

Spatial Transformation and Colonial Order in J. G. Farrell's the Siege of Krishnapur

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Abstract

J.G. Farrell's *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1973), the second novel of his *Empire Trilogy*, is set in the fictional town of Krishnapur during a four-month siege by the local forces. Inspired by the actual sieges during the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and also drawing from archival materials, the novel recounts the lives of British residents in this colonial outpost and their gradual physical and psychological deterioration under confinement. The cantonment, which was originally designed to represent the spirit and culture of the British, is ultimately reduced to a battleground for survival, emphasizing its original foreignness to the surrounding environment. In this paper, I aim to focus on the representation and reproduction of space through Farrell's delineation of physical transformation of the cantonment under the siege so as to discuss the failings of colonial project. The colonial and Victorian space as portrayed early in the novel and its subsequent transformation will form the basis of my analysis of politics and aesthetics of spatial representation within the broader historical context. I argue that the Residency compound, and specifically the Residency itself, emerge as the focal point to examine Farrell's use of spatial organization and objects to underline the fragility, and the inevitable end, of the British authority in India.

Keywords: J. G. Farrell, *The Siege of Krishnapur*, India, colonialism, space

Introduction

J. G. Farrell's Empire Trilogy, comprising *Troubles* (1970), *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1973) and *The Singapore Grip* (1978), portrays the tribulations of the British Empire by focusing on the period of 1919-1921 in Ireland, the Indian Mutiny of 1857, and the Japanese invasion of Singapore in 1942 respectively. Farrell himself chose to call these novels "a triptych rather than a trilogy with each panel presenting a picture of the Empire at a different historical watershed and by their association shedding, I hope, some light on each other" (Dean in Erll, 2017, p. 345). While these novels, overall, depict the waning of the imperial authority over an almost century, Farrell's choice of specific locations bears significance to comprehend the workings of the colonial system at each particular territory within their own temporal and spatial circumstances. Thus, representation of space and spatial relations, as well as their organization and re-organization under colonial rule, comes under scrutiny to elaborate on the establishment of British authority and its subsequent failings in various colonial outposts. *The Siege of Krishnapur*, inspired by the sieges during the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and specifically by the Siege of Lucknow, depicts the transformation of the fictional town of Krishnapur during the siege with the British cantonment providing the main setting for the novel. The early representation of the cantonment, especially the building of the Residency, indicates a clearly designated spatial order based on western civilization as understood and embraced by the British residents, and emblematic of British superiority in India. The novel gradually shows the disruption and almost complete annihilation of this spatial order during the siege, raising questions about the assumed superiority and authority of the British in this particular colony. I contend that the novel's representation of space and spatial dynamics through the transformation of the Residency compound underlines not only the precarious physical conditions inherently related to colonial rule and its failures but also the resulting disappointment and disillusionment about the British authority in India with skepticism toward its future.

Peter Morey states that "the story of English language fiction on India is also the story of a struggle around representational politics" (2002, p. 2). While this struggle is primarily concerned with the representation of the India and Indianness by the British and the Indians themselves, it is also about the representation of the British and their authority in India from both sides with competing as well as complementing perspectives. The sheer number and multitude of works by the British focusing on India from the nineteenth century onwards indicate not only fascination with the territory but also a desire to control and shape its representation in literary imagination and cultural memory as well. In the context of nineteenth century, India served as the background for adventure novels and historical fiction as well as for the attempts to map out the problems of the Empire (Crane, 1992, p. 3). However, the tribulations of the British in the nineteenth-century India also led to stories of heroism and valor to celebrate and memorialize the courage and resilience of the British in the face of imminent threat and danger. The Indian Rebellion of 1857 ("The Mutiny") occupies the center of these narratives, as described by Astrid Erll, "the 'Mutiny' was quickly turned into a foundational myth of the British that contributed to grand scale imperial self-fashioning and helped legitimate British rule in India" (2006, p. 164). The rebellion started with the uprising of the sepoys serving under the British East India Company in Meerut and then spread to other cities such as Delhi, Kanpur, and Lucknow. While the beginning of the uprising is usually attributed to the introduction of pre-greased cartridges with cow and pork-derived ingredients, thus offensive to Hindu and Muslim soldiers, the uprising has its roots in broader concerns about the British influence and control in India. D.C.R.A. Goonetilleke, however, notes that calling the rebellion "The First War of Independence is a misnomer" since "it was not a rebellion against the British rule as such, and certainly, did not reflect a consciousness of nationality either on the part of the sepoys or the general public" (2003, p. 416). Although the rebellion remained mostly limited to the northern parts of the country, its end brought a general change for India with the abolishment of the British East India Company and

the establishment of direct rule by the British government.

The Rebellion of 1857 created a tremendous effect not only on the Anglo-Indians in India but also on the general public in Britain, which ultimately led to the emergence of “a colonial narration” (Erell, 2006, p. 164) with “the frontier mythologized as a place where colonizing subjects might prove their strength of character and moral worth by defending the values of the West from a perceived hostile, barbarous culture” (McLeod, 1994, p. 119). This mythologization, at that time, served to engender narratives emphasizing the atrocities of the Indians and the heroism of the British in cultural and literary imagination. The Siege of Lucknow, and the subsequent Relief of Lucknow by British forces, contributed greatly to the representation of ordinary people’s transformation to heroes under dire circumstances. The survival story of those under siege for five months and suffering from diseases and lack of supplies was celebrated as the epitome of heroism, paving the way for Lucknow to become one of the most “iconic sites in British memory” (Crane and Mohanram, 2013, p. 29). The early narratives of bravery and resilience can be regarded as working on two levels; on the one hand, they depicted the unwavering British spirit even in the most difficult times, and on the other hand, they strove to re-affirm the authority, and legitimacy, of the British in India in the nineteenth century. Later portrayals, however, tend to problematize the ideologically motivated representations of historical events in literature, and present a more nuanced critical outlook to the experiences of the British and the Indian during the Rebellion of 1857.

J. G. Farrell’s *The Siege of Krishnapur* belongs to the category of post-World War II novels in which imperial history comes under scrutiny for its shortcomings rather than a nostalgic longing for the bygone days. Margaret Scanlan observes that “the skeptical and critical historical novel” of this period “looks back to a public past, most often to the world wars or to conflicts in countries like India and Ireland once under English rule. The particular moments chosen are mostly inglorious or violent; the novels are more likely to evoke defeats than victories, stupidity and arrogance than heroism” (1990, p.6). At first glance, Farrell’s novel might appear incongruous with Scanlan’s observation given that it has chosen one of the most memorable incidents of the Rebellion in which the British character is said to prove its strength and determination. During the Victorian and then the Edwardian period, The Siege of Lucknow was celebrated not only in literary works but also in several paintings (Crane and Mohanram, 2013, p. 27); however, the celebration, not only of this particular moment but also of the British imperial endeavors in general, left its place to deconstruction and subversion of the mythologized narratives in the following decades, particularly after the World War II and the independence of India. In the words of Mariadele Boccardi, “after World War II, the historical novel becomes the genre that reflects upon the rupture in the British sense of the nation and enacts it in its narrative choices and in the unfolding of the events in its plots” (2009, p.31). Farrell chooses to represent the gradual disillusionment and loss of confidence among the British residents as well as the disappearance of Victorian propriety during the siege; it is not just the Residency crumbling due to the attacks, it is also the British belief and certainty about the colonial mission that falls into pieces.

1. Bringing British Civilization to India

Ralph Crane states that “every novelist who has written about India has reinvented that country.... To invent India, it is necessary to imagine the landscape too, because the novelist is inevitably inventing the history of a particular place, as well as a particular period in the history of that place” (1992, p.1). *The Siege of Krishnapur* is no exception, the narrative starts with the description of the landscape as seen by a traveler approaching Krishnapur, whose first impression would be a barely visible town with walls and roofs ahead in “unending plain,” “a dreary ocean of bald earth” (Farrell, 1973, p. 9). The careful eyes will notice tiny villages scattered around and made from the same mud as the plain. There is nothing until the white walls of the town that “a European might recognize

as civilization,” with bricks of the walls as “an essential ingredient of civilization” (Farrell, 1973, pp. 9-10). The European perspective used to describe the terrain reminds the reader of the well-known rhetoric of the west bringing civilization to the rest of the world; however, as the narrative zooms in to the abandoned, desolate town, more like a “City of the Silent” namely a cemetery, one starts to wonder the story of the town. Indeed, this beginning depicts the current state of Krishnapur, paving the way for its story from the center of administration for a large district to completely deserted ruins without a single soul. The narrative, thus, returns to the beginning of the end, or the time of “the first sign of the trouble” (Farrell, 1973, p. 10) to convey the tale of Krishnapur. In this section, I will focus on the novel’s representation of the cantonment by focusing on the various buildings and their spatial organization before the siege to elaborate on the implementation of colonial and Victorian ideals onto the space.

The town of Krishnapur, with a name appearing “genuinely Indian, generic one” (Goonetilleke, 2003, p. 409), consists of a cantonment with the administrative and governmental buildings, such as the Residency and the Cutcherry, housed together with accommodations for the doctor’s quarters as well as the church surrounded by compound walls. The bungalows housing Europeans working at different posts are close by, with the locals living further away. The native infantry regiment is stationed at Captainganj, five miles away from the town. The bazaar is one of the places where the locals and Europeans encounter one another. Overall, the general layout of the town with a center for colonial enterprise, nearby military forces and the locals living their life not necessarily close to them is presented as the typical spatial organization of a colonial Indian town, with clearly demarcated lines of power and limited social interaction with the Indians. The novel primarily directs its gaze to the spaces occupied by the Europeans, conveying their life in Krishnapur rather than providing a detailed portrayal of all communities. In doing so, the narrative mainly utilizes the perspective of two characters: Mr. Hopkins, the Collector of the region, and George Fleury, a newcomer to Krishnapur and India. These two characters embody different functions for colonial project in India: the Collector, represented “as an archetypal Victorian patriarch obsessed with his memories of the Great Exhibition of 1851,” can be regarded not only through his official administrative duty but also, and perhaps more importantly, as the person behind the display of the British civilization and progress in the Residency (Goodman, 2015, p. 761). Thus, he genuinely believes in his, and the British, mission of bringing progress and civilization to India, which he gradually comes to question during the siege. Fleury, on the other hand, exhibits any newcomer’s ignorance, fascination and at times bewilderment coupled with his own poetic spirit as he observes his surroundings to prepare a “a small volume describing the advances that civilization had made in India under the Company rule” (Farrell, 1973, p. 22). The juxtaposition of the very distinct personalities and priorities of these two characters provides a possibility to explore the different perspectives, that of the Collector as the one who primarily feels responsible for the continuity of British rule in India and that of Fleury who is expected to convey the accomplishments by the British, namely the builder and the observer, respectively.

In the novel, the Collector’s vision of progress and civilization is mapped on to the architectural design and organization of the Residency as revealed by detailed descriptions of the building over the course of the narrative. Crane reminds us that the British, not only in India but also in other parts of the Empire “impos[ed] their buildings on the landscape and shipp[ed] furniture and possessions to fill them as if it was their right and the natural course for a superior race” (1992, p.31). The general layout of the Residency, “more or less in the shape of a church,” with a library on the left and a drawing room on the right, a dining-room and several rooms “having to do in some way with eating or with European servants or with children” behind “a magnificent marble staircase” in a two-story structure exemplifies a familiar architectural design for British residents whereas it is completely foreign to the Indian terrain (Farrell, 1973, pp. 12-13). The building itself serves as a testimony to the British authority through its grandeur, welcoming its own residents and reminding the locals of the superiority of the British who are able to

construct such a majestic building in Krishnapur. The Residency, inspired by “the architectural model of the English country estate” (Boccardi, 2009, p. 49), provides a home away home as illustrated by Fleury’s reaction upon arrival: “The marble staircase which faced Fleury as he entered gave him the delicious sensation of entering a familiar and civilized house. [...] Fleury’s spirits had been instantly restored, thanks partly to the civilized atmosphere of the Residency” (Farrell, 1973, p. 47). The repetitive use of the word “civilized” in conjunction with the emotional change in Fleury indicates how even the sight of the building and its interiors has a powerful effect on the Europeans, underlining its difference from what lies beyond the walls.

While the architectural structure of the Residency, at first glance, emerges as a symbol of the success of the British civilizing mission, it is in fact the functioning of the building as a governmental, domestic and communal space that reveals its importance. In addition to the offices reserved for official business, especially those of the Collector and the Magistrate, the building also accommodates families of those posted at the Residency and hosts various community gatherings. An early example of these gatherings is the meeting of the Krishnapur Poetry Society attended by the ladies of the cantonment who read their own poems for an audience including the Magistrate and the Collector, the president of the society. While the novel painstakingly depicts the ordeals of the women whose poems are harshly criticized by the Magistrate, it is the portrayal of the drawing room that requires closer scrutiny to elaborate on its foreignness to the terrain yet familiarity to the residents:

[I]t was hard to believe that one was in India at all, except for the punkahs. His eyes roamed with satisfaction over the walls, thickly armoured with paintings in oil and water-colour, with mirrors and glass cases containing stuffed birds and other wonders, over chairs and sofas upholstered in plum cretonne, over showcases of minerals and a cobra floating in a bottle of bluish alcohol, over occasional tables draped to the floor with heavy tablecloths on which stood statuettes in electro-metal of great men of literature, of Dr Johnson, of Moliere, Keats, Voltaire and, of course, Shakespeare... (Farrell, 1973, p.16)

Indeed, the room, as Crane suggests (1992, p. 31), is furnished to create the impression of being back at home or rather bringing home to India, home signifying European progress, civilization and aesthetics. The objects that fill the room illustrate different aspects of intellectual curiosity and artistic creativity; while the paintings, most probably about familiar settings, appease the eyes who have been deprived of the British countryside, the statuettes of literary masters remind the audience of the tradition they belong to, and perhaps they aspire to belong through their own creations. The curios about the natural world disclose not only an interest in scientific discovery but also a proof of power over nature, not only over people. McLeod draws attention to the use of “armoured” in this passage, and claims that the overall description “presents the collection as a source of cultural protection and power, rather than evidence of a beneficial, welcoming culture” (McLeod, 1994, p. 128). Given that the room is reserved for the use of Europeans, it is also possible to see it as a reaffirmation of their cultural legacy that should be preserved and celebrated by everyone no matter where they are in the world.

The Collector’s satisfaction from the décor in the drawing room is no coincidence given his personal project of “bringing out to India examples of European art and science in the belief that he was doing as once the Romans had done in Britain” (Farrell, 1973, p. 12). The Residency houses a number of artworks and devices exemplifying scientific and technological advancement in various, and sometimes unexpected, rooms. Margaret Scanlan describes the Collector as the embodiment of “enlightened imperialism” (2004, p. 149). His mission of transporting the finest examples of art and science to India serves a moral purpose within the colonial project: as the representatives of higher intellectual capacity and finer aesthetic taste, they should lead the way and maintain a civilizing mission as well, “What use is it if we bring the advantages of our civilization to India without also displaying a superior morality?” (Farrell, 1973, p. 31). The Collector’s view emphasizes the need to focus on not only

the material world but also the immaterial world so as to effect the change necessary for a better future. The Great Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace serves as a source of inspiration for that future as the Collector visited the Exhibition at the time and managed to bring several models to India. If one considers the Great Exhibition's double function of displaying technological advancement and "engender[ing] nationalistic pride across the classes" (Boccardi, 2009, p. 48), it is possible to see how it aligns with the Collector's civilizing mission.

The narrative, however, discloses a rather skeptical view of the intended use and value of the technological devices brought from the Great Exhibition and scattered through the Residency compound. An early example of such a device is introduced during Fleury's first visit to the Residency: as he expresses curiosity about "a machine in the dining-room" the Collector explains its use as "a gorse bruiser [...] to enable gorse to be fed to the cattle." (Farrell, 1973, p. 47) Although the machine is intended to have a practical function, its placement in the dining room prevents any possibility of actual use, or a hint of ever being used, and turns it into an object on display to signify technological advancement in a seemingly unsuitable space. The Collector's most prized possessions, however, are in his favorite room, the study. Here, one can see art works such as "The Spirit of Science Conquers Ignorance and Prejudice, a bas-relief in marble" and "Innocence Protected by Fidelity" along with "tribute[s] to scientific invention" such as "the model of a carriage which supplied its own railway, lying it down as it advanced and taking it up again after the wheels had passed over" (Farrell, 1973, pp. 87-88). While the Collector cannot comprehend why it is not in use despite the excitement it created during the Great Exhibition, the model still reminds him of the greatness and ingenuity of scientific progress. With his fondness for all these models and works of art, the title he is referred to, the Collector, thus becomes suggestive of not only his official role of "excising tax for the East India Company" but also "his abiding passion for the Crystal Palace Exhibition" (Boccardi, 2009, p. 48), in a way combining the two important roles he undertakes in India.

The civilizing mission as embodied by the Collector's actions and manifested by the overall design and decoration of the Residency, however, starts to lose its intensity even around the bungalows occupied by the Europeans, underlining not only the Residency's status as "emblematic of British solidity in India" (Johnson, 2011, p. 283) but also the fragility of this status outside of its walls. As Fleury and his sister Miriam are to stay in one of the vacant bungalows, the scenery around is conveyed through Fleury's perspective as he decides to visit the bungalow of Rayne, the opium agent. With a number of deserted bungalows, the untended gardens have turned into a jungle with barely a path to follow, wild animals roam around and a shrine appears in the midst of vegetation. Fleury is "chilled by this unexpected encounter and anxious to leave this sinister garden without delay" (Farrell, 1973, pp. 54-55); however, he sees more forlorn and decrepit bungalows before finally reaching Rayne's bungalow. This description, juxtaposed with the previous descriptions of the Residency, indicates the limits of the British influence as well as its foreignness to the Indian soil and how nature takes its own course. Indeed, it illustrates what Ralph Crane suggests, "from the beginning of the novel through to the end there is a feeling that the British have had and will have little impact on India" (1992, p. 29). If one can hardly believe that they are in India within the confines of the Residency, the moment they step outside of its walls they realize the alienness of the familiar building in this particular setting.

The overall representation of the cantonment, and specifically the Residency, in the early chapters of the novel reveals a very conscious attempt to impose a certain form of order and colonial civilizing mission through architectural and spatial arrangement along with material possessions. Greg Forter claims that "[t]he cantonment becomes, in effect, a stage. It is a space on which is produced the theater of British civilization writ large" (2019, p. 122). Given that both the architectural plan and interior design of the Residency mimics the British country estate, almost everything transported from England, full of objects that no longer carry their original function

or meaning, it is possible to see the objects as part of this stage, mere props to signify the grandeur of British civilization, cultural heritage and scientific progress. However, the very qualities that create this environment, namely it is foreignness, or Britishness, also bear its “potential for ruin” (Johnson, 2011, p. 283). Thus, while the Residency seems to enjoy its heyday as the center of British governance and cultural superiority during times of peace, whether it will be able to maintain its position, or to survive at all, in the face of an outside threat becomes the more pressing concern for the rest of the narrative.

2. Time of Chaos and Disorder during the Siege

As the novel begins with the image of the desolate town with no Europeans living there, the narrative conveys the gradual physical transformation and deterioration of the cantonment grounds as well as the crumbling of British authority and sense of superiority during the siege. The siege, while seemingly sudden for the general population in the cantonment, is in the making for some time as indicated by various signs of trouble in not only Krishnapur but also other districts. The very first sign, “mysterious distribution of chapattis, made of coarse flour and about the size and thickness of a biscuit” (Farrell, 1973, p. 10), initially surprises and annoys the Collector as he comes across them first in his study and then in his office; however, he also suspects that this is a foreboding sign for future trouble, which begs questions in his mind: “Just supposing that serious trouble should break out in Krishnapur... an insurrection, for instance, ...where could we find shelter? Could the Residency, merely as a matter of interest, of course, be defended?” (Farrell, 1973, p. 12) In this section, I will explore the novel’s portrayal of the efforts to find answers and solutions to these early hypothetical questions when the trouble becomes real with the siege and radically alters the life in the cantonment and especially in the Residency. In doing so, I will illustrate the ways how the previous representation of the Residency and its people as a fine example of British cultural heritage, moral superiority and technological advancement can no longer be sustained in the face of dire circumstances, indicating the inevitable shortcomings of British colonial presence in India.

Astrid Erll, in her overview of Farrell’s oeuvre, describes the main defining aspects of the novel succinctly: “Again, a British imperial community (this time Anglo-Indians) and a confined location (the Residency compound) provide the *laboratory* for the literary investigation into the historical dynamics of Empire” (2017, p. 349, emphasis mine). Even before the siege, the Residency constitutes a rather closed-system of social interaction and standing, isolated in the vastness of India as portrayed at the beginning and maintaining minimum contact with Indians.¹ The spatial organization and dynamics within the Residency and its environs demarcate the boundaries set by the British, both through the official administrative capacity and in terms of the life style. Erll’s word choice of laboratory is striking; especially when one considers the implications of creating a controlled environment to portray the colonial aspirations for bringing civilization and progress to India, the Residency and Krishnapur transforming into an experiment about British colonial system. This limited focus and microcosmic representation of colonial authority through the case of Krishnapur parallels Scanlan’s categorization of historical novels with a “decentered view of history [that] permits the writer to pay attention to what seem to be the more important questions of how ordinary people assimilate their private lives to public history” (1990, p. 10). In Farrell’s novel, the Collector emerges as the most prominent example whose personal history is entangled with two of the important moments of British imperial history, namely the Great Exhibition and the siege. Moreover, if we follow with Erll’s metaphor of laboratory, the Collector is the fervent idealist behind the civilizing mission, thus responsible for not only setting up the stage for progress and advancement but also maintaining the order and preserving its main

¹ The lack of Indians’ perspective and voice in the novel has created divided opinions among the critiques (The novel has one fully developed Indian character, Hari the son of Maharajah, while the rest is referred as sepoys or onlookers during the siege.) While some, such as Carbajal (2014) and Chemmachery (2019), regard this as an undermining factor for the overall narrative, McLeod (1994) considers this as a strength, an attempt to limit the narrative perspective to criticize colonial project from within the system.

tenets. Although everyone is affected by the debilitating consequences of the siege, it is the Collector who is torn between his idealism and the actual circumstances gradually shattering his assumptions about the role of British presence in India.

In order to have a comprehensive view of the changes in the cantonment and the Residency, one needs to go back to the beginning, when the chapattis have such a disconcerting effect on the Collector to the extent that he commands “the digging of a deep trench combined with a thick wall of earth ‘for drainage during the monsoon’ all the way round the perimeter of the Residency compound” (Farrell, 1973, p. 20). It is noteworthy that the very first precaution is spatially motivated, creating a barrier between the inside and the outside. The pretense of taking precautions against the monsoon enables the Collector to keep up appearances without causing unwarranted alarm in the cantonment. However, during his visit to Calcutta, he is keen to warn people about the possibility of real danger, which is not taken seriously and ultimately causes disapproval by the military at Captainganj, along “with mocking comments from brother officers at other stations” (Farrell, 1973, p. 46). Then, the news of the sepoy attacks in Meerut reaches to Krishnapur, followed by the news of a massacre in Delhi, which prompts the Collector “to devise measures which combined insouciance with defensive properties” such as placing heavy stone urns next to the compound wall and ordering the construction of a new and taller stone wall along a vulnerable section of the compound wall (Farrell, 1973, p. 67). These new fortifications are, as in the case of the trench, done under different pretenses so as to maintain a display of confidence; however, the general atmosphere in the cantonment reveals that in the case of an attack, which is no longer a distant threat, the Residency will be the only place to offer shelter and protection. Thus, after “the sepoys had mutinied and attacked their officers on parade,” the wounded General and the young officers (the senior officers already dead at Captainganj) arrive at the Residency, only to be followed by people from the cantonment (Farrell, 1973, pp. 92-93). Here, it is important to note that the Residency not only constitutes the structurally most solid building in the face of an attack but also symbolically stands for the home(land) that should embrace and protect its citizens, expected to provide “order amidst chaos” (Johnson, 2011, p. 288). Yet, the arrival of so many people, accompanied by the shocking nature of the attack, gives the first signs of disorder that will take the reigns in the Residency in the following days.

If the earlier descriptions of the Residency are marked with organization, order and claims for a superior civilization, the times of unrest present a completely different picture. People have brought “their useless possessions,” in the words of the Collector, which has started to fill the rooms and corridors of the building (Farrell, 1973, p. 93). With fires in the cantonment in the following days, the Collector and the Magistrate start planning defense measures such as appointing people as guards to different parts of the compound, heightening the ramparts with mud walls, and storing food and military supplies in the church (Farrell, 1973, pp. 98-99). While the days pass relatively uneventfully for those within the Residency compound for some time, the beginning of the sepoy attacks changes the dynamics. Firstly, they attack from the most unexpected direction, the south where the riverbank and the stretching melon beds make the sepoys, in the minds of the British, vulnerable, especially since the attack will aim the most easily defensible building in the compound, the banqueting hall. However, the very first attack kills, except for three people, everyone positioned at the hall’s verandah. The novel’s detailed portrayal of the defense efforts reveals the lack of practical knowledge and, in fact, sometimes romanticization of the incidents by Fleury, who is warned by his friend Lieutenant Harry Dunstaple, Dr. Dunstaple’s son originally posted at Captainganj. Greg Forter argues that the defense strategies utilized under the leadership of the Collector and the Magistrate cannot be thought as separate from the discourse of civilization at work in the novel. Throughout the siege, the military plans are devised based on the knowledge coming from the books, which shows “that knowledge’s lack of responsiveness to the empirically actual” as evinced by the attack on the banqueting hall (Forter, 2019, p. 108).

Yet, the Collector's firm belief in scientific progress and knowledge prevents him from considering other options or viability of the employed tactics in this setting, reminiscent of the devices exemplary of the Great Exhibition's vision and advancement but with no practical use and value in India.

Johnson states that although Farrell follows the convention of the country estate narratives, he undermines the authority and durability embedded in the physical space by "upend[ing] the iconic potency of the Big House setting by having the British Residency crumble, both literally and figuratively" (2011, p. 278). The sepoy attacks transform the Residency compound either through the immediate physical destruction created by, for instance, musket balls or the consequences of the attacks such as the need to create a provisional hospital, first in the Magistrate's office and then in the library of the Residency. The increased population in the compound also necessitates certain arrangements with respect to food and accommodation: the food is already rationed to ensure the sustenance of the residents for some time, which eventually leads to a black market of anything edible over the months, whereas the living arrangements prove more difficult and contentious from early on, underlining the drastic change of the Residency. The transformation of the billiard room illustrates the combined effects of the siege on the people. The Collector's musing about the room, "this had been one of his favorite rooms but now he dreaded to enter," finds an explanation in the juxtaposition of its old days where the quiet, peaceful, "like some gentle rustic scene" with men smoking and playing and its current state as a makeshift dormitory for women that requires the Collector "to pause a moment to compose himself for the inevitable assault on his senses" (Farrell, 1973, p. 153). The following pages demonstrate how the noise, smell and disorder currently reign in this room with women complaining, children crying, stench of urine reeking and clothing, trunks and other objects invading the room in every corner. Crane suggests that portrayal of the billiard room in its current state parallels the representation of an Indian bazaar in typical colonialist mindset, which further marks "the changes the British are experiencing and the gulf which normally exists between British and Indian life" (1992, pp. 34-35). Indeed, both the room itself and the state of women are barely recognizable compared to the earlier parts of the novel in which the characters have difficulty in believing that they are in India. The space that used to convey familiarity, comfort and pride has turned into a source of anxiety, estrangement and dread.

Farrell's focus on "emphasizing the utter isolation of his embattled community" (Binns, 1986, p. 65) operates on various levels for the reader. On the one hand, the three-month-long siege discloses the characters' true selves as they suffer from hunger, diseases and constant threat of death. The narrative, rather bleakly and often sarcastically, presents examples of human condition under duress, such as the women's insistence on maintaining a hierarchical system (based on their husbands' ranks) in the billiard room, the unending medical disputes between Dr. Dunstaple and Dr. McNab, and Fleury's attempts at courting Louise. On the other hand, the siege undermines the previously attributed authority and superiority of British order, civilization and progress: "the Residency as depicted in the novel is anything but orderly, its hungry residents anything but civil" (Johnson, 2011, p. 288). In this regard, McLeod's assertion that "Farrell seems keen to foreground, and deflate, the role played by conceptions of order in the maintenance of colonial identities" (1994, p. 118) becomes highly useful to comprehend the overall change. If the earlier parts of the novel put emphasis on the concept of order, from micro to macro concerns, the subsequent parts represent its fragility and inability to maintain the British superiority and civilization. The Collector's efforts to maintain his old habits as a British gentleman highlight the meaninglessness of these conventions in their present circumstances. For instance, after Fleury's widower sister Miriam nurses him during his illness, the following conversation occurs between them: "Now that I've recovered we must think of your reputation, Mrs. Lang. 'After all this, Mr Hopkins, do you think that reputations still matter?' 'If they don't matter, then nothing does. We must obey the rules.'" (Farrell, 1973, p. 227) Toward the end of the novel, and the end of the siege unbeknownst

to the characters, the Collector's extreme adherence to the decorum is still at work:

On his way, he spotted a large black beetle on the stairs; he caught it between finger and thumb and took it out with him to the ramparts. There he generously offered it to the Magistrate, who was busy carrying cartridges to the firing-step. The Magistrate hesitated. 'No thanks,' he said, though with a note of envy in his voice. The Collector popped it into his mouth. (Farrell, 1973, pp. 284-285)

In both examples, the Collector strives to preserve his civilized manners in the midst of starvation and chaos, which he regards as a way to stay true to his own beliefs. However, his behaviors appear odd and out of place, if not ironic, in the present circumstances which have diminished the Residency compound to a barely standing building with so many lives lost to starvation, disease or the sepoy attacks. From another perspective though, these very behaviors are not only about his own identity but more importantly about the Britishness and what it stands for in general, especially when it is under attack. Thus, Boccardi argues that "the performance of British culture and customs [...] hints at the colonists' investment in those social practices as a marker of their identity" (2009, p. 46). When everything else either disappears or deteriorates, these customs and traits have the potential to retain what really matters.

Within the Residency compound, the Collector's behaviors might be the only remaining source of British civilization and colonial project seemingly unaffected by the siege. As they run out of supplies for defensive measures and ammunition, the objects become a new source in rather creative and highly symbolic ways. When rain washes away the mud ramparts, they decide to use solid objects to create a defensive line on the ramparts. Hence, tables, beds, chests, dressers, hatstands, statues, the shattered great piano, staircase banisters and ultimately "the last and most precious 'possessions'... tiger-skins, bookcases full of elevating and instructional volumes embroidered samplers, teasetts of bone china, humidors and candlesticks, mounted elephants' feet, and rowing-oars with names of college eights inscribed in gilt paint" (Farrell, 1993, pp. 244-245) are thrown onto the ramparts, leaving the Residency and the banqueting hall almost empty. These objects constitute the very markers of British civilization and lifestyle in the cantonment, complementing the civilizing mission through daily life practices. However, they are also entirely foreign to the locale, transported from back home to create a sense of home, familiarity and superiority. Crane states that when the incessant rains keep washing away the ramparts, they also "repeatedly expose the bizarre collection of possessions which clearly do not belong there, and in so doing mock the confidence that brought them." (1992, pp. 31-2) In other words, the decaying ramparts do not only stand for the weakening of the defensive measures against the sepoy attacks they also signal the failure of the British civilizing mission, with its ideals of technological advancement and progress.

Farrell, however, saves the most scathing criticism of the civilizing mission for the most desperate moment of the siege: as they exhaust all possible sources of ammunition, "[a]ll the metal was gone, first the round objects, then the others. Now they were on to stones" (Farrell, 1973, p. 304), they come up with the idea of separating the heads from the electro-metal figures the Collector has brought from the Great Exhibition. Thus, heads of Shakespeare, Keats and Voltaire among others are blown from the six-pounder to the sepoys, Shakespeare's head proving the most effective due to his baldness the Collector muses (Farrell, 1973, pp. 304-305). Forter states that "Farrell's aim is rather to drain objects of all 'civilized' functions except [...] their use as instruments of destruction – that is, as weapons of war." (2019, p. 111) When the earlier and the later sections of the novel are contrasted, almost every object embodying the cultural superiority and scientific progress of the British is used for the sake of saving the lives of those trapped in the Residency compound. Their symbolic value becomes transformed to their value in taking lives and causing as much destruction as possible. For instance, Goonetilleke comments on the effectiveness of the head of Shakespeare and states that "literature appears both literally and metaphorically a weapon of the colonial

masters.” (2003, p. 411) In other words, the besieged community reappropriates the examples of western aesthetics and refinement as well as the mundane household objects such as silverware and furniture in their battle against the sepoys, which, in colonialist ideology, can be regarded as the clash between the barbarians and the civilized. However, from the very early on, the narrative emphasizes the need for these objects for the self-identification and self-assurance of the British, which begs the question of what has become to the half-destroyed Residency as the symbol of British authority and superiority. The novel provides an answer to this question with the reaction of the British Relief Forces who end the siege: “He [the General] had never seen Englishmen get themselves into such a state before; they looked more like *untouchables*.” (Farrell, 1973, p. 309, emphasis mine) Thus the siege, in a broader perspective, has not only obliterated the British civilization but also turned the besieged individuals into almost savages, thus stripping them from their civilized and superior status and making them indistinguishable from the locals in the eyes of their countryman, which puts the entire colonial project under jeopardy. If it is the carefully planned architectural design of the Residency compound and its equally meticulously decorated interiors that were presented as the embodiment and pinnacle of the British civilization and progress, their ultimate destruction and utter ruin shatter not only these ideals but also the individuals.

CONCLUSION

The Siege of Krishnapur ends with the thoughts of the Collector, who is now a completely changed man living in London after his departure from India. A chance encounter with Fleury demonstrates the extent of his transformation: “Fleury asked the Collector about his collection of sculpture and paintings. The Collector said that he had sold them long ago. ‘Culture is a sham,’ he said simply. ‘It’s a cosmetic painted on life by rich people to conceal its ugliness’” (Farrell, 1973, p. 313). This utmost contrast between his enthusiasm and belief in the superiority of British culture and civilization before the siege and the disappearance of his faith in general after the siege is almost too obvious. It is possible to find a parallel for this change in the transformation of the Residency that he has created and felt responsible for and its gradual destruction both in terms of the physical space and the people during the siege. It is his realization, in the very last sentence of the novel, that encapsulates what has happened in Krishnapur: “Perhaps by the very end of his life, in 1880, he had come to believe that a people, a nation, does not create itself according to its own best ideas, but is shaped by other forces, of which it has little knowledge.” (Farrell, 1973, p. 313) As part of Farrell’s Empire Trilogy, the novel aptly illustrates the post-war historical novels’ tendency to represent the imperial past through a critical lens rather than nostalgia, as evinced by the Collector’s final thoughts about the limits of one’s own power and those beyond. The narrative’s preoccupation with the representation of space through its constructedness, strangeness and symbolic of certain values and norms is closely linked to the colonial discourse’s desire to control and refashion unfamiliar spaces in the name of civilization and progress. In the case of Krishnapur, the Residency, through its architectural grandeur and vast collection of objects, stands apart from the rest of the terrain and the local life, presenting itself as a home away home for the British. However, it is the same quality of standing apart, namely not belonging to the space that it inhabits, that brings its inevitable demise. In the end, one is left with the questions of the cost of the colonial project through the small yet telling example of the Residency, which first emerges as an embodiment of scientific progress, order and British cultural superiority only to descend into a chaotic and ruined space in which the very principles of British authority and cultural superiority can no longer be maintained.

Geniřletilmiş Özet

Bu makale, J. G. Farrell’in 1973 yılında Booker Ödölünü kazanan *The Siege of Krishnapur* [Krishnapur Kuřatması] (1973) adlı eserini, İkinci Dünya Savařı sonrası yazılan ve imparatorluk gemiřine eleřtirel bir gözle

yaklaşan bir roman olarak betimlediği mekânlar, burada yaşanan değişim ve dönüşümler ile bu dönüşümlerin İngiliz sömürgecilik tarihinin edebi tasvirleri açısından ele almaktadır. 1857 Hint İsyanlarından esinlenen roman, İngilizlerin bu dönemde gösterdiği askeri kahramanlık, fedakârlık ya da imparatorluğun zaferine odaklanmak yerine sömürgecilik girişiminin farklı düzeylerde kendi içinden ve sarsıcı bir şekilde dağılıp parçalanmasına yoğunlaşmaktadır. Bu amaçla kurgusal bir kasaba üzerinden anlatıyı oluşturan Farrell, romana her şey olup bittikten ve kasabada tek bir İngiliz bile kalmamışken başlayarak, kaçınılmaz sonun geleceğini romanın en başından okuyucuya gösterir. Diğer bir deyişle eser, Hindistan'a yönelik İngiliz bakış açısı ve yaşam tarzı çerçevesinde karakterlerin bulunduğu mekân ve koşullara olan yabancılığının bu kaçınılmaz sonun gerçekleşmesinde ne gibi bir rol oynadığını da okuyucuya gösterir.

Bu çalışma, kuşatma öncesi ve kuşatma sırasında Krishnapur kasabasının idari merkezinin yer aldığı yerleşke ve özellikle buradaki Ana Bina betimlemeleri üzerinden mekânsal değişim ve sömürgeci yaklaşım arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektedir. Kuşatmanın merkezinde yer alan Ana Bina, sadece fiziksel bir kale olarak değil, aynı zamanda Viktoryen dönemin ideallerini özetleyen sembolik bir yapı olarak da işlev görmektedir. Binanın mimari yapısı, genel düzeni ve sanat eserleri ile en son bilimsel buluşların örneklerini de içeren mobilyaları, bilimsel ilerleme, kültürel üstünlük gibi ideallerin somutlaşmış hali olarak sunulmaktadır. Bu anlamda bulunduğu fiziksel ve çevresel ortama tamamen yabancı olan bu yapı, İngiliz sakinlerine hem aşına oldukları ev hissini hem de güvende olacakları bir sığınak duygusunu sunmaktadır. Kuşatma sırasında sığınılacak en güvenli yer olarak görülen Ana Bina, kuşatma devam ettikçe ve şartlar zorlaştıkça yalnızca fiziksel olarak değil öncesinde hüküm süren anlayış ve ideolojiler açısından da zayıflamaya ve dağılmaya başlar.

İlk kısım, mekânsal düzenlemeler ve nesneler üzerinden kurulan kültürel üstünlük ve bilimsel ilerlemenin gerekliliği gibi noktalara yoğunlaşırken, bu noktaların kendi içlerindeki sorunlu ve zayıf taraflarını ortaya koyan örneklerin incelenmesiyle romanın sömürgeci anlayışa olan eleştirel yaklaşımının altı çizilmektedir. Binanın yapısı ve farklı odaların idari ve sosyal işlevleri detaylı bir şekilde ele alınarak hem karakterler hem de karakterlerin benimsediği ve Hindistan koşullarında devam ettirdikleri yaşam tarzının sembolik önemi incelenmektedir. Uygarlık ve bilimsel ilerleme kavramları farklı roman karakterlerinin bakış açılarından tartışılarak sömürgecilik anlayışının belirli bir mekânda nasıl hayata geçirildiği ve sürdürülmeye çalışıldığı ele alınır. Eserde detaylı bir biçimde betimlenen fiziki mekânlar ve nesneler, var oldukları doğal ortamdan kopuklukları ve yabancılıkları üzerinden analiz edilmiş ve aslında ait olmadıkları bu coğrafyada herhangi somut bir verim veya fayda sağlayamayacakları, dolayısıyla da sömürgecilik sisteminin sürdürülemezliği vurgulanmıştır. Bu kısımda ayrıca yaklaşmakta olan isyanın ilk belirtileri ve bunlara karşı Ana Binanın korunması ve güçlendirilmesi için alınan fiziki önlemlerin incelenmesi de yer almaktadır.

Çalışmanın ikinci kısmı ise isyan sonrası gerçekleşen olaylara odaklanmaktadır. Yaşanan ilk şaşkınlık ve şok sonrası kasabada yaşayan İngiliz ve Batılıların Ana Binaya sığınması ile değişen mekânsal ve sosyal dinamikler bu inceleme için özellikle önem taşımaktadır. En nihayetinde tamamen kuşatılan ve dışarı ile ilişkisi kesilen bu topluluğun hayatta kalmak ve saldırılara cevap vermek için yaptıkları ve yaşadıkları dönüşüm romanın sömürgecilik ideallerine olan cevabının bel kemiğini oluşturmaktadır. Kuşatma şartları, önceki kısımlarda betimlenen Hindistan'daki İngiliz varlığının kendiliğinden sorunlu taraflarını tamamıyla görünür kılar. İyice kalabalıklaşan Ana Binada baş gösteren sıkıntılar, örneğin yer sıkıntısı nedeniyle kadınların yatakhaneye dönüştürülen bilardo odasında kalmaları, yiyeceklerin tutumlu dağıtılması nedeniyle yarı aç gezen insanlar ve salgın hastalıklar sonucu yaşanan kayıplar gibi, karakterlerin kuşatma öncesinde ve sonrasındaki davranış biçimlerini benimsedikleri uygarlık kavramı üzerinden karşılaştırma olanağı sağlar. İngiliz ve Batı uygarlığının en önemli unsurları olarak sunulan ve Hindistan'daki İngiliz kimliğinin altını çizmeyi amaçlayan nesne ve sanat eserlerinin savunma amaçlı

kullanımı gibi örnekler de bu değişimi tartışmak için ele alınmaktadır. Diğer bir deyişle, kuşatmanın kaçınılmaz sonucu olan kıtlık, hastalık ve ölümlerin daha önce sunulan yaşamı nasıl tamamen değiştirdiği, karakterleri ve içinde bulundukları fiziki mekânı ne gibi yollarla dönüştürdüğü incelenmektedir.

Kuşatma hem gerçek hem de mecazi bir olay olarak ele alınarak sömürgecilik ve uygarlaşma misyonunun farklı düzeylerdeki krizleri ve bunların sonuçları irdelenirken, sistemin iç çelişkileri göz önüne serilmektedir. Ana Binanın kuşatmanın sonunda zar zor ayakta duran bomboş hali ve açlık ve yokluktan tanınmaz hale gelen sakinleri aynı zamanda temsil ettikleri ideolojinin de çöküşünü göstermektedir. Romanın sonunda bu sakinleri kurtarmaya gelen İngiliz kuvvetlerinin onları tanınmaz ve hatta yerel halktan neredeyse farksız olarak tarif etmesi, romanın en temelinde yer alan uygarlık ve ilerleme tartışmalarına dair önemli bir noktayı göstermektedir. Benzer şekilde, kuşatmadan yıllar sonra Londra'da tesadüfen karşılaşan karakterlerin kültür ve uygarlık hakkındaki söyledikleri de yazarın eser boyunca betimlediği dünya ile uyumludur. Sonuç olarak, Farrell'ın sömürgeci egemen anlatıları ve imparatorluğun temelinde yer alan çelişkileri mekânsal değişim ve dönüşüm üzerinden sorgulayarak ele alması, romanı imparatorluk mirasına eleştirel bir gözle bakan eserler arasında önemli bir yerde konumlandırmakta ve derinlemesine incelemelere imkân sağlamaktadır.

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