“But caste was evident in the hierarchy of language, in the public sphere, in the practices of capitalists and some communists, in the built environment, and in the social boundaries drawn in the everyday lives of workers.” P. 84.

Outcaste Bombay

Outcaste Bombay tells a history of colonial and post-colonial Bombay from the perspective of caste. In other words, it is a story of the presence of caste in an Indian city—Bombay (now Mumbai), the epitome of modernity, capitalism, cosmopolitanism, and class consciousness. Usually, the history of Bombay city has been told through industry and capital, labour and work, urban landscape and infrastructure, knowledge formation and struggle for education where caste and caste inequality has come to acquire a prominent place. Outcaste Bombay, divided in five chapters, asserts that caste hierarchy shaped Bombay’s working-class housing and industrial economy, the language of city’s Marxism, and Dalit literature. Upfront, it poses an analytical question which is not uncommon in academic writings: has caste, a feature of Indian society inherited from the ancient past, dissolved under the pressures of modernity? Juned Shaikh’s simple answer is ‘no’. Even Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, like the later modernisation theorists, believed in the 1930s and 40s that caste would become irrelevant in the cities (pp. 4–5), and would later renounce Hinduism to escape the oppressions of caste hierarchy. Shaikh argues that ‘caste hid in plain sight in the city’ and often operated under the cloak of class and modernity (p. 5). The obscure presence of caste is itself a feature of Indian modernity and urban class experience. Recent studies by Satish Deshpande, Ashwini Deshpande, Ajantha Subramanian, and Balmurli Natrajan show that how caste gets invisible through cultural capital, merit and employment, and the cultural idiom of samaj in contemporary India. Shaikh’s major contribution lies in pushing the chronological and conceptual boundaries of this process of invisbilisation to city formation, class politics, and literary writings since the early twentieth century.

Shaikh places his work in an understanding of caste that looks at the institution of caste not merely as a social and religious (purity and pollution rituals) hierarchy but one embedded in political economy regulating the access of Dalits to public resources, employment, housing, and education. In the city, Shaikh asserts that caste and class work as tandem. Caste informed class that structured built environment and language, and class allowed caste to remain invisible, masked (pp. 11-15). While the nexus between caste and capitalism has already been commented upon by Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, Shaikh makes the point that capitalism (a modern phenomenon) and caste (an ancient social hierarchy) were not opposed to each other with greater emphasis. In fact, capitalism needed caste to re-signify itself whether it was to accumulate capital for the textile industry or to organise housing for the labouring poor. And cities’ class politics and public sphere was infiltrated through experiences of caste hierarchy. Let me elucidate how Shaikh develops his argument by focussing on the key two themes of the book.

Urban Planning and Poor’s Housing

Spread in over two chapters, this theme is central to Shaikh’s argument that chawls and slums became the material referent of caste (p. 20), and caste guided the shaping of Bombay’s urban housing infrastructure. Not only estate building and housing allotment was filtered through caste networks, neighbourhoods and chawls were also caste and community marked. Overcrowding, filth, and unhealthy conditions of chawls and slums was looked through the

lens of community and caste by official urban experts and sociologists alike, even though overcrowding was a result of lower wages of workers and higher rents of tenements. Bombay workers lowered the cost of their rooms by sharing it with other migrants. Shaikh sees housing in Bombay as a commodity for workers for which they paid a rent (28) and could further sublet (110–11). While he defines what was the form of this commodity (that is its built and shape) and how different castes inhabited this commodity, he does not probe as to what it meant to possess this commodity. Did the commodity ever become a home for urban workers, and if yes, how? Or, were workers always migrants to the city uninterested in making and investing into their homes, as the Bombay architect, Claude Batley, remarked (p. 44)? The fear of demolition, eviction, rent increase, and illegal construction meant that possession and dispossession of commodity was always elusive even if you rented it. In an innovative manner, Shaikh conceptualises slums as the 'internal other' of chawls for urban planners (The City of Bombay Improvement Trust, 1898) who wanted to remove them for being sites of disease, filth, and degeneration. It removed 14413 families by March 1909 (p. 31). Yet workers inhabited these places socially creating and using not just caste and class networks, but also religious, regional, neighbourhood, and occupational links (social relationships that are not highlighted so much in the book). Shaikh shows that despite slum clearance and improvement focus of the colonial and post-colonial state, the number of slums increased from 88 in 1957 to 619 in 1981. Slums, not classed as homes and seen as 'internal other', shaped the extreme harsh lives and experiences of Dalit labourers which got articulated in their writings and anti-caste/class politics.

Marxism and Dalit Literature

The most innovative conceptual and methodological contribution of the book lies in its focus on Marxist Marathi texts, novels, short stories, and other cultural texts. Shaikh shows how ideas of Marxism and communism were translated and domesticated in Bombay in the light of growing working-class politics between the 1920s and 30s. Translation and transmission of transnational Marxism required Indian Marxists to confront the question of caste hierarchy and inequality which until now they had hidden under class in their political theory. A language hierarchy emerged while translating texts; Sanskritised Marathi words for abstract categories and urban slangs/popular language/ caste were used for embodied categories (66-67). In the translated Communist Manifesto, the word Dalit is used to refer to non-working class oppressed classes and to refer to the oppressed classes of medieval Europe (69). Shaikh uncovers the world of Dalit communists (Annabhau Sathe, Baburao Bagul) who not only brought communism closer to the lived reality of Dalit workers (job precarity, humiliation, unsanitary housing conditions, fear of eviction) but also produced a body of Dalit literature parallel to modern Marathi literature (139). Shaikh argues that post-colonial Dalit literature, a driver for political movements like Dalit Panthers, was both shaped up by the revolutionary ethos of left politics of overthrowing colonial capitalism and anti-caste movement of overturning social hierarchy (119, 125). While shaping the political and cultural world of Bombay, both these revolutionary ethos ended up as a dream with the collapse of the mill strike (1982-84) and Bombay's 'outcastes' continued to live in slums.

To conclude, I would like to return to the question of how metropolitan cities wear this cloak of modernity and cosmopolitanism which makes caste invisible from afar. After reading Shaikh's work, common-sensical binaries of rural as den of caste/urban as telos of progress, capitalism as anti-thetical to caste/class inequalities as working outside caste hierarchies gets demolished. Through his work, we come to a new understanding of Bombay, Dalit literature, and Indian Marxism.

I would like to return to the point of invisibility of caste because it is so central to contemporary experiences of urbanity in India. Why did caste, so central to the working of colonial state (ethnographic data) and colonial capitalism (industrial capitalism and built environment), work in anonymous and invisible ways? While Shaikh refers to an intensifying anti-caste movement in Bombay which had a significant presence among textile workers, what perhaps was also needed was a focus on debates, discussions, and discourse on caste and social inequality in the elite public sphere. How was the colonial state and colonial capitalism interacting with opinions and pressures of this sphere which articulated itself in vernacular media and other writings at the turn of the century.

investigates how did the question of caste was dealt in these translation

Narrative:

A confusing narrative;

The two sections on housing and Marathi Marxian text stand in contrast to each other. Although both talk of caste figured in these two, but how did Marxian text discussed the problem of housing. It is reflected in leftist leaders of the post-independence who opposed demolition and bargained for alternate housing from slum dwellers (p. 110).

Key points:

State machinery and elites were central in producing a caste experience for socio-economically marginalised groups.
The lowest castes and untouchables were also the poorest in Bombay city (23).

Capitalism not anti-thetical to caste.. it requires local social hierarchies for an easy nourishment 25S.

Colonial state in the 1920s and 30s continued to **recognise** caste as an important administrative and political category (49).

Housing Question and caste

Overcrowding in Bombay was not due to necessarily because of lack of housing in Bombay, but the inability of the poor worker to pay the rent of jerry-built accommodation. Sub-leasing the tenetments in chawl was result of poverty which led to overcrowd. P. 20 Housing and build environment became the material referent of caste; certain features and types of housing was labelled as housing of certain castes (20, S)

No drainage in the working-class/poor neighbourhods in the north of Old Bombay. While a functioning drainage where the cities' elites lived. 21..Housing eviction of striking sweepers

(1889) and their replacement by scavangers (Halalkhors and Bhangis) used as a tactics to immobilise and control them. A continuity in manual labour from rural to urban life. Caste links critical in getting jobs in the textile industry through jobber. 27 Higher rents and they demanded higher wages and shorter work hours instead reduced rents. 28

Housing for the poor was a commodity, for which they paid a rent. 28 (In what sense, it was a commodity---the poor did not have a control over their rooms even though they paid the rent? Fear of eviction). 1901 Census.. there were 33,402 houses in the city with an average of 23.23 person living in each house. A number of houses were also vacant in Girgaum and Walkeshwar due to unaffordibality (30). Slum not categorised as house, 'as the internal other'; overcrowding and sanitation decided the designation (30). The City of Bombay Improvement Trust 1898, targeted overcrowded and unsanitary housing (breeding ground for plague) to be demolished (30). The trust evicted 14,413 families by March 1909 but only provided 2,844 rooms in their own chawls. A further 2220 tenements were built by private developed who had leased land from the trust (31). Caste was an important category in the allotment of tenements, but it is not shown systematically in the book (31): gives example of a meat shop shifting from Matung Hindoo neighbourhood to Sion Catholic Christian neighbourhood (32) and another example of Sarswat Brahmin housing (32)

City administrator attributed slums to the avarice of landlords, lack of civi and sanitary sense among tenants, the attractions of primordial community ties asuch as caste, poor law implementation and low wages (32). Landlords expanded housing in free space to gain rent (33). In the 1920s, a shift to the Bombay Development Department with Indian representatives, but largely unsuccessful. Perceptions about the poor also changed. Poor as labouring entities and housing and living conditions critical for their labour performance. Several surveys on working-class living conditions, health, etc. (34).

Radha Kumar: City Lives

Contrast between south European elegant building to North with mills and crowded mills with smoke in the air. The population of the E ward was the highest. 72000 people per square mile in 1931, 21,700 per square mile in F ward, and 27000 in G Ward. 173 men per 100 women. Between 1921-31, number of chawls increased by 90 percent and of huts decreased by 40 percent. 47

Caste Hindus (Kunbis and Marathas) lived in tenements buildings and Dalits (mostly Dheds and Mahars) were relegated to tin sheds or zavalis. (P 48).

Marxism:
Colonial state's attack on communism and sending of many trade union leaders to jail gave communists time to read Marx and Marxism, and many became Marxist there, p. 46. SA Dange started as nationalist (non-cooperation movement) and turned to socialism in the 1920s, wrote Gandhi vs Lenin (1921). Like MN Roy (India in Transition), Dange cited Marx only once. Unavailability of Marxist Literature in Bombay city. How Marxism, Bolshevism, and communism was translated, transmitted, domesticated and vernacularised to be of use for India's Marxists and trade union leaders (48). The social history of Marxism and socialism in the city evolved in the context of the cultural practices of Marxists and the Urban

poor (48). Caste was important in the process of translation and domestication, as was the engagement with Marxism of the Dalits and the urban poor, including the working class.

Revolution, Indian Marxists believed, would bring an inversion in the relationship of power. Indian revolution would herald the communal ownership of the means and instruments of production. (48). Indian Marxists used caste terms like Dalit to translate categories such as oppression. (48) They believed that capitalism would dissolve caste affinities and their work would be to aggregate workers into working class, (49). But capitalism in Bombay attached itself as caste and used it to recruit workers and sever working-class solidarities. So Marxist had to confront the caste question. It was creating a wedge between their political theory and social practice (49). Marxist negated caste in political theory and caste was presented in its economic form as class (49—caste folding within class). Their political theory presented a paradox: modern industry and political democracy would eliminate caste, instead of strengthening it (49-50).

But Marxist used caste to translate and domesticate Marxism and socialism in India. Used Dalit for the opressed proto-middle class of feudal Europe. Abstract categories were translated in Sanskrit words (use value as upyaktu vastu, exchange value as vikrya mola, mode of production as utpadanpaddhati) and embodied categories such as lumpen proletariat (mavali) were translated in lower registers, urban slang. Worker as kamgar/kamkari and capitalist as bandvaldara (50). Caste informed the categories of translation but the political and social revolution striggled to address caste (50). Indian Marxists rebuked anti-brahmin and dalit movement and saw them as assertion of caste identity. Ambedkar doubted communists' ability to question and abolish the power of Brahmanism (50).

Bombay communist intellectuls included: Dange, Gangadhar Adhikari, and Arjun Alwe, GR Kasle and RB More who were also involved in other social movements, particularly anti-Brahmin movement. 51.

Confiscation of Marxist literature by the colonial state I the early 1920s. The Marxist literature did not stop; one ways it came through was via Bombay's businessmen like Ranchhoddas Lotwala, managing director of Hindustan Ltd. Which published Hindustan, daily newspaper. His Press published and republished various Marxist texts, including Engel's Wage, Labour and Capital. Dange started the Social by August 1922 which cultivated a circle of socialist revolutionaries such as SV Ghate, SV Deshpande, SS Mirajkar, VH joshi who became members of the Communist Party of India in 1925.

Dange saw the ancient commune as an ideal place, devoid of birth based hierarchy. 56

While translating Marxist texts, Marxist translators had the task of addressing transnational socialism to address Indian nationalism and caste. 57 Translation has to go through Marathi language public sphere via the mediation of Sanskritic words, 58. They decoded the idea of revolution to workers through their speeches, newspaper articles, books, and meetings.

Before the 1928-29 mill strike, an disciourse of translated Marxist was already there- a working-class public sphere. Formation of WPP in 1927; emphasis of Shapuruji Saklatvala in translation, 59. **Women in strikes,, but the ideas is not developed very well. 63**

Meerut trial and Jail as a space of translation of Marxist text. The communist manifesto was translated here by Gangadhar Adhikari. 64.

SV Deshpande established the Kamgar Vangmay Prasarka Mandal (Society for the Propogation of Marxist Literatuer) after the division and disintegration of Textile Workers' Union. BT Ranadive's faction esbtliahse dMarkist Vangmay Pracharak Mandal (Society for the Transmission of Marxist Literature) 64-65

In Marathi Manifesto, Dalit is used in two senses. In preface, to dnote all other oppressed people apart from the working classes and also used to refer to the oppressed classes of medieval Europe. 69. [devoiding meaning to caste terms?]

Between 1929-1933, communist movement attracted new followers in Idnia like nationalist VB Kulkarni; Dalit activist R B More who was secretary of Mahar Samaj Seva Sangh and was influenced by communism and under mentorship of BT Ranadive, SV Deshpande, Jagannath Adhikari, and RM jambhekar (people who took leadershio in 1929 strike when erstwhile leaders went to jail). He encouraged Dalits to move beyond confines of caste and imagine affinity with and inhmwabit universal categories of class (71).

Marxist conceptual universe comingled with folk traditions of popular culture (novels, plays written in 1920s and 30s). 74; Hanuman Theatre, Damodar Thackersey Hall
The 1933 novel, The Flying Shuttle by Bhargavram Varekar-set in 1917-18 Bombay—caste boundaries were highlighted centrally in this novel through various characters (80)
PS Sawant, Writer of In the Workers' Kingdom, p. 75 during the strike of 1933; the Worker's Wife, 1 4 anna novel.

Novels borrowed from conceptual oeuvre of Marathi Marxism, p. 79. Social hierarchy was very visible in the Marxist literature, not just in translation, where communist had their office and eat. 81. Samata article argued how communism could not be real in India if the lowest caste did not participate in it and it took the critique of caste seriously, But a few Dalits (More and Lingam) did overcome these reservations to embrace communism, 82
Chap 3:
In the early 1940s, communist party made cultural turn. Banned between 1934-1942 for supporting britain's war effort. IPTA (1943); Meeting of AIPWA (1943) headquarter shifted from Lucknow to Bombay. 1944 Lal Bavta Kalapathak (Red Flag Artists' Troupe) was founded in the city by Amar Shaikh, DN Gavdhankar and Tukaram (Annabhau) Sathe. 85.

Sathe (Matang/mang dalit), icon of Dalit literature: writing on the politics of urban poor, their occupation of public space to protest eviction from tenments, anxieties about the loss of class. Literature advocating revolutionary transformation of the society (His plays, loknatya, dealt : low wage, high rent, unaffordable housing, lack of basic facilities such as water supply and sanitation, the nonpayment of bonus) 86. An autodidact and with the help of a friend, started reading Marathi Marxist text in Matunga Labour Camp, worked as domestic servant, doorkeeper, bootpolish, colliery worker, porter. 87-88.

Greater Bomaby Law and Bombay High Court Act of 1945, demolition of slums and eviction; Dalits responded by protest and foot dragging. 87

Tamasha was banned in 1948, and Sathe transformed his tamasha MY Bombay to loknatya. 88 His plays highlighted the contradictions and difference of interests between the labouring poor and elites including politicians and employers. 89-90.

The convergence of Communists, socialists, anti-Brahmin, nationalist and Hindu nationalist for a Marathi speaking state, The Samyukta Mahrashtra Samiti, 1946. 97

Urban Planning:
Planning as a response to the mobilisation of the poor in the 193-40s. Urban planners thought sub-urbanization as a remedy for overcrowding and the proliferation of slums. 98-99. NV Modok and Albert Mayer as new planner of the city, produced AN outline of the Master Plan for Greater Bombay in 1947. The discourse of improvement in the name of the urban poor (and housing the poor) ended up displacing the urban poor, p. 103; various laws and statuatary bodies came up which gave the state power to evict poor from their tenements and increase the rent in the 1950s, p. 103. 9000 Sweepers and scavengers protested against low wages and for better housing on 1 July 1948. In may 1949, 15000 municipal workers fromconservancy dept went on strike demanding free housing, 6 hour work day. Led by Ambedkar and other dalit leaders PT Borale and Madke Buva. Strike went for 140 days, p. 104. Unseccful strike in terms of demand but ended congress rule Municipal corporation and was reelected with socialist and Schedule caste federation collaboration under the mayorship of PT Borale who addressed the demand of better housing and housing allowance for municipal (dalit) workers. 105. Tied workers for 20 years though loan. 106.

In 1946, there were 88 slums in the city, in 1957, the number increased to 144, covering 877 acres across various wards in the city and 619 slums in 1981. The total population of the slum dwellers in the city was 415, 875. Bombay's population increased from 1.49 million in 1941 to 2.3 million in 1951. Almost 29 percent of 131662 tenements were overcrowded in 1956 and 83,451 families lived in slums. P.108. In 1959, the p;anners said that the city still needed 300000 tenements, p. 109. 50 % of Bombay's population or 8.2 million people lived in slums in 1984 (115).

Caste seggragraiton within slum was a prominent feature (p. 111). If so, how class was caste?

Chap 4: The Maharashtra Slum Areas (Improvement, Clearance and Redevelopment) Act of 1971 gave some rights to reside in slums who could show proof of residence. An alternative to slum clearance. Dalit literature thrived in the context of the production of urvan space and the everyday lives of Dalits in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, p. 116. Dalits producing literature aspiring a revolution to transform the socio-political conjuncture in which they were situated, p. 116.

Government of India Report of the Committee on Untouchability, Economic and Educational Development of the Scheduled Castes (Elayaperumal Report, 1969) showed that neither in villages and nor in towns, caste diminished, p. 117. Dalit writers (Raja Dhale and Namdeo Dhasal) questioning the meaning of independence for themselves at the silver jubilee, p. 118. In 1972, they formed the shortlived Dalit panthers movement. Shaikh argues that the revolutionary vision of DP inside literature and outside literature was the child of two distinct revolutionary lineage: Marxist overturning of colonial capitalism and anti-caste movement, p. 119, 125.

Baburao Bagul, protégé of Annabhau Sathe, introduced a new ontological category-humiliation in addition to Marathi Marxian terms such as exploitation, pain, suffering, p. 125.

MN Wankhede, Dalit writer, who went to the USA and introduced African literature into Dalit and appealed to learn from it, p. 129. He also introduced social anthropology as a model of crafting the narrative of Dalit experiences.

Chap 5

Slums served as metaphor and a material referent for Dalit lives in this literature, p. 136. The objects of revolutionary transformation—state, society, and Marathi literature—were the sources of both recognition of Dalit literature and the subordination of Dalits, p. 136.
After the creation of Mahrashtra on linguistic lines, the state sought to promote Marathi literature, but how to deal with vast Dalit literature and writers who critiqued dominant Marathi literature and wanted to create a parallel Dalit literature institutions (Maharashtra Boudh Sahitya Sabha), p. 139.