



*Research Method Statement*  
*Of Vultures, Cyborgs and Child Servants*

# *[THESIS PROPOSAL]*

This thesis proposes to examine the loss of Lahore's identity as 'The City of Gardens'. Lahore has undergone a rapid expansion over the last 20 years, more than doubling in size. A primary cause for this expansion has come in the form of the housing society; large and often gated residential settlements. This thesis will aim to show that the negative impacts of the housing society are further reaching when researched deeper; especially for Lahore's culture and mythology. Written in the form of a kafi, a type of Punjabi poetry, the thesis tells the fictional story of a child maid who works in a servant quarter within a housing society. Research will be presented side by side to the kafi in the form of critical analysis, imagery and data.



## The Principles of The Garden City Movement:

- *Strong vision, leadership and community engagement*
- *Land value capture for the benefit of the community*
- *Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets*
- *Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are affordable for ordinary people*
- *Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens in healthy communities*
- *A strong local jobs offer in the Garden City itself and within easy commuting distance*
- *Opportunities for residents to grow their own food, including allotments*
- *Generous green space, including: surrounding belt of countryside to prevent unplanned sprawl; well connected and biodiversity-rich public parks; high quality gardens; tree-lined streets; and open spaces*
- *Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable neighbourhoods*
- *Integrated and accessible transport systems*



## THE MODEL TOWN

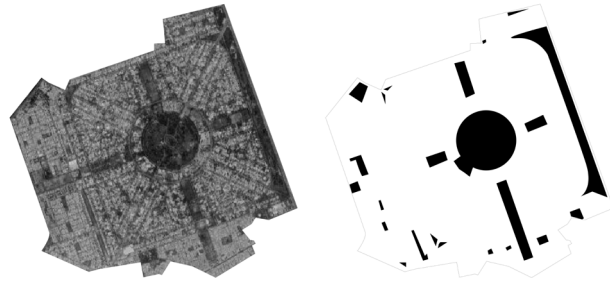
The Model Town was created in line with the Garden City Movement, with Patrick Geddes playing a key role in where the site would be. It was completely different to what Lahore had been used to and was greatly inspired by the army cantonments outside of the Walled City



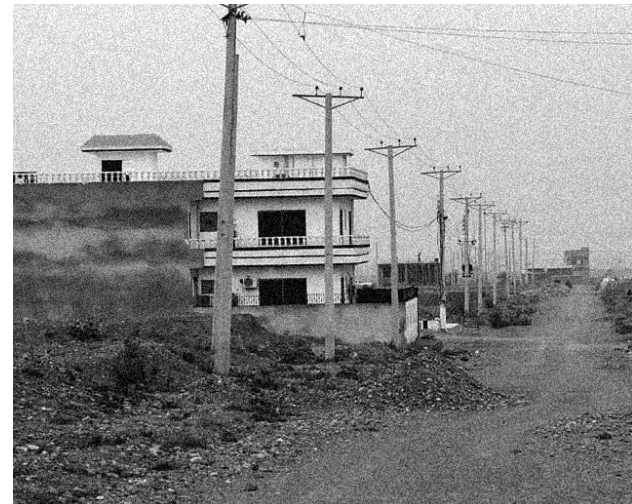
## THE NEW 'MODEL TOWNS'

Are not following any of the original rules, which is now beginning to damage Lahore's identity and daily life

*Model Town:*



*DHA:*



**From 20% to 3%**





*Pictures taken of child maids and children of workers forced to live in tiny servant quarters. The servant quarter is a feature in almost every home in the new societies. Army cantonments and then Model Town were the first to introduce them.*



*Deforestation and damage to historical ruins in a city more than 2000 years old. While further temples and sites sit in disrepair, more and more housing societies keep being built. There is no way to stop the construction of housing societies due to the demand and political nature of them.*



*NO MORE TREE COVER: Air so bad that schools have to close. Even the Vultures have left...*

**[PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE NEW HOUSING SOCIETIES]**

## [The Thesis is a Kafi, which is a type of Punjabi poetry]

Kafi is a form of Sufi poetry originating from the Kasur region of Punjab. . Bulleh Shah was a Mughal era philosopher and poet famous in the art of kafi, his tomb in Kasur is still a popular site for locals and visitors.

Kafi follows a simplified method in terms of written form, where one or two lines (used as the refrain) are repeated throughout the poem. It is a form of poetry which is influenced by the time, place and culture in which it is spoken, meaning it has a richness and variety through its simplicity. It generally follows a mono-rhyme pattern and is mostly used to tell legendary tales which centre around God, the soul, love and heroism. However the form can be changed and experimented with. The refrain must always be included but can be altered slightly by one or two words to enhance its impact.



Above are images from four famous Punjabi love stories; known by almost all Punjabis through the spoken word. They all tell great tales love and tragedy. Bulleh Shah would reference them in his kafis.

An example of a kafi by Bulleh Shah with a repeating refrain, on the left of it is the same kafi but shown in its true written form.

علموں بس کریں او یار  
علموں بس کریں او یار  
اکو الف ترے درکار  
علم نہ تو سے دعا  
چاندی عمر نہیں اجار  
اکو الف ترے درکار  
علموں بس کریں او یار  
بڑھ پڑھ لکھ لکھ لادیں ڈھیر  
ڈھیر کتابیں چار چھپر  
کر کے چاہن دفن آسمان  
چھپر پڑھ لکھ لکھ لادیں ڈھیر  
بڑھ پڑھ لکھ لکھ لادیں ڈھیر  
آگے پہنچے علموں پتھاری  
سب علموں کو لے لے لے لے  
جوئے سچے کہیں اقرار  
بڑھ پڑھ لکھ لکھ لادیں ڈھیر  
ڈھیر پڑھ لکھ لکھ لادیں ڈھیر  
میر سے پڑھ لکھ لکھ لادیں ڈھیر  
سینا میں علموں بس کریں او یار  
چد شمع سیتی عشق دا پھیلا  
دوڑیا کجھ وحدت دا وڈیا  
عمرن میراں دے دفن آسمان  
شام عتایت لالیاں  
علموں بس کریں او یار

Enough of learning, my friend!

You meditate and you say your prayers  
You go and shout at the top of the stairs  
You cry reaching the high skies  
It's your avarice which ever belies

Enough of learning, my friend!

- Bulleh Shah

The kafis in the thesis follow a mixture of styles but keep the following elements throughout:

1. A refrain which may change slightly, but follow the same pattern
2. A variety in rhyming scheme; each poem will have an element of rhyme
3. A mixture of Punjabi and Western rhythm is used
4. Kafi is designed to be spoken, this thesis is a conversation between the reader and the poem

A City that holds so much history is being devoured from the smallest child to the largest forests in the form of suburban expansion. Offsetting alone is not enough because you cannot save the nature and mythology of the city.

The Kafi at its most basic is a tale examining the damage being caused by the housing society, through the eyes of the child servant.

The thesis aims to combine myth with research and data in the kafi; A journey from the servant quarter to the forest (on the unconsumed part of Lahore).

The damage that is being caused by the housing society is much further reaching than planting a few trees

The smaller villages which are being expanded to are the last remaining strongholds of event and memory.

The Quarter

The New Model-Town

The Journey

The Event

*Small scale*



*Larger Scale*

#### MORE THAN JUST PLANTING TREES:

The government is completing the 10 billion tree Tsunami to offset the deforestation in certain parts of the country. However this is not enough, it does not tackle the deeper issues such as the loss of culture.



## THE ORAL MYTHS AND HISTORIES SURVIVE

Everyone, from the poorest to the richest, know about Lahore and Punjab's spoken word mythologies, such as the four tales of romance. The tales and stories which are spread through shared knowledge, even if the physical artefacts are dying



The City needs a reminder of what it is. The existing housing societies act as networks. Almost everything happens within their framework.

The true damage of housing societies is happening at a much smaller scale as there are solutions in place for the large scale impact

Permaculture through utilising the mythologies and histories of Lahore can be a viable solution to the destruction.

Instead of deforestation + rebuild, a middle ground of working with the environment, as Lahore done for centuries needs to be examined

*“Liberty is practice. So there may, in fact, always be a certain number of projects whose aim is to modify some constraints, to loosen, or even break them, but none of these projects can, simply by its nature, assure that people will have liberty automatically”*

*(Michel Foucault: speaking to Paul Rabinow of Skyline in Space, Power and Knowledge, 1982)*

*“The difficulty lies in the very expression “relation to the world,” which presupposes two sorts of domains, that of nature and that of culture, domains that are at once distinct and impossible to separate completely.”*

*(Bruno Latour: Facing Gaia Lecture Series)*

*“Myth and tool mutually constitute each other”*

*(Donna Haraway: “(Cyborg Manifesto)*

*“To explain something to someone is first of all to show him he cannot understand it by himself.”*

*The Ignorant Schoolmaster (Jacques Ranciere)*

## PERMACULTURE AS A TOOL FOR EMANCIPATION FROM THE HOUSING SOCIETY; KEY QUOTES

Permaculture is a key tool in the potential future of Lahore. Just as the issues of housing society run deep, so can the answers be found. To re-establish Lahore as the City of Gardens will require new ways to communicate the relationship between humans and nature. Man and Nature, not Man Vs. Nature.

## Introduction



### Kafi I-XIV

1. *The nightman calls in the distance*
2. *On his whistle's blow the journey hinges*
3. *A guiding path has lit the scene*
4. *To where the sons of Rama convened*

Example from Kafi II-2



## Conclusion

## Analysis

*In the style of 'Pale Fire' by V.Nabokov*

**1. The Nightmen are guards who patrol housing societies at night, often blowing a whistle every few minutes to let potential burglars know they are on duty**

**4. The sons of Rama, Lava and Kusu, used to play in a mythical forest. Lahore and Kasur are both said to be named after them. It is Hindu and Jain temples which have been unfairly targeted in recent times due to the rising Islamism in the country.**

## Engagement

*Playing with the text to communitate emotion. It is up to the reader how they respond to the analysis. The analysis will feature a range of written formats designed to reflect the specific kafi they are analysing*

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the rising Islamism in the country.

## STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION

An example of how the thesis will be presented. There is no contents page, and it is only sectioned by Kafi. There is a linearity to the story and the analysis; but only at a basic level. It is up to the reader to engage. As the reader goes on the journey with the child, everything becomes more clear

| I. Unlocking the Room  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>In the warmest summer, she would sit on her knees<br/>Where a sun does not preach, was a blessing to be!<br/>The smallest joy is a life with such little glee<br/>Waiting and protesting, because then he will see:<br/>The One who for exercises sets the net at ease,<br/>A mind that is bound with a soul so free...<br/>Is worth even more than a golden sea<br/>You must utter the words if you want to be free</p> <p>Resting at night in the smallest room<br/>A space in the universe to hide your bloom<br/>Your bloom which becomes a spring for whom<br/>You call, but cannot see<br/>You must utter the words if you want to be free</p> <p>Why is this place hurtled so deep?<br/>Twenty rooms yet here you sleep<br/>One bed shared between six feet<br/>But at least they have a place to rest<br/>You must utter the words and begin your quest</p> <p>Will you drop a plate and stand there in fear?<br/>A master's wrath and your hidden tears?<br/>A fall on the steps as you run down the stairs?<br/>Cyberfreaking or misplacing or misplacing,<br/>Under the words: is it you who needs embracing</p> <p>The answer is not found in this writing,<br/>But you must go now, step out of the doubting<br/>The sun always rises above the mountains<br/>Lava is waiting and he is shouting<br/>"Repeat after me":<br/>"I can be the one to set this land free"</p> | <p>■ The opening passage refers to the child finding small joy in the comfort of a basement during the summer heat. In the Lahori summer it is common for temperatures to reach up to 40°C. Edlow is a photo of Kirti, a girl who I met during a trip to Lahore who works as a child maid. She had very few possessions, but was proud of them and showed me her small collections of items; even within the confined space of a quarter the spirit of the servants remain strong.</p>  <p>■ The contemporary quarter is a small room in the basement of a large home. The number of servants in this space can vary. The image below shows multiple servants living in one space in a home in Lahore.</p>  <p>11-17: If the 25 lines of this kafi were equivalent to the floorpace of a contemporary "room" (shown in the image to the right), lines 11 and 12 would be the space given to the servant quarter: potentially for multiple servants. This space does not include a full on the stairs or 1.5% on the same level.</p>  <p>■ Abuse is not uncommon towards domestic workers (ILO, 2013, pg. 44)</p> <p>24-27: Lava and Kunti were the sons of Rama and Sita in Hindu mythology. They were raised in a magical forest after Sita was banished according to the Hindu epic Ramayana (Griffith, 2010, Chapter: Easi and Lavi). According to myth passed on through oral tradition Lava was the legendary founder of Lahore (Baqir M. 1985).</p> <p>28-29: The repetition of the phrase "I can be the one to set this land free" is a response to the earlier message of this kafi which establishes the servant as the lowest in the hierarchy of the housing society (a bed in the basement of a home). This final sentence is a phrase shared with the reader and the child: a denial of passivity for the reader. Inspired by Jacques Rancière's belief in challenging the opposition between the viewer and the audience (Rancière, 2009, pg. 15), the repetition is an act of emancipation from the passive hegemony in place within the housing society. The line (29) reinforces the child's realization in becoming aware of their actions with the reader (or spectator): "first as distance the preoccupation of distance" (Rancière, 2007, pg. 279). In the last two years, new legislation for the protection child workers has come in place in Pakistan (Domestic Worker's Act, 2010). However most child servants do not go to school, are illiterate and have no way of accessing their own rights. Punjabi oral traditions, such as the kafi, are potential tools for bridging the gap between the illiterate and those acting passive to them. The knowledge of historical tales and mythological folklore is widespread among the population regardless of background.</p> |

## PRESENTATION CONTINUED

Analysis is placed in a grid shown by the blue guidelines. Each block lines up with the line it is referencing. The grid keeps the form controlled, however sometimes passages may cross over and be in a position just outside of the grid; it depends on the kafi and what it is portraying. Each kafi can be read in any order. While the story follows a linear pattern, a lot of the analysis can be read at any moment. Just like the housing society and its hidden layers; the thesis is presented in this way.



# *PRIMARY RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGIES*

*RESEARCH IN LAHORE - Completed during 02.11.19 - 11.11.19 (Images shown my own from the trip)*

*Exploring and documenting a variety of housing societies, including the DHA, Model Town and Bahria Town.*



*The core research; an examination of how housing societies are damaging Lahore.*

*Visiting sites beyond the boundary of Lahore, such as the Changa Manga forest to see the effects of Lahore's growth.*



*The forests can inspire new ways of thinking and designing. There are great myths and lore in forests of Pakistan.*

*Exploring the servant quarters within the housing society and observe the lives of child maids first hand.*



*An opportunity to see damage at a smaller scale but massive importance.*

*Explore Lahore's mythology by visiting its cultural sites, the Lahore museum and its member's clubs.*

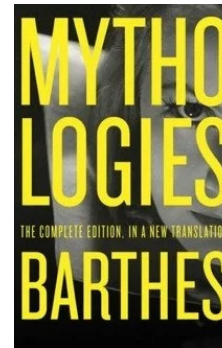
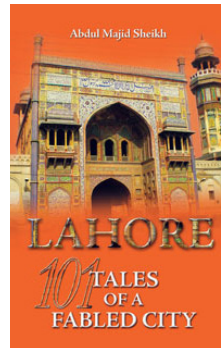


*An opportunity to understand Lahore's history and mythology.*

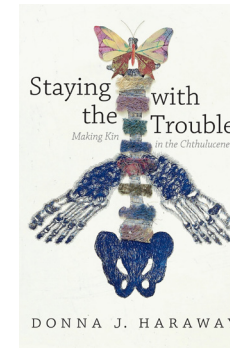
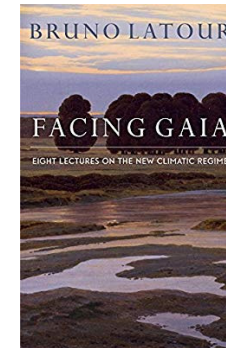
# *[SECONDARY RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGIES]*

*Exploring articles and journals which discuss issues related to contemporary Lahore. I will aim to draw connections between the different reports to highlight links with the housing society.*

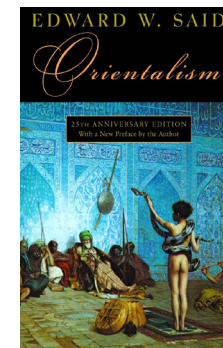
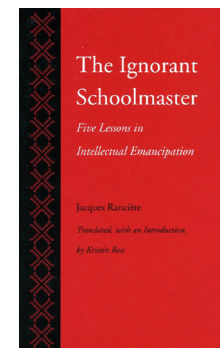
*Writings which discuss the relationship humans have with their mythologies and built environment*



*Writings which analyse the relationship we have with nature from a post-human perspective.*



*Writings which examine post-colonial identity; there will always be a connection the British Lahore and the housing society through Model Town.*



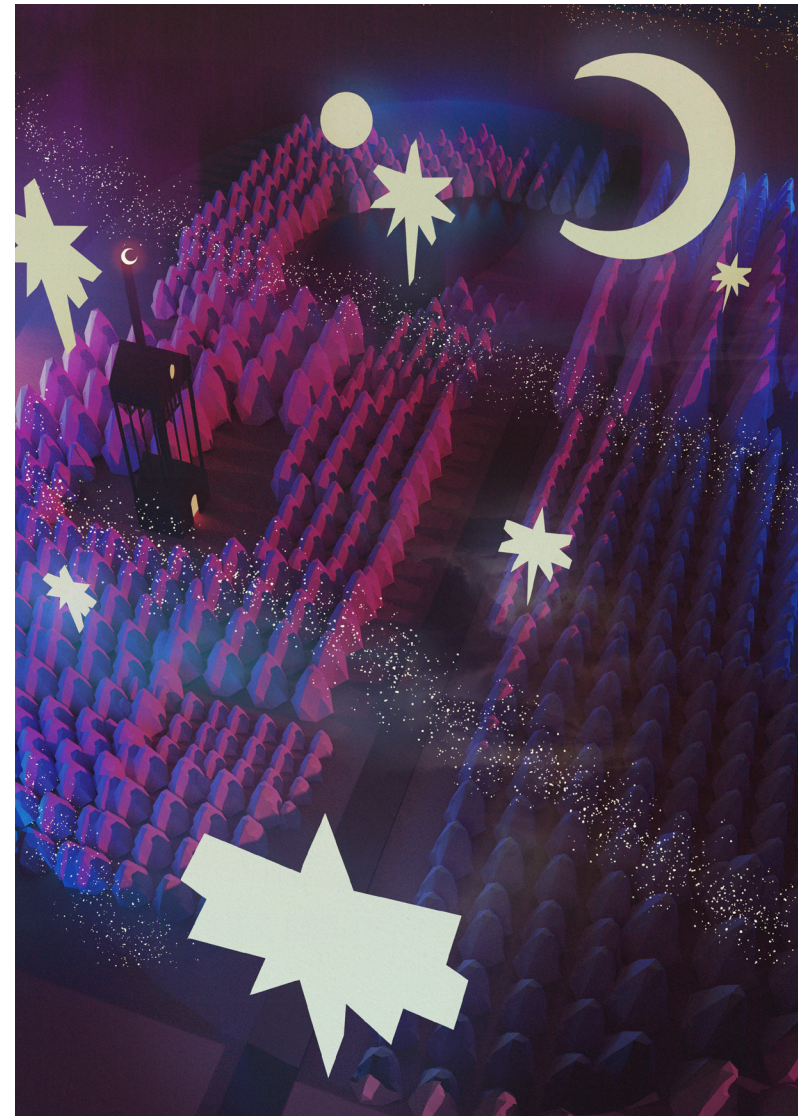
Just planting trees will not stop the internal and smaller scale deterioration the city is facing. A more nuanced approach that examines nature and man is required.

The large scale issues plaguing Lahore as a city can be responded to by studying smaller scale and very local situations. By using the knowledge of old Lahore, there are tools and techniques which can be utilised to become the building blocks of new opportunities and mythologies that can emancipate the city from its current cycle.

Housing societies are creating a bubble or network in which problems are sustaining themselves. Historical and local knowledge (such as the kafi) are realistic tools in breaking into these networks. Re-examine what made Lahore the City of Gardens to begin with.

## CONCLUDING GOALS

The aims of this thesis. The image to the right is a re-interpretation of the tale of Malangi. The forest from which this tale comes from is in danger of being destroyed due to Lahore's expansion and poor management.





## *A Reference to the Punjabi Love Stories*

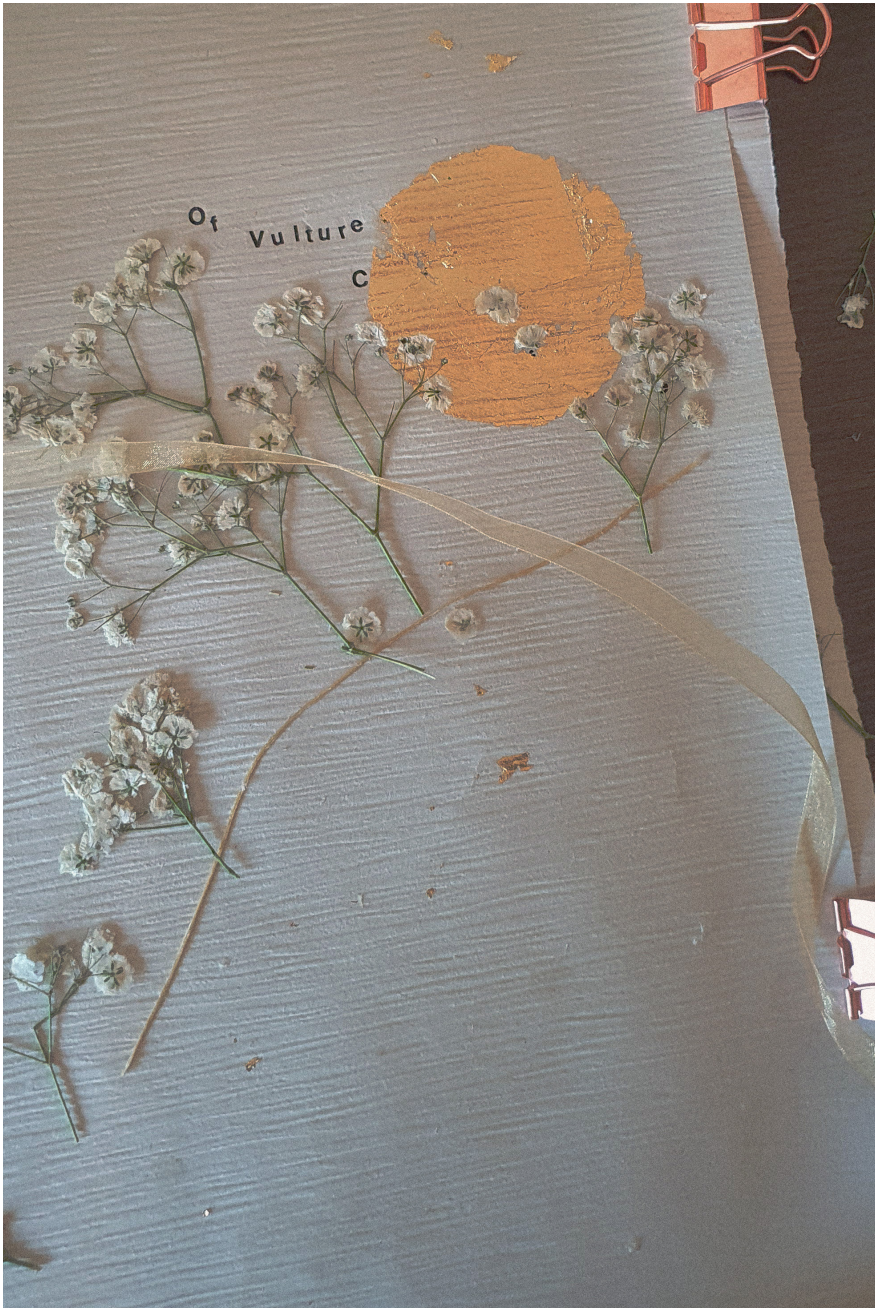
### ***The Punjabi Love Stories referenced in the kafi:***

*Sohni Mahiwal: One lover takes the job of the servant to be closer to his love. When the love is discovered by the family, they send the girl to have an arranged marriage. Eventually the tale ends in tragedy as one is killed and the other jumps in a river.*

*Mirza Sahiban. Mirza and Sahiban fell in love, but family ties again prevent the marriage and they are forced to marry away. Mirza tries to elope with Sahiban one night by riding his horse into town and kidnapping her. Sahiban's brothers come to rescue her while Mirza hides in a tree to shoot them down with arrows. Sahiban torn between the love of her brothers and Mirza, breaks his arrows. The brothers catch and kill Mirza and Sahiban kills herself.*

*Sassi Punnu. Sassi was born to princess, but due to her birth under a star considered cursed she was thrown into the river Indus. She was found and raised in a humble lifestyle. Punnu was a prince who fell in love with her beauty. When the families found out, both were chased away. While on the run, Sassi travelled the desert barefoot until she gave up and was swallowed by a mountain. In his grief, Punnu met the same fate.*

*Heer Ranjha. Heer was a flute (bansuri) player who travelled around mesmerising people with his music. On his travels he fell in love with Ranjha. He was against the wishes of their tribes and Heer is poisoned. Crying on his grave, Ranjha is swallowed by the earth and the two are together again.*



*Of Vultures, Cyborgs and Child Servants*

[Examining the loss of Lahore’s cultural identity as a ‘City of Gardens’]

by Ahad Mahmood

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## *Abstract*

This thesis aims to examine the loss of Lahore's identity as 'The City of Gardens'. Lahore has undergone a rapid expansion over the last 20 years, more than doubling in size. A primary cause for this expansion has come in the form of the housing society; large and often gated residential settlements. The housing society has become a network which is having a major impact on the built environment of Lahore. This thesis shows that the negative impacts of the housing society are further reaching when researched deeper; especially for Lahore's culture and mythology. Written in the form of a kafi, a type of Punjabi poetry, the thesis tells the fictional story of a child maid who works in a servant quarter within a housing society. Her journey reveals how old Lahore is slowly being consumed by the uncontrolled consumption of land; and its consequences. Research is presented side by side to the kafi in the form of critical analysis, imagery and data, collected during time spent in Lahore studying the new housing developments and the contemporary city. This thesis also looks at how Lahore should re-engage with its past to find more sensitive solutions than those currently offered by the government of Pakistan. As a result of this thesis, the housing network is shown to be a far more dangerous entity than currently assumed; a thorough restructuring of how the city manages its growth is required.

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# Introduction

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## Lahore: The Zombie City

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Since the Mughal era (1524 - 1752), Lahore has been known as the ‘City of Gardens’ (Mubin, S et al. 2013), an identity reinforced over the centuries through architecture, mythology and culture. However, contemporary housing developments, or more specifically, housing societies are beginning to form a new culture of aggressive land acquisition, isolated gated communities, poorly regulated infrastructure and rapid expansion. The expansion has led the city into a scenario that it is unprepared and unwilling to face. The new housing settlements are eating into the arable land, green-spaces and tree cover around the city. 20th Century Lahore had always been a place balanced between its pre-colonial traditions and its post-colonial heritage. Moving to the 21st Century however, the garden settlements, linked to Lahore’s colonial past, have evolved (or mutated) into the contemporary housing society. The extent of Lahore’s urban and suburban growth from 1990 to 2017 can be seen in figure 1a; more than doubling in size.

The contemporary housing society has its origins in British Lahore (then British India) during colonial rule. Patrick Geddes introduced the notion of a garden city in Lahore during a visit in 1917 at the request of the government of Punjab. Geddes was acquired to survey and produce key strategies for the area which would lead to productive expansion beyond the boundaries of the Walled City. During his visit, Geddes located a site which would eventually become ‘Model Town’. It is assumed that surveyors and engineers working with Geddes chose the location for Model Town based on Geddes’ research. The concept for Model Town began taking shape two years after Geddes’ visit, in 1919 (Glover, W. 2005).

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Model Town in name and form; was built under the principles of the ‘Garden City Movement’, introduced in the writings of Ebenezer Howard (Glover, W. 2005). It was completed in 1920 under the guidance of Sir Ganga Ram (an architect and civil engineer, known as ‘the father of Lahore’ (Bed, B. 1940 pg. 283). Model Town was a major undertaking in the context of Lahore; an expansion outside the boundary of the Walled City and a progression of large settlements (such as the Mian Mir Cantonment) used by British soldiers. Unlike properties in the Walled City, these cantonments featured large open garden spaces, grid like site planning and a separate outdoor servant quarter from the main house (Sheikh, M. 2015 pg. 290-91). Building on the agricultural principles of the ‘Garden City’ movement, Model Town retained 19% of its area as public green-space. The maintenance of these garden spaces; a core principle for Model Town; remains to this day (MTS, 2020).

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More contemporary housing authorities, such as those made under Defence Housing Authority (DHA), do not follow any particular guidelines in comparison to those set in place by Model Town. Limited garden spaces and autonomous gated communities at the behest of capital gain over sustainable living are rampant (Hasan A. and Arif H. 2018). This is not limited to elite housing societies like DHA, but also low-income settlements. The negative impact of contemporary housing societies is increasing the regularity of smog from the lack of tree cover; causing schools to shut down and reaching hazardous levels of toxicity. The servant quarter has (de)evolved into an unregulated basement or high wall cell (DHA-K, 2011); the quarters regularly house multiple domestic workers (including child maids). The housing society is creating a damaging cycle; from the child servant, to the servant quarter, to the pollution, to the consumption of land. This cycle only touches on the damage at a surface level. Looking deeper, each of these issues effects Lahore on a cultural level. As the ‘City of Gardens’, much of Lahore’s current mythological landscape is because of the traditional connection the city had to its gardens. With the housing society’s growth, this connection is slowly being broken. Land consumption impacts villages where unique local events place. Children forced into illegal domestic is giving birth a new generation of Lahoris with no bond to the city other than one of labour. A total concrete future breaks the connection to the gardens which inspired so many great men and women of Lahore’s past.

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Beyond Lahore; in the villages, the forests and the towns there does still exist a speck of local culture unfounded in the city. Local celebrations, rituals and customs dictate the life of many villagers. However there is also the hardship of village life. A key reason so many adults (and children) enter the city to work is the lure of financial opportunity. There is an essence of hope however, these places are beyond (at least for now) the growing city boundary; a threshold. If the threshold can be observed as a form of spatial emancipation, the actions beyond this network can be the instigators and inspirations for a better Lahore. Foucault states:

***“Liberty is practice. So there may, in fact, always be a certain number of projects whose aim is to modify some constraints, to loosen, or even break them, but none of these projects can, simply by its nature, assure that people will have liberty automatically”***

(Michel Foucault: speaking to Paul Rabinow, the editor of The Foucault Reader 1982)

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Here Foucault is stating that liberation can not naturally occur within the structure of things; the only guarantee of freedom is freedom itself (Rabinow, P. 1982, p. 245). This is where spatial emancipation can be a tool not to create freedom, or intend freedom, but to ignite the process of freedom. That emancipation of Lahore from the housing society will be through myth. With that emancipation, the children, the air and the land also gain a new platform for recovery.

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The Pakistani governments weak effort in combatting the problems relating to Lahore’s urban expansion has meant the housing society has remained largely untouched; only a process which challenges the housing society (and what it represents) at a deeper level will begin liberating the city. The main solution currently offered by the government has been the planting of trees in a project called ‘The Billion Tree Tsunami’<sup>1</sup>. However, while this is commendable, this project is being completed in a different region of Pakistan. There are plans for more projects such as these, however their purpose is to offset the damage of expansion rather than engage with it. The creation of nurseries and planting trees does not cancel out the loss of mythology and culture due to the all encompassing issues associated with the multiplying housing societies. Other solutions have included the promotion of vertical living and new laws pertaining to child labour. Again, these are weak, on the surface responses; most Pakistanis do not accept vertical living (Hanif, S et al. 2016) and most domestic and child workers are part of the informal sector. The informal sector force has high rates of illiteracy and has no real union (ILO, 2013 pg.13); laws are one thing but without a way to regulate and maintain them they are futile.

The re-engagement of myth begins at the smallest scale; with the children and their connection to *their* city. The kafi is an exploration into the mythological world of Punjab’s dichotomy with the now lifeless Lahore. Theorists such as Bruno Latour and Donna Haraway, who engage with nature and the post-human world are relevant to this study. The increasing strain put on our relationship with the Earth is leading us towards an age of uncertainty. This uncertainty is similarly observable with Lahore’s future development. Furthermore, as a post-colonial society, Pakistan earned its independence through great sacrifice; the current apathy towards its cultural heritage suggests there is a gap appearing between its people and its land. The work of post-colonial theorists such as Edward Said (among others) is highly relevant in understanding how the housing society has become an entity of neo-colonialism itself. An examination is required or else a new, darker culture is inevitable. Myths live inside the children, the land and the histories; a city more than 2000 years old deserves to be handled with more sensitivity. It is important to note that other factors outside of the housing societies are also responsible for Lahore’s mythological and cultural degradation (such as Islamization and spatial politics). However, if the garden is the symbol of old Lahore, then the large isolated ‘graveyard’ communities are the perfect symbol of contemporary Lahore. The housing society could be the final piece in leaving ‘The Garden City’ Lahore to the annals of time. Lahore may be expanding at great rates, but is losing itself in the process; a Zombie City. Throughout Lahore’s history, until this new mutation of the housing society, Lahore has maintained this title as the ‘City of Gardens’. The title is more than a simple name, it holds a social and cultural heritage from hundreds of years of mythology. Lahore’s urban fabric has always had a connection to the garden, even before the Mughal era (Sheikh, M 2015 pg. 122).

This thesis is presented in two parts. Firstly, it is a kafi which tells the fictional story of a child maid; the child of Lahore or Lahore herself; who escapes the housing society and goes on a journey to the threshold; where the lost myths reside. The kafi portrays the damage of the housing society through the eyes of the child; a contemplative piece on what Lahore is and was, as the child passes through moments of memory, event and engagement. Secondly, the thesis is a critical analysis of the very real impacts of the housing society as a network, its damage to Lahore’s identity as ‘The City of Gardens’ through the destruction of mythology and the potential old Lahore has in the form of permaculture and sustainable agency if a more sensitive approach is taken. The kafi is structured in 14 parts and uses text, images and diagrams to convey ideas, research and data. If the ‘City of Gardens’ is coming to an end, the kafi and Punjab’s oral histories are only becoming stronger. The tales and stories which are spread through shared knowledge, even if the physical artefacts are dying, can be used in new ways to re-engage with Lahore and re-start the conversations which are being suppressed by the weight of neo-colonialism (in the form of the housing society). The kafi reminds Lahoris of great tales, it should also remind them of their great heritage, the ‘City of Gardens’.

1. ‘The Billion Tree Tsunami’ was an afforestation project started in the KPK province of Pakistan. The project was completed successfully in 2017 (Hutt, R. 2018). While successful, there are questions regarding the impact the project has had on marginalised communities (Ashraf, U. 2018).

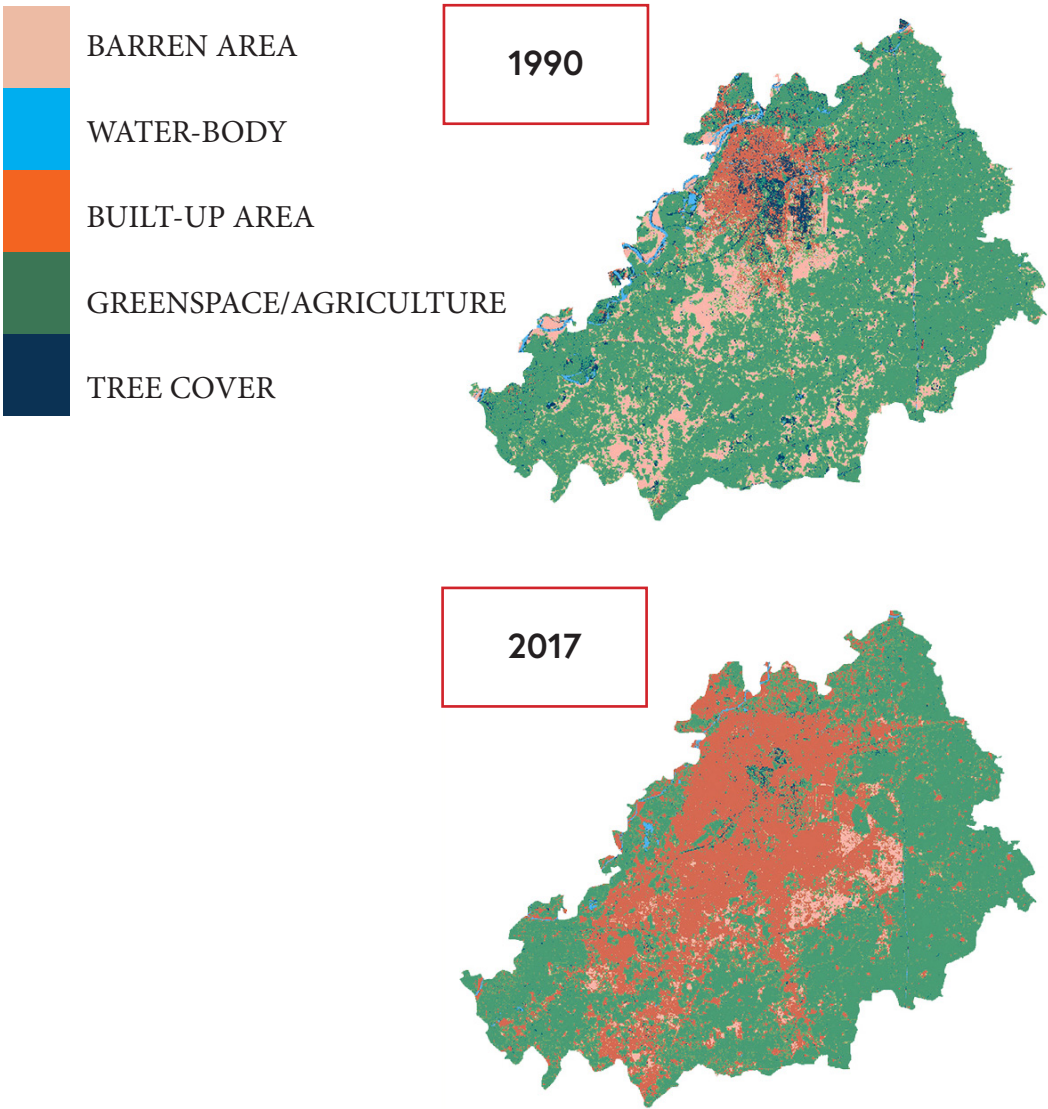


Fig 1a. Lahore's growth and loss of tree cover





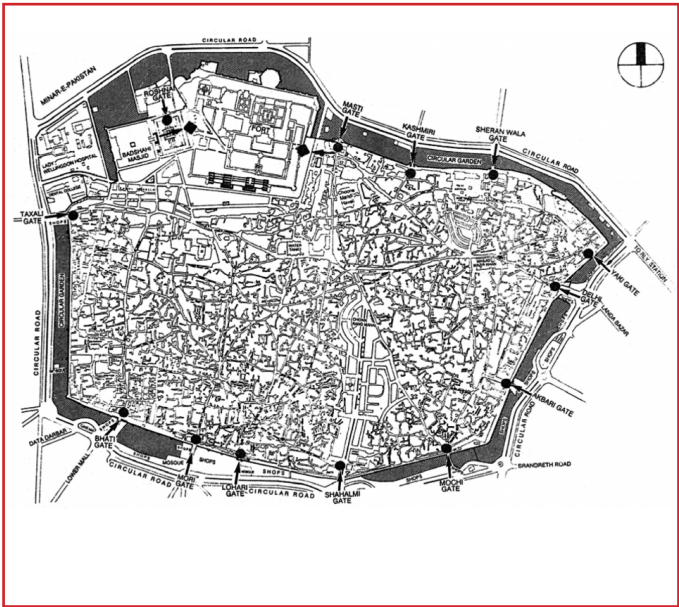


Fig 1b. A plan of the Walled City

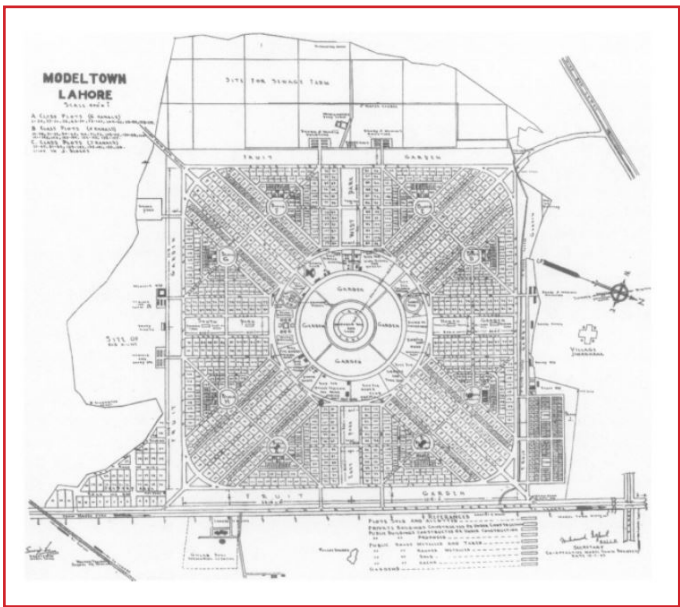


Fig 1c. A plan of Model Town



A picture taken in the Walled City in 2019



A picture taken in Model Town in 2019



I. Unlocking the Room

1 In the warmest summer, she would sit on her knees  
2 Where a sun does not preach, was a blessing to be?  
3 The smallest joy in a life with such little glee  
4 Waiting and prostrating, because then he will see;  
5 The One who for eternities sets the mind at ease,  
6 A mind that is bound with a soul so free...  
7 Is worth even more than a golden sea  
8 You must utter the words if you want to be free

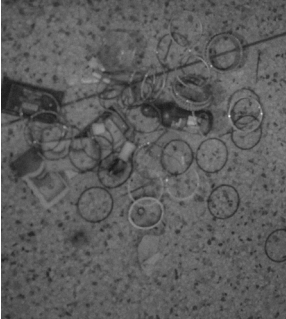
9 Resting at night in the smallest room  
10 A space in the universe to hide your bloom  
11 Your bloom which becomes a spring for whom  
12 You call, but cannot see  
13 You must utter the words if you want to be free

14 Why is this place buried so deep?  
15 Twenty rooms yet here you sleep  
16 One bed shared between six feet  
17 “But at least they have a place to eat”  
18 You must utter the words and begin your retreat

19 Will you drop a plate and stand there in fear?  
20 A master’s wrath and your hidden tears?  
21 A fall on the steps as you run down the stairs?  
22 Of breaking or mistaking or misplacing,  
23 Utter the words! It is you who needs embracing

24 The answer is not found in this writing.  
25 But you must go now, step out of the doubting  
26 The sun always rises above the mountain  
27 Lava is waiting and he is shouting  
28 “Repeat after me”:  
29 “I can be the one to set this land free”

1. The opening passage refers to the child finding small joy in the comfort of a basement during the summer heat. In the Lahori summer it is common for temperatures to reach up to 40°C. Below is a photo of Kirin, a girl who I met during a trip to Lahore who works as a child maid. She had very few possessions, but was proud of them and showed me her small collections of items; even within the confined spaces of a quarter the spirit of the servants remain strong.



9-13. The contemporary quarter is a small room in the basement of a large home. The number of servants in this space can vary. The image below shows multiple servants living in one space in a home in Lahore.

16-17. If the 25 lines of this kafi were equivalent to the floorspace of a contemporary (500m<sup>2</sup>) home in DHA (shown in the images to the below right), lines 11 and 12 would be the space given to the servant quarter; potentially for multiple servants. This space does not include a rail on the stairs or a WC on the same level:



19. Abuse is not uncommon towards domestic workers (ILO, 2013. pg 44)

24-27. Lava and Kusu were the sons of Rama and Sita in Hindu mythology. They were raised in a magical forest after Sita was banished according to the Hindu epic Ramayana (Griffith, 2010, Chapter: Kusu and Lava). According to myth passed on through oral tradition Lava was the legendary founder of Lahore (Baqir M, 1985).

28-29. The repetition of the phrase “I can be the one to set this land free” is a response to the earlier message of the kafi which establishes the servant as the lowest in the hierarchy of the housing society (a bed in the basement of a home). This final sentence is a phrase shared with the reader and the child; a denial of passivity for the reader. Inspired by Jacques Rancière’s belief in challenging the opposition between the viewer and the audience (Rancière J, 2009 pg. 13), the repetition is an act of emancipation from the passive hegemony in place within the housing society. The line (29) reinforces the child’s realisation in becoming aware of their actions with the reader (or spectator); “first we dismiss the presupposition of distance” (Rancière J, 2007, pg. 279). In the last two years, new legislation for the protection child workers has come in place in Pakistan (Domestic Worker’s Act, 2019). However most child servants do not go to school, are illiterate and have no way of accessing their own rights. Punjabi oral traditions, such as the kafi, are potential tools for bridging the gap between the illiterate and those acting passive to them. The knowledge of historical tales and mythological folklore is widespread among the population regardless of background.

II. The Tiny Mansion

1 A brand new dress but a hopeless sight  
2 The melancholic stood far away that night  
3 Another place confined by silent lines  
4 Which only the vagueness of time defines  
5 For how long child can you stay confined?

6 Their gate is near, so begins the calling  
7 The nightmen pass and the gate comes falling  
8 The journey is a freedom, like the last morning  
9 before your task becomes one of enduring  
10 For how long child can you stay awake?

11 The car door opens and all escape  
12 The kindness was just a masquerade  
13 Take their bags! your work awaits...  
14 Another night of the sham parade  
15 For how long child can you still obey?

16 They do not see the idleness in your gaze  
17 It is okay because it is His way?  
18 This was not what Ganga wanted to say  
19 The docility of one who has known one way  
20 And yet you still do not accept this pay?

21 If the last ant was to go away  
22 The world would take notice within a day  
23 Only the liar can call it a City of Gardens...  
24 When not all the children can go out and play  
25 For how long child can you still obey?

1-5. The housing society is a physical settlement but the ownership of the child servant can stretch beyond the lines of the society. When families go on occasions, such as weddings, the servants are often with them, sometimes sitting in their own area at a function and usually continuing work once returning home. If the housing society is seen as promoting the quarter, then it is also influencing a culture beyond its boundary. In 2015 an image went viral in Pakistan which showed a family enjoying a meal at a restaurant while a child maid was forced to stand away from the table and watch (Bibi, 2017).

6-7. Many contemporary housing societies only feature one main gate as an entrance to the colony. This is for security reasons. The gate is patrolled by security guards. Nightmen is a term referring to guards who patrol with a whistle at night to ward off potential criminals. The term nightmen is a taken from the word ‘Chowkidaar’ which roughly translates to ‘the men who patrol the street (Chowk)’. Another term is Citi Baba ‘Whistle Man’.



A typical home in DHA (Defence Housing Authority). Most properties are two storeys, with an accessible flat roof, 1 kanal of land (500sqm) and a basement quarter.

8. Self determination has been taken away at a young age. Some children are born into service, as children of maids. Others are sold into it at a young age. Over half the births in Pakistan are unregistered (Nation, 2013), meaning many children who go into servitude are much younger than the age their parents state. The legal working age is 15, however it is not uncommon for children as young as 10 or 11 to be working. Kirin’s age is about 11 or 12.

18. Sir Ganga Ram was a civil engineer and architect who made great contributions to Lahore’s urban development. He was also instrumental in introducing the Model Town (Bedi, B 1940), Lahore’s first settlement based on garden city principles. Contemporary housing societies share very little with the principles set during the construction of Model Town.

17. Pakistan is an Islamic country and regardless of background religion plays a major part of most people’s lives.

23. DHA Lahore is a contemporary housing society which is currently in its 10th phase of construction. In phase 6 it features a private member’s club (open since 2018) with a golf course for residents of the society. Private members clubs are not uncommon in Pakistan. Lahore Gymkhana, for example, was built in 1878 on the principles of social and recreational activity for the residents of Lahore. However, during Lahore’s early development, the garden city inspired settlements such as Model Town featured roughly 19-20% of public greenspace (which Model Town has maintained to the present day). DHA’s phases average 3% even with the private club included (diagram below). Some member’s clubs even restrict the access of servants in club grounds when accompanied by their employers (Bibi, 2017). The government has looked into this but only at a micro scale, the act of restriction itself. On a macro scale, the private club being the only large scale greenspace in a housing society creates a new culture; *the City of [Private] Gardens*.

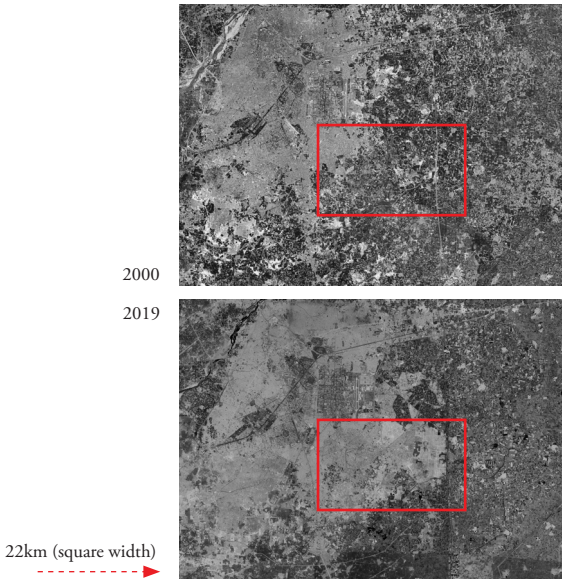


Fig 2. The expansion of DHA into arable land over the last 20 years, the phases near the edge are over 15-20km away from Lahore’s city centre, causing huge issues relating traffic and congestion. Lahore has poor public transport facilities, cars and motorcycles are the primary mode of transport. (Mirza, Ali & Kazmi, Jamil. 2013)



DHA Phase 6 - 4% area given to greenspace (black) - 2019

Model Town - 19% area given to greenspace (black) - 2019

III. Synecdoche, Lahore

1 It is all contained in one!  
2 The potter's daughters and the master's son  
3 The maid's lament and the nightman's gun  
4 A gardener's toil under the highest sun  
5 The cry of a land that is heard by none

6 It is all contained in one estate!  
7 Sadness too fixed to contemplate  
8 In an endless run of ornament gates  
9 The tension of a morning which ties the fate  
10 Of a journey to the market... and a child's escape

11 It is all contained in one so thin!  
12 Further and further the child goes in  
13 Each house she passes hides a secret akin  
14 To the memory of Gods which walk in sin  
15 As the world moves on and forgets their kin

16 It is all contained in one so vast  
17 The sinister nature of a land that is cast  
18 By shadows of fortunes wicked and vast  
19 Too many shadows still accept the task  
20 Of the child's interest without even being asked

21 It is all contained in one long tale!  
22 The softest morning becomes the strongest gale  
23 A place so open the child will fail  
24 At night you must go! When the whistles hale  
25 When the crickets sing to the lonely Churel

26 It is all contained in one so slow!  
27 You know it is time, home you must go  
28 The child finds a corner where a white tree grows  
29 Climbing and hiding in the leaves only shows  
30 The rows and rows and rows of rows

31 It is all contained in one!  
32 It was a step too far! The journey is gone  
33 The child is sunk, this sun has shone  
34 The cousin, the brother or the father will come  
35 But the child will try again before dawn  
36 Because in the darkness the moon still hangs on

1. Latour and Woolgar's Actor Network Theory or ANT (1986) can be considered as an initial platform for this argument in that the social processes which govern contemporary Lahore are very much a result of practices within core elements of a network, from the introduction of Model Town. Model Town itself is not entirely negative, but its profound socio-cultural impact is very much an amalgamation of its development over the last century.

2. Many child servants are children of potters, farmers, brick kiln workers etc. Sohni, from the Punjabi love story 'Sohni Mahwal' was the daughter of a potter.

3. A lot of children grow up being scared of the nightmen, which is why the child attempts the journey in the daylight first.

8-10. A description of the contradictory aspect of the housing society. A society in which an impressive number of endless homes, side by side, stand without significant communal social spaces. During the day time, the streets of societies can be filled with a few vendors (such as fruit sellers) and daytime workers (such as gardeners). The child cannot walk through without being noticed.

14-17. In a 1996 article, Latour stated that the common usage of the term 'network' was a key misunderstanding of ANT; "Nothing is more intensely connected... than a computer network. Such is not however the basic metaphor of an actor-network. A technical network in the engineer's sense is only one of the possible final and stabilized state of an actor-network" (Latour, B. 1996, pg.2). There is nothing controlled about the housing society. Kafi I-III have so far highlighted the plight of the child servant and the perpetuation of the quarter. Next, the capital gain of the housing societies, an obvious reason for their pandemic like spread, becomes an actor. The capital gain is a process directly linked to the spatial politics of contemporary Pakistan. (Hasan and Arif, 2019). Historically, Lahore's relationship between its minority religious institutions has always been controversial (due to its geopolitics). However, it is not controversy nor is it sin; controversy breeds discussion and sin highlights a social issue. The wipe-out of land in the gain for capital is more akin to apathy. The new sin of mindlessness. This is an aspect off the housing society network, not influenced by social issues but working outside them. On Lahore's centuries long urbanisation: "Lahore today is the extension of British Lahore, which has nothing to do with the original city, which was not only the center of the Mughal or Islamic era but also Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, and Hindu architecture...",". (Latif, 2018). This was said by Kamil Khan Mumtaz, a leading architect in Lahore and former head of the National College of Arts, Pakistan's top school of art and the second oldest in South Asia. The housing society is the extension of British Lahore. The fruits of the Gods of Lahore, Kusu and Lava, the 'founders' are being forgotten, even in memory.

25. The Churel is a monster from Punjabi folklore. They are horrifying apparitions of women who died in child birth searching for children to devour. It is a tale told to frighten both children and adults. They walk around at night.



A photo of a typical Model Town home, with a tree in the foreground.

34: It is not uncommon for multiple extended families to live in the same housing society (in different blocks, even the same house). The joint family system was a key part of life in the Walled City of Lahore (Gulzar, S. 2017). As Lahore expanded beyond the Walls of the old city and housing societies became more prevalent, the joint family system evolved to work with the housing society. Owning a home in which your family can live in for generations. 67% of Pakistanis prefer to live in a joint family system as opposed to a nuclear family system. (GRE, 2010).



IV. Leaving the Gates

1 In a silent room, a moth's wings can be heard  
2 But you are forgotten, child of potter

3 The smell of the air burning  
4 The certainty of a corrupt word  
5 You sit forgotten, child of potter

6 Homes stand still as if in mourning  
7 Like a forgotten graveyard; undisturbed  
8 And you are forgotten, child of potter

9 The impossibility of new learning,  
10 Something simple yet seemingly absurd?  
11 You are forgotten, child of potter

12 A bridge when crossing a river yearning  
13 Where a thousand lives drowned unheard  
14 You are forgotten, child of potter

15 Why should they care about your hurting?  
16 When their lives are so perturbed  
17 You are forgotten, child of potter

18 Should the right answer always require searching?  
19 When it is as familiar as the singing bird  
20 You are not forgotten, child of potter

2. The apathy towards the children in servitude. ‘Child of potter’ is a second reference Sohni Mahwal. While the Punjabi love stories often end in tragedy, the kafi represents a different type of tragedy with an ending still in ambiguous.

3. Smog and haze are common during winter.

6-10. The homes and child stand forgotten. The numerousness and profitability of societal expansion is highlighted in the number of illegal housing schemes currently active in Lahore. This also highlights the demand. As of 2019 there are 557 illegal housing societies as noted by the LDA (Lahore Development Society, 2019). Many are halfway built, or built with the no regulation, meaning endless graveyard like settlements all over the City of Gardens.



Fig 3. A low income illegal housing development in Lahore

12. Cases of abuse of child servants and domestic workers gains expansive coverage when exposed by the media, such as the case of Tabbaya as reported by the BBC (Kermani, S. 2018). However, the amount of cases which go unreported is unknown.

20. This brings an end to the first set of

Kafi. The child has begun their journey

though the housing society after leaving

the home on a winter night. Remember

the child and remember Lahore.



Top: Lahore Gymkhana club, bottom: The member's club in DHA (2019)



V. The Infinite Maze

1.

Begin the march to the gates of green
2.

A forest breathes with lives unseen
3.

Begin the march to the gates of green.
4.

The first step reveals an infinite maze
5.

The next step stops before a haze
6.

A haze so thick it blinds and weighs
7.

A farmer's graze from lands between
8.

Begin the march to the gates of green
9.

A plague bestowed from fields of fire
10.

A place succumbed to men's ire
11.

A place of greed with air so dire
12.

Another liar from seeds unclean
13.

Begin the march to the gates of green
14.

The silent child walks out of sight
15.

A heavy moon on a force so light
16.

The infinite maze on a finite night
17.

It all but seems a fevered dream
18.

Begin the march to the gates of green
19.

A row of lucent streetlights linger
20.

The nightman calls in the distance
21.

On his whistle's blow the journey hinges
22.

A guiding path has lit the scene
23.

To where the sons of Rama convened
24.

Begin the march to the gates of green

V. Unlike the garden city layout, contemporary housing societies are much traditional in their layout, with maze like rows of endless homes (fig. 5a)

1. The gates of green refer to the gates that sit at the entrance to housing societies. Green is a reference to the forest, the gates act as a threshold to nature in the kah. The Walled City of Lahore once had 13 gates which surrounded it. Only 6 or the 13 gates remain and they are largely in disrepair (Sheikh, M. 2015, pg.202). Each gate held significant cultural history and mythology; the gates of new Lahore protect the housing society with security guards who check car boots.

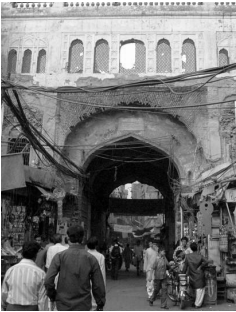


Fig 4. A picture of Lohari Gate in disrepair

6. A reference to Lahore's toxic smog; so dangerous that schools have to regularly close down. Impacting the education of Lahore's children. It is not only the poorest children who are affected but all children. (Bukhari, M. 2020)



A picture of smog taken in a morning in Lahore (2019)

7-12. Farmer's burning stubble and brick kiln work is also a major cause for smog, however, the uncontrolled expansion of Lahore has meant housing societies are active participants in the increased smog as well. Brick kiln work and stubble burning is not new, but the recent smog getting worse in Lahore indicate the major impact of Lahore's expansion. In October 2019, Lahore's air reached between 300-500 on the air quality index (considered hazardous, the highest setting) and for this brief period Lahore was the most polluted city in the world. No city considered a 'City of Gardens' should reach levels this dangerous. A New York Times article declared Smog Pakistan's 5th Season( Malik, 2017). A significant cultural crisis.



A brick kiln in Lahore

19.



A row of streetlights in the evening smog in DHA Lahore (2019)



Fig 5. A farmer burning stubble in Punjab (India)

23. Lava and Kusu, used to play in a mythical forest while being read to by Valmiki, according to the Ramayana (Griffith, R.T.H. 2010, pg. 527)



Fig 5a. The maze lie Bharia Town in Lahore

VI. The Unlit Window

1 A walk done again and again  
2 Past the gates with invisible chains  
3 Past the trees spread far and few  
4 who whisper together in silent complain:  
5 “Let us walk with you in this refrain”

6 The quietness of an unlit window  
7 Under the moonlight’s glow  
8 Conceals behind it a secret;  
9 The tired worker’s sorrow...  
10 Hear this refrain and walk again,

11 A land so old and in decay  
12 Of army men and brittle clay  
13 With poisoned sands and hues of grey  
14 You will walk with us again one day

15 A storm has come, the storm of time  
16 Of eons gone and grown sublime  
17 On the window it batters, loudly crying  
18 “There is hope in footsteps when they are trying”  
19 The unlit window of the model village  
20 The artefact of a conman’s pillage,  
21 Powerful illusions now diminished,  
22 Is this the dynasty of Geddes’ image?  
23 Close the gate forever, then proclaim  
24 You walked through the ceaseless rain

\*The first DHA (Karachi) was established in the 1950s by retired army personnel as a co-operative housing society, however it was abolished under the regime of Zia Ul Haq and re-established under his control in 1980. (Hasan A. and Arif H. 2018, pg. 16). DHA Lahore was established in 1975 and has gone through similar structural and command changes and developments as DHA Karachi. Its most current iteration was established in 2001 by General President Pervez Musharraf. (DHA, 2020)



A street in DHA Lahore



A typical gate into a 1 Kanal (500m²) home in Lahore

12-18. Defence Housing Authority in its current state\* was established in Pakistan in 1979-80 under leader General Zia Ul-Haq (Hasan A. and Arif H. 2018, pg. 16). The power held by many housing societies in Pakistan is supplemented by the influence the army has over the country, with many (like the DHA) created by the army themselves. This is a culture which has developed from the cantonments of centuries ago. It is difficult to quantify the extent of the influence with regards to housing societies. However, according to a former senator, the DHA is the most powerful housing institution in the country. (Babar, F. 2019).

20-21. Engaging with Latour and ANT once more, there is an argument to suggest that even aspects such as corruption can viewed as outliers emanating from the housing society. Under General Zia Ul-Haq Pakistan went through a period of strong Islamization beginning in 1979 (Hussain, T. 2010). This was the same time DHA Karachi was established\*. With regards to damage (at least to Lahore’s identity), the current manifestations of the DHAs are significantly responsible. ANT therefore allows the suggestion that the housing society itself can be a tool for the spread of corruption or Islamization, rather than a result.

A critique of this is that the complex socio-economic developments in Pakistan were required for the housing society to develop in this way. However, if the essentialist approach is taken re: the housing society and its development, then the significance of British Lahore has to also be considered on the contemporary housing society. Either approach is viable as both still result in the loss of cultural identity. In ‘Orientalism’ Edward Said stated, “... colonial rule was justified in advance by Orientalism” (Said, E. 1994, pg. 39). British Lahore was a ‘City of Gardens’, however even if the repercussions today were not predicted, the Orientalist mindset still changed major social dynamics which mutated into what we have today as the housing society.

19. Empty ‘model’ homes litter the City of Gardens; spatial politics at play. Empty properties can dominate housing societies which are aimed at the upper middle class or higher client base. Due to the profit in these settlements, they are not an answer to Pakistan’s housing needs. Throughout the country there are properties which are vacant. A recent study stated over 300,000 plots are vacant in Karachi due to the huge speculative market for gated settlement development. (Hasan A. and Arif H. 2018, pg. 15).

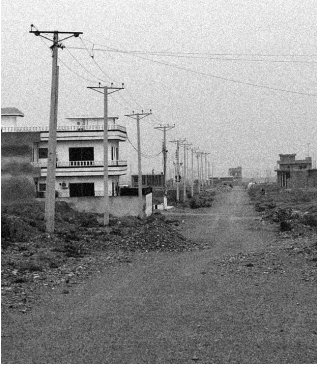


Fig 6. An illegal housing settlement

22.



VII. The Drum and The Gate

1 The calmness of a dawn, where eyes remain closed  
2 Where a voice does not call,  
3 Where a dream can hang on like the last leaf of fall,  
4 A morning free that would bring an end  
5 To the nights of malaise, of serving smiles  
6 and spurious praise

7 Oh, Bang the drum, the path has ended  
8 Bang the drum! Hear this song

9 A threshold which now seems so sorry  
10 Two gates standing just a metre tall  
11 That night after night, held you in thrall  
12 To the endless maze and your master’s whimper  
13 To a space as warm as the harshest winter  
14 The toughest work for the weakest fingers

15 Bang the drum, the path has ended  
16 Bang the drum! Hear that sound  
17 Bang the drum, the path has ended  
18 Bang the drum! And go stand proud!

7-8. This is a reference to the kafi ‘Gharyali Diyo Nikal Ni’ which means ‘Sack the Gongman!’. In the kafi, Bulleh Shah is stating he does not need the Gongman (time keeper) as his beloved has returned home. “Bang the drum” is a reference to the end of child’s journey towards the gate; reaching the threshold. For the child, what is beyond the gate is unknown, but they have made the first major step on their path to emancipation.

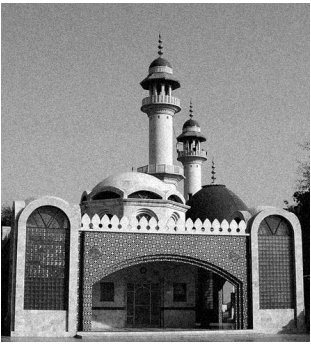


Fig 7. Bulleh Shah’s Tomb in the Kasur region of Punjab

14-18. Bulleh Shah was a Sufi poet who looked beyond caste; his teacher, another famous poet, Shah Inayat was of a lower caste than him; a cause of much strife. Bulleh Shah’s family did not greet Shah Inayat properly and the two friends did not speak again for many years, until Shah Inayat saw that Bulleh had put all societal pre-conceptions behind him. (Abbas, Q. 2016 pg. 48).

Bulleh Shah’s tomb is still visited today in Kasur. The love of Bulleh Shah’s memory is a testament to his poetry and its cultural significance. Simultaneously, Shalimar Gardens, arguably the most famous of the Mughal gardens in Lahore is being neglected in places due to poor maintenance. Shalimar Gardens was built by Emperor Shah Jahan\*. A 2014 study highlighted the extent poor maintenance was damaging the site (Mubin, S. 2013). As recently as 2019, no significant improvements have been made. (Omer, S. 2019). Shalimar Gardens is one of the only two world heritage sites in Lahore (UNESCO, 2020). The other is Lahore Fort, which is much better maintained.



Fig 8. Shalimar Gardens in Lahore



Fig 9. Damage to Shalimar Gardens (2014)

As a mythological entity, Shalimar Gardens, like other Mughal gardens, represent Quranic imagery reflecting paradise or heaven (Abdul Latiff, Z. and Mohd Yaman, M. 2017). Bulleh Shah was roaming Shalimar Gardens on his first encounter with Shah Inayat (Abbas, Q. 2016 pg. 47). There is an intrinsic link between Lahore, its people and its gardens that cannot be lost. Bordering Shalimar Gardens is Wapda Town, a housing society in which several commercial buildings are being demolished due to illegal land acquisition (Express Tribune, 2019).

Contemporary housing settlements are working against the city outside of (generally) quantifiable complications, such as bad smog and child labour. The argument here is not the direct destruction of mythology by the housing society, but rather the rabidness of commercial acquisition versus the apathy towards Lahore’s mythological foundations. This is difficult to measure due to the contradictions in play. The love of Bulleh Shah transcends apathy and prejudice; people still sing his poetry (i.e the antithesis of apathy and prejudice). This could be because of Islamization, Bulleh Shah was a famous *Sufi-Saint* poet, so it makes sense that a religious country like Pakistan would venerate him. However if this the case, Shalimar Gardens, which are a reflection of Quranic beauty , should be similarly celebrated. If a UNESCO site are suffering from neglect, there is little hope for the smaller, more intimate sites in Lahore.

\*Emperor Shah Jahan most famously oversaw the construction of the Taj Mahal in Agra, India as a tomb for his wife.

VIII. The Barren Land

1 Come child, care for the land!  
2 A land stained by the blackest rain  
3 Like an old parchment with ink like stains  
4 A land where not even pain is felt  
5 A numbness spread to the furthest plain

6 Come child, this is just the start!  
7 A land so sick it is pale and bare  
8 An illness vast and all consuming  
9 It is coming closer and will not spare,  
10 The lonely farmer or sprightly deer  
11 The roosting vultures or the homeless seer

12 Come child, this is just the start!  
13 The dying lands will swallow your heart  
14 But you must go further than Punnu's path  
15 Reach the pyres and ignite the spark  
16 And bring an end to the eternal dark

2. The Barren Land is a reference to the halfway land on which new settlements are built but left unfinished. The land where the housing society wants to spread but is unable due to stoppages in construction, legality, financial issues or land disputes.

10. The seer is a reference to Valmiki, the author if the Ramayana. He used to sit on the banks of the River Ravi. The River still flows through India, but has largely run dry in Lahore; what exists now is a canal of toxic waste.(Khalid, H. Jan 2018) Punjab means ‘Land of Five Rivers’; now it is the land of four rivers and one toxic canal.

14. A reference to the Punjabi story of Sassi Punnu. Sassi was swallowed by a mountain in the search for her lover, Punnu. She failed on her journey across a desert to reunite with Sassi and their love was reclaimed by the land, as Punnu has a similar end. The child will go further.

10-11. White-backed vultures in Lahore, once a common site, are near extinction. In the 1990s Diclofenac ( a medication for livestock ) rendered the cattle’s flesh toxic. This caused a major decline in the vulture population (Oaks, J., Gilbert, M., Virani, M. 2004). Diclofenac was banned but easy access and its low price means it is still used today (in the same way stubble burning is banned but still occurs).

Restoration projects began in areas like the Changa Manga Forest in Kasur (and are still ongoing). However, the expansion and unplanned urbanisation taking place in Lahore has meant deforestation is having an impact on their habitat too (Qadir, I. 2014).

In an anecdote from his book 101 Tales: A Fabled City, Majid Sheikh (a prominent journalist for Dawn, Pakistan’s oldest English newspaper) recalled a municipal officer telling him “*The type of waste we collect from the walled city is so toxic that only humans can survive it, not vultures..*” (Sheikh, M. 2015 pg. 303).

Vultures are traditionally a symbol of death and decay. Lahore used to house a community called Parsi’s who would lay their dead on the roof of structures called ‘Towers of Silence’ (Sheikh, M. 205, pg.295) to be exposed to vultures. This association may be a reason for the apathy towards them, yet it is also a statement. The new Lahore, the Lahore of housing societies is a place not even vultures want to be.



Fig 10. A White-backed vulture



Fig 11. An abandoned illegal housing scheme in Pakistan



IX. The Dhole

1           The tragedy of the stars, they gave Sassi no light  
2           But the Dhole’s eyes still shine, in the obscure night  
3           Do come to me...

4           The solitude in the ending times; a moment at last to ponder  
5           At least the child got to the chance to wander  
6           Do come to me...

7           The sunlight will eventually breakthrough  
8           And the cry of the Dhole has awoken you  
9           You have come to me...



A community of Nomadic people on largely barren land, taken on the outskirts of Lahore (2019)

2. The Dhole is a fox native to Lahore. In this kafi it represents the dichotomy of fear and calm. The stars have long been considered guiding lights for people lost in the wilderness, however in the case of the child, the Dhole’s eyes are an indication of safety. She cannot follow the stars as she does not know where she is going.

The fictional Dhole is a response in the form of new mythology, the first ‘being’ outside the network of the all consuming housing society. Myth or new myth, are an effective tool at opening the dialogue suppressed in neo-liberal policies of contemporary Lahori growth (Sajjad, F et al. 2012). “The boundary is permeable between tool and myth, instrument and concept, historical systems of social relations and historical anatomies of possible bodies, including objects of knowledge”. (Haraway, D. 1985, pg. 33). There is a richness in myth as an ambiguous entity; a process which transcends traditional boundaries.

“Na main apna naam dharaaya  
Na vich baitthan na vich bhaun  
Bulleya Ki jaana main Kaun”

I am not the name I assume,  
Not in stillness, nor on the move,  
Bulleya! to me, I am not known

Bulleya Ki jaana main Kaun  
Bulleh Shah  
(Bulleh Ya Ki Jana Mein Koan, 2008)

- 1. Sassi’s father in the love story Sassi Punnu, was an astrologist. She was born under a star considered impure.
- 8. The cry of the Dhole represents the crossing of the threshold. The Dhole is not an instrument for meaning, but a marker. The Dhole is nothing.
- 9. This is a refrain paying homage a work of Bulleh Shah entitled “Verhe Aa Varh Mere” which translates to ‘Do come to me’. It is a religious kafi in which Bulleh Shah is asking Shah Inayat to come to him. In this kafi it is the child calling on herself to cross the threshold of barren land and lush forest.

X. A Simple Day

1 Enough learning my child!  
2 A simple walk into the unknown  
3 Forget the mediocrity of extravagant homes,  
4 Of listless folk with boastful yawns,  
5 Of tensions faced at every dawn  
  
6 Enough learning my child!  
7 On this, a simple day  
8 Embrace the winds which clear your way  
9 Hear the echoes of the bansuri play  
10 Creating a path for the children of clay  
  
11 Enough learning my child!  
12 To a farmer and his cattle who pass you by  
13 Centuries unchanging under one clear sky  
14 You can walk with them and breathe the lightest sigh  
15 A land of the spirits; not dark but shy  
  
16 Enough learning my child!  
17 Demons and Djinn may sit waiting  
18 And beasts from tales your Lord has forsaken  
19 But look, there is joy, there is something placating  
20 Of times so rich and memories permeating  
  
21 Enough learning my child!  
22 Let your feet walk on in mirth,  
23 Unthinking.  
24 ...And with each moment,  
25 A rebirth,  
26 Not in anxiety and not everlasting,  
27 But made in the worth of Gaia's blessing  
28 You are now the child of the Earth

8. Wind helps disperse smog while tree-cover helps regulate carbon-dioxide. The loss of tree cover due to urbanisation will both reduce the strength of absorption and hinder potential wind tunnels that forests can help circulate.

17-20. Haroon Khalid, an anthropologist, known in Pakistan for his books on Lahori mythology, writes a melancholic yet comforting message on two forgotten pieces of Lahore.

Firstly, Khalid describes a pavillion (built in 1540) sitting on the dried up banks of the Ravi. The Ravi was once a great flowing river, but all that remains of it is a poisoned stream from chemical waste. (Khalid, H. Jan 2018). Khalid goes on to describe how Valmiki (the writer of the Ramayana) would sit on the banks of the Ravi. In a second writing he describes the temple of Lav. Named after Lava, the son of Rama. (Khalid, H. Oct 2018).

The writer of the Ramayana, the son of Rama (and ‘founder’ of Lahore allegedly). These are major cultural figures. While the artifacts may sit largely forgotten, the memory is still alive, and as line 20 suggests, when it is remembered it is rich and vast. These are the memories that will re-ignite a magical quality in the term ‘City of Gardens’. These are also the types of memory which may have already vanished in the lure of vacant houses.

9. Ranjha, from the Punjabi love story Heer Ranjha, used to play the bansuri (flute). His flute playing was so beautiful it caused Heer to fall in love with him. Ranjha was a cattle herder. There story is sung in villages across Punjab. Waris Shah, another Sufi poet who lived at the same time as Bulleh Shah, was the writer of Heer Ranjha. (Mehboob Sarmad Sahib Talking about Village Culture and Heer Singing, 2016)

Moments such as these risk being lost to time. There is a consumption of Lahore’s arable land where rural settlements such as these dwell (Hassan, I.2018). The urbanisation of agricultural land may be more profitable, however, beyond the increased pollution, child labour, destruction of wildlife and class separation sits a silence. The silence of the bansuri player, or the singer of Heer.



Fig 12. Villagers singing Heer in Lahore (2016)

25. In Latour’s lecture series Facing Gaia he suggests the requirement of a new sensitivity that “...precedes all distinctions among the instruments of science, politics, art and religion.” (Latour, B. 2015, pg. 144). He uses the analogy of Lars Von Trier’s Melancholia, in which a large planetary object collides with the Earth. The totality of the housing society, its all consuming nature, sets a pathway for a destructive Gaia. The Gaia referred to in line 27-28 is not the image of a Goddess giving warm blessings to the child, but a Gaia taking back the Earth (with the child) in whatever means necessary. Latour goes on to state that our Globe or our idea of globe needs to be destroyed for new art or aesthetic; [ in our case architecture or processes of architecture] to emerge (Latour, B. 2017, pg. 144). The housing society is a closed entity which is expanding exponentially; planting more trees, suggesting vertical living, new laws for child labour are all solutions which do not consider the delicate nature of the land. The lack of unity in these responses is precisely the missing sensitivity which sets the precedent for settlement expansion.

To paraphrase Latour “...the nature of yesteryear may well have been indifferent.. a cruel stepmother... Gaia on the other hand, seems to be excessively sensitive to our actions, and it seems to react extremely rapidly to what it feels and detects” (Latour, B. 2015, pg. 141). Poisoned air, barren land, dwindling wildlife and disillusioned children may just be the beginning. The kafi is just a vessel. However at least it is one that lets the child [or Lahore] look deeper at itself.



Fig 13. Pavillion on the Ravi

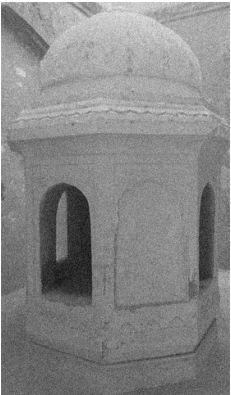


Fig 14. Temple of Lav



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# XI. A Secret from the Ravi

1 **I have learned a Secret!**  
2 *There was a teacher, great and old*  
3 *Who taught that all could learn if told*  
4 *That the world was not as cruel and cold*  
5 *To the children born unblessed with gold*

•  
6 **I have learned a Secret!**  
7 *The spirits whisper..*  
8 *“You must look!”*  
9 *The forest still hides the teacher’s book*  
10 *It is in the grass, the bark, the flowers, the seeds, the worms, the birds and fires*

•  
11 **I have learned a Secret!**  
12 *To live and to exist, determination intervenes*  
13 *But something is there, amongst the green*  
14 *Sitting between the existing and alive*  
15 *Calling out in the faintest cry*

•  
16 **I have learned a Secret!**  
17 *Lift her up, you must help her*  
18 *The call cannot work without your hunger*  
19 *She is you, the child of wonder*  
20 *A soul awakened after years of slumber*

•  
21 **I have learned a Secret!**  
22 *There is still magic in this land*  
23 *Remorsefulness can become purifying*  
24 *Rather than a memory forever tainted*  
25 *Fanon! your words will be replicated*

•  
26 **I have learned a Secret!**  
27 **I have learned a Secret!**



Fig 15. Lawrence Garden, taken by Tahir Iqbal (2012)

•

\*While gardens were maintained well, there was significant damage done to Lahore Fort by the British (Majid, S. 2015, pg. 204)

2. This is a reference to intellectual emancipation. An idea proposed by a French teacher Joseph Jacotot and featured in the book ‘The Ignorant Schoolmaster’ by Jacques Rancière. Rancière used Jacotot’s ideas to convey a message of individual liberation being the catalyst for true social change (Rancière, J. 1991). Emancipation; for the child and for Lahore from the housing society, requires engagement which re-evaluates how the housing society can be disrupted as a process. The expansion of the society creates more domestic work, which creates more child servants, which consumes more villages etc. The principle of universal teaching sits outside of this. If the child can be individually emancipated, then so can Lahore.

The Walled City, prior to Lahore’s expansion, had arts which are now lost; “*The story of Lahori hand made paper... women in the mohallahs manufactured the paper... with the pulp being made along the river Ravi*” (Sheikh, M. 2015 pg. 16). There is a harmony between this lost art and the land itself, it is something simple yet (as Sheikh goes on to explain) great figures of Lahore’s past have wandered the streets of the Walled City looking for books made from this paper (pg. 17).

There is nothing to stop the revival of an industry such as this, especially considering Pakistan is experiencing a large growth in tourism; Condé Nast Traveller magazine even ranked it as the top tourist destination in the world for 2020 (CN Traveller, 2019). The all encompassing nature of the housing society is a hindrance to the long term development of Lahore; acting as a fly-trap. Beyond the planting of trees and nurseries, there needs to be allocation for the potential of alternative economic opportunities. Universal teaching is a method of liberation. There is potential for creating new pockets of growth; for it to have the possibility of taking place, destruction of Lahore’s natural fabric needs to be slowed.

19-24. At this part in the kafi, the child is realising who she is; Lahore, or the essence of Lahore. The child is beyond the reach of the housing society, because she is not invested in it the same way as land owners or residents. She is a product of it. Lahore is a product, being sold part by part. The individually minute but swarm like nature of the cultural damage is equal to the large scale, more systematic physical damage being caused by the gated communities.

The language of the kafi; the vessel for Bulleh Shah’s love, which is the antithesis of contemporary Lahore is innate to the Punjab. In Mythologies, Roland Barthes writes the following: “[On myth as a type of speech] *This does not mean that one must treat mythical speech like language; myth in fact belongs to the province of a general science, coextensive with linguistics, which is semiology*” (Barthes, R. 1972, pg. 109) The reverence of Bulleh Shah is just as relevant as the lack of what he represents in visible Lahore. The myth is lost in regards to his message; the housing society is the representation of a system where Bulleh Shah’s work is light enjoyment as opposed to a progressive message. In this way, he is being lost too; like Lahore. However, the kafi is not read as a reader, but as an author; it is both direct and vague, a post-structural device that is outside the boundary of the housing society mentality because the kafi itself is boundless. Individual emancipation, returning to Rancière, is core to Bulleh’s message and if Lahore wants to re-identify as a legitimate ‘City of Gardens’ a new relationship between Lahore and its past needs to emerge. One that may require some form of purification from the housing society.

*You have reached the skies,  
But you have failed to reach,  
What’s in your heart!*

from Look into Yourself,  
by Bulleh Shah (WPA, 2012, pg. 24)

25. “*All values ... are irrevocably poisoned and diseased as soon as they are allowed in contact with the colonized race. The customs of the colonized people, their traditions, their myths -- above all, their myths--are the very sign of that poverty of spirit and of their constitutional depravity.*” (Fanon, F. 19). From a post-colonial perspective, Fanon is correct here, while radical, Lahore is only losing its identity now. However, Lahore is a city which has seen great battles and destruction throughout its existence, it has always been rebuilt however. In the case of British Lahore, gardens were maintained well\* (Mubin, S. 2014 pg. 511) and even more built, such as Lawrence Gardens (now Bagh-e-Jinnah). Contemporary Lahore could be a rejection of years of colonisation; now the goal is gain and capital. Again, regardless of why, Fanon’s words hold true if the housing society is considered a disease; it is a mutation of what was introduced by the British; Model Town will always be part of Lahore’s ‘new garden’ mythology. In this sense, the rejection of the housing society again comes in play; emancipation. First there was British Lahore, now there is Zombie Lahore; the neo-colonisation.

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## XII. The Fire Behind the Veil

1           *The setting sun and shimmering trails*

2           *Hidden behind the unseen veil*

3           *Only seen when a mind is pure*

4           *The final calls from the forest floor*

5           *Hidden behind the unseen veil*

6           *Rustling past branches and tangled in vine*

7           *The faintest glow catches the eye*

8           *Hidden behind the unseen veil*

9           *A fire's smoke and figures of three*

10          *Obscured by a penumbra of evening trees*

11          *Hidden behind the unseen veil*

12          *They are in commune with an unnatural pleasantness*

13          *Even Mirza's arrows could not pierce this calmness*

14          *Hidden behind the unseen veil*

15          *A joy not in work, but in the sharing of names*

16          *So inconsequential, yet freedom all the same*

17          *Hidden behind the unseen veil*

18          *And then you notice, from your times in servitude...*

19          *You must find the arrows*

20          *For in those there is permanence, a gift for the sparrows*

21          *Hidden behind the unseen veil*

22          *"Child come in! You need not worry..."*

23          *Take these seeds and join the Lohri!"*

24          *The Spring has begun,*

25          *The march will give rise to a blanched white sun*

26          *And the dew of the morning will cleanse the char*

27          *With a wisdom procured from the great Mughal lords*

28          *And the God's of the Puranas*

29          *And the ladies of Mohallahs,*

30          *You are the future of those tales*

31          *Hidden behind the unseen veil*

2-9. The is both beautiful and mournful; memories of death and joy are being replaced by concrete and capital.

On the right are images taken in the Changa Manga Forest, a forest which is being eradicated slowly due to illegal timber logging and urbanisation. The forest sits at in Kasur; a region set to be consumed by Lahore's expansion by 2040 (LDA Report, 2016). Kasur is also the site for Bulleh Shah's tomb, and named after Kusu, the twin brother of Lava, according to legend. (O'Dwyer, M. 1926, pg. 426)



The joy in school children on a trip to Changa Manga, walking in a place where the air is clear, experiencing a place of great myth, emits a serenity. Top: Illegal logging, bottom: school children in Changa Manga Park (2019)

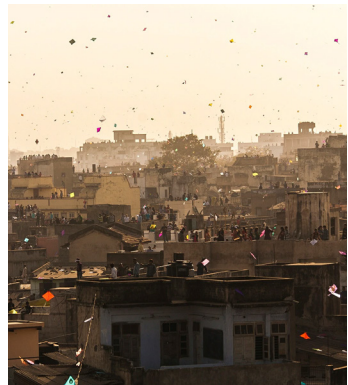


Fig 16. An image of a Basant festival, where kites fill the sky



Fig 17. A small community celebrating the Lohri festival in Punjab

13. A reference to the Punjabi love story Mirza Sahiban. Mirza was a great archer, it was only when his arrows were hidden by Sahiban to protect her brothers (who disapproved of their love) did he fall. Sahiban killed herself after this.

21-30. *"For centuries it was centered at Lahore, and the nearby villages. This festival of Lahore has been forgotten as we get lost in the mists of antiquity."* (Majid, S. 2015, pg. 173). Lohri is a festival celebrated in Punjab to mark the passing of the winter solstice. Its origins are disputed but the actions in participation (such eating sesame seeds) are timeless. The ceremony ends with the lighting of a bonfire around which people sit and sing. Lohri is also linked to the warrior Dulla Bhatti, who freed Hindu girls being sold as slaves to the Middle East during Akbar's reign (pg. 174). Another iconic festival, Basant (or the kite festival) marks the beginning of Spring. Kites are flown from the rooftops, creating a colourful sky filled with a plethora of designs. A festival even Bulleh Shah celebrated. *"In the Punjabi's life this is the only true time everyone is happy."* (Majid, S. 2015, pg. 209). Lohri has been largely forgotten, with small communities keeping the tradition alive, while Basant has been banned due to nine deaths associated with kite string in 2009 (pg. . 209). As of 2019, the festival is still banned, as well as the manufacture and creation of kites. (Bashir, S. 2019).

There is purity in these festivals; sitting around a fire, flying a kite. Barthes argues, on poetry "...the very resistance offered by poetry makes it an ideal prey for myth" (Barthes, R. 1972. pg. 133). However, if the essence of poetry is compromised ;even in the spoken kafi, the purity of the festival remains. This may be why they are dying, like the other cultures of Lahore, because they represent the 'other' to the housing society. As villages are consumed, festivals are banned and gated communities thrive, the old Lahori is dead. Controversy does effect traditions, as Majid Sheikh describes; the Spanish bullfight, the tomato fighting in South America (Majid, S. 2015, pg. 173). He asks why Lohri cannot be our Guy Fawkes (pg. 209). New Lahore is a post-human Lahore; not even a commercialised Lohri or Basant exists.



XIII. The Little Silkworm

1 The little silkworm on the Mulberry tree  
2 The reeds by the riverbanks  
3 A touch of flowing water on a winter morning  
4 This time is not forever, the black sea comes  
5 But there is a space! Raise your arms!

6 Let the sea flow! For the sea knows  
7 It can not cross the ravine  
8 A place beyond the Anthropocene  
9 A home shared with the Laputan machines  
10' But there is a space! Raise your arms!

11 The bionic men! they rise with you  
12 A blissful ignorance will not do  
13 But of ancient moons not infernal  
14 Yet filled with silver sap eternal  
15 There is a space! Raise your arms!

16 And as that sap does not rot  
17 And within it sits the simplest thought...  
18 Accept these men, they are not from here  
19 They covet only the dreams you fear  
20 Raise your arms! The time is near

\*The allegory of the cave is an analogy Plato used to describe the theory of forms. To summarise, the allegory begins with cave-dwellers chained facing a wall, behind them is a camp fire. Behind the fire is a pathway in which figures walk back and forth. For the cave dwellers, their perception of reality is confined to the shadows created by these people. The cave dwellers can hear whispers. Eventually one of them is freed and having seen truth returns to the others to try and explain it to them. (Philosophy Now, 2015)

17-18. To the child the world outside the housing network is inaccessible ; child servants begin work so young and remain denied an education; the mental slavery of opportunity is in some ways reflective of Plato’s allegory of the cave\*. If we consider the child chained and facing the wall, the housing society as the flame and the kafi as the escapee. If the correct foundations are created Permaculture can be expressed in same lens as the tales Punjabis know; a new language to heal Lahore.

1-3. These lines refer to the creation of new opportunities based on permaculture. Sites such as the Changa Manga forest used to be popular for producing silk, but poor site maintenance, illegal timber logging and government profiteering has led to silk of an inferior quality and a dying industry (Rahim, F and Hyder, M. 2017). A working relationship with nature will be the first step in reducing labour which depends on uncontrolled expansion while preserving forms of cultural identity. New forms of old culture could allow for real change: using Mulberry trees and river reeds for paper, using that paper for re-printing iconic mythology or creating kites, using silkworms to produce kite-string or festival clothing, regulating and re-planting greenspace or forests near sites of culture to take advantage of the tourism industry and encourage wildlife re-population through proper maintenance of sensitive sites. While this is idealistic thinking, it is precisely the naivety and innocence which housing societies are consuming as vessels for child labour and pollution. Much like these sets of kafi, the spoken word is outside the control of the housing society; the individuals answer to the infinite ‘idealistic’ gated community.



Fig 19. Still from Castle in the Sky (1986) showing the Laputan machine and a squirrel like creature

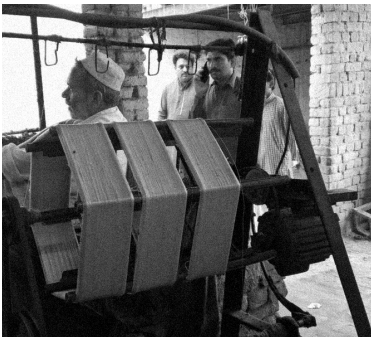


Fig 18. Silk making in Changa Manga

8-9. “Perhaps, instead of the fiery forest, the icon for the Anthropocene should be Burning Man!” (Haraway, D. 2016, pg. 46).

The contemporary housing society, in the image of DHA, should also be considered the ideal icon for the Anthropocene; from a Pakistani perspective. It represents no better image of a need for self indulgence; the a vacant home on an upper middle class settlement, or an illegal home on a lower-middle class settlement.

The post-Anthropocene is referred in the next line (9); *A home shared with the Labutan machines*. This is reference to Hayao Miyazaki’s film “Laputa: The Castle in the Sky”. Laputa is a floating castle with a machine landscape. There is no human life on Laputa, just Laputan machines and wildlife. The castle floats on, in the sky, away from the happenings of Earth. There is a moment in the film where an ominous looking machine deftly handles a squirrel like creature (Laputa, 1986). In the context of the kafi, the Laputan machine represents a softness missing in Lahore. While the human isn’t there, nature and machine are in balance. The argument is, the characters only saw the machines in one way until they did not. The housing and urbanisation machine of Lahore is creating an environment where seeing anything other that its extensions will become impossible. The tree project, child labour laws and promotion of vertical living are all components of that extension, they do not go deep enough to the nucleus of the issues; only a reflection on mythology, culture and sensitivity to nature can pierce that.

XIV. The Reset

- 1 Of Vultures and dacoits
- 2 Of Malangi’s long nights
- 3 You are not them
- 4 Of the kite-flyer, the kite-maker
- 5 Of the Emperors and land takers
- 6 You are not them
- 7 Of the street dancer and tragic Heer
- 8 Of the lawmen who do not care
- 9 You are not them
- 10 You are the Bull,
- 11 ...and you are the Horseman

2. Malangi was a dacoit and freedom fighter, who used to hide in the forest of Changa Manga. Changa Manga is home to many tales like the one of Malangi; its deforestation is not just one of consumption but one of erasure. Which stories will inspire the emacipation of children forced into work once the tales of men like Malangi die out? Of Malangi, people used to sing;

‘Whereas the British rule in the day, it is Malangi who rules the night’

(Haroon, K. 2016)

XIV - 7. The cyborg is a hybrid; the robot is a machine that can be reset. The child is no longer a robot; she is reset. Bulleh Shah was a street-dancer, yet revered. Myth is emancipation in the case of Lahore. The myth turns the robot into a cyborg. A new form of consciousness that examines permaculture and sustainable agency from a lens of heritage. The housing society is a corrupted nostalgia, but the children are still a blank slate. There is an estimated 264,000 child servants in Pakistan (Akhtar, S et al. 2005). The smallest carriers of myth, the only ones in Lahore who still have the capacity of imagination and wonder, will be the ones who (when exposed to a life beyond servitude) emancipate the ‘City of Gardens’.

10. The bull and the horseman are two mythological images of ancient Lahore largely forgotten. They represent the great Lahori ruler Jayapula, a man responsible for turning Lahore into a fortress. Eventually, after losing two battles, he walked out the Mori Gate (a gate of the Walled City) and set himself on fire; a death considered pious in Rajput custom (Sheikh, M. 2015, pg. 42). The child’s journey has come full circle; the purification of the child; of Lahore. Unlike Jayapula, whose purification was his end, the child represents the opportunity for a new beginning, but her end is left ambiguous, like the future of Lahore. Liberation from colonialism came from a great physical sacrifice, liberation from neo-colonialism can come from something much more personal, a purification through sensitivity.



A servant



child, a



quarter, a

living room, and



a great city

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## Conclusion

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The contemporary housing society is a symbol of Lahore’s cultural decline because of its inebriation into the life of modern Lahoris. The term inebriation is important, the housing society has begun changing and mutating everything around it, but this has happened at such a slow pace that the extent of what the societies now represent is difficult to comprehend. There has been a mutation in the atypical nature privatisation, through the means of neo-liberal policy, hindering lower class residents of the city. More than lower class residents being forced to move out for the sake of development, the structure in place for the expansion of Lahore now is one of much more complexity. This is evidenced in the creation of low class illegal settlements and numerous bourgeois vacant homes (Sajjad, F et al. 2012); the response to building developments has become building more developments. The effect of this has turned the housing society into a catalyst for a huge range of socio-economic and environmental issues facing Lahore. The smog damaging the city’s daily lifestyle, the lack of regulation in servant quarter design and promotion of informal sector work, the destruction of villages, the graveyard settlements, the reduction of tree cover and the plight of child maids are all now fragments of the built environment schema of Lahore. All of these issues are facilitated in some way by housing societies. However , the cultural and mythological loss this new schema represents is even worse; these are just issues on the surface. Looking deeper, which has been the goal of this study, there are major cultural repercussions on each surface issue which will have far reaching consequences in Lahore’s future identity. As the green cover and villages are consumed, so is the wildlife (such as the vultures; deeply steeped in myth) and the festivals (Lohri is almost forgotten in Pakistani Punjab). As the children are forced to stay in due to smog or forced to work as maids, a future generation of disillusionment will be void of the mythology that gave Lahore its name in the first place. As illegal settlement after illegal settlement is knocked down and model (empty) home after model home is built, Shah Jahan’s Shalimar Gardens ( a UNESCO site) is crumbling. Tales of heroism and dacoits, from the Changa Manga to the Dulla Bhatti, will be lost; what will inspire the weakest or the youngest in their personal emancipations. Finally, the forgotten temple of Lava, the dried up Ravi, the last gates; the further and further the gated communities are built, the closer Lahori culture is to evaporation.

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The built environment of Lahore is forever tied into its Gardens; from Quranic verses in the Mughal era to the construction of English gardens in British Lahore. A city that has seen great rulers of multiple religious backgrounds, has seen great wars and great re-builds, has been through colonialism and most recently the war on terror; should not give up its identity so easily. The kafi is a reminder that there still exists great love in this city; the great and tragic tales of love, the songs of the Sufis and the regard for their tombs. That love transcends the ‘City of Gardens’ narrative, but that love also represents a problem because it was the mythology and culture around these Gardens that inspired much of these great tales to begin with. Bulleh roamed the Shalimar Gardens, Waris Shah references the Kalabagh<sup>1</sup> in Heer Ranjha which villagers still sing (. Valmiki wrote the Ramayana on the banks of the Ravi (now dried up stream of waste in Pakistan Punjab). One of Lahore’s and Pakistan’s great contemporary figures, the poet Allama Iqbal, was an avid kite flyer (Shekh, M. 2015); a practice now banned.

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The kafi, or the culture it represents, needs to become a catalyst to challenge the housing society. A tool for the built environment and a tool for Lahore’s Garden identity, just as the housing society is a catalyst for the depreciation of Lahori culture. This is not to say the kafi is the solution, but it allows an outside view of the housing society and a view of it as a network. The housing society’s physical evolution is only matched by its involvement as a ‘symbol’ of 21st century Pakistan. The symbol; an image of the Anthropocene, as explored in the works of Latour and Haraway in its complete rejection of the natural built environment of Lahore. The housing society does bring joy in some form, an end goal of many Pakistanis in the form of a generational home, however this ‘joy’ is fragmented. The fragmentation being the distance from kafi or myth that Pakistanis also enjoy. There is no real connection between the future home, the song, the land, the culture; Gaia does not wait. This disconnection is furthered in the post-colonial narrative, the housing society is after all a mutated product of the garden city movement, but now it is in an environment even beyond the coloniser; who maintained (and advanced) Lahore’s cultural heritage (as a ‘City of Gardens’ ) to some extent. The true essence of kafi is the liberation, or emancipation; gated communities may appear like a social community, but they have removed the individual from his or her or their city.

1. The Kalabagh translates to black garden, a garden prominent in the story of Heer Ranjha (Usborne, C.E. 1874)

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Future developments in Lahore must not simply offset the past; by only tackling the issues presented in Lahore at a surface level, the government has allowed the housing society to evolve into something far more dangerous than anything Model Town ever was or is. However, where there is a loss of culture there is also an identification of a culture. Lahore’s rich history gives answers that do not need searching for; kite and paper making, sericulture, festivals and historical tourism are all economic responses much more sensitive to Lahore’s history. The rise in tourism is an indication to start sharing Lahore’s hidden and dying mythology to the world. Just as Bulleh Shah’s poems transcend religion, so can permacultural solutions which evolve from Lahore’s colourful past. Myth has been crucial to the social and cultural heritage of Lahore and it should also be crucial to the future development of Lahore’s built environment. How the myth is utilised will not be difficult. The agency of action which begins the process is what will be difficult. Lahore is still the ‘City of Gardens’, but time is limited until that becomes a myth too. The housing society as an entity will only be addressed by examining it a deeper level than what the government has been doing. In his epic poem Paradise Lost, John Milton wrote:

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*“Whereon for different cause the Tempter set,  
Our second ADAM in the Wilderness,  
To shew him all Earths Kingdomes and thir Glory.  
His Eye might there command wherever stood,  
City of old or modern Fame, the Seat,  
Of mightiest Empire, from the destind Walls,  
Of CAMBALU, seat of CATHAIAN CAN,  
And SAMARCHAND by OXUS, TEMIRS Throne,  
To PAQUIN of SINAEAN Kings, and thence,  
To AGRA and LAHOR of great MOGUL..*

*(Milton, J. 1667)*

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Lahore is mentioned amongst the great cities of the time. As Pakistan approaches a new era, post the war on terror, there is a chance to recapture and inspire a new generation of Lahoris and share its inner beauty with the rest of the world. A new sensitivity to the pockets of culture that sit beyond the network of the housing society can once again earn Lahore the title of ‘The City of Gardens’. A title which it is currently undeserving of.

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[Snapshots of life in Lahore]



A gardener sitting outside Badshahi Mosque (2019)



Inside the walled city (2019)





An old gate and an old street (2019)



Barren lands and a beautiful sunset (2019)





A market (2019)



A boy selling fabric (2019)





A girl chases a cat in the old city (2019)



Daily life from above (2019)



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*Bulleh Ya Ki Jana Mein Koan. (2008).[YouTube] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNDTc35g2GI> [Accessed 2 Mar. 2020].*

*Mehboob Sarwad Sahib Talking about Village Culture and Heer Singing. (2016). [YouTube] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYIDytJloQg> [Accessed 2 Mar. 2020].*