

Mr. Gobhai
Post-walk interview

The first thing I remember was that on the right hand side on the corner there was a modern building against an old-fashioned building which looked rather nice. The contrast wasn't jarring or anything. And I noticed a big flag over the pavement, and I remarked on that. I'm not sure whether it was Brooks Bros. -- oh, but that was later.

And there was a left turn, and we turned onto a street which wasn't very pretty by any means. On the right hand side of the street the heights of the buildings were very diverous, and that was a little jarring. There was a pseudo-organ grinder on the left, or was it a trumpet or something? The left hand side of the street was pretty busy. The right hand side was more or less residential and office buildings. The left side was shops.

Then we came out near the Gardens, and the Gardens were rather bare because there was no snow. They were laid out pretty well. There were batches of grass and lots of paved ways which I thought at the time was much better than the great big sweep of the Common beyond it. We went into the Gardens, and then we ~~walk~~ walked parallel to them on the road.

And then we came to a very good street, I think the best street that we passed. The right hand side had a couple of churches, or maybe a church and library or something, but sort of similar architecture. On the left hand side were subdued fashion shops. I think that was the best part of the walk.

Oh, I should go back to the first street, or was it second? On the right hand side I noticed something jarring, and that was a very new shop called Kakas. Behind it there was this -- somehow which reminded me of a palace on a river that I had seen someplace. There was this great big straight balcony sort of thing in back, black I think it was.

I was a little impressed by the position of Bonwit Teller's because it had nothing near it. It took up a sort of square all by itself. Somehow I had the feeling it should be built up more, up into the sky. Perhaps that's because, seeing places like New York, one associates a square like that all by itself with something rising up -- I'm not quite sure.

Then there was that alley which was rather unusual because the rubbish in the alley was not the garbage common or garden type of rubbish, it was rather industrial or packing house rubbish with lots of crates, not many peeled onions or that sort of thing, nothing stinking very much. For an alley it was tolerably clean. Walking through the alley, on the left there was this incongruous bit of brick work which had stopped some time back, and I was wondering why. Probably the contractor went out of business or the owner changed his mind. Anyway, it rather stuck out somewhat. Of course, there were the fire escapes which didn't look particularly pretty.

(What thing or event made the greatest impression?) Newbury St., because of the architecture, and on the right, the old kind of architecture, and the subdued shops on the left. (Any particular buildings?) Bonwit Teller, and Kakas coming out of that black balcony behind it. Brooks Bros, merely because of the flag. The half finished brick-work; that really isn't a building, but maybe a hemmed-in courtyard or something. There was one church, I think, or one building on that Newbury St. right hand side which stood out from the rest of them, even though they were pretty similar architecturally. As far as impressions go, not a very favorable impression, was the right hand side of our first left in which the heights of the buildings didn't go at all. (You don't know which building on Newbury St. you were talking about?) No. It was higher than the rest. I think it might be a church, I'm not sure.

(Any particular features about these buildings?) Yes. I'm repeating myself, but Kakas coming out from that balcony sort of thing, which wasn't really a feature, rather it is a combination that I remember. I don't think I remember any features as such. On the

right hand side of Newbury St. it was the architecture it general. Of course, I said the planning of the Gardens. Coming into Boylston St. (Berkeley), on the corner was again this modern building -- no, a semi-old building contrasted against a large modern building. I don't recall what it was right now... (The hotels?) It gave the feeling of not being complete to me. I had associated architecture like that with perhaps going up a little more; it seemed cut off too short.

(Any particular people or types?) Yes. The musician on the road, with his funny hat, sort of tin hat with bells on it. The crowd was pretty average, I think, for a locality like that in Boston. I don't remember any special people. (Types?) Not really, no. I imagine a couple of them were a type that's easily distinguishable, either coming from out of town someplace. But those are distinguishable not from what they are but from the way they look, the way they walk. They didn't seem to be very familiar with what they were walking through. Not Bostonians; not necessarily Massachusetts or USA.^{so}
(Any particular sounds?) Again the music on the road. The Garden I remember because there wasn't too much of sound, even though just a couple of blocks away the traffic was pretty heavy. (Smells?) No. I remember, however, that the alley was rather free from smells, which again made it a little different from most alleys; perhaps it was so early in the evening.

(Traffic?) Personally, I had to find a parking place 3 blocks away. That's one thing. The traffic didn't seem to be very, very heavy, but it was heavy enough. Again, Boylston St. stood out because of the ease by which traffic was able to travel through it. I remember making the remark that there should be more streets like that. But then, of course, it's difficult if you want to go the other way. Perhaps if there was a street just adjacent to Boylston St., running the other way all the way with Boylston, it would be much easier for traffic.

(Any signs you remember?) Kakas, for one thing. It wasn't very good but it stands out, because there was a great big open space and then just these words on it. I remember some of the, in general not in particular, some of the signs on the left hand side of Newbury, aside from Brooks Bros. which I recall because of the flag. Bonwit Teller's I recall because -- I didn't really see the sign -- I did see a sign, wasn't it in very small letters? Incidentally, I think that's the way things should be. Signs shouldn't be very, very conspicuous on the road like that.

(How many definite areas?) I could make out 3 distinct, different impressions. I don't know if that's what you meant by areas. There was semi-gaudiness of Boylston St. and the sounds associated with that. There was the relative quiet, or possibly even quaintness of the Gardens. Newbury St. was very distinctly on a different level than Boylston. Both of these things contributed to it: The old architecture on the right and the shops on the left contributed to the impression of a higher level. Then there was the alley, of course. (Do you feel these areas fit together as a whole; are they separate areas by themselves?) They stand off from each other; they don't go together. I would say they are separate areas. (There were 4: The Gardens, Boylston St., Newbury St., and the alley?) That's right. But the alley necessarily goes with at least 2 of them. (Continuity in the area as a whole?) What I meant was that with any one of these four impressions, except perhaps the Garden impression, -- let's say, with any one of two impressions, Newbury or Boylston St., the alley must be along with it; it's just necessary. So perhaps the alley and either Boylston and Newbury, even though they are different, go together, so that they might be the same area. (Therefore 3 areas?) Yes -- the alley and Boylston, the alley and Newbury, and the Gardens.

(Anything that gave these areas a character of their own?) Very much so. As I said, Newbury - the architecture on the right and the subdued shops on the left; Boylston - gaudiness by the shops which were of a different calibre than the ones on the left side of Newbury; the Gardens just because they are the Gardens. Of course, they were a better type of Gardens because of the planning of the paved ways. The alley was obviously an alley but a better class.

(Anything that gave them order?) Things seemed to conform. For instance, the gaudy Boylston St., even though the buildings on the right side were of different sizes, the main fact that they were all of different sizes meant that they were a unit. And again the shops on the left of Boylston St. were all semi-gaudy, or even on the right with Kakas. The shops on the left of Newbury were all beyond a certain calibre. There, again,

there was a conformity, and there again the whole right side of Newbury, except for maybe a couple of not-really-old but semi-modern buildings, there again there was this conformity. I think this conformity gives them the order that you're speaking about. (Two different kinds of conformity -- between Boylston and Newbury?) Yes, two distinctly different types of conformity. Even in a street like Newbury, by itself, there are two types of conformity -- quite simply, the left-hand side and the right-hand side. Yes, I do feel that there was a sense of order in these two areas. Perhaps least in the Gardens. That was mainly due to the skating rink, I think. It didn't somehow go with the -- well, there was white ice on it, first of all, and people skating on it. That may be a seasonal impression. It didn't quite go with the green grass and the paved ways and the bare trees.

(Anything that gave these areas continuity?) As a unit or in themselves? (Either way) As a whole, I don't think there was any continuity at all. Within themselves, the continuity that was there was mere conformity, as I have said. Of course, this impression perhaps -- well, there was a definite break between the two sides of Newbury, and inasmuch as there was this break there was a break also in the continuity. There was a completely distinct impression if one was walking along one side and if one was walking along the other side.

(Sidewalk pavement?) No, I couldn't describe it. (Street pavement?) Crowded, is all I remember. Because of that I think the pavement doesn't at all come into view, since it was crowded.

(Question 12) Very well. Not because I think Boston is one type of place but rather because I think Boston has all these separate qualities -- the quality of the Gardens and the quality, very much, of Newbury St., then again the gaudy quality of Boylston St. (Been there often?) Perhaps driven, but not walked. (Used the area at all?) Yes, I have used Newbury. I've never walked in the Gardens. (Use Newbury for shopping?) Yes, and that's about all I've used it for.

(Could you find your destination without any trouble, if you came here for any particular purpose?) Yes. (Feel at ease in this part of the city?) Very much so. It's much more comfortable than some of the other parts.

(Describe feelings you experienced as we walked?) The distinct impression was that of contrast. It was at the corner of Berkeley and Boylston. Then there was one of loudness on Boylston and through Boylston, perhaps garishness. There were the Gardens which have a feeling of their own associated with them; that would be Gardens in general, I think. I remember feeling that even an afternoon's snow alters Boston completely, makes it much, much more mellow. That was one thing -- over in the Gardens I didn't feel mellow at all. Newbury St. was very nice; no exultant feeling or anything, but perhaps if I were a Bostonian I would like to walk down Newbury more rather than stroll in the Gardens or walk along Boylston, or dodge through alleys.

(What did you like or dislike?) Nothing. I think all of these elements belong to them -- all of them. As I said, looking back on it, ~~it~~ was a remarkable cross-section I think.

(If you could change it in any way, what would you do?) I'd change the right hand side of Boylston architecturally. Perhaps I'd make Boylston a trifle wider. Perhaps abolish loud signs or signs that hit one even if they sometimes aren't loud. I'd put snow in the Gardens. Perhaps I'd clean up the alley a little and finish that unfinished little piece. Newbury St. I'd leave exactly as it is, excepts perhaps put more parking meters.

(Where are you from?) Bombay, India. Been in Boston 2 years and 3 months.