

Metamorphosis of the Migrant

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Abstract

This paper is designed to do two things. First, it will try to bring together a number of different case studies, from different locations in India, and elsewhere in the subcontinent, by way of providing empirical details necessary to substantiate the larger argument made in the panel. In doing so, it will draw upon both primary research, based on ethnography and fieldwork by the presenter, and secondary literature, borrowing from research done by other scholars in the field, including the context of other Asian countries. The overall aim here will be to draw out certain commonalities or parallels showing the construction of new and composite migrant identities, that combine elements of past with elements of belonging to a new context, which are held together in a critical tension. The second objective of the paper is to tease out the larger theoretical implications of the case studies presented by the other papers in this panel: Besides the reconfiguration of the migrant identity, this will include unpacking the new historical conditions that make it necessary for the migrant to undergo what is being described as a metamorphosis. The paper will explore two different dimensions of these conditions, with the help of immediate examples provided in the panel. These involve looking into the recent changes in the economic and political dimensions that are germane to the process under study. We will specifically discuss how the new modes and spaces of labour and consumption introduced by globalization have created a place for accommodating the migrant in the service sector in a manner that commodifies and incentivizes her migrant identity. At the same time, the paper will briefly analyse how the logic of electoral and political mobilizations, propelled by populism, pushes increasingly towards certain forms of biological, racial and communitarian interpellation rather than anonymous citizenship. The changes taking place in these two spheres need to be perceived in the light of the technologically mediated current ecology of cultural representations, with the framings and adjustments that are made possible by this ecology, which will be illustrated with instances. It is in keeping with these larger structural conditions, the paper wants to contend, that one must locate the transformations of the migrant identity. By way of conclusion the paper will speculate on the larger implications of rethinking the figure of the migrant and what it means for democratic politics at home and in the world today. The speculations will include possibilities of thinking progressive trans-national solidarities as well as global networks of support for conservative regimes to come.

Introduction

Coming in the wake of three other papers in this panel, my paper will outline three things. To begin with, it tries to describe how the subjectivity of the migrant has changed today, that includes its forms of agency and politics of seeking admission in a host, yet often hostile, society. Secondly, it talks about certain political, cultural, economic and technological developments that form the historical conditions for the transformations of the migrant subject. Finally, with the help of examples drawn from widely distributed geographical contexts across India, and other countries, the paper extrapolates the larger theoretical significance of this change for politics in local and global contexts.

Let me offer a caveat here. One half of the sample of population discussed in the panel (which I convened in this conference) is related in racial terms, where migrants are mostly tribes, coming from the North east, covering Assam and West Bengal, located in metropolises. The other half relates to migrants that are recognized as partition refugees, covering both poor Muslims and low caste Hindus, found paradoxically, as we shall see, in Bangladesh and India respectively. However heterogeneous, all these segments occupy a subaltern position in class terms and with regard to the hierarchy of groups in immediate host society. We are not looking at the well-off diaspora or the upper middle classes or castes that are part of the familiar multicultural milieu in most mega cities representing the social elite. To put it more bluntly, we are looking at the partly farming and mostly labouring, poor and

lower sections, but who may not necessarily see themselves as belonging to the poor or lower classes as such. There is a significant aspirational dimension in some of their self-perception, even when there is something like despair and resignation among other sections. What is common to both segments is that they struggle to find a *locus standi* in the political process, from the electoral to the everyday levels, while they occupy bulk of the informal economy. It is in this process of trying to establish relevance as a population to the government on the one hand and the market on the other that one can situate their practices, agentive acts as well as what can be seen as sheer persistence. Let me come to these acts by way of describing the metamorphosis of the migrant. This is what my first section tries to lay down: the change in the migrant subjectivity, seen from social and cultural perspectives.

1. The Metamorphosis of the Migrant

The memory of home and belonging is perhaps the most familiar leitmotif in most migrant literature, including a rich body of academic writings on refugees and migration. We have already seen (in the paper on Darjeeling in this panel) how the political minefield of identity construction is torn between migrant memories of leaving a home and claiming another. This will ring a bell among scholars of the refugee question in the Bengal partition, as well as for anyone who has seen the films of Ritwik Ghatak.ⁱ The early signs of migrant and refugee articulations simply refused to separate the questions of where they came from and who they are, besides the communal reason why they were displaced from there. A good amount of postcolonial creative literature, music and especially films, continue to resonate with the experiences of living in ancestral land and the fundamental violence of getting uprooted.ⁱⁱ To put in a nutshell, they mirror the subjectivity of victims driven out of home by a terrible wrong committed by an anonymous state. Yet, at the same time, for all its bureaucratic anonymity, it was also a state of care, which recognized the claim of refugees, and took steps to rehabilitate them, howsoever inefficiently, as the work of the Calcutta Research Group has shown among others.ⁱⁱⁱ Indeed, however hostile, it may be fair to argue that even the host society slowly came to recognize the claims of refugees. These are the moments when the tensions were gradually displaced to rivalry in football matches and the mockery of rustic dialect, languages made into articles of entertainment, and competition over cuisine and dietary habits, like in Bengal. It suggests that the early postcolonial state and the mid-twentieth century Indian society were relatively open to migrants. The proliferation of government jobs and optimism about manufacture led growth provided a condition where, what I call the old migrant, or the refugee, could afford a subjectivity that questioned the establishment. As Bijan Bhattacharya's character said in *Meghe Dhaka Tara*, the migrant could point a finger at us and say, 'I accuse'.

What our case studies bear out is that this is no longer the case. Today, the migrant, much less the refugee, has practically no *locus standi* before the state and society, and only survives because of the market of informal economy. Perhaps, one reason behind this is the absence of a law about refugees in India.^{iv} But it has much to do with the transformation of the neoliberal postcolonial state, which has moved away from taking care to shifting the responsibility of care to the population. It is also not afraid to display indifference and periodic abandonment, like in the recent pandemic. The global recession and shift from manufacturing to service sector has squeezed society so much that identity assertions and

anger against immigrants has become the rule of the day, across the globe, even in multicultural states.^v Globalization has paradoxically bolstered national borders and control of labour flows more strictly than ever before, which is complimented by varieties of populism that psychologically mobilize local populations against migrants by triggering moral panics.^{vi} I would like to contend that the upshot of these developments has been increasing fluidity of identities among migrants. It is by no means uncommon, even among the well-off diaspora who went through struggles to settle down, to take a hard anti-immigrant stand today. Some of the leading indigenous political actors vocally oppose new migrants and migration. The support of non-resident Indians in most countries, with a few exceptions like Canada, has flowed to right-wing and nativist political regimes, thanks in part to this turn of logic.^{vii} That means, among other worrying implications, that the old migrants have either given up their past as migrants or made it a provisional memory overruled by variable considerations. The old migrant will no longer accuse ‘us’ – they are a part of ‘us’ by now; instead they will accuse the new migrant as ‘them’, who threaten the race for resources, jobs and benefits. What does this imply for the subjectivity of the new migrant? What kind of acts can help them to negotiate this difficult terrain, to practically claim a *locus standi*?

It is best to start with examples. Let us think of the racialized migrants from the North east (in a paper of this panel). They must perform and embody a non-Indian-ness at their daily workplace to secure their service as affective labour and article of a global Asian aesthetics. In other words, they are accepted by the market precisely on the condition of being non-local. At the same time, they must put on their Indian hats and learn to abide with the local ways and Indian customs, when they return to their rented homes in the urban villages. Here their acceptance depends on how much they can integrate with the native way of life around them. As a researcher I have witnessed interesting variations of similar practice in the two refugee settlements I have been working on located in Dhaka and Uttarpara. As I have discussed at length elsewhere, the Urdu-speaking Muslim refugees of Geneva camp, Dhaka, who were feted by the Pakistani regime and labelled as traitors in Bangladesh, are constantly struggling to escape conditions similar to Agamben’s ‘bare life’. We return to this concept later in the paper, but allow me to use this to outline an existence that is seen as surplus and dispensable by rest. They are simply ‘Bihari’s, who may be hardworking but untrustworthy. When seen as traitors to the liberation, they deserve a punishment that can easily go to extremes of death. In these circumstances, the ways in which the ‘Bihari’s can hope to integrate with the host society, according to my observations, is by erasing their identity as Urdu speakers and their address as the Geneva camp. They must learn to use the mask of a local, to borrow a phrase from writings on race, that involves a forgetting of where they come from and who they were before and after the partition.^{viii} In other words, it involves a detachment or alienation from the given face of the self, in order to pretend or become other kind of subjects. The findings from the other site, Uttarpara, strengthen and extend this line of argument. The low caste *namashudra* inhabitants of the Bhadrakali Permanent Liability camp appear to have passed through a series of masking, unmasking and masking up again, to borrow from the language of pandemic. Neglected because of their low caste social status, this population, located on the industrial banks of Hooghly, close to Kolkata, lent their political support to the Congress, the ultra-Left, the Left Front, The Trinamool Congress, the BJP and once more to the TMC. Lately, as it were, they are cultivating their identities as the heterodox Matua sect that has become a factor in West Bengal politics today. When I asked an interesting outlier respondent living in the camp, an elderly practising Brahman living with the *namashudras*,

about the incommensurability between Brahminism, the ultra-Left ideology, supporting the TMC and becoming Matua, he was candid. “You become whatever you need.” This fluidity of identity or a composite subjectivity has profound implications for migrant selfhood. But leaving that aside for the moment, let me flag how much of a contrast it presents with the old migrant’s foundational identity. What we see with the new migrant is not only a metamorphosis of the migrant, but what I find as a migration of metamorphosis in the very texture of human existence. So much so, that the migrant not only pretends to be local but he can also perform, if necessary, the exaggerated otherness of the migrant that is both enjoyed and derided by the host society. That is precisely what the case of Sukur Ali in the paper on Assam in this panel illustrates. These are not exceptional cases. There are certain technological conditions and media ecology behind the making of Sukur Ali as a mini-celebrity that we shall explore below. But Sukur Ali is not without precedents. We may think of Bhanu Bandyopadhyay’s comic sketches in the Bangal dialect to get a sense of how refugees were ready to play according to the host society’s stereotype, and gain social traction by reinventing oneself as a figure of fun. Obviously, the essentially rustic Bangal that Bhanu played in his radio broadcasts is not his real identity. He was Bangal, but more importantly, a modern and gifted actor. It was the actor who played the essential Bangal in a manner that Kolkata society enjoyed, by putting on yet another mask, so to speak. Bhanu was perhaps a pioneer in regard to the fact that he foresaw the shape of the new migrant subjectivity, offering to commodify itself. It is not very different from what Sukur Ali represents, or how the camp dwellers act in Dhaka or Uttarpara.

2. The Conditions of Metamorphosis

As flagged in the introduction, there are specific political, economic, social and cultural, in short historical, conditions that make such a metamorphosis possible. These conditions are too many and too complex to offer any comprehensive reading in the scope of this paper. Let me limit the discussion to certain key aspects in the different registers, which have been already invoked by the different papers in this panel. These range from flexible labour regimes and in-migration to the growing assertion of identities for social recognition and targeted benefits. It is a time animated by recession on the one hand and the politics of representation on the other. Let me start by drawing your attention to the aspect of representation in the cultural register. This has come to dominate party manifestos and social movement agendas, which the state appears to welcome and often accommodates mainly by distributing symbolic goods, including symbols, statuary and renamed places after the icons of respective identity mobilizations. This is of course in keeping with the populist temper of political articulations of late. What often escapes our attention in this regard is the technological possibilities opened up by information circulation, and the social media. Just like it required radio broadcasts and films for a migrant actor like Bhanu Bandyopdhayay to succeed, the arrival of social media, youtube, facebook and twitter have created an arguably more open platform for representations of the self and new subjectivities. It offers instantaneous recognition and a new although temporary focus of attention, which can be leveraged like symbolic resources by men like Sukur Ali. Since the new media ecology does not exclude as much as it exposes someone to trolling, it becomes possible for someone to have a social existence as a trolled but highly visible micro-celebrity. It offers a fertile ground to play with plural identities, even perform virtual personas, that are exchanged in the society,

while the paper and biometric regimes try to pin us down to a place. These acts, that generate content on media feeds off the political culture – of spectacles and emotions triggered by superhuman figures, with hyperbolic speeches and astonishing feats. These elements circulate and multiply in turn on social media, often riding on the affective purchase of these acts. Such environment and ecologies, what Bourdieu may have framed as the digital habitus, throw up new factors in the processes that determine social conditions and push them to certain directions. The dominant social phenomena have undoubtedly been ethnic and other communitarian polarizations, that seem to have made the immediate society more adversarial than before. As the growing episodes of stray and organized violence suggests, the society seems to have withdrawn into tightly packed groups, competing with out-group members, and unlikely to cede any space to members without any group.^{ix} This qualification, that of not belonging to any group is not always based on inherited or received locations. The micro-level at which sovereignty plays on the ground involves a stealthy process of disenfranchising others, to make their attributes of citizenship provisional, and even possible to withdraw.^x

These are the conditions which leave no alternative for the migrant according to me but to abandon its identity, and perform another, if that helps to negotiate better with the host society. If one carefully attends to the political speech acts and gestures that are exchanged in the process, one can make out the conflict that Samaddar calls ‘social war’ lurking behind the parodic slogans of a mythical battle taking place. A clear sense of friends and enemies are the need of the hour. But the migrant is left with very few friends and too many enemies, including the old migrant, and no community to claim. It is at the receiving end of things for the most part, and trying to make the best of the situation. What kind of acts and practices remain within its possibility that are necessary for survival? Such acts begin with carving out a functional *locus standi* in the informal sector. Migrant labour often use different names at workplaces in order to get work. What kind of a labour force will such a population stand to deliver? It is precisely the labour that agrees to be entirely casual, work without benefits, does not care for access to the labour laws or fight their deregulation, welcoming the extension of work hours. In fact, they are grateful for a corporate worker’s identity at the end of the day. I have witnessed emotions of hope and frustration among the Urdu speaking youth in Dhaka precisely on the basis of who does work and who no longer works in application-based delivery companies akin to Swiggy. The space of this gig economy introduce a discourse of motivation and entrepreneurship, self-employment, and even affluence and consumerist lifestyle, based on learning soft skills. As any hospitality sector trainee knows, it is a lot about learning to be polite and looking happy, walking with the proper gait and speaking with confidence, offering a personalized experience. It also provides recreation and teaches how to take responsibility for livelihood.^{xi} In other words, the market demands the workers work on themselves and change what they are. It is not surprising that it is taken most seriously by those at the bottom of the market and society – the migrants.

Speaking from the standpoint of political theory, and looking at the political aspects, which can include the question of rights, allow me to highlight the status of the human being in the case of the migrant. There is no doubt that Giorgio Agamben’s influential formulation of ‘bare life’ is impossible to avoid when thinking about the refugee and migrant. However, it seems necessary to adjust two critical nodes in the concept of ‘bare life’ offered by Agamben, found in ‘Homo Sacer’, but used more lucidly in ‘Means without Ends’.^{xii} The first aspect is that, as bare life, the refugee enjoys no political right; there is no life of power available to

those living in the camp. The second aspect is that as bare life the refugee is *homo sacer*, she can be killed or sacrificed without facing consequences. Indeed, we can gradually replace the refugee with all those who are similarly disenfranchised through political and sometimes legal operations. In fact, following Benjamin and Arendt, Agamben wants us to use the refugee increasingly in the sense of a universal class.^{xiii} The adjustment I would like to propose is directly informed by our cases. The cases we talked about compels me to notice that Agamben does not allow for any meaningful or significant interval between a life without power and imminent death. Death overtakes the experience of life for the refugees in a profound sense. Later thinkers like Didier Fassin, among others, have shown how life in refugee camps is not always amenable to Agamben's reliance on a singular and centralized locus of sovereignty that renders life bare without escape. Instead, Fassin talks about refugees and camps as a humanitarian topological border running through the society.^{xiv} The topological treatment suggests that sovereignty is not centrally but differently and unevenly distributed in such a society, that means it is possible to distract and puncture, if not momentarily escape the state's sovereignty. What I suggest here, is that we make space for certain acts of power, that may not be transformative of the conditions, and which may not be sufficient to fully overcome threat of death. But these acts nonetheless try and manage to alter the equations of social intercourse, economic pecking order and cultural exchanges. They do not take a prescribed course on the ground but blend with agentive practical acts. They are often a part of larger set of acts and communication. Thus, an elderly 'Bihari' respondent vividly narrated to me his participation in the Bangla language movement despite being an Urdu-speaker, as someone who was more nationalistic than many Bangla speakers. Here we are looking at a fragment of memory that seeks to settle the claim to nationalism and conferment of citizenship, perhaps even some kind of distinctive recognition. Thus, survival is not the only thing that depends on these acts. They also nurse the desire of wielding sovereignty even if it is temporary. These are indefinite manoeuvres, that clear up space for oneself, by dissociating from the collective identity and associating with the host state/society. Regardless of the truth of the above claim, what we can ascribe in the age of post-truth to the new migrant is a general practice of camouflage. That is what we have referred to at different points in the paper with the use of masks and keeping one's identity fluid and contingent. As opposed to the old migrant, this amounts to a non-organic relation with the sense of selfhood. Instead of remembering roots like a tree, and carrying the weight of the past, the new migrant takes the past lightly and tries to free the present, to join the party ruling the immediate future. Their malleable property can be likened to a river, adjusting her course with the changing terrain. The immediate political moves may show an apathy for structural transformations, and a willingness to look for situations that show escapes as real opportunities. At a small scale, escape is often temporary and unsustainable but it facilitates a minimum presence, that is better understood as persistence, a refusal to die, which is in my opinion a critical move of power. But more often than not these moves become available only when one has grown familiar with the local masks, and the mask of the other as the host society prefers to see it. These moves, of being otherwise, of not being the migrant, of blending with local, of performing identities, of inventing oneself, is the most distinctive feature of the new migrant subjectivity today.

Concluding Remarks

The political ramifications of the developments I have described as the metamorphosis of the migrant have two sides to them. Some may very well find one side disappointing, at least in the short run, for it is more likely that most migrants, like other minorities, will lend their support to more authoritarian regimes and parties at the moment. The conditions of gig economy leave little room for trade union discourse that earlier provided counterpoints and alternative mobilization. What works with migrants in the short run is the efficacy of muscular messages like *Hindustan mein rehna hoga to Hindu banke rehna hoga*,^{xv} that clearly signals the performance of an identity for access to livelihood, and life at times. This performance is the act of masking, pretending, or perhaps more accurately, camouflaging. As a researcher I have come across several cases of such camouflage time and again, and wondered if their political choice was different to the identity they performed. There is strong circumstantial evidence, besides the above data, in my daily experience, to suggest that not only camouflaging is very common among migrants but they also find it prudent to vary their support based on different considerations. That is what we saw in the case of Uttarpara, where the *namashdra* refugees alternatively supported all the parties in the spectrum, whether or not they addressed caste, or even the problem of refugee rehabilitation. I find the Uttarpara case ideal typical of the pattern of electoral negotiation of migrants.

The other side of the political ramifications involves a thorough rethinking of territoriality by progressive forces, which I believe are stuck with a physical geography that is dated and localized. More importantly, it is difficult to imagine the experience of migration and migrants from this grid because one does not consider the complex relationship between spaces, hills and plains for example, or cities and villages, or simply the extent to which people have been mobile in history even in the last century. Indeed, I often find our academic language approaching migration as external to the fact of existence, happening to life as tragic event of interruption, of which one instance is traumatic enough. Whereas one can see a profound internalization of migration and traveling in poetic articulations of life, such as the lines of Jibanananda Das: *haajaar bochhor dhore aami poth hatitechhi prithibir pothhe* (I have been walking the paths of the world for thousands of years), or even in familiar lyrics of Bob Dylan: “how many roads must a man walk down”. None of these poets or writers literally mean what the lines convey, but they use the metaphor of life as made up of journeys, in physical and spiritual senses. The challenge for progressive forces is to comprehend this centrality of migration and the migrant subjectivity and to recognize refugees and migrants as a universal class, not aberration to citizens, who set the norm for modern human existence. This will go a long way in rethinking the relationship of spaces that make up the contemporary social terrain, which could start with the lesson taught by the pandemic and the farmers’ siege at Delhi border, that is about the relation of city and village,^{xvi} and of borders and nations.

Let me conclude with two brief, partly speculative and bigger arguments that follow from above. Firstly, we see that the political economic relation built around the balancing of primitive accumulation with governmentality by Sanyal and later Partha Chatterjee is not enough to account for the ground reality, especially with regard to migrants. They cannot always combine into moral communities in order to claim access to resources from the state and host society. There is a stigma and contagion of illegality about their existence, that perhaps makes even political society hostile to them. There is another layer of subaltern society below the claim-making population, who depend on their own resources and capacity to access resources than on the welfare schemes that benefit the local poor in the host society. It is not difficult to connect this reality of migrants, described in the panel, with the underside of the current process of primitive accumulation. Let us call it a subaltern political society, another reserved army of labour, to mean a second tier of the poor population, increasingly visible in the gig economies of service sector. It follows at the level of the state that periods of governmentality can alternate with periods of total indifference and benefits as incentives before the polls. There is no stable equilibrium between the violence of accumulation and the benefits from the state. This is bound to impact the poor’s trust in the state and institutions and their capacity for politics. The relation with the state at a bigger level is likely to be seen as unfair and adversarial, that

one must learn to handle with new techniques, like camouflage. Camouflage allows access to resources in ambiguous ways, and helps to live with little escapes, without disqualifying the threat of death. This is the significance of persistence, as political act, which is lacking in interventions but gaining in preserving life and perhaps also biding time. To sum it up, the persistence of the new migrant depends on camouflage, who wants a *locus standi* and the right to have rights, even if that involves a change of face and identity. So more than ever, representations are playing a big role in the labour market, besides the market for representations that is growing. This is where the global economy relents to the terms set by the specifics of vernacular local contexts and states, which redirect the flows of capital and labour for political reasons.

The second argument is about rethinking space and territoriality. While it is useful to bring the framework of accumulation together with 'bare life', the geography of capital as we have come to understand it needs to be pushed in new directions. Sometimes I find it useful to move beyond the status of spaces as inside or outside of capital, for example. We can do this, and partly tried to do this, by showing subjects who live on the borders and intersections, both inside and outside the market and state. The question we ask is: can we reconfigure spaces by combining how we know them, and what we don't know about their mutual relationships and entanglements as they are experienced by migrants? The idea is to rethink the nation and its borders in terms of regions and localities that are part of passages and movements, and in this way reconceptualize territoriality as how spaces are experienced in movement. What kind of imperatives lead the state and successive regimes to restrain or encourage these mobilities across nations and regions? It opens up a new window for governmentality, going back to the partition. Does the presence of a population as migrants keeps alive the traces of partition as a necessary discourse which creates distractions from bungled up state interventions and policy failures? For example, I came across the talk of some areas as 'mini-Pakistan' in Malda, as I keep doing in Delhi. Any and every problem of local power asymmetry and resource distribution is redirected to the existence of such fantastic geographies as the cause. It is a peculiarly statist cartography but hosted by the society that perceives migrant habitations, slums and camps as 'outside' their known geography, lying on an invisible border when it is right in the middle of *sarkari* maps, like the Geneva camp in Dhaka. I have met inhabitants of Uttarpara who live next door to Bhadrakali PL camp but are totally unaware of its existence and were genuinely surprised with my account. Such places are in a sense, invisible or what Ranciere will put as un-seeable, behind the 'partition of senses' in his words.^{xvii} How do we account for such heterotopias in politics? I have also come across liberated, imaginative cartographies at the same time, which have arisen from the experiences of migration, especially for those, who have taken it in one way or the other, as a permanent way of life. The refugees in Dhaka often described a cartography of frequent travels, that included Pakistan, the middle east, and a different kind of cosmopolitan world that is close to the Arab civilization, with very few references to India, though most of them are from Bihar. I think they talk about a geography of movement and aspirations, what they can access as connected spaces at the global level, and intervals of a life with dignity, while they struggle in the Geneva camp for a *locus standi* in Bangladesh. I believe that I find the possibilities of a transformative politics in the comprehension of such political geographies and composite subjectivities. The challenge for progressive forces is to measure up to a proper understanding of this alternative territoriality, and work out how sovereignty is distributed in this terrain, with and without capital and states as the key players. What could mean emancipation for such refugees that I describe in constant camouflage? I don't think it is just being themselves. It is when the normative discursive subject let go of the authentic mask, and participate in the play of masks as a political travel in subjectivities. We need a new phenomenology here to reconstruct the citizen with what is left after deconstructing the refugee.

ⁱ There is a wealth of scholarship on partition that has grown in several directions since the likes of Gyan Pandey and Joya Chatterjee gave it a new historiographical life. I have in mind here more recent, rigorous and exciting scholarships on Bengal, produced by scholars like Gargi Chakrabarty, Debjani Sengupta, Anwesha Sengupta, Tista Das, Anindita Ghoshal, Himadri Chatterjee, and a host of other researchers. The films by Ritwik Ghatak I have in mind are *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (1960), *Komol Gandhar* (1961) and *Subarnarekha* (1962) in particular.

ⁱⁱ It is important to remember lesser known authors in this regard, like Saktipada Rajguru (whose story was reworked by Ghatak in *Meghe Dhaka Tara*). Among the lesser known and comparatively recent body of creative literature, it is important to mention Sunanda Shikdar, *Doyamayir Katha* (2008), Mihir Sengupta, *Bidhadbriksha* (2004), Adhir Biswas, *Deshbhager Smriti* (2010) and Manoranjan Byapari, *Itibritte Chandal Jibon* (2012).

ⁱⁱⁱ Ranabir Samaddar, ed. *Refugees and the State: Practices of Asylum and Care in India, 1947-2000*, (SAGE Publications India, 2003).

^{iv} B. S. Chimni, "The Legal Condition of Refugees in India", (*Journal of Refugee Studies*, Volume 7, Issue 4, 1994), 378–401.

^v Andrew Sparrow, "Suella Braverman condemned for claiming asylum seekers engaged in 'invasion' of south coast – as it happened", (*The Guardian*, October 31, 2022).

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^{vi} *The Times of India*, "RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat raises concerns about rising Muslim population, says temples being given to heretics", (*The Times of India*, October 15, 2021).

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^{vii} Soumya Shankar, "India's Liberal Expats Are Modi's Biggest Fans", (*Foreign Policy*, May 7, 2019).

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^{viii} Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, Translated by Charles Lam Markmann, (London: Pluto Press, 2008), Homi Bhaba, *Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse*, (1984), and HA Jr. Baker, *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013).

^{ix} *Time*, "What the Death of Nido Taniam Tells Us About Racism in India," (*Time*, February 6, 2014).

<https://time.com/4876/nido-taniam-india-racism/>.

^x Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as exception: Mutations in citizenship and sovereignty*, (Duke University Press, 2006).

^{xi} Nandini Goopu, ed. *Enterprise Culture in Neoliberal India: Studies in Youth, Class, Work and Media*, (Routledge, 2013).

^{xii} Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998) and G. Agamben, *Means without End Notes on Politics* (Mineapolis, London: Minnesota University Press, 2000), especially the first chapter 'Form-of-Life'

^{xiii} Hannah Arendt, "The rights of man; what are they?", (United States: American Labor Conference on International Affairs, 1949).

Hannah Arendt, "We Refugees", *The Jewish Writings*, edited by Jerome Kohn and Ron H, Feldman, (New York: Schocken, 2007), 264-274.

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