

Postcolonialism and the Historical Novel: Tracing Nur Jahan in Contemporary Historical Accounts and Fictions

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Abstract: The historical fictional novel with its mix of creativity, imagination, and facts, also comes with notions which have emerged from colonial and empirical sentiments. This paper aims to look at Indu Sunderesan's *The Twentieth Wife* and study the patterns of colonial prejudices which lie in works of historical fiction. This paper will also explore the impact of colonial trade on the cultural tropes of the 21st century. More importantly, the paper will trace the dismantling of the preconceived idea of the 'woman in the *harem*' through the figure of Jahangir's Twentieth Wife.

Keywords: Historical fiction, postcolonialism, colonial stereotypes, Mehrunnisa, Nur Jahan, women

Introduction

The popular cultural representations of subjects from the Global South differ vastly in their portrayals by white writers and travellers. A glimpse at the travelogues of Portuguese, Dutch, or English writers would show the inherent stereotypical notions that the Global North held (still holds) of the Global South. Gabriel García Márquez, in his Nobel lecture,¹ elaborates on these models of realism which he, along with others in the world, had grown up reading. He questions its sustainability and truthfulness, he questions its one-sidedness, and its inflexibility. He says in his speech, delivered on 8th December 1982, 'I dare to think that it is this outsized reality, and not just its literary expression, that has deserved the attention of the Swedish Academy of Letters. [...] Poets and beggars, musicians and prophets, warriors and scoundrels, all creatures of that unbridled reality, we have had to ask but little of imagination, for our crucial problem has been a lack of conventional means to render our lives believable. This, my friends, is the crux of our solitude.' His point of contention is that the reality of Latin America is very different from its contemporary North America, thus rendering it unbelievable to the colonisers. And if the everyday realities of these once-colonised lands are not believed, there is no way or no reason to try and represent it through the mainstream modes of representation since these modes developed in response to different kinds of realities.

The paper argues that most historical fictions of the subcontinent, despite being written by South Asians or diasporic writers, embed Reality for the purpose of serving it on a platter, so as not to challenge the beliefs of the colonisers. The 'exotic' lands are kept alive in these texts through descriptions of landscapes, food, garments, languages, and people. Moreover, there is a visible change in the selection of words used for narrating those fictitious incidents. For instance, words which are taken directly from local dialects or subcontinental languages are highlighted or italicised and are mostly accompanied by a footnote providing their explanations in English. On the other hand, when white writers write about habits like having supper, which are not a part of the daily routine of the people of the Global South, they seldom highlight it, or provide a note with its meaning. The readers across the globe are expected to find out about the practice or phenomenon by themselves. A plausible reason would be that the writers of the Global North believe *their* reality to be the Reality. The genre of Magical Realism, of which Márquez is considered to be the Father, emerged only to challenge *this* belief.

The paper would begin by discussing the category of ‘Third World Cosmopolitans’² so as to establish Sundaresan’s geographical and cultural position within the category of historical fiction writing emerging from South Asia. To corroborate the claim that her writing caters to a predominantly white audience, it would further take recourse to the accounts of travellers and courtiers who came to Mughal India and wrote about it in their memoirs as a way of comparison. Post this, the paper would discuss the progression of Mehrunissa till her becoming Nur Jahan, taking into consideration how different historians have described her and where Sundaresan falls amidst them. To make the picture holistic, it becomes imperative to highlight certain stereotypes for which ‘Third World Cosmopolitans’ fall since they target white readership. Conclusively, the paper would talk about postcolonialism and historical fiction; the ways in which they can coexist within the parameters of realism and historicism.

Third World Cosmopolitans

‘The category of writers called ‘Third World Cosmopolitans’, who are globally visible, who are taught in postcolonial classrooms the world over, and who are hailed in the review pages of Western journals as interpreters and authentic voices of the non-Western world hardly ever include a writer from India who does not write in English [...] the precondition for belonging to this club is that s/he must write originally in English. Implicit here is an erasure of the diversity of India.’ (Mukherjee, 2000)³

It is intriguing to note that many diasporic writers hailing from South Asia choose to write of South Asia in their new homelands. As Lisa Lau suggests, ‘[...] perhaps due to their familiarity with both culture and geographical location of their countries (and cities) of origin. It is possible that having settled outside South Asia, they may choose to write of South Asia in order to inform other non-South Asians about their culture.’⁴ Writing of the homeland can also be cathartic, because the process of writing takes one back to the place they have left behind, the stories they grew up with, and the people they were about. *The Twentieth Wife*,⁵ by the Indian-American writer Indu Sundaresan, is one such text about one of the most phenomenal, powerful, but not-so famous queens who ruled the subcontinent from behind her veil. The main focus of this paper would be to trace her presence in popular imaginations of today and further challenge the notions of white supremacy through the tales of prowess of Empress Nur Jahan in history and literature.

Foreigners’ Narratives of Jahangir’s Hindustan

The presence of the Jesuits has predated that of the English or the Dutch, and they became especially important and influential during the reign of Jahangir.⁶ ‘The Jesuits had been in India for a long time. Now there were other firangis also. The world was indeed opening up. The newcomers styled themselves ‘ambassadors’ from a tiny island in Europe called England.’ (316) Sundaresan talks about the presence of merchants, traders, and diplomats in her novel very elaborately. The aim is to highlight how nobles in the Indian subcontinent viewed merchants as the lowly-kind, not suitable to be present before the Emperor. This is undoubtedly because of the lack of noble birth and a stable occupation, their nomadic tendencies, and unawareness of court etiquette. ‘What were the English after all but a country of fishermen and shepherds? [...] The foreigners wanted the spices, calico and saltpetre that India had in abundance. If so, they should have taken the trouble to approach the Emperor with an appropriate ambassador.’ (316-317) Mehrunissa’s musings in the novel are heard through these lines by Sundaresan. Along with an indication that she was politically very aware and concerned, these lines also highlight the importance and stature of the Mughal Empire in the eyes of its subjects.

Nur Jahan, being one of the highly invested and knowledgeable subjects of this empire, has been labelled as scheming and cunning by many, but Sundaresan paints her as a woman of the world, a woman who did not want to spend an anonymous life within the walls of the imperial

harem. Findly, in his book titled *Nur Jahan: Empress of Mughal India*,⁷ writes, ‘The stories preserved of this period, however, portrayed a Mihrunnisa full of schemes and hardened dealings.’ (34) As consumers of such narratives, what has to be kept in mind is that it is through the eyes of these merchants and fishermen that some of the most popular representations of the subcontinent have been documented in the books of the world. Mehrunnisa wasn’t like the Virgin Mary or like Elizabeth I; she was a widow with a child, had an ambition with the understanding of politics and administration, wanting to marry the Emperor of one of the largest empires in the world. The descriptions of her would be clouded when viewed from the eyes of men who have hailed certain images of womanhood as ideal and divine.

From Mehrunnisa to Nur Jahan

‘Day by day her influence and dignity increased [...] No grant of lands was conferred upon any woman except under her seal. [...] Sometimes she would sit in the balcony of her palace, while the nobles would present themselves, and listen to her dictates. Coin was struck in her name [...] (and) on all farmans also receiving the Imperial signature, the name of “Nur Jahan, the Queen Begam,” was jointly attached. (Until) at last her authority reached such a pass that the King was such only in name.’

– *Ikkal-nama-i Jahangiri*, translated and edited by H. M. Elliott and John Dowson⁸

It is important to note how the entire novel, since the time Mehrunnisa saw Salim for the first time at the age of eight, revolves around her heart’s deep rooted desire to marry him one day. She is shown to be an intelligent girl, a quick learner, and a determined student, but it all comes down to her usage of this intelligence in finding ways to be seen and appreciated by Salim. This can also be seen as an inversion of courtly love, given that the agency to desire rests with the woman, where Mehrunnisa pines for an object beyond her reach. But at the same time, we cannot forget that this agency rests with her because she belongs to a class which isn’t noble. Does this mean that women born in lower classes had more agency than women with higher ancestries? In some nuanced cases, they did. This is because the higher the class, the more confined a woman becomes through restrictions in mobility and regular decision-making. Since marital alliances were based on political alliances, for them to be fruitful, the woman had to be ‘pure’. This manner of confinement is not quite visible across women of lower classes because of lack of means to confine them and also lack of political motivation and social obligation. Such trends of portraying female characters as the subject instead of the object of desire, especially from the 19th century onwards, have been common across the globe — in the novels of Jane Austen, Edith Wharton, Barbara Pym, Leo Tolstoy, or Attia Hosain. But does this subjectivity come despite class, race, and in the Indian subcontinent, caste barriers?

At the tender age of eight, Mehrunnisa exclaims that she finds Salim to be ‘beautiful’. But Beni Prasad, in *History of Jahangir*,⁹ writes, ‘She aspired to the conquest of Prince Salim and succeeded, by a dextrous use of her charms and accomplishments at an entertainment, in casting a spell over him.’ The association of women with witchcraft in luring men has been universal, especially in works of male writers and historians. On the other hand, Ruby Lal, in her feminist history of Nur Jahan,¹⁰ gives her a different dimension altogether and with it, a novel reason for the readers to imagine why Jahangir would have found her extraordinary. She writes, ‘In that turbulent land, she’d witnessed the troubles that arose when the capital and the province knocked against each other, when an emperor and his son collided, when ambition, ego, and factionalism tangled. She seemed more canny than other royal women her age about the workings of the empire, exhibiting the knowledge expected of esteemed elder women like her harem mentors.’ (110)

Alternatively, this can be read as the writer’s aim to depict women of vision as wanting male stalwarts to rely on for the purpose of being powerful. Mehrunnisa has been portrayed as a very self-aware and self-reflexive character, knowing very well that in the world of men, power had to be extracted from them. Sundaresan talks at length about Mehrunnisa’s fascination with Ruqayya

Sultan Begum, Akbar's chief wife, who was the most powerful woman in the harem. Her power came with her title, *Padshah Begum*,¹¹ and this title became hers only after her marriage to the Emperor and her success at making herself indispensable to him; (in Ruqayya's case) not sexually, but intellectually and emotionally.

Sundaresan also gives in to the prevalent stereotypes while describing her male characters. Her description of Salim's first glimpse of Mehrunnisa aides the pre-conceived notions that the Global North has of the Islamic World. 'Ya Allah! Was he in Paradise? Words from the Holy Book came unbidden to his mind: "The believers shall find themselves reclining upon couches lined with brocade, the fruits of the garden nigh to gather; and will find therein maidens restraining their glances, untouched before them by any man or Jinn, lovely as rubies, beautiful as coral." She was all that and more. He stared at her, his gaze riveted, everything else fading around her.' (81) The Mehrunnisa of Sundaresan's historical fiction is a woman of immaculate beauty and charm, and it is this charm which helps her woo Salim, even after years and years go by. A lot of historians claim that Mehrunnisa was a woman of intelligence and wit, she was well versed with the political scenario of the world, good with calculations, and with running the Empire. It has been mentioned even by Sundaresan as to how her fearlessness was attractive to Jahangir, 'He admired her fierce independence, her deep sense of self, her convictions about her actions. She scorned the rules, trod on them.' (352-353), but in order to cater to the cyclic progression of the trope of a love story, this union has been credited primarily to her unconventional beauty which is unmatched. Mehrunnisa, the name meaning Sun Among Women, has been highlighted and reiterated multiple times in the novel, only to bring back attention to her features, her 'slender back' even after being a mother, her breasts, and her body. Moreover, such associations in the novel have been made with other women as well; for instance, Arjumand (Khurram's wife who would later be the famous Mumtaz Mahal), Jagat Gosini (Jahangir's supreme wife before his marriage to Mehrunnisa), and also Anarkali, Akbar's concubine whom Salim allegedly falls in love with.

An alternative way to look at the constant reiteration of the meaning of her name, Sun Among Women, would be to say that she is the Man Among Women. The Sun stands for masculinity, in opposition to the Moon, which stands for femininity. The entire novel, and even this mystery behind this figure of a woman who ruled one of the largest empires of the world, is one that derives its foundation from her un-femininity. Wit, intelligence, knowledge, and diplomacy are unwomanly traits. They make a person aware and accustomed to surviving in the world of monetisation and trade. Nur Jahan, being well versed with all of these and more, then becomes not only Sun Among Women, but quite literally, the Man Among all Women. Is Sundaresan then trying to project her desirability as being a result of the masculine in her?

This paper argues that even though Mehrunnisa has been depicted in masculine terms, moving away from the docility of the feminine, the author doesn't take this to the realm of the physical. 'Driven to a frenzy by his one glimpse of Mehrunnisa, Salim groped and grabbed at the girls, thinking one, then the other, to be the angel of the morning.' (84) The conscious description and language used to picture Salim after his meeting with Mehrunnisa, is the language of the Coloniser. The frenzy to explore uncharted territory brought the Europeans to South Asia (and other places), similarly, the frenzy in Salim led him to grope and grab at other girls, finally making his way to Mehrunnisa after years of exploration, and at the end, designating her his Twentieth Wife; *Nur Jahan*, Light of the World.

Manufactured Stereotypes

Despite the novel having been written by a woman of South Asian descent, there is an inherent bias in the body of the text against the visible, everyday realities of South Asia. This is not to say that the text openly criticises or mocks the subcontinent, but it definitely doesn't challenge much of these stereotypes. The novel is about 17th century India, a time of the flourish of an Indo-

Islamic Empire which brought the Europeans rushing to it because of their greed. There were stories, stereotypes, taboos, etc. about this foreign land, and certain descriptions, even in the 21st century texts, do not give way to initiate change. One of the recent examples of such stereotypes being made to come to the surface through art is the movie *Padmavat*¹² directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. There is a clear distinguishable difference in the ways in which the Rajput King, Maharawal Ratan Singh, is depicted, with his palace full of light and beauty, in contrast to Alauddin Khilji, with his palace and self always submerged in darkness. This raises further questions about our associations of skin colours with the colour white and black, and how we still associate peace and tranquility with white, while death and sadness with black. Sundaresan also resorts to these stereotypes in the usage of language and descriptions, especially of folk tales, Muslim men, and the imperial harem.

The following sentences describe Mehrunnisa's first encounter with the head eunuch Hoshiyar Khan: 'Mehrunnisa watched her mother leave, wanting to beg her to stay. How could she leave her alone here with a funny looking man? [...] she was all alone with this strange, pasty-faced, limp-moustached creature. Who was he? And why did he have so much power here, in the harem of women?' (32-33) Contemporary feminist criticisms would label this as transphobic and also allege the author of assuming someone's pronouns. But even if one looks specifically at the text after placing it in context, one realises that eunuchs were very prominent in the Mughal court and harem. Mehrunnisa might not have thought them to be 'funny looking' for she must have been accustomed to seeing them frequently. Homosexuality and trans-identities have been very common in the Indian subcontinent, as Madhavi Menon argues in her book, *Infinite Variety* (2018).¹³

The novel also talks about Mehrunnisa's parents' marriage at length; about how Ghias Beg, who even though could marry four times, did not marry anyone after Asmat Begum because he did not feel the need to. There is a sense of portrayal of Muslim men in a lustful light, wherein the writer seems to be succumbing to the popular beliefs regarding Muslim men marrying multiple times and 'owning' all their wives within their harems. While describing Mehrunnisa's relationship with her first husband, Ali Quli, Sundaresan writes, 'He did not beat her, was not openly cruel to her like other women's husbands were, as if their wives were dogs, unclean, untouchable, fit only for the most carnal satisfaction.' (109) This is the way the Coloniser has always viewed the Global South and justified colonisation; in this book, similar language of colonisation has been used to portray the women of South Asia in the centuries of Mughal rule. Similar references can also be found in texts written in Britain in the aftermath of mass colonisation like Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*¹⁴ where Jane explicitly mentions how she doesn't wish to be one of those Arab women in their men's harems. These claims were made on the foundations of a belief that white women were more 'emancipated' than women of colour because they were more educated, civilised, and had been 'granted' more freedom by their fathers or husbands. Moreover, such representations of womanhood do not only corroborate the discourse of orientalism, but also the contemporary Hindutva politics. The act of making the practice of *Triple Talaq*¹⁵ illegal and not passing any such acts for the protection of women of other religions, or the recent controversy over *Love Jihad*,¹⁶ are ways to highlight the victimisation of women at the hands of 'vile' and 'lustful' Muslim men.

Nur Jahan breaks these myths by being the pillar behind the functioning of the court and the empire. Ira Mukhoty, in *Daughters of the Sun*,¹⁷ notes, 'Noor Jahan is issuing royal farmans signed with her own seal, having gold coins struck in her name, engaging in trade and has a series of magnificent buildings constructed through the breadth of the empire.' (137-138) Even the English Ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe,¹⁸ talks grandly about Nur Jahan and her escapades. He documents his frenzy at coming across this wondrous woman who owned jagirs, ships, collected revenue, and issued legal notices. He also mentions his tireless efforts at finding appropriate gifts for this powerful Queen! This is not to say that such agency was visible in women across classes, religions, and castes, but the belief that the idea of independent women was fictional in the subcontinent is not entirely true. This argument subverts the one earlier made regarding women's mobility which gets threatened by belonging to a higher class. The question that arises then is — in what context

are women truly agential? It needs to be noted that the means to have agency, in the world of men, comes with association to them. In the case of Mehrunissa, given that her father was a commoner, she had the means to desire and be mobile. In that of Nur Jahan, because her husband was the Emperor of Hindustan, she had the means to rule. Another significant example of such associations would be Gulbadan Begum, Humayun's aunt, who wrote his biography, the *Humayunama*.

Other descriptions of the East, where Sundaresan gives in to the stereotypical ideas of the East being a land of exotic animals and peoples, are very prevalent in the novel. She talks about cows and their rhythmic chewing, making it appear unworldly. She also talks about fairs, specifically the famous Meena Bazaar, where the royal ladies gathered to shop, exchange gossip, and flirt. There are elaborate descriptions of snake charmers, monkeys, and other animals used for the recreation of humans. She writes, 'As the music played, the monkey, clad in a blue waistcoat, a tasselled fez on its head, jumped up and down.' (17) These descriptions cater to an audience who are not of South Asia, because similar to how this paper argued that Mehrunissa would have been aware of the presence of eunuchs, likewise, for South Asians, these are a part of their everyday realities and do not need to be unnaturalised or romanticised.

More Mouths, More Tales

For the colonisers, the colonies are exotic, because as stated earlier in the paper through the words of Márquez, they view Reality as singular. It is exciting for them to dig out tales and conspiracies from these lands full of intrigues, controversies, magic, and supernatural phenomena. Sundaresan, in her novel, mentions the episode of Mehrunissa's first husband's (Ali Quli) assassination as a provocation by Ali Quli himself. It is impossible to know what actually conspired but contemporary historical accounts do not view the incident as a plot by Jahangir or Mehrunissa to eliminate him from their way of getting married. This charge that Jahangir plotted his murder, which has become a tell-tale now, was first laid on him in the works of the European writer, Niccolao Manucci (ca. 1656), who noted, 'The king, who was deeply in love with her, sent an order to the governor of the city of Patana (Patnah) that as soon as Sher Afghan should arrive there with a letter, he must be slain. This was done, but the valorous soldier, although taken unawares, killed five persons in defending himself. Sher Afghan¹⁹ being dead, Jahangir took the woman into his palace.'²⁰ Other sources, like those of Alexander Dow,²¹ claim that Jahangir sent assassins to the house of Ali Quli to kill him in his sleep. But because this was unsuccessful, Jahangir had to send Qutbuddin to make sure that the task was successful. In abiding by the Emperor's wish which led to a truce, both the men ultimately killed each other.

Multiple accounts of travellers and courtiers exist, with different versions of the incident, one of them even calling Sher Afghan, the 'Persian Romeo'.²² These associations to popular characters known all over Europe are ways in which the unfamiliar is made familiar and is co-opted into the mainstream discourse. But what this co-option does is take away the creative imagination from the colonised populace to render their unique realities believable without an aid from the Coloniser.

Postcolonialism and the Historical Novel

Many nuanced definitions have surfaced since Johnson's but the most obvious answer to the question of defining the genre of historical fiction is 'fiction set in the past'.²³ Homi K. Bhabha, in his essay, 'Representation and the Postcolonial Text',²⁴ declared 'historicism and realism' to be 'necessary fictions that tragically believed too much in their necessity and too little in their own fictionality,' and blamed imperial discourses like realism, to supposedly—'deny their own material and historical construction.' It is imperative to consume historically motivated art as fiction and not as mirrors of gone reality because every art is produced in a landscape and time-space which includes the materiality of the producer. But does this mean that postcolonialism should always be in a conundrum with historicism and realism?

‘The problem with such readings is that they ignore the ethical commitments to historical plausibility routinely expressed by many postcolonial novelists. For example, even Rushdie himself asserts his desire that his novels be read as thoughtful, informed analyses of the actual past and not simply as acts of discursive contestation or linguistic experimentation.’²⁵

While one needs to be aware of the problems which come with the postmodern era of multiplicity of truths, with fictionalising history, and considering the context from which the subject produces it, it cannot plainly be considered to be a figment of the creator’s imagination. Postcolonial novelists use the trope of historical fiction to keep the memory of the violence of colonisation alive and to say that these texts cannot be seen as plausible appendixes to reality would be taking away agency and a means of expression from the oppressed communities. It isn’t bizarre to hear staunch nationalists claiming that the Holocaust never happened, or colonial conquests weren’t as violent as narratives from the colonies portray it. Therefore, it is in the light of this understanding, and the realisation of a responsibility, that historical novels from the subcontinent should be critiqued by the subcontinent.

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Notes

- ¹ Márquez, Gabriel García – Nobel Lecture. NobelPrize.org. Nobel Media AB 2020. Sat. 7 Nov 2020. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1982/marquez/lecture/>
- ² The term, though highly problematic, has only been used here to highlight an academic category and not as a significance of one’s belonging to a place/culture.
- ³ Mukherjee, Meenakshi. 2000. *The Perishable Empire. Essays on Indian Writing in English* New Delhi: Oxford UP.
- ⁴ Lau, Lisa. “Making the Difference: The Differing Presentations and Representations of South Asia in the Contemporary Fiction of Home and Diasporic South Asian Women Writers.” *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2005, pp. 237–256. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3876512.
- ⁵ Sundaresan, Indu. *The Twentieth Wife*. New York: Pocket Books, 2002. Print.
- ⁶ Ross, E. Denison and Eileen Power (eds.) *Jahangir and the Jesuits: With an Account of the Travels of Benedict Goes and the Mission to Pegu* New York: Robert M. McBride and Co., 1930.
- ⁷ Findly, Ellison Banks *Nur Jahan: Empress of Mughal India* New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- ⁸ Elliot, H. M., and John Dodson, trans. and ed. *The History of India as told by its Own Historians. The Muhammadan Period*. Vols. 5, 6, 7. London: Trübner and Co., 1873, 1875, 1877. Reprint. New York: AMS Press, Inc. 1966.
- ⁹ L. D. B. “History of Jahangir by Beni Prasad. With Foreword by Shafaat Ahmad Khan, Litt.D. (Allahabad University Studies in History, Vol. I.) 8vo, Pp. Xviii li 501, 2 Plates. Oxford University Press; Madras Printed, 1922.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1923, pp. 173–175., doi:10.1017/S0041977X00000161.
- ¹⁰ Lal, Ruby *Empress: The Astonishing Reign of Nur Jahan*. Gurgaon: Penguin Random House, 2018.
- ¹¹ First Lady of the Mughal Empire
- ¹² *Padmavat*. Directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Bhansali Productions, 2018.
- ¹³ Menon, Madhavi. *Infinite Variety: A History of Desire in India* Speaking Tiger, 2018
- ¹⁴ Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. New York: Harper Collins, 2010. Print.
- ¹⁵ The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019 was passed on 26 July 2019 making instant triple talaq (talaq-e-biddat) in any form – spoken, written, or by electronic means such as email or SMS – illegal and void, with up to three years in jail for the husband.
- ¹⁶ The conspiracy theory purports that Muslim men target Hindu women for conversion to Islam by means such as seduction, feigning love, deception, kidnapping, and marriage, as part of a broader “war” by Muslims against India

- ¹⁷ Mukhory, Ira *Daughters of the Sun: Empresses, Queens and Begums of the Mughal Empire* New Delhi: Aleph Book Company, 2015.
- ¹⁸ Foster, William ed. *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615-1619, As Narrated in His Journal and Correspondence*. 2 vols. London: Haklyut Society, 1899.
- ¹⁹ A title given to Ali Quli by Jahangir after he killed a tigress and saved the Emperor's life.
- ²⁰ Irvine, William (tr.) *Storia Do Mogol or Mogul India 1653-1708 by Niccolao Manucci Venetian*, 4 vols. London: Murray, 1907.
- ²¹ Dow, Alexander. *The History of Hindostan*. Vol. 3, *From the Death of Akbar to the Settlement of the Empire Under Aurunzebe*. London: S. Beckert & P. A De Hondt, 1770. Reprint. New Delhi: Today and Tomorrow's Printers and Publishers, 1973.
- ²² Findly, Ellison Banks *Nur Jahan: Empress of Mughal India* New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- ²³ Johnson, Sarah L. (2002). 'Defining the genre: What are the rules for historical fiction'. Speech at the annual meeting of the Association of Writing Programs, March.
- ²⁴ Bhabha, Homi K., "Representation and the Colonial Text: A Critical Exploration of Some Forms of Mimeticism," in *The Theory of Reading*, ed. Frank Groversmith (Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press Ltd., 1984)
- ²⁵ Dalley, Hamish. "Postcolonialism and the Historical Novel: Epistemologies of Contemporary Realism." *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2014, pp. 51-67., doi:10.1017/pli.2013.3.

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