

### **In Search of a Conclusion:**

To be within history is an inescapability, for the historic is the premise in which any possible claim to agency is validated. It is also the contingent discursive field that is complemented with each passing anthropocentric moment, for every slice of temporality that hosts the anthropocene, has a liable claim to history. History is the house of vitality which, keeping in pace with the growth of the human-anthropocene, is always in growth. This vitality is essentially discontinuous and to be in history is to inherit the pauses and fissures of a discontinuity. Such an understanding of history is in sharp departure from the conventional and canonical rules of historiography, where the history of human is emphatically the history of progress. True history progresses, but not with the stagist gait of the traveler with a destination. It is instead the flâneur, strolling aimlessly, its foot retractable from the insignificant everyday. To historicise these footfalls and to chart a meaning out of it is to construct a Library of Babel, where the comprehended and the familiar is perennially haunted by the possibilities of an unrealized excess and this excess is where the real of history evades the historian and his/ her attempts of historicization.

What is the real that history supposedly contains? This thesis has not been able to arrive at a determinable inference, and in all possibilities, it has deliberately problematised the possibilities of determinability. On the contrary, the thesis has tried to hint at the poly-significant status that history acquires and the pluralities which can emerge as the real of history. The thesis has tried to disengage from any homogeneous and systematic ideal of history and has significantly attempted to nuance the real of history. In doing so, the thesis has argued that history is not characteristic of a real but a reality, which has discordant and distinct implications and does not necessarily abide by a homogeneous law of significance.

The thesis has tried to validate the many statures of History and has tried to unearth the many implications that the historic might contain. Hence, the basic premise of the thesis, i.e. History has been intentionally opened up, if only to explore the nuances that constitute its possible discursive paradigm. For each chapter, the essence of history has been different and this relative instability pertaining to the ontological stature of history has been both deliberate as well as dependent. Deliberate because, from the beginning the thesis has attempted to engage in comprehending the many significances which the signifier called History is likely to contain. Dependent, for the concerned chapters are attempted analyses of novels and since nothing exists outside the text, the plot and its profound limits have been the starting premise upon which the subsequent interpretive engagements have been made. The understanding of history has been different in each of these chapters for each of the novels represent history from a distinct perspective. For instance, in the immediate chapter following the Introduction, history becomes a site of contestation where History and history co-exist, i.e. the State advocated machinations of teleological History and the claim to history of the deviant subject inhabiting a subversive order of the lived. In the next chapter, history is more intimate and stripped off its ideological determinacy, it acquires the status of a lost time. This essence of loss that the historic contains is suggestive of an absence that the historically conscious subject aims to ritualise as a *presence in absentia* by preserving the traces of history that are contained in the relicsque status of objects. The following chapter presents us history as a messianic containment of the present which the historicized subject constantly engages with, within an interpretive economy, if only to explore the unmanifested potentials of the past. This interpretive engagement with the past, accord it an alternative historicity which can subsequently anticipate the present as contingent and synchronous and not as ahistoric and estranging. The final chapter returns to the understanding of ideological History but does not necessarily emphasize the tension between the ideological and the lived. Instead, it hints at the possibility of inhabiting the intersection of

the ideological and the lived and being indebted to both for constituting the historical consciousness of the self. This liminal stature of historical consciousness increasingly involves a transgression of the systematic validation of history and instead posits history as a discontinuous reality, which is devoid of any nominal significance of the real.

It is this essential understanding of history as the discontinuous and the ensuing departure from the usual obsession with the systematic and hermeneutic model of history which historiography endorses that validate the possibilities of alternative historiography in the novels. As the chapters have tried to argue, the four principle characters in the novels engage in the praxis of alternative historiography in their departure from the notional understanding of history as an inalterable and inert recorded debris of past. The significances that the historic acquires in the novels are different; they resemble each other in their refusal to adhere by the rudimentary understanding of history as a neutered and non-vital past. History is conceived within a polymorphic economy, suggesting the promise of an alternative engagement with history.

As the thesis has tried to substantiate, this alternative engagement with history has a curious resemblance with the poetics and performative of *flânerie*. The principle protagonists in the four chapters have a claim to *flânerie* in their wistful indulgences of straying, both within the cityscape and the conceptual pragmatics of logic, purpose and intent. The poet turned reporter strays off from the accurate reportage of incidents and entraps himself within poetry, the bourgeois Istanbulite rejects the good life of material culture and revises his understanding of materiality as a relic and not riches, the lawyer searching his lost wife ends up searching the city of memory and the memories of city, the boza seller trades his fortune in order to preserve the traces of ecstasies that are revealed in reminiscing the lived- which is otherwise marginalized in the material milieu of modernity. For all these correspondents, the present and the material manifestation of the present (apparent events, occurrences and incidents) hold little

significance. Their only signification rests in containing a meaning; an ecstasy that has always been a preoccupation of/for the flâneur. More so, all these flâneurs are able to co-habit the ambiguous, the paradoxical and the contradictory. They are both in and out of the locational, the empirical-material, the hermeneutic and most importantly the ontic. This habit of co-habitation, as has been argued throughout the thesis, is essentially the characteristic feature of the flâneur.

To co-habit is also to belong within the paradoxes and nuances that constitute history. History in the eyes of critical philosophy, as the thesis has substantiated, ceases to be a discourse that can be objectively rendered through the limited approach of an objective hermeneutics. Instead, it is conceptualized as a profoundly fertile and poignant site of contestations and exigencies, of limits and limitlessness, of fact and interpretation, of scientism and imagination, which contribute to the plasticity of history. Ranjan Ghosh observes that history, in the lights of critical philosophy, acquired the ambiguous disposition of “certainty and unpredictability, revisionism and relativity” and transformed into a site of “discord” (*Lover’s Quarrel* 2). This “discord” was fundamental to “history’s professed aim to tell truths about the past” (2). The truth of history (the real) appears deferred and probably absent, what is present instead is the possible claim to truth (reality) which in turn is not a singular but is affected by plurality. The possible claim is construed, developed, intervened, interpreted and realized; it barely sustains as pre-discursive and uncontaminated. To be within history is then to be aware of the nuances that history contains and realize that there are other realizations which remain unrealized but cannot be denied as unhistoric. Such realizations do not just pertain to the meaning of history, they are equally apprehensive of the claim to history that the present posits. What becomes history? Only that which has occurred or even the non-occurring? Can tracing the non-occurrence within the occurred enable us to revise history’s claim and the claim to history?

Presumably, there is no real resolution to this dialogue of doubt. However, this doubt is suggestive of a profound skepticism, an overlap where the flâneur meets the alternative historiographer. Both of them are intensely aware of the limits of empirical and the apparent. For both these personas the excess is the essence and both of them are concerned not with the trajectories of consistency but the discontinuous. To both, the experiential is fundamental but inadequate and both revel in introspection and interpretation of the experienced and the sensed. The sensory and the apparent are premises which host and do not contain or limit the experiential significance that can be derived. The meaning is subjective and yet both of them are ready to nuance their subjective with an increasing consideration of the other. The experiential and the interpretive do not lay a claim to singularity, it is increasingly juxtaposed by a recognition of other validations of experience and experience of the other. The other is the excess; the self is the curious overlap of flâneur-alternative historiographer, perpetually haunted by the urge of self-effacement to furnish other realizations of realities, but never the real.

The circle winds up, in the beginning is the end. There is Dedalus walking along the Irish sea shores, insulating himself from “the ineluctable modality of the visible” (Joyce 33): in other words, the empirical, and speculating— trying to see the unseen, trying to hear the unheard, trying to speculate that form which the arriving is yet to take. What he reconciles with instead is a heap of broken images, the rudimentary remembrances of childhood, those little insignificances which have so long lingered unrealized. He feels “at one with one who once...” (Joyce 36)

Apostrophes replace being and Dedalus fails to arrive at his material destination, the house of Aunt Sara. He has however arrived at that crucial overlap where sense is procured in a suspension of sensory, where realization and reality are liberated from the tyranny of the

material and nominal real and where past and the present are co-habited simultaneities, none identified and determined in distinction from the other.

**Works Cited:**

Ghosh, Ranjan. *A Lover's Quarrel with the Past: Romance, Representation, Reading*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2012.

Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. London: Penguin Books, 1968.