feudal order, where people in the slums are not protected or taken care of by the government or the law, but they must obey an individual amongst themselves; a practice where one individual has the ultimate power to assign tasks and punish people as he wishes, where he decides who gets how much water would be hard to praise if it were to take place in a country in the global North, but when it occurs in the slums, it is suddenly normalized and even praised, because the individual in charge is seemingly a man of wisdom. Another critical point to note is that Kalpana Sharma's argument in *Rediscovering Dharavi* that the fact that they must work so hard and are unable to focus on anything else is the only reason why Hindus and Muslims are able to coexist in the same place, but in *Shantaram*, it does not stop Faroukh and Raghuram from fighting over religion. Therefore, in this novel, Sharma's suggestion that the harsh capitalistic conditions forced upon slum dwellers bring peace is contradicted. It seems that capitalism is not a strong enough factor to eliminate religious and ethnic differences and issues caused by them. Instead, a person, just like Qasim Ali Hussein, appears to bring order to them. Whether they are all wise and just, like Qasim Ali, cannot be certain, and if not, slum dwellers, in most cases, would have no choice but to obey them anyway.

Furthermore, this is not the only case where Lin praises the wisdom of Qasim Ali and his punishment methods, and Qasim Ali does not refrain from using violence to punish others. Lin describes how people in the slum gathered outside a married couple's door, where the drunk husband had been beating his wife for hours, and no one intervened. The woman named falls outside naked and covered in blood, after being abused and hit with a stick by her husband Joseph; as he sees this, Qasim Ali orders the men of the slum to prepare a very strong, home-brewed alcoholic drink known as *daru*, and then, tells them to make Joseph drink it (223). Joseph passes out a couple of times and begs for water, but he is not given any water and is forced to continue drinking *daru* (224). As Joseph passes out one last time, Qasim Ali lets him doze off for five minutes before he gives the stick, with which he hit his wife, to the men of the slum and orders them to beat Joseph with it; while beating Joseph, they tell him that his wife died because of him in order to make him feel guilty and regret what he has done (225). Qasim Ali saves Maria from being abused when no one else does it,

and he also takes her revenge on Joseph, but what is worrying here is that Qasim Ali Hussein or anyone else does not think of contacting the police or authorities so that Joseph would be punished, and Maria would be protected. It is up to Qasim Ali to decide Maria and Joseph's faith, and he decides to protect Maria with a tooth for a tooth, eye for an eye approach, and it shows us that Qasim Ali Hussein holds power to use violence as a punishment method without any consequences. As Lin, based on Gregory David Roberts himself, is very close and attached to Qasim Ali, we only get to see him use his power in rather wise ways, but he could potentially use violence against anyone who opposes his ways in the slums. In *Shantaram*, Lin's first-person narrator seems to believe everyone looks up to Qasim Ali and willingly obeys him, but people who live in the slums would probably have no other choice than to obey such a person. Lin's tolerance for violence can be explained by his background, as he is also a criminal who used violence himself. However, this image of eastern mentors full of wisdom is not an isolated case in *Shantaram*, and it is not limited to Qasim Ali Hussein, either. Most of the powerful men in the mafia that he becomes friends with are, in fact, wise men who like to have deep conversations, and Lin is moved by this. For instance, Lin has a conversation with Abdul Ghani, who is a mafia boss working for Abdul Khader, the head of the whole mafia, where Ghani says, "The world is run by one million evil men, ten million stupid men, and a hundred million cowards" (349). He, then, explains that one million men are the rulers who decide everyone's fate; ten million men are soldiers and the police who are brave but stupid enough to give their lives for their governments; a hundred million cowards are "the bureaucrats and paper shufflers and pen-shufflers and pen-pushers who permit the rule of the evil men, and look the other way" (350). Ghani, then, says,

This formula – the one million, the ten million, the hundred million – this is the real truth of all politics. Marx was wrong. It is not a question of classes, you see, because all the classes are in the hands of this tiny few. This set of numbers is the cause of empire and rebellion. This is the formula that has generated our civilisations for the last ten thousand years. This built the pyramids. This launched your Crusades. This put the world at war, and this formula has the power to impose the peace. (350)

Later in the novel, Abdul Khader himself also has a conversation with Lin, where he talks about how the universe began and how it came to be what it is today. Khader explains to Lin how the Big Bang started a chain reaction that created particles, which then came together to make atoms, which came together to make particles and it eventually turned into the universe that they know today. He says, "The universe has a nature, for and of itself, something like human nature, if you like, and its nature is to combine, and to build, and to become more complex. It always does this" (479). Khader tells Lin that his is called "the tendency toward

complexity” in science and says that the universe has been getting more and more complex ever since it started, which makes him believe that we are moving towards an ultimate complexity:

...we are all moving towards it – everything in the universe is moving towards it. And that final complexity, that thing we are all moving to, is what I choose to call God. If you do not like that word, God, call it the Ultimate complexity. Whatever you call it, the whole universe is moving towards it. (481)

Afterward, Lin questions Khader’s logic by saying that the universe does not always get more complex; asteroids can destroy civilizations, and stars do die (481). The fact that Lin argues back pleases Abdul Khader, and they have a long discussion about religion and science. Therefore, there is, without a doubt, a pattern of such characters in *Shantaram*, and they do serve as an eastern mentor to Lin with their wisdom; during this discussion, Lin says to himself, “I could not find a flaw in his logic, and I was profoundly impressed by his argument” (482).

Throughout the novel, there are many examples that recreate the colonial elements in literature. One obvious example would be how Lin reacts to people’s ‘costumes’ in general, especially at the beginning of the novel; he sees all the saris and turbans, and he thinks it is like an “extravagant and complex drama” (21). Apart from that, Prabaker’s English skills are constantly thrown on the face of the reader, as it is always emphasized how he makes so mistakes while speaking English, and Lin finds it quite amusing, even though Lin’s sheer attempt at speaking Marathi and Hindi is highly appreciated by Indian people throughout the novel. Although Prabaker says some grammatically rather complex sentences right, sometimes his lines are written with such a ‘broken’ English that it feels as though it was intentionally ridiculed; although he gets many longer sentences right, he sometimes forms sentences, such as “You are not mention” (66) or “Nothing broken you are, Lin?” (66). Not only the language but their physical features are also exaggerated, and they, sometimes, sound quite superficial and shallow. For instance, Lin describes the aggressive taxi driver, who was attacked by the mob on their way to Prabaker’s dark tour of the slums, as following: “He turned his head to snarl at us. His mouth was wide open, and his teeth were bared. His eyes were huge, their blackness streaked with rage” (67). Apart from the fact that it sounds like he describes a wild animal, the reference to how the blackness of his huge eyes streak with rage also raises some question marks. However, their clothes, languages, and physical features are not the only things that are presented this way; their body language and physical expressions get their share of it, too, as Lin finds Indian people’s head shake gesture, which is usually

called ‘the head bobbing’ by foreigners, quite curious, and spends quite a while thinking about it. He believes it is not the same thing as nodding in his own culture, because according to him, it carries “an amiable and disarming message: ‘I am a peaceful man. I do not mean any harm’” (107). Lin believes the head wiggle almost has a magical power over Indian people, where a simple shaking of the head makes them instantly trust and like you. He mentions how he himself tried this effect on people on his way to the Prabaker’s village while riding the cheapest possible trains. He says that a stranger joined them in their carriage, and he tries the head bobbing on this stranger: “I have the wiggle of my head and a smile. The result was astounding. The man beamed a smile at me so huge that it was half the brilliance of Prabaker’s own and set to such energetic head waggling in return that I was, at first, a little alarmed” (107). Lin even believes that the head gesture holds power to resolve conflicts immediately, as he notes,

The people who stared at me from the groves and bushes at the side of the road seemed more anguished and threatened than happy. In the hope of dispelling that trepidation, I began to practice my Indian head-wiggle. The reaction was immediate. The people smiled, laughed, wiggled their heads in return, and ran ahead, shouting to their neighbors about the entertaining spectacle that was plodding along the track towards them. (116)

With the abundance of such examples, it is apparent that Roberts recreates certain clichés about the global South, and he seems to observe such clichés, especially in slums and rural areas, and around people who come from those places; it is rare to hear Lin mention such descriptions of people’s traditions, appearances, clothes and gestures when he lives in Colaba and spends his time at Leopold’s, a bar where many Europeans live in Bombay go often. Therefore, it can be said that Lin rises above the tourist gaze rather quickly, thanks to Prabaker’s guidance and the fact that he is not a tourist, and he does not go to slums with certain expectations; he simply goes there because Prabaker takes him there. However, even though he is not there as a tourist, the differences between Lin and the Indian characters are always highlighted throughout the book, and the narrative seems to position Lin higher than his fellow slum dwellers, as people in the slums starts lining up at his doorstep, asking for his help, the very next morning he finds himself there (165); more importantly, it feels as if his description of Indian people were a caricaturing portrayal (Magner 216), which overall suggests an Orientalist point of view towards the slums and Indian people in general in Roberts’ *Shantaram*.

People of the slums can usually not speak for themselves. Therefore, a bestseller novel that takes place in the slums for the most part (until Lin leaves for Afghanistan later in the novel) is an important text which can allow us to analyze the representation of the slums and more importantly, of their residents. *Shantaram* provides many characters from the slums who speak for themselves. However, these characters are all represented by Gregory David Roberts, and we get to hear from through the author and his narrator Lin. That is why the gaze factor in *Shantaram* is very significant. Foucault says, “The gaze will be fulfilled in its own truth” (Foucault 1994, 107) and as the specific images of eastern places and people that Roberts already has in his mind seem to have surfaced in his novel. Even though he states that his novel is based on his real-life experiences, his extravagant representation of people in this novel makes it hard to believe that this is an objective representation. This specific way of representation also reflects the asymmetrical nature of the gaze in *Shantaram*. In Orientalism, Edward Said argues that Orientals and people from the global North had their separate worlds:

Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, West, “us”) and the strange (the Orient, the East, “them”). This vision in a sense created and then served the two worlds then conceived [...] A certain freedom of intercourse was always the Westerner’s privilege; because his was the stronger culture, he could penetrate, he could wrestle with, he could give shape and meaning to the great Asiatic mystery, as Disraeli once called it. (43 – 44)

Just like Said suggests, Roberts, indeed, creates a vision of two worlds in his novel, and the collision between those two worlds seem to work in Lin’s favor. One very prominent example of that is how Lin’s effort to adapt the common gestures in India and say basic words in their languages is highly appreciated, but Prabaker’s English is sometimes mocked by Lin. For some reason, even though Prabaker speaks English much better than Lin speaks Marathi, Lin’s almost non-existent Marathi skills are considered better than Prabaker’s English skills, even though Prabaker is always able to communicate in English. Imaginary ideas and myths are crucial elements that decide how we gaze at the Other, but such myths “are in turn closely linked to class, politics and economic relations” (Kaplan 4). In *Shantaram*, class, politics, and economic relations are definitely decisive factors regarding how Lin sees others. As a poor man from the slums with no power, Prabaker is an exception among Lin’s friends, as Lin often makes very powerful friends easily, such as Qasim Ali Hussein and Abdel Khader, and even calls them family. Prabaker, however, also has a connection to Qasim Ali through Johnny Cigar, so he, too, has at least some relation to someone in power. Although Roberts

represents both Muslims and Hindus in his novel, most of the influential characters in the novel who speak for themselves are powerful men. The most important female character in *Shantaram* is Karla, who is a European woman living in Bombay. As Lin is in love with Karla, she appears quite often in the novel. Most of the other female characters are also women of Western origin, whom he gets to know either from Leopold's or among Karla's friends. Apart from that, an important Indian female character from the slums, who only finds herself a spot in the novel as part of someone else's story, is Maria. Maria is the woman who is abused by her husband, Joseph. Although her part in the novel to let the readers know how just and full of wisdom Qasim Ali is (because of how he punished Joseph), Maria's suffering is still a very important representation of women and their place in the slums; when Maria falls through the door and faints on the street, people see how she was cruelly beaten (222), but what shocks people is not only the fact that she was brutally attacked by her husband but also her nakedness. Lin says,

The crowd flinched and reconciled in horror. They were as affected by her nakedness, I knew, as they were by the terrible wounds on her body. I was affected by it myself. In those years, nakedness was like a secret religion in India. No one but the insane or the sacred was ever publicly naked. Friends in the slum told me with unaffected honesty that they had been married for years and had never seen their own wives naked. We were all stricken with pity for Joseph's wife, and shame passed among us, burning our eyes. (223)

This excerpt shows us how women's bodies and nakedness are such taboo in this community in the slums that Maria's nakedness is what burns their eyes, rather than her beaten and injured body. Furthermore, when Qasim Ali asks Johnny Cigar why he did not stop Joseph, Johnny says, "She is his wife" (222), and Lin explains, "They were reluctant to interfere in what we usually call domestic disputes, even when those so-called disputes became violent" (222); this part of the novel shows us how violence against women is widely tolerated in these communities (if a wise, hero-like figure, such as Qasim Ali, does not happen to appear). Additionally, Muslim women also appear in the novel. However, they also make short appearances in other men's stories; Lin mentions three Muslim women, but they are only mentioned as Qasim Ali's wives. Lin mentions that Qasim Ali only married two of his wives out of mercy, as they were both poor widows who would have stayed widows otherwise. Nevertheless, he has many children from all three of his wives (the last two of them are quite younger than him). Lin, finally, mentions that Qasim Ali has bought his wives sewing machines, so that they would have their financial independence, and he stops talking about these three women (221).

Roberts' *Shantaram* is significant in terms of representation of the slums in literature because compared to works like Geoffrey Moorhouse's *Calcutta*, books like *Shantaram* have a much higher potential of reaching more readers. Therefore, *Shantaram* might create a certain image of the slums in many readers' minds, and it even inspires actual tourism, as Leopold Café from the novel is a popular spot in Mumbai for the fans of Roberts' novel. Although Roberts is able to present us with a great number of problems slum residents face, like inadequate housing, sanitary conditions, safety hazards, religious conflicts, and women's safety, for the most part, he rather represents the more powerful characters than the 'underdogs' of the slums; Hindu or Muslim women from the slums never appear as prominent characters throughout the novel. They are only represented if they need to be mentioned as part of someone else's story. Apart from the issue of representation based on social status, overall representation of places and people also seem to conform to a stereotypical image of the Eastern world in the Western imagination. Therefore, *Shantaram* does not seem to be an objective representation of the slums by someone who has been a fellow slum dweller; it rather seems like Lin had never truly belonged to the slums, and he was able to hold on to his objectifying gaze towards others; the relationship between Lin and the slums/Indians seem to stay asymmetrical throughout the novel.

4.2 A Tale of Two Subalterns: Slums in *Q&A* and *Slumdog Millionaire*

Vikas Swarup's *Q&A* and its film adaptation *Slumdog Millionaire* by Danny Boyle are both critically acclaimed works that earned prestigious awards in literature and cinema. Both the original novel and its adaptation follow a quite similar plot with some major differences, and they both aim to create a subjective point of view with a first-person narrator. Since this first-person narrator happens to be a child, this book and the film are very important in terms of the subaltern because children are at least as much as, potentially even more, voiceless and forgotten than women when it comes to subaltern places. Furthermore, the representation of slums by people from the global North has proven itself to be quite problematic and sometimes even turn into misrepresentation through some features of cultural imperialism, such as orientalism, romanticism, and exoticism. Therefore, having access to the same story that is written by an Indian person and rewritten by British people is, in that sense, a privilege because this allows us to determine if they differ in terms of representation of the subaltern subjects and if they do, how they differ exactly.

Swarup's *Q&A* sees its protagonist, Ram Mohammad Thomas, start as an orphan child and build a chain of events that lead to him being a rich eighteen-year-old young man (However, unlike in *Slumdog Millionaire*, the chain of events in Swarup's *Q&A* is not linear). The prominent theme in *Q&A* is the social issues that Indians, especially those who are the least unfortunate, like slum dwellers, face. More specifically, the most prominent and reoccurring theme in Swarup's story is sexual abuse, and Ram's reaction to abuse as a pure-hearted, good person who does not hesitate to stand up to the evil people. In Swarup's story, good and evil are usually determined by the power dynamics between people. Whoever has some sort of power and authority over someone is highly likely to abuse the ones beneath them. This power dynamic does not necessarily depend on one's economic status; any kind of authority, gender, religion, and even the hierarchy within a family might determine this dynamic.

Ram Mohammad Thomas is an orphan raised by Father Timothy at the church. He is specifically given the name Ram Mohammad Thomas, so that people would not be angry, believing that the church is trying to assimilate and convert a child. The church he is raised in is also where Ram witnesses sexual abuse for the first time. Although it is not a representation, it is also the first time a different sexual orientation is mentioned among all the writing that has been so far discussed in this thesis, as Ram comes across magazines, which have names like *Gay Power* and *Gay Parade*, and Ram does not understand what they are (59). Soon thereafter, Ram realizes:

I often see strange-looking young men entering the church at night and going to Father John's room. Visitors used to come to meet Father Timothy as well, sometimes at odd hours of the night, but they never came by motorcycle wearing leather jackets and thick metal chains around their necks. (60)

Ram then mentions that Father John and his friend take out a bag of white powder and inhale it (60), but Ram does not understand what all of this means. He says, "Why Father John puts talcum powder in his nose, I do not now. But then, I am just an idiot orphan boy" (60 – 61). It is only when Ram sees Father John abusing Ian, the illegitimate teenage son of Father Timothy, that he understands what is going on, and tells Father Timothy – unaware that Ian is his son – what he has just seen. (64) Next morning, Ram is wakened up by the gunshot and finds out that Father Timothy and Father John have killed each other (65), which is how he is orphaned again and sent to the juvenile home, where he meets Salim. Ram and Salim become very close friends, and one night, Ram realizes that Gupta, the caretaker, has asked to see

Salim in his room. Following Salim, Ram realizes that Salim is about to be sexually abused by Gupta:

Salim has still not understood what is happening, but a fog is lifting from my brain. With startling clarity, I suddenly comprehend what had happened in Father John's room that night, and what had followed the next day. I let out a piercing scream that shatters the silence of the night like a bullet. (96)

Ram, then, says that everyone else has realized the truth about Gupta. He says, "They discover his dirty secret that night (though they do nothing about it)" (97), which means sexual abuse towards children of the slums is overlooked by the adults whose job is to take care of them. Consequently, just like Ram, Salim also discovers sexual abuse at an early age, but unfortunately, Salim finds out about it as the victim, which might explain why he turns out to be rather hateful towards gay people later in his life, as he gets furious and thinks it is an abuse by jealous people when he finds out that according to a magazine, Salim's hero, the actor Armaan Ali is allegedly gay, and that is why his girlfriend broke up with him (41). Later (the timeline of the novel is non-linear, but the examples here are written in a linear timeline), Salim is abused by an older man with a long beard, who tries to touch him at the cinema, as they see a movie starring Salim's hero, Armaan Ali. Furious, Salim screams and slaps the man on the face and holds on to his beard as he tries to run away, which is when the light momentarily comes on, and they realize that the man is Armaan Ali himself (42 – 43). Ram says, "Armaan Ali, his hero, died" (44). As a result, it is obvious that children of the slums, or "slumdogs," as the film puts it in a derogatory way, are constantly abused by men who are more powerful than themselves. Religious institutions, the places where they live, public spaces, and anywhere else are not safe for these children; wherever they go, they are threatened with abuse by adults. Additionally, these three incidents are the only time gay people are seen in the book, and in two of these incidents, being gay is associated with pedophilia and rape, and in the other incident with the magazine, it is considered as an accusation, as something to be ashamed of. Ram says, "[Salim] hates gays [...] I, too, know of perverts, and what they do to unsuspecting boys. In the dark halls. In public toilets. In municipal gardens. In juvenile homes" (41). Therefore, in this literary work that aims to give voice to one of the underdogs in the slums, the children, gay people, another group of underdogs, cannot find a place for themselves, as they are only represented as perverts who abuse minors. Thus, there is a clear misrepresentation of a particular sexual orientation.

As Ram moves from one place to another, he finds himself in the Taj Mahal, working as an illegal tour guide, and that is where he meets a group of wealthy people who take him to

a brothel, where he meets Nita for the first time. Just like Ram, Nita is seventeen years old, and she is working as a prostitute. Ram wants to know why she does this and if she is not afraid of diseases like AIDS, and Nita answers,

Look, this is a profession for me, not a hobby. It gives me enough to feed me and my entire family. If I was not doing this, my family would have died from hunger long ago. We prostitutes know about AIDS. But it is better to die of disease tomorrow than hunger today, don't you agree? (300)

It is evident that Nita believes that she does not have any other choice. She does not reveal the true reason why she feels that way until Ram's fourth or fifth visit. Then, Nita reveals that she comes from the *Bedia* tribe, which has a tradition where one girl from each family serves as a communal prostitute to help their family get by, and such women are called the *Bedni* (305). Nita has a brother and a sister who is happily married, so Ram asks why her family had chosen her over her sister, and Nita says it is because she is more beautiful and adds, "This is the price I have to pay for beauty, so do not call me beautiful" (305). In time, they fall in love with each other, and Ram asks her pimp, Shyam, to let her go, but he asks to be compensated (315); Ram suggests killing Shyam because he cannot find that much money, but Nita opposes and reveals that Shyam is her brother (316). Thus, the children of the slums are not even safe with their own families, and this is not an isolated case in Swarup's Q&A, either. Ram moves in next to a family, where the father is an astronomer who lost his job and became an alcoholic. Ram feels like a brother to their daughter, Gudiya, who is being sexually abused by her father, Shantaram, who says,

Do not worry, Gudiya, there is nothing wrong in my love for you. Even Shahjahan, the great emperor, fell in love with his own daughter, Jahan Ara. And who can deny a man the privilege of gathering fruit from a tree he himself planted. (83)

The fact that Gudiya's abusive father is able to refer to history and culture for justifying his actions also prove how critical elements like history, language and culture are all shaped by male experience to favor males over females, which means that children like Gudiya and Nita are victims both for being children and females: Ram asks himself: "What was Gudiya's crime? Simply that she was born a girl and Shantaram was her father" (84). Once Ram is older and he understands what abuse is, he does not keep silent anymore. As he overhears that Gudiya's father is abusing her again, he goes over there and pushes him down the stairs (83). Believing he killed Shantaram, Ram escapes to Delhi (86). Moreover, he also shoots a robber to death on the train, as the robber tries to abuse a young girl (186 – 188), and he only joins the game show "Who Wants a Billion?" to take revenge on the host Prem Kumar, who abused

both Nita and Ram's ex-boss Neelima Kumari. Therefore, abuse against children is the most important theme in Swarup's *Q&A*, and Ram is presented as a good and brave character who stands up against this abuse, and he is rewarded for his behavior afterward.

In *Q&A*, the economic factor is rather downplayed. Usually, in travel writing or books like Sharma's *Rediscovering Dharavi*, poverty and callous working conditions are highlighted, even though every author and reader might have a different interpretation. Unlike the film adaptation, in *Q&A*, the protagonist does not always live in extreme poverty. As he grows up and moves around, he always finds new opportunities, and his status changes accordingly. First, he is raised by Father Timothy, whom he sees as his father. Then, he finds Salim at the juvenile home, and Maman buys them both there (104). Once again, the children face physical abuse by the powerful adults, as Maman plans to purposely disable children so that people would give them more money when he turns them into beggars. However, Ram, with Salim, escapes Maman and goes to Neelima Kumari, asks if she could hire him as her servant, and starts living in a famous Bollywood actress' flat (245). After Neelima's death, Ram moves into a one-room apartment called a chawl, and he says,

After the time I spent with the actress Neelima Kumari, living in her flat, I had almost forgotten life in a chawl. A bundle of one-room tenements occupied by the lower-middle-classes, chawls are the smelly armpit of Mumbai. Those who live here are only marginally better off than those who live in slums like Dharavi. As Mr. Barve told me once, the rich people, those who live in their marble and granite four-bedroom flats, they enjoy. The slum people, who live in squalid, tattered, crowded chawls, we simply live. (70)

His living conditions constantly change. For instance, at some point, Ram mentions how he actually pays and buys trains tickets and is wearing Levi's jeans (174). His job also changes often. He also works for an Australian diplomat, as a tour guide in the Taj Mahal, and as a waiter. Therefore, it is seen that Ram is able to create opportunities for himself, even as an orphan from the slums.

In Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*, the protagonist Ram is changed dramatically. First of all, his name is not Ram Mohammad Thomas anymore. It is Jamal Malik, which is a critical change, because the name Ram Mohammad Thomas provides Ram flexibility throughout the novel, as he can simply give whichever name that would work out best for him in each scenario; for instance, the Bollywood actress Neelima Kumari does not hire Salim, because is Muslim, so Ram does not mention that his second name is Mohammad (245). However, in *Slumdog Millionaire*, this flexibility is taken away from him, and he is adapted

into a Muslim child, born to a Muslim family, which plays a significant role in deciding his fate in the movie. However, Swarup's Ram is a character who did not grow up with any religion whatsoever, even though he was raised in a church by Father Timothy. Ram says,

Father Timothy taught me about the life of Jesus, Adam and Eve, and this extended family instructed me on the rudiments of other religions. I came to know about the Mahabharata and the Holy Koran. I learnt about the Prophet's flight from Mecca to Medina and of the burning down of Lanka. Bethlehem and Ayodhya, St Peter and the Hajj all became part of my growing up. (54)

It is clear that Ram's upbringing brings a sense of cosmopolitanism into the picture, whereas *Slumdog Millionaire* removes this cosmopolitan element and creates a fixed and othered subject out of the protagonist for its viewers (Alpana 198). Moreover, Jamal is not an orphan from the beginning like Ram; he and his brother Salim have a mother, but their mother dies as a result of a group of Hindus rioting in their neighborhood, which shows us that the film adaptation aims to create an absolute Other and a victim out of the protagonist, as Jamal says, "If it was not for Rama or Allah, I could still have a mother" (Boyle 00:18:39 – 00:18:44). This might have two reasons: First, this is a necessity that comes with a film adaptation. Unlike the novel, people do not have much time to empathize and sympathize with the hero. Making him a victim might help in that sense. However, Boyle and Beaufoy could have accomplished that if Salim were Hindu or something else, too. Another possible explanation would be that they felt the need to recreate the hero as a character that would be familiar to the global and mainly Western audiences, and as a result, the character they created turned out to be the classic Other of the Western imagination; someone who is controlled and oppressed by the dominant culture in his land. The ultimate goal is, perhaps, getting rid of the need for white protagonists by making the Other the narrator, by putting the Other in charge (Norain), but the specific effort to create an othered object undermines this effort. Another major difference between the novel and *Slumdog Millionaire* is the approach of representing the social issues in the slums. Vikas Swarup highlights how children always tend to be abused by anyone more powerful than themselves, and it is the most occurring theme in his book. *Slumdog Millionaire*, however, almost completely scraps sexual abuse against children in the film. The adaptation, overall, is a rather feel-good film. That is why it is understandable why they chose to leave sexual abuse against children mostly out. Instead, the film adaptation chooses to go the direct opposite direction as Vikas Swarup; they scrap the abuse Swarup highlights and highlight the poverty and living conditions in the slums, which are downplayed by Swarup. The places they must live, being homeless, stealing food, unsanitary conditions when it comes to toilets, the squalid feeling are all seen in the film. Therefore, *Slumdog*

Millionaire offers every image of extreme poverty that one would imagine if they were to think about slums. As mentioned, sexual abuse against children is not as prominent as it is in *Q&A*, but *Slumdog Millionaire* also provides many examples of how children of the slums are oppressed and mistreated. For instance, one of the first scenes that introduce Jamal and Salim Malik is where children of the slum are playing in what seems to be an airfield for private planes, and suddenly, police officers appear and try to chase them, saying “This is private property!” (Boyle 00:06:07 – 00:06:09), but their ultimate goal is not to make the children leave the area. Even when they are far away from the said runway, the police continue to chase them so that they can beat them. When Jamal and Malik finally make it their mother, who tells the angry police officer, “Brother, leave these two to me” (Boyle 00:08:16 - 00:08:19), the police officer does not hit them, but he screams in fury because he did not get to catch them and beat them. This is not the only time the police let these children down. After their mother had been killed during the riots, the two brothers run to the police, but they just tell Jamal and Malik to go away (Boyle 00:18:09 – 00:18:13), even though there are people after them who would probably kill them. In general, it is obvious that their life is not considered that valuable; when Jamal and Salim escape Maman, they become homeless and live in trains, and one day, as they try to steal food, a man deliberately tries to make Jamal fall off a moving train (Boyle 00:38:48 – 00:38:58). More aspects of life for slum children are seen in *Slumdog Millionaire*, as we get to see Jamal and Malik go to school. The classroom is tiny and full of students, some of whom must sit on the ground, and when the teacher hears Jamal speaking to Salim, he tells him to shut up and hits him (Boyle 00:08:55 – 00:08:58). Therefore, *Slumdog Millionaire* provides us with different layers of problems with being a child in the slums. The reason why poverty in the slums is so emphasized in *Slumdog Millionaire*, whereas its highlight is dimmed by other social issues in *Q&A*, might be due to the fact that slums and extreme poverty are taboo for rather privileged people like Vikas Swarup (who is a diplomat in India), whereas it is what the audience from the global North would expect from a film or a book about the slums. That is why both works seem to misrepresent the children and the slums from time to time, as Swarup seems to have downplayed their poverty and magically created so many opportunities for Jamal, which would normally, most likely, not happen, while Boyle and Beaufoy sometimes ended up making poverty seem humorous (since this is, after all, a feel-good film).

Another major difference between the book and its adaptation is the character named Latika. Having scrapped most of the social issues Vikas Swarup had emphasized, Boyle and

Beaufoy have used romance to fill the void instead. There is also romance in *Q&A*, as Ram and Nita fall in love with each other, Ram tries to help Nita quit prostitution, but Nita still occupies only a rather small part of the story, and she is introduced when she is seventeen years old, so we get to see Nita as a teenager, but with Latika, we get to see how boys' and girls' experiences differ so much as they grow up. Jamal and Salim meet her the day their mother dies because of the riots; Latika is also an orphan, and she follows them around. Even though she has almost the exact same background as the two brothers, her experience is different due to her gender. First of all, it is men – of all ages – who usually decide her fate. For instance, the first night they are all orphaned, Salim and Jamal find a container to take refuge from the rain, but Latika stands outside in the rain for a long time because Salim will not let her in, saying, “I am the oldest in the family now, and I say she cannot come in” (Boyle 00:20:15 – 00:20:18). Then, while all three children are running from Maman, the two brothers jump on a train; Latika holds Salim's hand to jump on the train as well, but as Salim lets her go (Boyle 00:34:20 – 00:34:25), condemning her to what Maman has in mind for her, which is to sell her virginity to a rich man and use her as a prostitute, as he says, “Have you any idea how much this little virgin is worth? (Boyle 00:54:10 – 00:54:13). While Maman purposely makes boys disabled and beggars, he turns girls into prostitutes, which shows us how objectified the female body is, unfortunately, even as a child. Just like Nita, Latika also suffers because men in her society find her beautiful. Throughout the film, Latika is also abused by Salim, and she is taken as a wife by Salim's mafia boss, most likely when she was still a minor. Even though it is not as prominent as in Swarup's story, there is also a story of abuse in *Slumdog Millionaire*, but the sexual abuse is only limited to the female character, Latika. Furthermore, there are also some moments that emphasize Latika's place as a girl in this community. For instance, when Maman puts Salim in charge of the beggar children, including Jamal and Latika. They also have an infant baby among them, and he gives the baby to Latika right away and even threatens her; “I will drop her if you do not take her” (Boyle 00:26:29). As a result, it can be said that, in contrast to travel writing about the slums, fictional stories of the slums include much more female representation; women are visible in these works but does that necessarily mean they are justly represented? In *A Double Colonization*, Kirsten Holst Petersen and Anna Rutherford suggest,

The colonial world was no place for a woman, let alone a lady; it was a man's world, demanding pioneering, martial and organizational skills, and the achievements of those in the shape of conquered lands and people were celebrated in a series of male-orientated myths: mateship, the mounties, explorers, freedom fighters, bushrangers, missionaries. [...] This male ethos has persisted in the colonial and post-colonial

world long after the reality which formed it had ceased to exist. The effect of this on colonial women was no longer a question of 'no place for a woman,' since they were palpably there, but of a place denied in the imagination. With regard to literature, the myths are paramount, and female achievement does not fit readily into them. (9)

This excerpt fits the representation of women in *Shantaram*, *Q&A*, and *Slumdog Millionaire* quite well. In all of these literary works, women are there, but they exist only as a part of a male hero's story and nothing more. Be it Maria, Qasim Ali's wives, Nita or Latika, they all require help from men to be saved. It is clear that all of these literary works emphasize they are victims of a male-dominant culture, but they must still be saved by men. Therefore, the social critique in these works does not seem to represent and demand independent women. They only demand merciful men who would treat women better. Therefore, when it comes to women as subaltern subjects, apart from the tourist gaze and the colonial/imperial gaze, the male gaze is also a critical issue. On this issue, Spivak suggests,

Can the subaltern speak? What must the elite do to watch out for the continuing construction of the subaltern? The question of "woman" seems most problematic in this context. Clearly, if you are poor, black and female you get it in three ways. (Spivak 294 – 295)

Spivak speaks of a double-displacement (Spivak 295), which applies to many subjects in the slums, as we see that the characters or people whom they meet during their travels are more likely to create opportunities and solutions to their problem if they fall within the norm in their communities, the norm being a male; women and children all get it two way, as Spivak puts it. The authors might be trying to make them visible, but as seen here, they might end up reaffirming the system that makes victims of women and children. As seen in Swarup's *Q&A*, gender and sexual orientation might even result in a complete non-visibility when it comes to slums and slum literature, as gay people are only represented as perverts and pedophiles. Father John's sexual abuse does not make Ram believe all religious men are perverts, but it makes him clearly believe that all gay men are perverts. Additionally, in *Shantaram* and *Slumdog Millionaire*, gay people or anyone of any other sexual orientation than straight people do not exist. In travel writing, they are also not seen, which is most likely due to the fact that people of different sexual orientations are not visible in a daily slum life itself, either. As travel writing is based on what the traveler sees, they are not seen and therefore left out. One more thing that is worth mentioning about one of the victims of this double-displacement, children, is that the child actors in *Slumdog Millionaire* are, indeed, children from the slums, which is seemingly a great opportunity and the right thing to do. However, the child actors were underpaid, which brings the question of exploiting children from the

slums. Azharuddin Mohammed Ismail, who played Salim, was paid 1160 US dollars, whereas Rubina Ali, who played Latika, was paid 830 US dollars for their important roles in a film, which made over 352 million US dollars in the box office (Kim). After the film, both actors reportedly continued living in the slums, but Danny Boyle has denied that there was an exploitation of the children, saying that what they made from the film was above local wages for thirty days of work in India (Kim).

One thing that both *Q&A* and *Slumdog Millionaire* have in common is the continuing influence and importance of the Anglophone culture in India, as both Ram's and Jamal's salvation depend on a TV show, which is adapted from an English speaking country. Moreover, the show itself and the questions are all in English. Therefore, it is a must that Ram and Jamal speak and understand English very well, which is not something everyone in India can do. Swarup's Ram can speak English because he was raised by a British man, Father Timothy. However, Jamal and Salim just appear as having learned English very well in the film, assumably by working as illegal tourist guides around the Taj Mahal. In short, the only reason why Ram and Nita's and Jamal and Latika's lives are better is because these two protagonists can speak and understand English, which allows them to participate in things like the TV show *Who Wants to be A Millionaire?* However, in real life, many people in the slums would not be able to enjoy such opportunities in their own country, simply because they were not fortunate enough to have a good education, where they could learn their former rulers' language. To sum it up, fictionalizing slums seems not to work properly in terms of the true representation of slums and slum dwellers, as the authors tend to misrepresent many aspects of the slum life because of their own socio-economic status. However, they still prove themselves as great materials, as they, with or without the intention of doing so, textualize many problems that slum dwellers face.

5- Conclusion

It is undeniable that there are many critical issues regarding the slum dwellers. According to Žižek, they are the "part of no part" (41), who are oppressed to the point where they are "excluded from the benefits of citizenship, uprooted and dispossessed" (41). This is the idea on which this thesis is based. However, can one truly say they are entirely excluded and do not occupy any space within the boundaries of conventional society if so many people around the world show interest in these places and people, theorizing and textualizing them, writing novels, and creating films about them? In his essay titled "Nature and its

Discontents” from 2008, Zizek also argues that slums are one of the “excesses” generated by global capitalism, and these excesses, then, “open up the site of resistance” (37). Zizek, thus, argues that slums are one of the antagonisms contained by the global, which will eventually “prevent its indefinite reproduction” (38). However, in the case of India, that does not seem to be the case. Just like the way it worked for imperialism in the nineteenth century and before, literature and the media seem to have served as a tool to support and reaffirm global capitalism and the international division of labor which play a major role in the creation and continuance of the slums. The way how this works is due to the fact that most influential works (with some exceptions) uphold and endorse neoliberal values. Tejaswini Ganti notes that neoliberalism can be traced back to the ideas of some intellectuals after World War I, and she suggests, “The aim of these intellectuals, mostly economists and philosophers, was to oppose what they saw as arising tide of collectivism, state-centered planning, and socialism” (91). Even though it is obvious that people in the slums require urgent help, with the rise of neoliberalism, literature and media also served as great platforms for upholding the idea that the struggle of slum dwellers is an individual struggle. Therefore, we, as a society, as the world, do not necessarily have to feel responsible, because as tough as it may seem, the capitalistic society provides opportunities for every individual to succeed. The ones who cannot seize these opportunities, however, are condemned to a life of misery and suffering, which is commonly something that is overlooked in the twenty-first-century slum literature, as it is only the ones who succeed that are highlighted. As this phenomenon occurs quite often, it would be hard to call this an exception or a coincidence. For instance, The Economist had written about Dharavi that there was “a thriving entrepreneurial spirit that has spawned small businesses ranging from pottery to leather goods” (The Economist 2012). In another article about Dharavi, they had suggested, “If poverty can seem dehumanizing from afar—especially in much reporting on it—up close, Dharavi, which is allegedly Asia’s biggest slum, is vibrantly and triumphantly alive” (The Economist 2007). The correspondents’ tendencies to portray the slums in a positive manner are supported by the various examples of stories of personal success. One of these success stories is about Mr. Kadam:

Mr. Kadam is a *dhor*, of the *dalit* tanning caste. Yet as his business thrived, his family became middle class, a powerful identity. Last year Mr. Kadam exported 25,000 leather belts to Wal-Mart in America. He has moved his family from Dharavi to a smart suburb of Mumbai. (The Economist 2007)

This example is one of the many, and it is also important, as it introduces the caste system as the reason for Mr. Kadam's poverty and the global capitalism as his salvation. Another success story by *The Economist* includes a man named Abdul Hassan:

Abdul Hassan, who was born in Dharavi, runs a plating workshop with his brother and 12 workers. The brothers each take home about Rs4,000 a month. Abdul has bought a flat just outside Dharavi and is paying for his two children's education, in the hope that they will become doctors or engineers. (The Economist 2012)

The latter article by *The Economist* on Dharavi also suggests, even if someone was born and raised in a slum, the existing system would still give them a great chance of success and saving themselves from there. Such articles support the idea that it is not the government's problem that these people are suffering, nor is it their responsibility to fix them; it is completely a personal struggle. It is not so surprising that *The Economist* would uphold such neoliberal values about the slums. However, it is also a trend among the middle and upper classes of India. Kalpana Sharma's *Rediscovering Dharavi* and its praising of the hard-working population who do not even get to think about religious and ethnic issues were already mentioned. More recently, in 2012, Rashmi Bansal, Deepak Gandhi, and Dee Gandhi, who define themselves as "ordinary middle-class citizens" (Bansal et al. Author's Note), wrote *Poor Little Rich Slum*, where they went to the slums, listened to the slum dwellers and photographed them. Right before they begin, they note, "We can be happy, we can be hopeful, we can be enterprising – no matter where we are. The question is – are you? If Dharavi can, so can I" (Bansal et al. Author's Note). Indeed, its tone is perhaps the most positive among all the literary works and works of media. Right from the beginning, the authors make it clear that Dharavi is quite valuable in terms of capitalism, as they write,

To the businessmen who operate in Dharavi, it is a convenience. Cheap labor and cheap rent make it a mega-hub of micro-enterprise. 650 million US dollars is the sum total of Dharavi's annual turnover. [...] Dharavi is a cauldron bubbling with enterprise, with a never-say-die attitude. With spirit and spunk (6 – 12).

The trio start their journey into the world of Dharavi with a slum tour and call it "riding on the wave created by *Slumdog Millionaire*" (9). The tour seems to be the same as what the previously mentioned travel bloggers had experienced, as they admire the opportunities in Dharavi but are puzzled by the living conditions and the lack of privacy (13). Then, they argue that even though people know that there are more opportunities, if they push their luck, they might lose what they have in the slums, which leaves them wondering, "Is less really more?" (13). This sort of approach to the slums is also quite common, as Ellie Quinn also suggests in her travel blog that people in Dharavi are at least able to make money (Quinn).

Gregory David Roberts writes about the slave markets, where it is noted that children are taken from the disaster zones, and this way, they are at least alive (Roberts 82). Dharavi and slums, in general, are presented as places where people could at least get what they needed to survive, and in the best-case scenario, they could do much better:

You get a cheap place to stay, you get a job. What you make of yourself thereon depends on the strength of your hands, the passion in your heart. Dharavi is the ‘incubator’ which made it possible. A shack under a tin roof, a factory of dreams. (Bansal et al. 41).

It is seen that slums are now presented as places of hope, rather than places of despair and immorality, as it was in the past. In *Slumming It*, Fabian Frenzel suggests that there is now a sense of “slums of hope,” which finds this sort of DIY urbanism in the slums fascinating (61). He argues, “This ‘taste for slums’ also contains deeper aesthetic dimensions, placing the beauty of density and apparently chaotic, illegible and strange form against the order of planning” (61). Here, Frenzel suggests that the reason why slums are romanticized and idealized by visitors is that the informality of the slums provides relief and an escape from the modern world of concrete buildings and skyscrapers (62), which is a paradox, as they end up romanticizing the cheap labor of people who work extremely hard, so that the elements of the modern world, which the slum tourists/writers are trying to escape from, would be available to them as well. However, romanticizing this informal urbanism is quite common in slum writing. All Charlotte and Natalie, Ellie Quinn, and Jacob Laukaitis tend to focus on how people have built a life for themselves in Dharavi and the sense of community that comes with it, which leads them to believe that people could be happy with less. The very same sense of community and happiness is also prominent in Roberts’ *Shantaram*, where Lin, after seeing the slums for the first time as he lands in India, says,

A sense of wonder possessed me. I began to look beyond the immensity of the slum societies, and to see the people who lived within them. A woman stooped to brush forward the black satin psalm of her hair. Another bathed her children with water from a copper dish. A man led three goats with red ribbons tied to the collars at their throats. Another man shaved himself at a cracked mirror. Children played everywhere. Men carried water in buckets. Men made repairs to one of the huts. And everywhere that I looked, people smiled and laughed. (7 – 8)

In Boyle’s *Slumdog Millionaire*, people going through the same hardships for simple things, such as washing clothes and going to toilets, and children playing, even while they are running from police brutality, are all portrayed in a joyful manner. In contemporary modes of travel writing, this romanticization of slums results in writers’ overlooking of critical issues such as children’s and women’s safety. Works of fiction differ in that sense, as they tend to

include such issues, at least some aspects of them, despite the immense romanticization and the idealization of the perfect neoliberal individuals in slums who fight their way up and still keep their smiles while doing so.

The one author/journalist and one travel bloggers who manage to avoid romanticizing slums are Geoffrey Moorhouse and Alex Reynolds. Reynolds is subjected to the very same, rather whitewashed tour of the slums as many others, but instead of finding joy in the informality of the slums, she questions how objective the slum tour was. She writes,

Dharavi is, as the guide said, a “5 star slum”, and I suspect we saw the most polished aspects of it. We saw factories and bakeries, cricket pitches and paid toilets, but there was no mention of issues such as women’s safety, child labor or issues with tuberculosis and cholera. (Reynolds)

Moorhouse also does not see the bright side of what the slum dwellers must go through to survive. Moorhouse suggests that there are many marvels to see in Calcutta (13), but he does not claim there are any wonders to find in the poverty of the slum dwellers. He finds these marvels in sights like palaces, parks, and works of art. When it comes to poverty in the slums, Moorhouse is clear, as he says it is an “affront to the dignity of mankind,” and “we must be rid of it” (356). However, even though they do not romanticize the slums, these texts still cannot escape voyeurism. From travel blogs to books such as *Calcutta, Poor Little Rich Slum* and *Rediscovering Dharavi*, to articles like the ones *The Economist* published, every text, where its author has spent a certain time watching the poor as they suffer in their squalid environment, in order to write about them or simply out of curiosity, are inevitably voyeuristic. Moorhouse has a justification for his observing gaze directed at the slum dwellers, as he argues that he simply wishes to make people aware of the situation, or the poor who are the majority might eventually choose violence as a solution (357), which proves itself to be a justified warning, as in Shantaram, Roberts writes about a radical party called Shiv Sena which was very active in the slums (52) and a man from the slums named Sapna, who murders rich people to take revenge in the name of the poor (254). In the twenty-first century, the lack of such a justification introduced altruism and voluntourism as an important part of slum tourism.

It is certain that the slums are widely represented in our age. Therefore, we must return to the subaltern and question if slum dwellers could still be considered subaltern, as they are now being placed on the map by so many travelers, authors, journalists, and screenwriters, who introduce us to actual people or characters from the slums. In fact, many

slums around the world could find a place for themselves within their societies as sort of an alternative society, even as a subculture. For instance, Carroll D. Wright, in his research of the slums in urban areas of the United States, had found that there were much more liquor saloons in the slums than anywhere else in the cities he had researched (14), and the arrests resulting from gambling and intoxication in the slums were also remarkably higher than they were in the rest of the cities of Baltimore, Chicago, New York and Philadelphia (15 – 17). Therefore, it can be argued that the slums offered people a space where they would not have to worry about morality, as they would in other parts of the cities. Thus, they found themselves a space as alternate places within the city for people who would like to drink carelessly and gamble. Another example of such a phenomenon can be found in Greece, in the twentieth-century slums of Athens, which was a result of the population exchange between Greece and Turkey that resulted in 1,2 million refugees arriving in Greece during the early 1920s. As a result, the population of Athens had doubled from 453,042 to 802,000 (Leontidou 1989/2013: 158). These refugees from Asia Minor or Anatolia have brought a certain culture with them; the most prominent aspect of their culture was the rebetiko (ρεμπέτικο), an urban music genre that the slum dwellers brought with them. The rebetiko kept its Anatolian influence and adapted itself to reflect the urban realities the refugees faced, mainly issues such as drugs, prostitution, poverty, violence, and anything else that might be associated with the slums. Other crucial elements of the Greek slum culture were the *tekedes* and the *ouzeri*, where people drink the Greek alcoholic beverage ouzo in the latter and smoke hashish in the first one. These refugee slum dwellers, in spite of the poverty, the stigma about their Anatolian roots, and even the censorship by the authoritarian Metaxas in the 1930s, slum dwellers managed to put themselves on the map of Athens through the rebetiko, *tekedes*, ouzo, and coffee shops. Thanks to their cultural input and serving as an alternate place, their culture emerged as a subculture of Greece; in “Slums of Hope,” Lila Leontidou writes,

In the refugee settlements, which were initially erected by international institutions and then developed spontaneously, hope flowered even where poverty was dwelling. It nested in shantytowns, in factories, in tavernas where rebetika songs were performed. The refugees were rebuilding their lives and innovated, renewing Greek culture, economy, society. (Leontidou 2017)

This phenomenon is not limited to the earlier centuries, either. For the Netflix show *Dark Tourist*, the presenter David Farrier joins a slum tour for the Alexandra slum in Johannesburg, South Africa. Farrier is unsettled when he discovers that his security guard carries a gun (17:04). However, when he returns to the slum at night for a local spot “known for its barbecue meat and Sunday drinking and dancing sessions” (22:43 – 22:46), he realizes what a

vibrant lifestyle Alexandra actually offers. Additionally, Farrier also witnesses something called spinning, where drivers do dangerous stunts with their cars, and many people gather around to watch them. He explains, “Spinning began back in the 1980s when gangsters brought back stolen cars to the townships and spun them around in graveyards to honor their dead. I am told these days, it has become a popular spectator sport” (20:30 – 20:44), and the tour guide Jeff says that everyone comes in as soon as they hear the spinners (21:01 – 21:03). Farrier points out that it is no longer the gangster who spin the cars. In fact, one of the heroes of this sport is Stacey, a young woman who studies law. Jeff says, “She is the hero in this town” (21:08 – 21:10). Therefore, Alexandra offers a vibrant nightlife with barbecues and an exciting sport that is quite popular with many people and finds itself a spot on the city map as a developing subculture by introducing new things like spinning into an existing Johannesburg culture. However, this phenomenon is not to be seen in Indian slums. As Kalpana Sharma suggested, these people have absolutely no time to focus on anything else than work, as they believe they would die if they were to stop working (70). Because of religion or what they have been taught by their families and society, many of them also believe working in such inhumane conditions is the morally thing to do. Of course, this means that most slum dwellers in India do not even have the luxury to seldomly enjoy themselves and provide cultural output like the slum dwellers in Athens or the ones in Johannesburg. Even if they do, their output is not available to us as outsiders, which means they could not find themselves a place as a subculture in India or even in Mumbai. In spite of being seen more, the slum dwellers in places like Dharavi and many other slums, especially the smaller and illegal ones that could be demolished any day, still do not speak to us directly. Their thoughts and words are always filtered either by nationalist and neoliberal ideas or an orientalist point of view of the authors and travelers; their representation is merely the objectified versions of them by the representer’s gaze, which might function in many ways, such as the tourist gaze, the colonialist/imperial gaze, and the male gaze. Moreover, they get lost in the representation or are widely misrepresented if the subjects are child and women subjects or subjects of different sexual orientations. The only way a slum resident might find their voice is if they somehow manage to be the few who succeed in what neoliberalism and the global capitalism promise and take themselves out of the slums, in which case the said person would no longer be a slum dweller and a subaltern subject. Therefore, the overwhelming majority of slum residents in India as subaltern subjects still cannot speak; only a few lucky ones who have been given a platform by privileged people get to speak, but

we, as the reader, only get to read or watch a filtered, objectified version of them through the gaze of the person who represents them.



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