CHAPTER THREE

THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE IN THE GARDEN

Abstract

The aim of this chapter is to examine the themes of sacred and profane in the garden spaces in select Anglophone fiction. As an enclosed space "set apart and forbidden" (Durkheim 44), the garden becomes the image of sacred space of Eden on earth and evokes religious associations Like the Satanic temptation in the original garden, the Edenic implications of the garden also extend to dangers of profanation, that is, the overturning or dissolution of sacrality by its associations with magic, science or the secularization space. The desire to protect the garden from defilation or profanation might lead to violent forms of expulsion or oppression. Using the theories of sacred and profane from Emile Durkheim, Mircea Eliade and Michel Foucault, this chapter seeks to understand how the enclosed garden space acts as the space of healing, contemplation and ecological reaffirmation in a modernized, colonized world on one hand and an enchanted or dangerous space animated by magic or a space needing violent acts of purification on the other. It looks at texts such as Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*, (1911), Kate Morton's *The Forgotten Garden* (2008), J.M Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983) and Nadeem Aslam's *The Blind Man's Garden* (2013) to show how the garden continues to function as the microcosm of paradisical enchantment in an increasingly secularized world.

Objectives

i. To understand links between the garden spaces or the idea of garden in fiction and the sacred and profane
ii. To examine the ecological, religious and gendered implication of the garden as the image of Eden on earth in the novel
iii. To understand narratives of the garden as the Gothic space of female sexuality
iv. To examine how the novel reflects the role of the state in secularization and desacralisation of space

Hypotheses

i. The Edenic implications of the garden spaces in fiction invite attention to their religious and mystical overtones

ii. The enclosed gardens harboring family secrets, deaths etc. in the novel become potent sites of enigma and peril
iii. While a well kempt garden in fiction becomes the ideal of paradise, a garden unkempt and wild is seen as a Gothic space
iv. The sacred/profane binary is still operative in the way spaces shown demarcated in fictional narratives

Arguments

i. The garden space in late nineteenth and early twentieth century fiction serves to offer stage for the playing out of such ideas as religion and science
ii. The garden space becomes the site where the feminine is termed monstrous and shut off
iii. In postcolonial writing, the garden spaces often become ways of reaffirming relations to nature which had been wiped away by the colonialist apparatus
iv. The garden spaces in such novels are also used to challenge the geometrical understanding of the world which arbitrarily cuts up spaces

Review of Literature

Sacred and Protection

The idea of the sacred and profane in relation to the divine has been defined by scholars such Rudolf Otto (1923), Emile Durkheim (1912), Mircea Eliade (1957), and Giorgio Agamben (2005). In his *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Durkheim defines the term sacred as "things set apart and forbidden," (44) and defines the system of religion as consisting of sacred things. Durkheim states that sacred is protected by prohibitions while the profane is which the prohibitions apply to (38). The ideas of the sacred and profane are used to study depictions of the garden in fiction which is variously seen as sacred and profane as the image of Eden of earth and as space of pleasure or magic respectively.

The protection of the sacred extends to concepts of purity and pollution and entails violence. In "Modernity and the Holocaust" Zygmunt Bauman discusses how holocaust driven the impetus of racial purity in the Nazi Germany was effected by an

efficient bureaucracy which like a gardener weeds out the unpleasant elements. He discusses how the German Reich:

> had no room for the Jews, as the Jews could not be spiritually converted and embrace the Geist of the German Volk. This spiritual inability was articulated as the attribute of heredity or blood—substances which at that time at least embodied the other side of culture, the territory that culture could not dream of cultivating, a wilderness that could never be turned into an object of gardening (the prospects of genetic engineering were not as yet seriously entertained). (66)

Bauman here underlines how such perception of "spiritual inability" rendered the Jews inherently corrupt in the Nazi Germany who had to be weeded out. The chapter would look at such violent implications of the garden a "a moral space, as it were, where certain purported vices—disorder, weeds, imperfection—are variously avoided, discouraged or perhaps even eradicated.." (Hughes iv) and where "the process and discipline of gardening endows those who police the borders of domestic(ated) space with righteousness as much as with the power and authority to cut and mutilate, to burn and poison, to judge and to approve and exclude on the grounds of colour, gender or of national origin" (Hughes xiv).

Sacred and Cosmogony/Worldbuilding

Rudolf Otto uses the word 'numinous' (7) for the words 'sacred' or 'holy' and sees it characterized by 'creature feeling' (10)which is "the emotion of a creature, abased and overwhelmed by its own nothingness in contrast to that which is supreme above all creatures" (10). Otto's concept can be used to understand the potency of the space of the garden where the bounty of nature can overwhelm humans. Van der Leeuw calls the sacred and the profane as "the potent and the relatively powerless" (48) respectively and discusses how the sacred's "powerfulness creates for it a place of its own" (48). He describes the formation of sacred spaces are formed "by the effects of power repeating themselves there, or being repeated by man" (393). He defines it as a "place of worship, independently of whether the position is only a house, or a temple, since domestic life too is a celebration constantly repeated in the cycle of work, meals, washing etc" (Leeuw 393) as well as "a place of dread awe which deeply impresses man" (Leeuw 394). The

activities of tilling and enclosing the land, forming a settlement and distinguishing it from the wilderness beyond is also seen as sacred (Leeuw 399).

Developing Otto's concept of the numinous, Eliade goes on to define the sacred as "a reality of a wholly different order from 'natural' realities" (10). The sacred, according to Eliade, is characterized by imago mundi or the act of centering oneself in the world, and hierophany, which is an experience of the sacred and cosmogony which is the act of settling in or cosmicising a territory. Foucault in 'Of Other Spaces' writes how modern society is still far from a complete desanctification of space as the presence of the sacred is still visible in such dichotomies as private/public spaces which are characterized by "the hidden presence of the sacred" (2).As the image of Eden on earth, "A garden is ordered nature in the same way religion is an ordered system of values, beliefs and practices" (Plathe 1) and the clearing of land for gardening is a repetition of the cosmogony. Foucault discusses how

> the traditional garden of the Persians was a sacred space that was supposed to bring together inside its rectangle the four parts of the world, with a space still more sacred than the others that were like an umbilicus, the navel of the world at its center (the basin and the water fountain were there); and all the vegetation of the garden was supposed to come together in this space, in this sort of microcosm. (6)

The chapter will look into such acts of worldbuilding and cosmicising in the garden where the space is seen as paradisical recreation of childhood or as the microcosm of nations seen as paradisical gardens.

Sacred, Profane and Gothic

According to Mauss, the "isolation and secrecy" (29) surrounding magical rites invite speculation and endow them with their mystery (29). Drawing from Hubert and Mauss, Durkheim discusses the idea of Magic which though shares with religion these characteristics cannot be called a sacred force as it "takes a kind of professional pleasure in profaning holy things, inverting religious ceremonies in its rites" (40) and lacks an organizational setup akin to that of a church in religion. Quoting Hubert and Mauss, he points to how there is "something inherently antireligious about the maneuvers of the

magician" (41). This is the realm of the Gothic which has its origins, among others, in "tales of magical recurrences" (Botting 15). Gerardus Van der Leeuw discusses the ambiguity of the sacred as it is "neither completely moral nor, without further qualification, even desirable or praiseworthy. On the contrary, sacredness and even impurity may be identical: in any event the potent is dangerous" (48). In his book *Profanations*, Giorgio Agamben, draws attention to the ambiguity of the root words where the verb proafanare "means, on one hand, to render profane, and, on the other (in only a few cases) to sacrifice" (77). Similarly, the word 'sacer' means both "'consecrated to gods' and cursed, excluded from the community'" (77). Mary Douglass focuses on this ambiguity when she speaks of how "the separation of sanctuary and consecrated things and persons from profane ones is basically the same as the separations which are inspired by fear of malevolent spirits" (11). This ambiguity draws attention to the sacred and profane being termed variously as holy and dangerous. The chapter would look into how the private garden, as a secret space overgrown with vegetation, is seen variously as sacred and profane space of transgression and magical activities, threatening the order of the home. It takes into account such understandings of the sacred and profane in order to examine the garden animated by magic which is variously seen as a sacred healing force and a defiling one, taking into the Gothic space signaling "the creeping return of excluded vegetation" (Hughes iv) and one haunted by fairies (Bihet 148) who are endowed with magical properties.

Profane and the Material

According to Durkheim, the sacred correlates with "an ideal and transcendent milieau" (36) while profane corresponds with the "material world" (36). Foucault refers to how the Medieval understanding of sacred and profane spaces was challenged by such developments in science as Galileo's notion of an infinite space. This alternative to the church's view of the centrality of the planet earth and by implication that of man in the creation led to a paradigm shift in the way the world was perceived hereafter. The scientific and enlightenment paradigm thus sees the world as a vast expanse of homogenous space as opposed to the heterogeneity of the sacred space, as discussed by Eliade who refers to how "desacralization pervades the entire experience of the nonreligious man in modern societies" (13). He also refers how "for profane experience, space is homogenous and neutral; no break qualitatively differentiates the various parts

of its mass" (22) as opposed to sacred experience which operates through a break in space and heterogeneity of space. Highlighting the political implications of sacred space, Chidester and Linenthal discuss how "a sacred space is not merely discovered or founded, it is claimed, or constructed, it is claimed, owned and operated by people advancing specific interests" (15). Bordieu notes that "the discovery of labour" (Bordieu 177) results in "the disenchantment of a natural world henceforward reduced to its economic dimension alone" (177) where "the most sacred activities find themselves constituted negatively, as symbolic" (177). The idea of the disenchantment of the world owing to the encroaching economic and political is pertinent to the discussion concerning the garden spaces whose function as spaces of contemplation is challenged in an increasingly desacralized world.

Garden and the Sacred/Profane in Literature

The garden in literature is seen as a place for contemplation of the spiritual. The Medieval dream allegories like *Pearl* often feature the walled garden where the narrator has some kind of religious vision about the virtues relating to Christianity. Woolf realizes that "the whole world is a work of art" (Woolf 72) in one of her "moments of being" or spiritual revelation in her garden at St Ives. William Blake's poem "Garden of Love" depicts a garden where joys of life and sexual pleasures and desires are forbidden by the Church which now stands in the middle of the eponymous garden with its commandment of "Thou Shalt Not" (Blake). The poem is a retelling of the Garden of Eden narrative where sexual awakening is equated with sinfulness and instead presents sexuality as a human experience and the society as a garden of love which organized religion has dehumanized. The garden running wild in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* represents nature taking over and is reflective of the spiritual void during wartime. The monstrous female in the garden is a recurring idea in literature and popular culture whereby the woman working with herbs in an enclosed garden is seen as a witch concocting magic potions. A variation of this idea appears in Toni Morrison's *Paradise* where the sacred space of the convent and its adjacent garden inhabited by women who are self-reliant and live by baking and other activities including hellfire peppers in the garden is seen as a profanation by the men of Ruby (Sempruch 102).

David Davidar's *The Solitude of Emperors* (2007), provides an alternative site and reading of the sacred and the profane. The novel problematizes their traditional

oppositional relationship to show how the sacred and the profane are inseparable twins, more so in political contexts. Davidar offers a critique of the entanglement of religious fanaticism and nation building, challenging the idea of sacrosanct spaces. Davidar uses the trope of the garden first to recall the long history of Edenic mythology that triggered constitution of the garden as sacred and allowed it to serve profane ends. Through two contestatory garden types that represent the sacred and the profane—one well-maintained in what looks like a 'perfectly' controlled space, the other well-cared for in a wild space adjacent to a graveyard—Davidar interrogates the relevance of oppositional archetypes in religious cultures. By integrating the dissolution of sacred-profane narratives in the backdrop of communal politics in India, the novel offers a contrapuntal reading of religious opportunism and the hollowness of sacred-profane distinctions. Given the historical connectionof independent India's democracy to its colonial past, Davidarfinds it useful to present the political economy of tea plantation as an allegorical prelude to the arduous task of building parliamentary democracy as a sacred temple. The garden of democracy is the earthly version of paradise that is challenged by the profanity of politics.

The history of India has been in Davidar's narrative-within-narrative the history of a rare state solitude on the part of three millennial 'Emperors' of India: Ashoka, Akbar, and Mahatma Gandhi. All the three 'makers' of India enforced through their character, action and thought a vision of India that was beautiful and sacred like paradise.Davidar suggests that the sacred nature of the paradise-like empires could be sustained the way the beauty of gardens is sustained. Clearly, the realization of heavenly kingdoms is akin to the creation of harmonius gardens. Such gardens can be sustained by the symmetry of mind and body—garden and gardener—and matched by the acts of sacrifice of the visionary men. That is possible only through solitude and meditation.

The resonance of yogic and priestly solitude in these spaces is not incidental. As this reading shows, the peace and beauty of gardens and empires—represented here by solitude and meditation—are threatened by two figures (a Hindu nationalist and a graveyard keeper-turned-savior) who are distorted images of each other, and represent the sacred and the profane at the same time.

In the novel a fictionalized south Indian small town with a history of dwindling tea gardens operates as a setting for the religious-nationalist entanglement to play out. In

this case, a controversy is created by Hindu nationalists seeking to reclaim a structure locally known as The Tower of God, and seen as a holy shrine by Christians and Hindus alike. They say that the Tower was once a Hindu temple and must be restored to the community. The impending violence and the final disaster are seen through the eyes of a young journalist representing a secular weekly magazine in a coming of age story. Persuaded by the journalist, Noah, a known town rake, assumes the role of the guardian of the tower and falls to his death, locked in a deathly grip with Rajan, the rightwing fanatic looking for publicity. Their death caused by what is clearly a deadly fall—nobody knows whether it was an accident or a fatal duel—is ironical to say the least, in that the antagonists are bound in an inseparable knot at death.

The novel written, in the wake of the destruction of the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmhoomi structure, is a parable of gardens gone wrong. Davidar repeatedly cites the story of true and false gardens. In the town under scrutiny, some of the most beautiful gardens have plants that are stolen from other people's gardens. While the plants are stolen, the beauty of the garden is never impaired by the fact that there is a history of felony in the background. The men in charge of their gardens are aware of the thief's activities but never hesitate to 'buy' the best saplings stolen by this man from another garden. The garden, whether with legitimate plants or stolen plants, looks beautiful. It seems as if plants have a different view of life and beauty. It is as if the plants celebrate the love and care of the gardener, not the right of the owner.

The beauty of the flower plants—absorbing the morning dew, soaking up the moonlight, meeting up the sun and the clouds—opposes the logic of possession and celebrates love. The harmony of the garden carries the soul of those who make it, the blood and sweat of those who maintain it. The garden has no time for those who propagate ownership, rights, and papers. Davidar transforms this story of a sleepy garden town's violent awakening into a parable of nation building, which needs love and true devotion before grand structures and grand rhetoric. This is Noah, on his vision of gardening:

I just set out to grow the best garden I could. The thing is, you can't simply follow a gardening manual or copy what someone else is doing. Plants have a will of their own, you've got to understand each one of them, empathize with them, know when to coax them, when to be stern, when to be patient, rather like trying to get a gorgeous

woman to do things your way. You can't just blunder in and hope for the best, but if you get it right, the results can be astonishing. (90)

It is instructive to examine the narrative involving Noah's private exhibition of one of his precious plants before his visitor:

The flower he was pointing to was extraordinarily striking, looking like an exotic dancer with her flounced skirts thrown back from long white legs. It had the same delicacy and blazing colour of the other fuchsias but where most of them had straight, elongated blooms,this one's petals were flounced, crinkled and coloured a flagrant pink with flared white and pink sepals and a pure white tube. (91)

Noah says that it is a rare variety of Fuchsia flower and admits that it was stolen from the ex-military man whose daughter he was in love with once at school, which was the trigger of his downfall. This man, in turn, seems to have stolen it from "a rich bugger, one of those guys who is not really a gardener but buys a great garden" (91). In the tender care of Noah the 'real' gardener, the plants "were somehow morebeautiful, more richly coloured and showy" (90). Noah's garden of love is contrasted to the flowers in a presumably well-kept garden mentioned by a Portuguese poet*: "Poor flowers in the flower beds of manicured gardens, They look like they're afraid of the police ..."* (90; italics in the original). The ordered gardens of the brigadier offer examples of such manicured gardens

The difference between love and fear suggested above is what makes and breaks nations. This difference in attitude towards gardening, between harmony and restriction, "between fundamentalism and tolerance" (Adami 104), and the image of the gardener as the leader is also referred to by Adami in his analysis of the novel (Adami 95-106). Expanding on the idea, it can be said that the power of Ashoka, Akbar, and Gandhi lay in their capacity not only for acts of sacrifice but also of solitude, a state that can be guaranteed by meditations. To sharpen the contrast, the narrator says:

We moved on, walking through detonations of colour that counterpointed the shabby gravestones, Noah expounding on the plants he was growing, and it occurred to me that this was the most unusual place I had ever been, this tumbledown cemetery perched on the lip of a mountain, with its wealth of exotic plants and its reclusive

guardian who talked with equal facility of his floral treasures as he did of matters too recondite for me. (91)

The power of a republic, in other words, is the like the power of Noah's garden. It does not matter that this garden in the middle of a graveyard is made up of 'stolen' plants and is not for public exhibition. The novel suggests that nobody—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians—will have irrevocable rights over the country by way of records of belonging and ancestry. Conversely nobody will lose the right to live in the country in light of the history of how they came to the country. The young journalist's mentor, the Gandhian proprietor of *The Indian Secularist,* imagines India as a garden maintained by a garden lover who is ready to be alone, absorbed in the beauty of the garden, and not worry about the past and future of its owners. The novel turns the parable of the garden into a manifesto of secularism, where democracy is sacred. The inviolable sacred space visualized and created by the three Emperors of India is threatened by hollow upholders of different faiths. The ironical inseparability of the sacred and the profane points to a final image of redemption. It is a strong reminder of the foundational strength of India, where it is possible to uphold the sacred, even through accidental sacrifices like the one offered by Rajan and Noah.

Thus, it might be pertinent to ask how the holy and Gothic implications of sacred play out in garden spaces "set apart and forbidden", why such closed off gardens are seen as magical spaces in novels like *The Secret Garden* and *The Forgotten Garden*, how the ecological implications of the garden resist modern profanation of space in *Life and Times of Michael K* and why the violence engendered by the sacred necessitate profanation and desacralisation in the garden in *The Blind Man's Garden*.

***The Secret Garden* (1911)**

Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*, presents three children—Mary, Dickon and Colin—as they discover the secret garden of the Misselthwaite Manor and amuse themselves with the delights of its natural growth processes. Neglected by parents and surrounded by attendants in India who are too servile, Mary turns into an unruly child with a sullen temperament. She is brought to Miselthwaite Manor in Yorkshire to stay with her uncle and the master of the house, Archibald Craven, after the death of her parents by cholera. Initially confining herself to her room, Mary later finds herself

influenced by the maid, Martha’s descriptions of the surrounding moors and soon finds herself wandering the moors and also the secret, locked up garden in the estate. She learns that the garden was locked up by Craven after the death of his wife who was fond of the same. While going about her adventures in the moor and the state garden, she befriends Martha’s brother Dickon who speaks in Yorkshire dialect and claims to be conversant in animal language. Mary also discovers Colin, the son of Archibald Craven who is sickly and keeps to his room and later, led by Mary, heals himself playing in the open spaces of the garden. The chapter looks at how the eponymous garden offers an alternative model of a colony in the form of an enchanted space as opposed to desacralized spaces in the colony.

In an early scene in India, Mary is seen trying to garden by sticking hibiscus into earth. The narrator notes how the futility of this activity makes her sulk: “She pretended that she was making a flower-bed, and she stuck big scarlet hibiscus blossoms into little heaps of earth, all the time growing more and more angry and muttering to herself the things she would say and the names she would call Sadie when she returned” (8). In a similarly futile attempt at gardening, Mary is mocked at by the clergyman’s son Basil:

> Why don’t you put a heap of stones there and pretend it is a rockery?” he said. “There in the middle,” and he leaned over her to point.
>
> “Go away! Cried Mary. “I don’t want boys. Go away!”
>
> For a moment Basil looked angry, and then he began to tease. He was always teasing his sisters. He danced round her and made faces and sang and laughed.
>
> “Mistress Mary, quite contrary,
>
> How does your garden grow?
>
> With silver bells, and cockle shells,
>
> And marigolds all in a row”. (14)

Such attempts to make something grow out of the land draws attention to the unproductivity of the colonial land. As Toth observes, this does not indicate the unsuitability of the colonies for growth, but, instead, points at the flaws of the British

Empire which is “causing its own decay by maintaining a rule founded on submission and fear” (136). The chapter looks at how the novel ascribes such failure to the desacralisation of the colonized land. Stripping the land of its potency and mysticism, through the processes of mapping, surveying and land grabbing, the colonial apparatus and its regime of submission turns land unproductive and people bear choleric temperaments. The chapter argues that the secret garden episode with the motifs of discovery, inhabiting, magic offers an alternative model of colonization where mysticism and sacralisation leads to a conducive environment facilitating growth.

The secret garden locked up for ten years resembles the mysterious overtures of the colonies. Mary’s imagination of the garden space is similar to that of explorers thinking of faraway lands: “She could not help thinking about the garden which no one had been into for ten years. She wondered what it would look like and whether there were any flowers still alive in it” (35). Further, Mary’s first impression of the garden resembles that of the settlers who are awestruck by its mysterious beauty: “It was the sweetest, most mysterious-looking place any one could imagine. The high walls which shut it in were covered with leafless stems of climbing roses which were so thick that they were matted together. Mary Lennox knew they were roses because she had seen a great many roses in India” (75). Here, the garden thick with overgrowth and roses is likened to India where Mary had been in. The garden, abandoned and overgrown with trees and shrubs, is emblematic of Gothic chaos and “a space where normal order has broken down” (Bihet 151). The garden is also the site of Mrs. Craven’s death and such spaces “peopled by ghosts, demons, “foreigners” (who are assimilated to demons and souls of the dead) are “foreign, chaotic” (Eliade 29). This Gothic wilderness is turned into a garden colony as Mary starts clearing up space using a piece of wood and dugs up weeds. Such acts of inhabiting and settling in a place are what Mircea Eliade likens to cosmicising, or the transformation of chaos to cosmos.

The garden, as the colony, is seen as a space of Magic. In the nineteenth century, as a reaction against enlightenment modernity, the theosophists lead by Madame Blavatsky looked eastwards and embraced the idea of orientalist magic (Josephson Storm 117). Burnett who was influenced by the ideas of theosophy (Stiles 300) invokes the idea of magic in the novel as a force sacralising of the garden. Here magic is seen as a healing force of nature which is contributing to the growth of plants and the good health and

happiness of children. Mary's idea of Magic is largely orientalist as she had "heard a great deal about Magic in her Ayah's stories" (73) and felt that the gust of wind revealing the ivy near the door was "Magic." The garden appeared "as if Magicians were passing through it drawing loveliness out of the earth with boughs and wands" (174). The source of this Magic is variously attributed to fairies and to Dickon who is seen as a "wood fairy" (115). The narrator refers to how "the seeds Dickon and Mary had planted grew as if fairies had tended them" (220). Silver notes how the Victorians were fascinated with fairies (3), who were seen to have "originated in 'savage' societies" (7) and seen as a reflection "of savage customs and traditions" (7). The garden like the colony is thus seen as teeming with Magical occurrences, aided by natives like Dickon and vestiges of savagery like fairies.

Bihet notes how 'Magic' in the novel refers to "an animistic presence making the characters and plants blossom" (153) or "anything natural or close to nature, a force closely tied to the idea of gardening" (153). The overtones of magic, in its animistic and primitive form, open up wider discussions on the discourse of magic as a force seen as opposed to the sacred idea of religion in the wake of colonization. Durkheim defines magic as that which is averse to religion and which takes "pleasure in profaning the holy things" (40). According to Durkheim, while religion is collective and organized under such institutions as the church, magic is individual and private in nature. This individual and secretive nature of magic, according to Mauss, lends itself to having mysterious, malicious or evil connotations (29). In the wake of colonization, this idea of magic is used as a tool by the Christian missionaries in order to refer to the religious practices and rites of the other as dangerous and backward (Styers 15). As in the manner of colonization, Magic in the garden is to be undermined by colonizing forces in order for its sacralising to take place. This is signaled by the arrival of Colin in the garden.

The figure of Colin here is that of the colonizer who takes over and subdues and people. When Colin first arrives at the garden, he is overwhelmed with its magic and exclaims: "I shall get well! I shall get well!." Later, he assumes authority over the garden and tells the gardener "I'm your master," I said, "when my father is away. And you are to obey me. This is my garden (210). As he hears of stories of magic and Dickon from Mary, he asks the former if it was him making Magic in the garden. To this he replies "Tha's doing Magic thysel'," he said. "It's same Magic as made there 'ere work out o'

th' earth," and he touched with his thick boot a clump of crocuses in the grass (211). In the manner of the settler he lays claim over the land symbolically as the gardener hands over a plant to him and says: "Here, lad," he said, handing the plant to Colin. "Set it in the earth thysel' same as th' king does when he goes to a new place." (216). In his new territory, Colin becomes the observer of Magic as the colonizer studies colonial customs. He tells Mary:

> "I shall stop being queer," he said, "if I go everyday to the garden. There is Magic in there—good Magic, you know, Mary. I am sure there is."
>
> So am I," said Mary
>
> "Even if it isn't real Magic," Colin said, "we can pretend it is. *Something* is there—*something*!. (219)

Aiming to unearth the nature of this Magic Colin states:

> The great scientific discoveries I am going to make, he went on, "Will be about Magic. Magic is a great thing and scarcely any one knows anything about it except a few people in old books—and Mary a little, because she was born in India where there are fakirs. I believe Dickon knows some Magic, but perhaps he doesn't know he knows it. He charms animals and people. I would never have let him come to see me if he had not been an animal charmer—which is a boy a charmer, too, because a boy is an animal. I am sure there is Magic in everything, only we do not have sense enough to get hold of it and make it do things for us—like electricity ad horses and steam. (222)

Speaking of Magic in relation to the garden Colin says:

> When Mary found this garden it looked quite dead," the orator proceeded. "Then something began pushing things out of the soil and making things out of nothing[…]. Scientific people are always curious and I am going to be scientific. I keep saying to myself, 'What is it? What is it?' It's something. It can't be nothing! I don't know it's name so I call it Magic[…]. (223)

Colin on witnessing the magic of things growing in the garden and thinking of Dickon as the possible source, decides to try performing magic himself, calling it a scientific experiment. Succeeding in such experiments makes him believe that this does not require special expertise and can be performed by anyone. In doing so, Colin reenacts the taking over of the magical world by science. In the nineteenth century, as the popularity of magic was gaining ground among the theosophists, spirirtualists and occultists, the colonialists at home were looking at ways of undermining magic, by offering scientific demonstrations in the form of jugglers and stage performers such as Jeam Eugene Robert Houdin (Davies 49).White European males, in shirts and trousers, performed magic in the colonies, taking away much of it dangerous import and revealing it to be an illusion and was seen as "a triumph for colonial rationality" (Davies 49-50). The narrative here dramatizes the processes of colonization and the gradual subduing of magic and indigenous belief systems.

Taken to its logical conclusion, this process of demystification threatens to profane the animated space of the garden and the colony. It is at this point that Burnett, a believer of Christian Science, inserts elements of the same such as prayer in order to subvert the complete de-mystification of the garden. A nineteenth century movement, Christian Science emphasizes on prayer for healing rather than medical intervention. In the novel, the gardener, Ben Weatherstaff asks Colin to sing Doxology which the latter is unable to sing. Dickon then sings the song as the others join in.

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow,

Praise Him all creatures here below,

Praise Him above ye Heavenly Host,

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Amen". (254)

Equating this with Magic, Colin says, "Perhaps it means just what I mean when I want to shout out that I am thankful to the Magic…Perhaps they are both the same thing…" (255).By making Dickon sing Doxology, Burnett restores the prerogative of Magic in the folk boy or native Dickon. As they sing, Mrs. Sowerby, the mother of

Dickon, is presented as a Mother Mary-like figure walking in who Colin sees just as his own mother. The challenge presented to the Magic of the garden through science is subverted through the element of prayer and locating its initiation in the folk. Thus, in the secret garden, Burnett addresses anxieties relating to the end of the empire and offers an alternative in the form of a sacralised space.

***Life and Times of Michael K* (1983)**

J.M. Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K* uses gardening as an ecological alternative to the unrest in civil war struck South Africa. Michael K, a man with a cleft lip, leaves Capetown for Prince Albert in order to escape the unrest following Civil War. His mother dies on the way and K takes it upon himself to bury his mother's ashes in her birthplace, embarking on a personal pilgrimage. On the Visagie farm where he thinks his mother was buried, Michael K takes to the cultivating and farm life until he is met with by the Visagie grandson who he escapes shortly after. Following this, he is taken away for labour on the railway tracks and taken to a camp which he escapes and returns to Visagie. His life on the farm is then disrupted when the army takes over the farm and sends him to a hospital escaping which he finds his way back to the cramped apartment of his mother in Cape Town. The chapter looks at land use and desacralized spaces in the apartheid South Africa and how gardening offers a contrast to such a view of space.

Derek Wright in "Black Earth, White Myth: Coetzee's Michael K" talks about how the novel imposes the Afrikaner writer's myth of the chthonic man living off the land and working for the land. He highlights K's journey as "a reverse initiation rite, returning from city to primitive, unspoiled earth and from adulthood to mothered child." (438). He notes how the idea that the land is to be returned not to the blacks but to itself" (440) makes for an ecological project devoid of political utterance (440). Alicia Broggi in ""What Does it Mean to speak of---? Rudolf Bultman, Biography, and J.M. Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K*" discusses the resistance to biographical or authoritative meaning making in the text. She discusses how the text stages encounters not with the divine but instead with an insight into the what she calls "inarticulable fullness of life" (339). K Wiegandt reads the sacred/religious implications of the text using Rudolf Otto's concept of "creature feeling" that evokes awe in the face of the divine. She explains how with Coetzee's characters, a creature feeling "emerges suddenly and without causation by their acts or beliefs, that is, grace like, in the form of needs and pleasures" (76) and

redirects attention to bodily nature of the subject (76). Taking into account such views, this chapter seeks to understand the sacralising of space and the act of gardening in relation to the colonization of South Africa which operates through a homogenizing of spaces, people and acts. The reaffirmation of the chthonic in the novel, the chapter argues, is reflective of the desire to offer an understanding of land and sacralised space which is opposed to a view of commodified nature and space. As opposed to *The Secret Garden*, where the discovery and colonisation of foreign lands is played out in the discovery and cosmicising of the garden, in *Michael K*, the sacralisation of space seeks to reclaim land from colonial structures.

The idea of private property, fencing, trespassing, fencing, mapping, surveying of land is reflective of a geometrical understanding of the world attributed to Cartesian paradigm responsible for much of the modern desacralising of the world. This is reflective of the homogenous space where on one hand,"no break qualitatively differentiates various parts of its mass" (Eliade 22) and, on the other, it is reflective of "Geometrical space" (Eliade 22) which can be cut and delimited in any direction" (Eliade 22). In the novel, K's view of life and land offers a staunch critique of such mapping and surveying of space and desacralizing of land. While on his journey, he comes across miles of fenced velds and finally decides to eat the fruit from one of the orchards believing that "it is God's earth and I am not a thief" (39). He is soon warned off land showing how he is trespassing, with "a shot cracking out from the back window of the farmhouse" after which he imagines a huge Alsatian streaking out to attack him. The novel here harks back at the discriminatory land use policy in apartheid South Africa. The Natives Land Act of 1913 limited the black population of the country to "reserves" while the vast majority of it was owned by the white population who controlled the buying and selling. Further, the act made farmers landless and forced them to work for the whites at meagre wages. While the statement of a fellow farmer in a labour camp, "There will always be a need for good fencers in this country, no matter what" (95), reflects the general atmosphere of gatekeeping, K's inability to understand and grasp the notion of private property is a way of resisting the state forces which turn nature and human beings into commodities.

The novel offers alternative model of land use as seen by way of Michael K's life on the farm. K does not own the farm nor is sure that his mother resided on the same.

The land obtains significance only after the process of sacralising which is done by spreading the ashes. In the manner of Christian burial, K lays the packet of his mother's ashes and waits for a divine voice to guide him. However, no voice comes and he decides to "to return his mother to the earth" (58) by spreading the "fine grey flakes over the earth, afterwards turning the earth spadeful by spadeful" (59). Such an act establishes links between the Mother and the earth both of whom are sacred as "The Mother is the all-nourishing earth: life is to be born of Mother earth, death is to enter into her" (Leeuw 91). It is this act that the narrator proclaims "beginning of his life as a cultivator" (59). It enacts Eliade's idea of cosmicising space by inhabiting it and performing purification rituals. The sacred and the act of cultivation are linked in this scene as "consecrating a territory is equivalent to making it a cosmos, to comicizing it" (30) "a ritual repetition of the cosmogony" (31). From here on, "The impulse to plant had reawoken in him; now, in a matter of weeks, he found his waking life bound tightly to the patch of earth he had begun cultivate and the seeds he had planted there" (59). K's act of sacralising land by spreading of ashes is an act of regeneration where land is not owned but seen as a living entity to be worshipped and taken care of.

The understanding of the garden as a sacred space must be read in light of its ecological implications. The farm garden which faces neglect during war time is reworked and revived by Michael K who thinks of it as a thing in its own right. For K, the garden stands for nourishment and needs to be taken care of not just for his survival but also for the survival of the ideas of nourishment and care as against destruction during war time. "His deepest pleasure came at sunset…bound tightly to the patch of earth…" (59). Here K is seen to have revived his desire which led him to work at Wynberg park. This reconnect signals a greater reconnect with nature and a pleasure in simple activities. The "umbilical cord of tenderness that stretched from him to the patch of earth beside the dam" (66) addresses this disconnect between nature and culture. When the soil tended by him finally bears fruit, K feels immense gratitude for the earth's produce: "Speaking the words he had been taught, directing them no longer upward but to the earth on which he knelt, he prayed: 'For what we are about to receive make us truly thankful…All that remains is to be a tender of the soil…He chewed with tears of joy in his eyes. The best, he thought, the very best pumpkin I have tasted'" (113). Wiegandt refers to this as an instance of "creature feeling" triggered by his own bodily needs. She interprets K's act of consuming the pumpkin as:

> Eucharist brought down to earth: no son of God is sacrificed, not even a man, but a pumpkin sitting between weeds on the ground…The numinous quality of K's bliss, stressed religious vocabulary is only explicable because K has been starving and absolutely depends on pumpkins for survival. The phrase 'aching with sensual delight' encapsulates the ambivalence of K's creature feeling, in which terrifying dependence releases bliss that is a secular version of thankfulness towards God. (81)

The pumpkin assumes here an object of worship which is "saturated with *being*" (Eliade 12). Here K experiences what Eliade calls "hierophany" (Eliade 11), that is, "manifestation of the sacred in some ordinary object" (11). He thinks how "From one seed a whole handful: that was what it meant to say the bounty of the earth (118). Here, land sterilised by war is revered again as bountiful mother.

The sacred implication of the land is then overturned by the South African state which impinges upon and claims this space for itself. Coetzee states how "he can't hope to keep the garden because, finally, the whole surface of South Africa has been surveyed and mapped and disposed of" (Morphet 63). The soldiers storm the patch of land suspecting militant activities in this abandoned land and blast the house adjacent to the farm. In an act of complete disregard for the "bounty of the earth", the soldiers remove all the pumpkins and fill the holes with landmines. This is reflective of another act of profaning the sacred through the act of homogenising space.

The idea of gardening as stewardship runs against the idea of commercial farming that is shared by the people in the hospital who insists that K goes "back to your gardening when the war is over" (135) and that even the soil in the Peninsula will be suitable for market gardening (135). Here Coetzee exemplifies the disenchantment of the sacred through the introduction of labour and market forces. The gardener K says"What grows is for all of us. We are the children of the earth" (139) and resists such reduction of the sacred fruits of the earth and relinquishes any form of possession.

Coetzee states how the doctor appears to be "a person who believes (or wants) Michael K to have meaning" (Morphet 63) or one who imposes his understanding and meaning on the figure of K. This meaning making or allegorizing, the chapter argues, is one way of cosmicising or the act of creation of cosmos out of chaos. His narrative of

K’s life reflects his own search for meaning and centre in a desacralized world taken over by civil war. In his description of K’s garden, the doctor stresses on the sacred and otherworldly nature of this space, by calling it “the sacred and alluring garden that blooms in the heart of the desert and produces the food of life.” (166) one which “is off every map” (166) where “no road leads” (166) and which only K knows the way to, imbuing K, the figure of the gardener with mystical overtones as the steward of the earth. The narrative thus makes a case for reenchantment of the world through sacralising the farm garden at Visagie and offers an alternative to the secularization of space through the intervention of Modernist forces.

***The Forgotten Garden* (2008)**

Kate Morton’s *The Forgotten Garden* follows three women—Eliza, Nell and Cassandra—as they go about making sense of their identities and lives in relation to the eponymous garden. The narrative follows three timelines—1901-1913, 1975 and 2005, respectively—for each of these three women of different generations from the same family and moves between Australia and Cornwall. As Nell comes to know of her identity as an adopted child on her twenty-first birthday, she sets out to Cornwall and arrives at Blackhurst Manor where she spent her childhood. She learns of her identity as the granddaughter of the Mountrachet family and comes to acquire the cottage and its garden at the end of the maze on the estate which is later inherited by Cassandra, her granddaughter. The garden used to be the abode of Eliza Makepeace, the writer of fairytales and the biological mother of Nell, raised as Ivory Mountrachet. This garden and its cottage at the end of the estate inhabited by Eliza offers perspectives on how the garden vacillates between the sacred space of Edenic bliss and a space of teeming sexuality threatening to overthrow the sacred order of the Victorian household.

The garden in Kate Morton’s *The Forgotten Garden* resembles an Edenic space with its sacred and dangerous insinuations. The Mountrachet estate houses a garden at the end of the maze where children are forbidden to go owing to the dangers of being lost in the maze. On arriving in the estate, however, Eliza takes an instant liking to the garden and ignoring the dangers of the maze, manages to reach the other end. In this garden, Eliza envisions a secret hideout for herself and her cousin Rose:

> It's going to be ours, Rose, yours and mine. A secret place where we can be together, just the two of us, just as we imagined when we were younger. Four walls, locked gates, our very own paradise. Even when you're unwell, you can come here, Rose. The walls keep it protected from the rough sea winds, so you'll still be able to listen to the birds, smell the flowers, feel the sun on your face (408-409).

Here, Eliza recreates a paradisiacal space of female friendship. If after Mircea Eliade, inhabiting a space equals to cosmicising the same, Eliza's inhabiting the garden degothicizes the locked up garden space. Further, Eliza performs a ritual cosmicizing of the space by sprinkling earth and planting an apple tree:

> 'This is our first new tree,' she called. 'We're going to have a ceremony. That's why it was so important that you be here today. This tree will continue to grow, no matter where our lives take us, no matter where our lives take us, and it will remember us always: Rose and Eliza.'
>
> Davies was by my side, holding out a small spade. 'It's Miss Eliza's wish that you should be the first to toss earth on to the roots of the tree, Miss Rose.'
>
> Miss Eliza's wish. Who was I to argue with so great a force?
>
> 'What sort of a tree is it?' I asked.
>
> 'An apple tree.'
>
> I should have known. Eliza had always had an eye to symbolism and apples are, after all, the first fruit" (410).

Sue Edney states how "the Paradise garden in Eden is both sacred and profane, profaned by the infiltration of evil" (9).Crosby states how "the garden apple tree has its own Gothic associations, taking on the mystical, spiritual reverberations of the sacred garden of Paradise, or Eden, or the formal Classical temple groves" (48). The sacred Edenic space of innocence is undercut by the Gothic association of the Edenic apple tree and hints at a dark, elusive, seductive space of uncomfortable intimacies, sexual transgression and death. Here too, the Edenic space of innocence acquires profane

overtones as the space comes to be inhabited by Eliza, associated with the enigma surrounding her figure.

Eliza, the daughter of Georgiana Mountrachet, brought from the London underbelly after the death of her mother is seen by her aunt Adeline Mountrachet, Rose's mother, "needs cleaning".' (230), "a little better than a savage" (265) given over as a grooming "project" (285) to Rose. "Plucked from her lonely London life and transplanted to the grand and mysterious Blackhurst", Eliza's status as an orphan and her time spent as a child in the London den of criminals makes her a misfit for the polite society of Blackhurst Manor. Adeline's despise of Eliza is also attributed to the fact the she reminds her of the latter's mother, Georgiana, and her husband's incestuous desires for her. For her "Georgiana's girl, her hair hanging loose, looking for all the world like a ghost from the past, and the expression on Linus's face, his old face turned foolish by a young man's desire (350) was "little more than a cuckoo, sent back to supplant Adeline's own child" (352) and poses a threat to her and Rose's place in the household. The Victorian home is understood to be a sacred space of angels in the house who are either nurturing mothers or obedient daughters under the guardianship of male figures. In the novel, Adeline Mountrachet is the figure of a Victorian woman who keeps the house together and trains her daughter, Rose Mountrachet to be the ideal woman, demure, submissive and gentle. Leeuw notes the sacrality of the house which "with its own fire, which must produce its own means of life, manufacture its own clothing, hew its own wood and have its own well, is a world in itself" (396). As in *The Secret Garden*, private gardens in the Victorian period were often seen as the extension of the sacred space of the home and "where the cultivation of productive and aesthetically pleasing plants could, or should, lead to better health, moral uplift and decency within the home" (Crosby 51). The garden space where Eliza conceives Nell with Nathaniel Walker, Rose's husband, as she was requested by her infertile sister to bear a child for her, is seen to be a dangerous space lurking on the margins of the Blackhurst Manor and threatening to overthrow its sacrality.

In the novel, Eliza residing in the garden is seen as a woman capable of magic. Marcel Mauss notes how women are seen to be among the "individuals destined to become magicians who are brought to public notice by fear or suspicion, or through their physical peculiarities or extraordinary gifts" (Mauss 34) during "critical periods of their

life cycle" such as "puberty, menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth" (35) and cause "bemusement and apprehension, which place them in a special position" (35). Such women are seen as "sources of magical power" (35). In their exploration of red hair and femininity in the novel, Ayres and Maier note how mythical seductresses like Eve are often portrayed with red hair as against angelic figures like Mother Mary whose hair is covered (151) and how Eliza and her mother Georgiana with red hair and with their fecund abilities are seen as threats. Eliza who conceives Nell in the garden also overturns the sacred image of the hortus conclusus or the virgin in the garden.

Being a writer of fairytales opens Eliza to further mysterious speculations. "Queen of the Piskies" (421). Nell or Ivory observes how "The Authoress was magical. Witch or fairy, she wasn't sure, but Ivory knew the Authoress wasn't a person like any other she'd seen before" (535) and also that 'It's a magical garden" (524). The narrator notes how "Nathaniel wondered what it was about Eliza's garden that made one feel such splendour could not have come naturally. That some bargain had been struck with spirits on the other side of the veil to protect such wild abundance" (524). Alongside the "savage" origin of fairies (7), Silver notes how certain types of fairies, especially the female ones were regarded with suspicion and fear:

> Individual female fairies were connected with death, witchcraft, vampirism and parasitism. Not surprisingly, when evil was endowed with features, its face was frequently female. Moreover, behind the projection onto the fairies of the fears of the mob or of "free" and sexually destructive women lay the culture's concern about failing institutional restraints- for example, about such factors as the weakening of the patriarchal and hierarchical underpinnings of the church. (9)

Here too the creative space of the garden with Eliza threatens the sacred order of patriarchy and is thus termed magical, otherworldly, enchanted, a world which is to be feared and kept at bay. Thus Adeline and Rose, representatives of the Mountrachet barren world keep forbidding Ivory from entering the garden telling her "that the way was dark and filled with untold dangers" (554). When Eliza finally dies, Adeline refuses to bury her in "the blessed soil that surrounded Rose" (633) which might "pollute" (633) the same. She is finally buried in the garden "Where no one would ever think to look" (633) turning it into a haunted space. When Nell's granddaughter Cassandra finally unearths the clue to their pasts in the garden in the form of the brooch that was buried

with Eliza, this haunted space turns into a space of memories, a sacred space which connects Nell and Cassandra to their pasts.

The Blind Man's Garden (2013)

In Nadeem Aslam's *The Blind Man's Garden*, the eponymous garden of the novel symbolises Pakistan, otherwise visualized by the makers of the nation as 'pure' or 'sacred'. The garden in question is of Rohan, a man who is gradually losing his vision in the fictional town of Heer in Pakistan. Throughout his life, he is troubled by his wife Sophia's apostasy, which, he thinks, will cause her insurmountable suffering after her death. Unknown to him, his son Jeo and his adopted son Mikal undertake a journey from Pakistan to Afghanistan to help the victims of the war on terror. They eventually engulf themselves in the activities of the Taliban and are later sold to Afghan warlords eventually leading to Jeo's death. Jeo's wife Naheed who was in love with Mikal awaits him after her husband's death. The narrative also discusses a terrorist attack on Ardent Spirit, the school in Heer founded by Rohan and Sophia, an attack which killed his son-in-law Basie. Rohan's garden here becomes a microcosm of Pakistan and reflects the colonialist legacy as well as the postcolonial detritus leading to problems of terrorism and religious fundamentalism. The chapter thus looks at how implications of the garden in the novel are twofold: first, it represents attempts at decolonization and resacralisation and second, it looks at the how the garden of Pakistan is plagued by the overt sacralisation leading to religious fundamentalism.

Gulsevin Guleryuz Kara discusses the garden space in the novel in her thesis titled "Spatial Politics in Nadeem Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil* and *The Blind Man's Garden.*" She uses Sarah Upton's concept of 'post-space', which refers to alternative spaces subverting colonial spatial patterns such as the nation state, and discusses the garden in *The Blind Man's Garden* as one such space. She notes how the garden and its plants and flowers offer "an idealistic reconfiguration of Pakistan where plurality is celebrated" (113) and offers a contrast to the oppressive public space. She further states how it is in the space of the garden where the characters find a way to be and express themselves. The garden in this reading is thus depicted in a positive light as it allows for self-expression and introspection. The present chapter, however, argues that the garden in the novel is reflective of the state of Pakistan and traces its journey from its inception to present day state descent into fundamentalism. The acts of purification in the garden

site, the plants and flowers, the bird snares etc. all dwell on how the idea of sacrality and the fear of desacralisation engender violence that plagues the nation in the present time.

The metaphor of the garden invokes the idea of the paradise in Nadeem Aslam's *The Blind Man's Garden*. In an interview with Aslam, Sunil Sethi states points out the Islam garden to be a recurring metaphor in the former's fiction (Sethi 358). In another interview, Aslam states that *The Blind Man's garden* represents Pakistan, also represented by its bordering walls decorated by the jasmine, Pakistan's national flower (Yaqin 42). The first instance of such parallels between the garden and the nation plays out as Rohan reminisces the act of laying the foundations of his house:

> Carrying his lantern he begins to walk back to the house that stands at the very centre of the garden. Before building it, he had visited the cities of Mecca, Baghdad, Cordoroba, Cairo, Delhi and Istanbul, the six locations of Islam's earlier magnificence and possibility. From each he brought back a handful of dust and he scattered it in an arc in the air, watching as belief, virtue, truth and judgement slipped from his hand and settled softly on the ground. That purifying line, in the shape of a crescent or a scythe, was where he had dug the foundations. (8)

Here, Rohan reenacts the carving out of Pakistan, the word referring to the "land of the pure" (Ispahani 7). The crescent in the middle of the green space points to the Pakistani flag which is green in colour with a white crescent and a star. The green in the flag is symbolic of the Paradisical garden which holds an important place in Islamic theology. Rooted in the Persian word "Paradieza", the paradise garden in Islam is described as place with golden trees laden with fruits, perfumed atmosphere, rivers flowing with milk and honey (Rustomji 170). The paradise is a state of eternal bliss where believers who have managed to lead a pious life and done good deeds can go and are escaped from the tortures of hell. The Islamic garden is said to be a recreation of such paradise on earth and is seen as a space of contemplation and retreat (Asif et al. 77). Most Islamic gardens are modeled on chaharbagh in the shape of a rectangle or square with a fountain in the centre. This style of garden architecture originated in the Middleeast and would mostly be a royal space differentiating itself from the surrounding heat and scorching earth by means of a fountain, replicating the image of an oasis in the desert. Shalimar bagh, gardens in Lahore etc. can be said to be the remnants of the

Mughal garden in the subcontinent. Variously referred to as “al Janna”, “firdaus”, etc. (Rustomji 166) the garden in Islam is considered to be a sacred space with religious overtones. The nation of Pakistan, conceived of as a sacred Islamic paradise is re-envisioned here as the land from the six sacred Islamic sites is spread out to lay the foundations of his house in the centre of the garden.

The nation of Pakistan was result of the desire to break away from the erstwhile colonial setup and to carve out a land for the Muslims. In the novel, this act of decolonizing is symbolized by spreading of soil from the sacred Islamic sites. The novel tells us how Rohan’s ancestors refused to aid the rebels or the freedom fighters who came in search of horses by trying to bury the animals in the garden soil. The narrator comments:

> The Mutiny was eventually put down across the land and one thousand years of Islamic rule came to an end in India, Britain assuming complete possession. A Muslim land was lost to nonbelievers and Rohan’s ancestors played a part in it.
>
> This was the century old taint that Rohan tried to remove by spreading the soils of Allah’s six beloved cities here. Mecca. Baghdad. Cordoba. Cairo. Delhi. Istanbul. Scattering them broadly in the shape of the trench in which the horses were interred, the cleft out of which they had resurrected themselves (11).

Thus, the garden and the house which belonged to Rohan’s ancestors witnessed acts of aiding colonialism which deferred the realization of its sacred Islamic Republic. Rohan’s act of laying the foundations by purifying the land of its colonial remnants is emblematic of the creation of Pakistan and its independence from a colonial regime. The home is later converted into a school named Ardent Spirit which houses the six rooms named after the six sites mentioned.

When students grow in number, the school is shifted to another building on the other side of the river while this building becomes Rohan and Sophia’s home. After the death of his wife Sophia, Rohan hands over the school to his former student, Ahmed following whose death his brother, Major Kyra, takes up its administration. Both Ahmed and Kyra are fundamentalists and the under their leadership the school turns into a

hotbed of jihadi activities is reflected in the following lines. Such a transition is reflected in changes in the school's motto since its inception:

> When Rohan and his wife founded it, the arch had read *Education is the basis of law and order*. Soon the word *Islamic* was added before Education, by Rohan himself, apparently against his wife's wishes. Over the years it has been amended further, going from Islamic education is the basis of law and order to Islam is the basis of law and then to Islam is the purpose of life, while these days it says Islam is the purpose of life and death (30-31).

This change in motto is indicative of the distortion of the sacred principles of the nation's paradisiacal garden foundations. While the nation was originally envisioned as a separate land for the Muslims, the incorporation of the Objectives Resolution its constitution in 1949 marked the first move towards making Islamic ideology central to its national fabric. As in the case of the school, this insistence on religion gradually turned the nation into a breeding ground of religious fundamentalism and terrorism.

The work of Ispahani can be used in this context. In her book, *Purifying the Land of the Pure* (2015), she notes how the desire for a 'Pak' land and purification has metamorphosed into "imposing religious conformity which in turn requires exclusion and marginalization of people believing in religions or practices other than those of the 'purifiers'" (7). This violence following the desire for purification is also reflected in the operations of the school. Under Major Kyra's leadership, the students storm the St. Joseph school, in retaliation to the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and Pakistani state's support for the same. Accompanying this is a zest to weed out elements polluting the sacred Islamic paradise such as Father Mede, "an infidel" (171) and teachers "filling heads of children with un-Islamic things like music and biology and English literature" (173), a desire akin to uprooting of Jews from the Reich due to their perceived "spiritual inability" (Bauman 66). The school moving away from its original site in Rohan's garden and the changes in its administration and operation thus reflects the violent turn taken by the desire for a sacred garden nation.

Discussions relating to the garden plants in Rohan's garden give way to histories of profanation of the Muslim world. As Rohan touches the pomegranate blossoms in the garden, he tells his daughter-in-law Naheed how the fruit came from one of erstwhile

centres of the Islamic world, Granada. He dwells on how the city was named after the fruit that grew there in abundance and about systematic persecution of Muslims and erasure of Islam in Spain by the Inquisition during the Crusades (203). In this context, mention might be made of Ruggles who in his *Islamic Gardens and Landscapes* (2008) mentions how the Spanish poet Ibn Zaydun's poetry visualized the bygone era as a garden which "represented the trace of something gone and irretrievable" (Ruggles 7). Such fall from grace in the wake of colonization is again brought to the fore when a rose bush reminds Mikal, who is trapped in Afghanistan, of Rohan's garden and the latter comments on its flora: "Before the science of botany was established just three hundred years ago, he remembers Rohan telling him and Jeo when they were children, flowers in their infinite variety and lack of human order were said to be proof of God's existence" (372). The fall of Granada and the secularization of botany here takes on insinuations of Paradisical fall of the Islamic world which paves way for Western colonization.

Aslam points to how the sacralising of the garden space requires the oppression of women and non-human others. In the novel, the bird pardoner traps birds in cages and then earns money by making people free the birds for good luck. As Rohan's garden trees house a number of birds, the pardoner set up tree snares in the garden and manges to trap many birds. The trapping of the garden birds for sacred purposes in shown to be parallel to Jeo's trapping by the Taliban, and, by extension, to the innocent lives in the lives in the nation who are caught up in the bloody battle between the U.S. and Afghanistan. While Naheed manages to cut off the bird snares trying to free some of the birds, some others have already succumbed to a slow and painful death: "The heron falls slowly to the ground and makes no effort to stand, its bleeding neck slowly relaxing along the ground…" (72). The death of the heron here mirrors Jeo's death whose body arrives at the exact same minute when the cut off snares alongwith the dead birds drop to the ground.

The oppression of women in Pakistan ordained by religion also finds representation in Rohan's garden, a microcosm of the nation. Rohan's wife Sophia who knew every plant and every creature in the garden and painted them, much to the horror of Rohan who thinks painting living things and painting in general to be a sin. He thus goes on to burn all of Sophia's paintings of the garden creatures "fearing she would be judged for disobeying Allah, who forbade such images lest they lead to idolatry" (21). In

another instance, Rohan is taken to a clinic in Jalalabad where a certain type of bush grows in abundance. However, its wood is also used to make wooden noses for women whose original noses were chopped off by the family in the name of family's honour. It is a bush that also grows in Rohan's garden whose wood was used to make writing tablets. Through the use of the garden, Aslam here juxtaposes scientific utility and religious brutality.

It is interesting, therefore, to note how the women in the novel, such as Naheed and Sophia are seen to contribute to the desacralizing of the garden. Being an apostate, Sophia did not believe in the concept of a paradise in afterlife and instead thought the garden and the nature to be "the only Paradise that she ever wanted" (43) challenging the sacred overtones of the garden. As opposed to Rohan who "knew that the soul existed, and not only that, it was accountable to Allah and His providential rage" (44) Sophia thought that "there was no soul, only consciousness. No divine plan, only nature" (44). Again, while men like the bird pardoner set up snares in the garden in the name of the divine, Naheed cuts them off in order to free the birds. Through the acknowledgement of and empathy to non-human life around them, Naheed and Sophia challenge the mystical understanding of the paradisical garden and, by implication, of religious orthodoxy of the Pakistani nation.

The novel thus uses the metaphor of the garden to reflect both on how the dream of the paradisiacal country has been sabotaged by the war on terror and the atrocities of the West and how the desire for a sacred Islamic land has snowballed into everyday violence and intolerance. Aslam here presents a picture of how the garden that is Pakistan is a man's world and is blinded by prejudice and warfare and. The idea of sacred land and the resultant violence thus problematizes the paradisiacal dream of its founders.

Conclusion

The garden thus makes a case for reenchantment of the world through sacralising and poses a challenge to the secularization of space through the intervention of Modernist forces. The liminal spaces of the garden operate as sites where the sacred is located, engendered and contested. The ambiguity of the word sacred as forbidden and consecrated is played out in closed off gardens in the Victorian period which are seen as

both healing spaces and dangerous spaces of feminine fecundity to be kept at bay. Similarly the word profane meaning both secular/real and overturning of religion give rise to understandings of the modern homogeneity and desacralising of space and magic as a profaning activity performed in the secrecy of the garden. posing a challenge to sacred understandings of space. The sacralisation of the garden, as in the case of the colonies, operates by terming magic as chaotic and folk, with science first and then religion. The violent implications of the protection of the sacred and purification also play out in the garden operating as a microcosms of the nation is seen as a paradise excluding deviations.