South Asia
Journal for Culture

Volume 3, 2009
ISSN 1800-4199

South Asia Journal for Culture is an annual refereed journal published jointly by the Colombo Institute for the Advanced Study of Society and Culture and the Theertha International Artists' Collective.

The journal is open to scholarship and exchange of ideas across the region and beyond, on issues that are of central importance to the region with regard to the broad areas covered by the key term 'culture'. The fact that the journal is based in South Asia does not mean that its focus is restricted on the basis of this regional or geographic identity. The idea is to enhance access of South Asian writers to a journal that is regionally published, regionally edited and managed and is responsive to intellectual needs, interests and concerns in the areas covered by the thematic focus of 'culture.'

While striving for a certain degree of specialization, the term 'culture' is deliberately meant to be broad. That is to ensure that the complexity and the varied manifestations of culture can be accommodated within the intellectual forum of the journal. In terms of conventional disciplinary parameters, the journal would accommodate contributions from the fields of sociology, social anthropology, history, archeology, art history, cultural studies and other related fields of study. More precisely, within and beyond these areas, its interest would be in culture and its extensions that would focus on cultural theory, art history and different domains of the 'arts' such as theatre, visual arts, architecture, film, music, dance, and the politics of these domains.

In the general context outlined above, the journal welcomes papers, reviews, photo-essays and opinions for publication. There is no page limit for submissions. However, standard academic practices in the social sciences and humanities with regards to stylistic conventions and issues such as references and footnotes should be adhered to. More specifically, all references should be inserted in the main text within parentheses (eg., last name of author, date of publication: page numbers) and the complete reference details of all texts should be presented at the end of the paper as a separate bibliography. All essays should opt for endnotes where necessary but should not use footnotes. For additional details on general stylistic matters, potential writers can write to the Colombo Institute (colomboinst@gmail.com) or refer to the *Chicago Manual of Style* (15th Revised Edition, 2003).

South Asia
Journal for Culture

Volume 3, 2009

Co-published by

Colombo Institute
for the Advanced Study of
Society and Culture

කොළඹ
අධ්‍යයනය

theertha International
Artists' Collective

South Asia Journal for Culture is a refereed journal co-published annually by the Colombo Institute for the Advanced Study of Society and Culture, and Theertha International Artists' Collective, 36 A, Baddegana Road South, Pitakotte, Sri Lanka.

This volume is funded by

Arts Collaboratory is a Hivos and DOEN Foundation program for visual artists' initiatives in Asia, Africa and Latin America and for exchange with visual arts organizations in The Netherlands in cooperation with Mondriaan Foundation.

Ford Foundation

Concept, layout and graphic design by Theertha Graphics.

Printed by L&C Printers Embuldeniya, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka.

Contents

Preface

South Asia Journal for Culture, Volume 3 (2009) presents three main essays, four book reviews and one photo essay. The first essay is Colin McFarlane's 'Postcolonial Bombay: Decline of a Cosmopolitan City?' Beginning from Bombay's long term association with notions of cosmopolitanism, McFarlane explores the possibility of the decline of the city's cosmopolitan ethos since the 1990s as a result of communal riots, bombings and heightened ethnic tensions since that time. In the paper, McFarlane presents a trajectory of events that lead to "destabilizing the notion of a cosmopolitan city through the postcolonial period." He suggests that "in the half century that followed Indian Independence in 1947, the undermining of the cosmopolitan city was closely linked to a growing disenchantment with the modernizing state and prospects of urban opportunity and justice, along with a related history of communalism and violence." Nevertheless, rather than characterizing this destabilizing as 'decosmopolitanism' or 'provincialism' as have other writers, Macfarlane suggests that Bombay consists of 'multiple cosmopolitanisms,' "not all of which take communalism and violence as their central points of reference."

In the second essay titled 'Visual Mnemonics: A Museum of Martyrs' Radhika Chopra presents a narrative of memory and emotional landscapes in the aftermath of the destruction of the Sri Darbar Sahib Complex and the Golden Temple in Amritsar by the Indian Army during 'Operation Bluestar' in June 1984. The monumental hurt that the military operation created in the minds of Sikhs is Chopra's point of departure. She notes the centrality of emotional landscapes in any discussion of memorials, and the importance of perceiving them "not as fossilizations of memory but of meticulous remembering and active forgetting of the past." Remembering as an inherently generative, selective, creative and performative process is mediated by aspects of material culture and ritual performances "embodied in the written, spoken and the visual word." These are the realities that Chopra places in context in her paper when exploring how memory works in the context of the damaged temple. This is a story about an uneasily remembered past. Though the main argument of the paper is based on a reading of one 'set' of material memorials (the Museum of the Golden Temple) and their interaction with viewers, it is clear that dynamics of remembrance and memorializing of the event is not simply restricted to the museum and the temple but "expand beyond portrayals in museum objects, 'travelling' across time and space."

Roma Chatterji, in the third essay titled 'The Transmission of Art Traditions: Children and Folk Art in India' points out that contemporary folk arts, which have been considered an embodiment of India's ancient craft tradition for a considerable time, have reached a historic juncture. In this context, the meeting of folk art with the global market has ensured its transformation into an "autotelic system as folk artists learn to interact with modern art institutions and become increasingly self reflexive about their own art practices." Chatterji also places in context the role played by state patronage in post-independence India in "reconfiguring traditional forms of folk culture and transforming them into commodities that could find a home in new contexts of exchange and performance." In her paper Chatterji addresses these issues in the context of exploring the dynamics involved in the paintings of the Chitrakars, a caste of scroll painters and singers in West Bengal. Her focus is on child

artists, and the manner in which they have incorporated in their art thoroughly contemporary issues making them both more relevant socio-politically and marketable.

In addition to the three main essays, Volume 3 consists of four book reviews: Nira Wickramasinghe reviews Asoka Bandarage's book, *The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka: Terrorism, Ethnicity, Political Economy;* Roma Chatterji reviews *Spatialising Politics: Culture and Geography in Postcolonial Sri Lanka* edited by Cathrine Brun and Tariq Jazeel; Sasanka Perera reviews *Sri Lankan Painting in the 20th Century* by Senake Bandaranayake and Albert Dharmasiri; and Tariq Jazeel reviews *Colonial Modernities: Building, Dwelling and Architecture in British India and Ceylon* edited by P. Scriver and V. Prakash.

Finally, *SAJC* Volume 3 also presents a review essay by Anoli Perera offering a reading of a series of photographs by the Sri Lankan photographer Menika van der Poorten titled 'Boys Own.' Van der Poorten deals with the personal experiences of her sons growing up. Perera defines the series as "a delicate photographic recording of adolescence through the eyes of an artist, a mother and a woman." She notes that the photographer in the present series focuses on two interrelated realms: "the realm of homo-social behavior where masculinities get formed and manifested in male children and the sensitive and often emotional realization of 'sons growing up'."

As usual, we would like to offer our sincere gratitude towards all the reviewers who reviewed the essays published in this volume and the design contribution from Anoli Perera.

The Editor
South Asia Journal for Culture
Colombo Institute

Postcolonial Bombay:[1] Decline of a Cosmopolitan City?[2]

Colin McFarlane [3]

Introduction

Bombay has long been coupled with notions of cosmopolitanism (Appadurai 2000; Prakash 2006). The writer Pico Iyer (2003) has described the city as inevitably cosmopolitan given its economic and cultural draw within India. He has written of Bombay as "the center of the subcontinent's bright lights, big-city dreams – home to the strenuous fantasies of 'Bollywood' and hunting-ground of mobsters and their molls - is at once the 'Capital of Hope', to which hundreds of thousands of newcomers flock each year, dreaming of making their fortunes, and a decidedly ruthless place, where more visitors find jobs than homes" (Iyer 2003: 3). Gyan Prakash has written of the city's "captivating imaginations, its representation as a place of desire and dreams" (2005: 499). It is a city, Iyer relates, that is a "beachhead for the modern" and "multi-cultured port", a "haven of tolerance" for Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, and others bound in a "money-minded mix" (2003: 3). Its kindred spirits, he suggests, are those other island staging-posts of people, capital and modernity, Hong Kong and Manhattan (Iyer 2003). Bombay has been for centuries a focus for global trade around the Arabian Sea and beyond, owing in large part to its endowment with one of the largest harbours in South Asia, and especially from the mid-nineteenth century, has long been attractive to a wide range of migrants. Conversely, the figure of the city as cosmopolitan is a constant feature in narratives of its recent decline (Prakash 2006; Varma 2004).

Most discussions of cosmopolitanism in Bombay focus on the rubrics of communal tension, tolerance and violence, and a range of commentators have remarked on a decline of a cosmopolitan city, marking as watershed the communal riots and bombings that occurred in the early 1990s. Appadurai (2000) describes this period as the 'decosmopolitanization' of Bombay, while Varma (2004) writes of the city's 'provincialization'. However, notwithstanding the force of these events within the city, claims that the city has witnessed a general social transformation from the early 1990s onwards need to be tempered by the multiple forms of cosmopolitan imaginations and practices that have circulated in the city. There are a wide variety of alternative cosmopolitanisms in the city -- not all of them progressive -- reflected in civil society organizations, lifestyle changes for different groups, and portrayed often most vividly in film. While there are important distinctions with the past, these cosmopolitanisms often resonate with the Bombay that existed before the 1990s.

In this paper, I will begin by narrating the destabilizing of the notion of a cosmopolitan city through the postcolonial period. I will argue that in the half century that followed Indian Independence in 1947, the undermining of the cosmopolitan city was closely linked to a growing disenchantment with the modernizing state and prospects of urban opportunity and justice, along with a related history of communalism and violence. However, rather than characterizing this destabilizing as 'decosmopolitanism' or 'provincialism', I argue that Bombay is a city of multiple cosmopolitanisms not all of which take communalism and violence as their central points of reference. I will chart just two contrasting examples of this in the latter half of the paper, one a global consumption oriented cosmopolitanism, and the other a learning network of civil groups working in informal settlements.

Locating cosmopolitanism

In contrast to the preoccupation with cultures and individuals in the 'North', the paper connects with a growing interest in the different ways in which people living in the 'South' become cosmopolitan, including work that has traced the formation of sub-national, subaltern or rural cosmopolitanisms (see, for example, Gidwani 2006; Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan 2003; Hall 2000). Cosmopolitanism is notoriously difficult to define, and as Pollock, *et al* (2000) suggest, this may in part be because definition, with its attendant possibilities of universalism and exclusion, seems an uncosmopolitan thing to do. I take cosmopolitanism to refer to a particular kind of worldliness, a cultural pluralism that connects different sites and people. Following Mignola, cosmopolitanism is "a set of projects towards planetary conviviality" (2000: 721), distinct from globalisation as a set of designs to manage the world. 'Planetary' should not be confused with the scale of the globe; cosmopolitanism can be more or less inclusive or exclusive, and it can be predominantly global, national or local in character, for instance in some multicultural neighbourhoods (Sandercock 2003).

Mignola links cosmopolitanism to the emergence of the colonial modern world, and connects this with attempts by the modernising Western nation-states to assert authority over the rest of the world through the global design of Christianity and the civilising mission (2000). He goes on to usefully distinguish between cosmopolitan projects and critical cosmopolitanism. The former arise from within historical global designs such as the civilizing mission, and have failed to escape the ideological frames of these designs despite often being critical of them. Critical cosmopolitanism refers to the perspectives of those exterior to global designs (Mingola 2000). He elaborates: "By exteriority I do not mean something lying untouched beyond capitalism and modernity, but the outside that is needed by the inside. Thus, exteriority is indeed the borderland seen from the perspective of those 'to be included,' as they have no other option" (Mignola 2000: 724). If cosmopolitan projects are critical of colonial modernity they do so from a perspective within colonial modernity, whereas critical cosmopolitan projects are located in the exteriority and issue forth from colonial difference, often in the form of 'cosmopolitanisms from below'. As Pollock *et al* write: "Cosmopolitans today are often the victims of modernity, failed by capitalism's upward mobility, and bereft of those comforts and customs of national belonging" (2002: 582).

I will consider three instances of cosmopolitan imaginaries, all of which take the city and its modernity to be central. First, an effort by the legendary film director Raj Kapoor to depict in the early years of Independence a form of national modernism that was closely linked

to notions of cosmopolitanism. This effort cautiously portrays a progressive nationalism that would recreate Bombay in the image of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's modernist vision of a planned and just city providing opportunities and services for all. The city is portrayed as a potential site of cosmopolitanism, as a space that welcomes and assists migrants from all over India regardless of background, a potential vividly interrogated in the popular film, *Shri 420*. In Mignola's (2000) terms, this is a cosmopolitan imaginary that emerges from the interior rather than the exterior, linked to the nationalist vision of open, tolerant and well planned cities. The paper goes on to briefly trace the destabilizing of this cosmopolitan imaginary of Bombay through the developmental crisis of the 1960s, the violence of the national emergency in the 1970s and the riots of the early 1990s, and connects these shifts to changing portrayals in film.

Second, I consider a particular cosmopolitan imaginary at work in contemporary film, especially new family film, which presents an image of modernity as global consumption. This casts an image of an exclusionary cosmopolitanism reserved for the city's globe-hopping elite. This cinema portrays glamorous, globally aware individuals, predominantly in luxury residential and café interiors in Bombay or elsewhere in the world, and often set against dramatic panoramic views that hover above the lives and interstices of the city.

Third, the paper then shifts from the panoramic views that drift above the city in the 'city of spectacle' to the ground level, to the 'city of debris' (Mazumdar 2007). This part of the paper traces a form critical cosmopolitanism that emerges from modes of social learning and solidarity present in a network of civil society groups based in informal settlements, Slum/ Shack Dwellers International (SDI).

SDI is an international network of nongovernmental (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs). The Indian SDI group, known as the Alliance, is a key node in this network and originates in central Bombay, in the struggle for housing, infrastructure and services. This struggle is peripheral to Bombay cinema and in sharp contrast to elitist consumption-oriented cosmopolitanism. The analysis shifts from the portrayal of the city in film to a distinct register of inquiry and experience, and focuses on what constitutes the imaginaries and practices of a transurban civil society network. SDI can be characterised as a form of critical cosmopolitanism issuing forth from an exterior. My central concern is with how SDI's cosmopolitanism is produced, and here I focus on SDI's cosmopolitanism as social, reproduced through the frames of group learning and solidarity. This marks a counterpoint to the tendency in discourses of liberal cosmopolitanism that emphasise the agency of the individual (Calhoun 2003). Calhoun (2003) critically locates much of the cosmopolitan discourse in the drive for world citizenship and global democracy developed from Kant's famous late eighteenth century essays written in the period of emerging nation-states and individual rights (see also Mignola 2000). In Vertovec and Cohen's (2000) influential collection, *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism*, various contributors worry over the complicity between cosmopolitanism and a Eurocentric liberal universalism that emphasizes the rights and responsibilities of the global citizen.

These three instances of cosmopolitan imaginaries are distinct in form, nature, constituency and objectives. The first two are internal cosmopolitanisms in that they are connected to elitist visions of the modern city, and the third is a critical cosmopolitanism that emerges from groups occupying the vacuum of nationalist state modernism and are largely excluded from the lifestyles and spaces of the contemporary elite cosmopolitan. However, the examples of elite consumption-oriented cosmopolitanism and of SDI are connected in that

they are imaginaries that speak back to conventional discourses of cosmopolitan Bombay by not taking the communalism and violence of the 1990s as their central reference points. They remind us that there are histories and presents operating on a variety of registers which, while connected in different ways to communalism and violence, operate beyond the commonplace observation of a "portrait of cosmopolitan Bombay in ruins" (Prakash 2005: 499).

Film, urban space and modernity

Methodologically, the paper connects two seemingly distinct registers of experience, narrative and portrayal: film and civil society. Film is a key repository of the urban imagination in Bombay, continually reproducing and contesting narratives and images of the city as variously cosmopolitan or divided, violent or hospitable, booming or in decline, collapsing or developing. Mazumdar argues that cinema is "the major reservoir of the urban experience in India" (2007: 197), and brilliantly reveals the role of cinema as an archive of the modern that houses allegorical images of the city, claiming that cinema is "the most innovative archive of the city in India" (Mazumdar 2007: xxxi). Kaarsholm echoes this view: "Indian films have not only portrayed the process of urbanization as a struggle towards coming to terms with and formulating agendas for modernity, but also as reactions to and counter-programmes against this process" (2007: 1). Ashis Nandy has been still more explicit, arguing that "the popular film is low-brow, modernizing India in all its complexity, sophistry, naiveté and vulgarity. Studying popular film is studying Indian modernity at its rawest, its crudities laid bare by the fate of traditions in contemporary life and arts" (1998: 7).

As a highly popular visual and experiential field, cinema registers distinct and significant impacts on urban discourse and imagination. It is the starkest arena where the 'city of spectacle' – of film, television, media, advertising, and design - is portrayed, a visual, experiential moment through which to reimagine the city, and which resonates with the many ways in which the material city and its people are changing (Mazumdar 2007). Film has the capacity to illuminate the lived spaces of the city, and to portray the city in different ways. The paper seeks to open up the relationship between cinematic space and urban social space.[4]

In contrast, civil society organizations produce their own narratives about social change, and seek to contest the nature of change through multiple imaginaries and practices. The civil society groups I explore in this paper operate in what Mazumdar (2007) refers to as the 'city of debris' - of informal settlements, dense neighbouroods, street hawkers, traffic congestion, construction debris, and refuse – which variously resonate with and diverge from the city of spectacle. This is the domain of lived experience, everyday struggle, routine and organization, and cannot be straightforwardly reconciled with the world of film. The city of spectacle and the city of debris intersect in a variety of ways: in the lives of civil society groups who loyally watch the latest films and sing their latest songs; in the cable television or film advertising that is so commonly found in hutments in informal settlements; by indirectly informing public debate about the nature of urban change and the city's inhabitants; or in portraying visions of the past, present and future of Bombay's urban spaces. Taken together, the intersections, homologies and divergences between film and civil society offer a wider politico-cultural lens through which to view Bombay's contested cosmopolitan imaginaries. In particular, for my purposes in this paper, this juxtaposition of film and civil society reveals specific relations between the city and narratives and images of urban cosmopolitanism.

Cosmopolitanism and modernity can be closely interlinked, and film and civil society offer two useful realms through which to read those changing relations. It is perhaps unsurprising that Bombay's modernity has often been thought of in cosmopolitan terms given the city's historically high number of migrants and multicultural make-up. Modernity, then, is a keyword in this paper, understood here as a multiple, changing site through which particular imaginaries and practices of the new city are deployed. These are efforts to break from present or past conditions and design or live a different kind of urban life. Again, these can be more or less inclusive or exclusive, global, national or local. The three examples explored reveal specific instances in postcolonial Bombay where the relation between cosmopolitanism and the modern city is mobilized in particular ways. In each instance, the specific form of the relation between cosmopolitan and modern alters in imaginary and practice, but the key elements of cultural pluralism in relation to cosmopolitanism and new imaginaries and practices of urban life in relation to modernity remain in each case.

The paper is based on fieldwork conducted over several research visits to Bombay, and especially two trips between October 2001 and March 2002, and November 2005 and June 2006. This research has focused on informal settlements, infrastructure and social justice, and has involved in particular a wide range of interviews with state officials, NGOs and CBOs, including repeated interviews and meetings with over thirty members of the Indian Alliance and other members of the SDI network, as well as observations of their work. The analysis of film is taken from existing scholarship, and in particular the work of Ranjani Mazumdar (2007), Ravi Vasudevan (2000), Ashis Nandy (1998) and Preben Kaarsholm (2007).

From cosmopolitan to provincial city?

Of cosmopolitan Bombay, a great deal of attention has been given in recent years to the ethno-religious riots and bomb blasts of the early 1990s (Appadurai 2000; Varma 2004), to the recent terrorist attacks on the train network (Punwani 2006), and to attempts to depict the city as a 'global city' (Banerjee-Guha 2001; Grant and Nijman 2002, 2004). While any discussion of cosmopolitanism and Bombay must be set against these backdrops, I hope to show here that there are other cosmopolitan imaginaries and practices in the city that do not take communalism or violence as their points of departure. However, before proceeding it is important to set the paper in the context of recent changes that have informed debates about cosmopolitanism and the city.

At a general level, the last 15 years have demonstrated that Bombay's capital-induced cosmopolitanism is not inevitable. It has become commonplace since the early 1990s to talk about the demise of a cosmopolitan city and the emergence of an intolerant, xenophobic city in its place (Appadurai 2000; Varma 2004; Virani 2001). This is due in particular to the mass riots that took place in late 1992 and early 1993, which followed the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya (in the state of Uttar Pradesh in north India) by Hindu extremists. The events spurred existing local tensions, resulting in the worst riots in the city's history: 900 people were killed and the psychosocial geography of the city was drastically altered. The riots were followed by thirteen bomb blasts on 12th March, 1993, the most destructive bomb explosions in Indian history, which killed over 250 and left 700 injured. The bombs targeted key political and economic structures in the city, including the stock exchange and the political headquarters of the Hindu extremist party, the Shiv Sena (Shivaji's Army), and were widely interpreted as retaliation by Muslim gangs to the riots (Zaidi 2003).

Gyan Prakash states: "The communal violence and bomb blasts left many people wondering if Bombay's cosmopolitanism had just been a façade" (2006: 98). He nevertheless rightly cautions: "The death of the city gives birth to an imagined past" (Prakash 2006: 88). Tensions between Bombay's different groups were, of course, present in the city before these riots. In 1956, shortly before the city was made the capital of the new linguistic state of Maharashtra, there was violence between groups demanding that the city become the capital of a Gujarati state and those demanding it go to Maharashtra (Appadurai 2000: 628). In 1984, the city witnessed the first major communal riots since Independence (Punwani 2003). In many of these cases, the Shiv Sena played a crucial mobilising role (Hansen 2001). One of the most xenophobic regional parties in India, the Sena is a pro-Marathi movement formed with the objective of ethnic control of Bombay and Maharashtra. Founded in 1966 by former cartoonist Bal Thackeray, who remains the party's president and authority, the party has sought to fight for the 'sons of the soil' through any means possible.

Initially, south Indians were the targets, their very presence portrayed as responsible for denying native Maharashtrians jobs. Gradually, the enemy morphed into Muslims, who were closely associated with the Pakistani 'terrorist threat' in Sena propaganda. During the 1980s and 1990s, the party capitalised on the waning support for the Left following, in particular, the unsuccessful attempts by unions and left-wing parties to resolve the textile strike in the early 1980s (Shaikh 2005). In more recent years, the Sena has associated itself with the national Hindutva (the land of Hinduness) movement across the country, and in particular with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a major national party of the Hindu right. As Appadurai has observed, this articulation frames the city "as a point of translation and mediation between a renascent Maharashtra and a re-Hinduized India" (2000: 643).

The zenith of the Sena movement arrived when the party made it into power at both the city and state level in Maharashtra in 1995. It was during its time in state government that the party renamed Bombay as 'Mumbai'. Mumbai has been commonly used historically by Marathi speakers, distinct from the 'Bambai' used by Hindi speakers. This renaming should not be confused as a straightforward effort to shake off an English colonial heritage; it is an active attempt to reinscribe the space of the city as Hindu, to the exclusion, in particular, of Muslims (Hansen 2001).[5] This has often manifested itself in the demolition of informal settlements with high proportions of Muslims. The Sena has since lost the state to Congress, but retains control of the municipal corporation. Despite recent preoccupations with feuds among the Thackeray family leadership, and a number of defections to Congress, the party retains a strong grassroots base in Maharashtra. The process of ethnicization of city-space linked to the shift to 'Mumbai' represents, for Appadurai (2000), a critical moment in the 'decosmopolitanization' of Bombay, and Varma (2004) calls this the city's 'provincialization'. However, notwithstanding the scale and force of these events, claims that Bombay has undergone a general social transformation from the early 1990s onwards are overstated, and fail to account for the multiple forms of cosmopolitan imaginary that operate on a variety of historical and spatial registers in the contemporary city. They assume that the city before the 1990s was cosmopolitan, and attribute too much causal efficacy to the riots and subsequent bombings. In addition, there are a wide variety of alternative cosmopolitan rubrics, reflected in civil society organizations, lifestyle changes for different groups, and often vividly portrayed in film. While there are important distinctions with the past, these cosmopolitanisms often resonate with the Bombay that existed before the 1990s.

National modernism: film, planning and urban justice

In the early postcolonial period, following Indian Independence in 1947, a great deal of film – especially those of the legendary director and actor, Raj Kapoor – connected the city with the nationalist vision of modernist planning and social justice. Independence linked the nationalist movement with the projects of development and democratisation, both of which were often presented as signalling a break with the colonial government even if the continuities were stronger than implied (Bose and Jalal 1997; Corbridge and Harriss 2000; Legg 2006). The constitution of India combined fundamental and directive rights that enabled universal suffrage, welfare reform, and reserved places for groups such as harijans (dalits or 'the oppressed'). The vision of nationalist modernism emerged most powerfully in these early years of Independence when the Indian state was wrestling between Ghandian conceptions of India as village-based, and Nehruvian visions of India as an urbanising country moving towards modernity. In this latter narrative, the cities were to be the loci of progress, opportunity and social justice. Bombay, the commercial capital of India since well before Independence, became a key site for this vision.

Many films of this period sought to portray the possibilities and dangers of national modernity through the city. Narratives of urban alienation and moral corruption, often represented in figures of the tramp and the refugee were particularly common, alongside utopian visions of urban equality. I connect this moment with the 1955 classic of Indian cinema, *Shri 420*, directed by and starring Raj Kapoor (Figure 1). *Shri 420*, along with several other films of the 1950s, addressed the opposition of city and countryside. One of its most famous songs, 'Ramayya Vasta Vayya' "generates an imagined universe of the village as a counterspace to the harshness of the city" (Mazumdar 2007: 45). Kapoor captured a notion of the city as both a place of class division and oppression, narrated through films like *Awara* (1951) and *Shri 420*, and a site of struggle for social justice, echoing the frequent labour strikes of the period (eg., of the mill workers) and the activities of the communists (Prakash 2006). Writing about this period, Ravi Vasudevan suggests that "the cinema of that time communicated a popular democratic perception which worked through some of the rationalist and egalitarian approaches of the liberal-radical intelligentsia, but on its own terms" (2000: 116).

Kapoor frequently deployed the figure of the tramp, and as Kaviraj writes, "In some Hindi films, particularly those by Raj Kapoor, the figure of the tramp as Chaplin is taken up with modification as the 'natural' carrier of such an outsider's vision" (2007: 69). His *Awara* (1951) portrayed this through the homeless man, an unloved traveller on an uncharted lonely path singing songs of happiness (Bakshi 1998: 104), a theme echoed in *Shri 420* and *Jagte Raho* (1956) (see Gayatri Chatterjee's 1992 (2003) study, *Awara*). A close associate of Kapoor's in film, Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, formulated the story for *Shri 420.* Abbas was a committed Marxist who was already becoming disillusioned in mainstream politics by 1949, when he published a series of articles in the Bombay-based popular magazine, *Blitz*, listing the socialist promises Nehru had made but was failing to implement. Of Abbas, Kapoor and *Shri 420*, Bakshi writes: "They had a critique of the unfulfilled promises of Independence but they were not entirely disenchanted then" (1998: 108). *Shri 420* connects the city with Nehruvian national discourses of economic opportunity and social justice. Indeed, Kapoor has acknowledged that he sought to portray, in Varma's words, a "period of Nehruvian effervescence about the possibilities

of a modern, socialist and secular nation as embodied in the space of a well-planned city" (2004: 67). Varma has further argued that the film "commented on the hopes and desires of countless migrants who flocked to the city looking for both economic opportunity and social justice" (2004: 67).

When the film was released in 1955, Bombay's cinema halls and streets echoed to 'Ramayya Vasta Vayya', the film's main song which "virtually became a national anthem" (Bakshi 1998: 107). The film itself is a rags-to-riches tale of greed, urban immorality, and modernist possibility. It begins with the main character, the young, Chaplinesque Raju played by Kapoor, setting off on the road and ending up in Bombay. On his way along dusty roads from the north Indian town of Allahabad, much is made of Raju's poverty and amiable naiveté. To this lively, cheery tune, he skips along the lonely road in a nonchalant manner:

Mera joota hai Jaapani
Yeh patloon Englistaani
Sar pe laal topi Russi
Phir bhi dil hai Hindustani

(My shoes are Japanese
My trousers English
On my head, red Russian hat
My heart's Indian for all that)

Raju soon comes across a sign stating that Bombay is 420 miles away and decides to follow it. The 420 in the title of the film has a double-meaning; it references not just distance but a section of the Indian penal code enforced for crimes of petty fraud and trickery. So the title in effect means Mr. Fraudster, connecting immorality with Bombay from the start. Raju arrives in the city to bustling streets of traffic, people, buying and selling, making him dizzy and appear lost and out-of-place, in sharp contrast to the relaxed joviality with which he traveled to the city. His first meeting is with a beggar, who tells him that people in Bombay hear nothing but "the jingle of coins". The beggar goes on to tell Raju that the educational qualifications, commitment to work, and the gold medal for honesty that Raju says he has brought with him will mean nothing in Bombay, but that "if you live by lying and cheating there are 420 ways" to get by. This signals Raju's arrival in India's commercial city par excellence – he has traveled from a provincial Indian town to an island separated from the mainland not just by the Arabian Sea but by the ruthlessness of capital.

For Varma, Raju's song announces an "arrival into cosmopolitanism" (2004: 65), embodied in his scrappy attire as much as in the portrayal of Bombay as city of migrants. The film casts Bombay as a both a potential site of greed, moral corruption, and alienation, and as a potential site of opportunity and justice. Through the film, different characters and story lines portray a city of progressive nationalism – a well planned city tolerant of difference that provides opportunity and amenity to all citizens. For example, Raju is exposed to narratives of urban inclusiveness and justice through a group of pavement dwellers he befriends in the city. This contrasts with the provincial and exclusionary nationalism that other characters, beset by greed, embody. The film narrates Raju's redemption from greed and trickery and ends on a note of optimism for the city and its future, emphasized by the image of Raju and

his new found love, Vidya, looking out hopefully at a panorama of the city in the final scene. *Shri 420* suggests to the viewer that the city, with commitment from the state and the public, can be a site both for cosmopolitanism and progressive nationalism.

However, off the set Kapoor became increasingly disillusioned as he aged, and found progressively less hope in the prospects of the modern and just city. Bakshi (1998: 94) argues that the progressive nationalism Kapoor sought to optimistically portray in Bombay met its end in the violence of the national emergency in the 1970s: "In some ways the enterprise of Kapoor and the Indian 'project' ran parallel", from the hopefulness of his *Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai* (The Land where the Ganges Flows) to the jaded *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* (Ram, Your Ganges is Soiled/Dirty), which journeyed from "its Nehruvian 'tryst with destiny' to Indira Gandhi's assassination and the growing political and social violence" of the late 1970s. On the emergency and its aftermath, he writes: "How did we journey from the ideals that Nehru appeared to embody to their betrayal by his own direct descendents?" (Bakshi 1998: 93) A national state of emergency, lasting between 1975 and 1977, had been declared by President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed on the advice of Congress Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. This followed opposition attempts to secure Gandhi's resignation when the High Court of Allahabad declared that her election had involved corrupt practices. Gandhi used the emergency to assert authoritarian control over her party and the opposition, to aggressively put an end to trade and student union strikes and protests, to demolish informal settlements across the country, and to install a draconian family planning program of forced vasectomy. Much of the violence of the emergency was played out in cities.

However, the destabilizing of the early postcolonial vision of urban development cannot be solely attributed to the authoritarianism and violence of the emergency alone. From the early 1960s, there was a growing disenchantment with the nationalist vision of the well-planned, ordered and just Bombay which emerged from rapid, haphazard urbanization and growing urban poverty. For example, in 1965, a collection of Bombay's leading architects -- Charles Correa, Pravina Metha and Shirish Patel -- were involved in the publication of an influential special issue of the Bombay-based architectural magazine *Marg* (Modern Architects Research Group), 'Bombay Planning and Dreaming.' This issue argued that the solution to easing congestion in Bombay lay in a new, well-planned modernist 'twin city' -- New Bombay -- made-up of twenty inter-connected but self-contained towns. If *Marg*'s arguments for New Bombay were highly influential among Bombay planners and middle-classes, it was due to a sense of hopelessness around the possibilities of improving rapidly urbanising congested Bombay, than it was for an enthusiasm around modernist planning ideals (Shaw 1999).

The discussion of the postcolonial model of national urban development and its subsequent crisis, then, needs to be connected to a confluence of factors, including histories of political violence and a failure of planning and administration, which connect nation, development and identity. Cinema reflected this, particularly around the themes of violence, despair, and the sense of failure and nonlegality of the state. Indeed, Mazumdar has argued: "Reworking a certain vision of modernity in which the state is the sole repository of legitimate action, the hero took on the role of smuggler [e.g. *Deewar*, 1975]...The moral divisions between legal and nonlegal, the legitimate and the criminal, grew increasingly fuzzy, opening up a reflection on dystopian forms in urban life" (2007: 7). In this context, the cinematic antihero emerged, embodied most explicitly in the actor Amitabh Bachchan (e.g. *Amar Akbar Anthony*, 1977), reminiscent of the James Dean or Marlon Brando rebel characters

of post-war Hollywood cinema. This is a form that expressed the insecurities of modernity that it then addressed through poetic justice – the form of the melodrama, a performance of excess and emotionally charged film. The 'angry man' figure of 1970s film addressed the crisis of the period -- a crisis of national development -- as a furious figure representing the margins of urban society and railing against a corrupt and often repressive state (Mazumdar 2007).

If in the 1950s Kapoor sought to portray with cautious optimism a Nehruvian vision of Bombay as cosmopolitan and progressive, this popular vision had unravelled in three decades, losing ground to disillusionment, anger and frustration. In Bombay, since the emergency, another key instance of the destabilising of a modern cosmopolitan imaginary can be identified in the Bombay riots of the early 1990s, which emerged not just from communal tensions but also from resentment at the enduring poverty in the city: "After 1993, the deep emancipatory moment of the urban modern, which spoke to new visions of community, independence and freedom, was shattered" (Mazumdar 2007: 30). However, far from marking the 'decosmopolitanization' or 'provincialization' of Bombay (Appadurai 2000; Varma 2004; Virani 2001), alongside the slow unravelling of the nationalist developmental and cosmopolitan view of the city, a variety of other cosmopolitan modernisms have taken shape. One example of this, well documented in cinema, is a global consumption-oriented cosmopolitanism associated with high-end urban interiors. While the next part of the paper begins by discussing this cosmopolitan global modernity and its portrayal in Bombay cinema, it will then shift focus to a different set of global cosmopolitan imaginaries and practices that emerge not from elite lifestyles but from poverty and informal settlements.

Global modernism: new urban cosmopolitanisms

Ranjani Mazumdar (2007) traces a particular cosmopolitan imaginary at work in recent film, especially new family films, which present an image of modernity as global consumption and also connect with a range of changes to the political, economic, social and physical landscapes of the city. These films often reveal glamorous, globally aware individuals, predominantly located in luxury residential and café interiors in Bombay or elsewhere in the world. She points to the materialization of a new kind of "surface culture" that is central to this emergent city of spectacle, where surface "refers to the expressive forms of architecture, advertising, print, television, film and fashion" (Mazumdar 2007: 110). This form of modernity is rooted in an explosion of new kinds of high-end design, advertising and commodity circulation, creating distinct links between consumption and the aestheticization of urban space: modernity as consumer cosmopolitanism. As Indian cities have increasingly globalised, laden with a wide range of images and commodities of contemporary capitalism, "the urban references are not just Bombay and Delhi, but London and New York" (Mazumdar 2007: xxii). Mazumdar describes this as a kind of urban desire for scale and spectacle, vividly expressed in film (Mazumdar 2007). This desire is marked by an anxiety around the cultural politics of globalisation. For example, there is a persistent return in recent films to a specific 'Indianness', a particular understanding of tradition, reflected in, for instance, the family photograph advertisement used for *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (2001), a film about a globalised family that moves through high-end spectacular urban India to the urban spaces of London.[6]

Mazumdar positions these changing depictions of the city in film in a wider context

of urban transformation in Bombay, linking these disparate sites with the concept of urban delirium, "in which commodity display, the crisis of space, new kinds of architecture, the spectacle of film, and television converge" (2007: 111). Much of the interior spaces in new family film mimics the experience of proliferating air-conditioned shopping malls in the city, where the shopper is exposed to "the commercial, aesthetic, and architectural splendour of interior spaces" (Mazumdar 2007: 148). Mazumdar argues that in South Asian cities, this commodified world is possible only through simulation: "The panoramic interior expresses a crisis of belonging, fear of the street, and the desire for the good life – all at once" (Mazumdar 2007: 148). These films are "created as perfectly designed and landscaped sets, the new interiors have emerged as the space of the 'virtual city', where the Bombay of claustrophobia is made to physically disappear" (Mazumdar 2007: 117). There is little scope for urban social justice in these elitist articulations of the city, which seek not to address the city's poverty and 'residual spaces' but to banish them from view. However, this 'city of spectacle' continually intersects with the 'city of debris'.

These cinematic depictions represent changes that have taken place in the city over the past 15 years. If Bombay is often spoken and written of as India's 'most modern city' (Rao 2006), this discourse has taken a new turn with the emergence of a managerial and technical elite associated with the growth of global financial services in particular parts of the city (Grant and Nijman 2002). The geographies of these groups are increasingly segregated and exclusive, reflecting new spaces of global connection and local disconnection, and associated with particular images of what the modern Indian city should look like. There has been an important role in this regard, as Partha Chatterjee has argued, for the "intensified circulation of images of global cities through cinema, television, and the internet" (2004: 143), and through the increasing tendency of the elite and middle classes to travel globally. In addition, the proliferation of new residential enclaves that mimic European and American cities, often expressed vertically given Bombay's high real estate costs, provide escape from the city of debris through elevation. These changes and forms of urban escapism are accompanied by the transformation of interiors, from cafes and residences to banks and offices.

The state plays an active role in these changes, and is increasingly seeking to attract investment and to develop infrastructure that will facilitate new globalising service and financial industries. Recent years have witnessed intense debates around the transformation of public space, provoked particularly by an increasing corporatisation of space that has followed India's economic liberalisation reforms in the early 1990s (Corbridge and Harriss 2000). For example, a recent controversial ruling by the Supreme Court will see two-thirds of the vacant former 'mill lands' in the centre of the city transformed not into social housing as many had hoped but into shopping malls and corporate entertainment (on the decline of the mills, see D'Monte 2002). These developments have been closely associated with the demolition of informal settlements, which in recent years have been coded less by ethnicity than politico-corporate Bombay's self-declared trajectory to become the 'next Shanghai' by 2013 (Bombay First 2003). To this end, an estimated 90,000 huts were torn down during the winter of 2004-2005, leaving some 350,000 people homeless and without alternative accommodation.

Mazumdar (2007) argues that the city of debris and the city of spectacle converge and diverge in a range of ways, from the self-styled high-end cosmopolitan identities portrayed by groups of the poor, including imitations of western fashions and the surge to embrace the

flood of new technologies; film and television; and the transformations in residential and commercial interior design. While her case is compelling, there is a danger here of reducing the 'city of debris' to a set of residual spaces that simply seek to imitate the city of spectacle. Within this city of debris are multiple forms of living, getting by and imagining the city that do not conform to this consumer-oriented city of spectacle, even in the informal hutments that contain cable television and saturated advertising that Mazumdar highlights. There are distinct social imaginaries and movements being carved out from the interstices of experiences and struggle in the Bombay 'slum', and it is to one revealing example of this that I now turn. This example briefly tells the story of a distinct set of imaginaries and practices that remains global in scope but which are produced through the work of people living at ground level in informal settlements rather than the high-end residential complexes that tower over the city. This movement, like several other social movements and civil society groups in the city, articulates a progressive urban imagination that seeks justice for the poor. This imagination resonates with the modernist visions of filmmakers like Kapoor working in the early years of Independence in its collectivist struggle for universal provision, although it is distinct both because of its global scope and in its insistence that the informal settlement, rather than the national state, remain the central reference point. In addition, it is another instance of cosmopolitanism that exists largely outside the rubric of communalism and violence.

Slum cosmopolitanism: global exchange and the informal settlement

A few blocks from Mumbai Central Railway Station, in the generally middle-class neighbourhood of Byculla, is the resource center of the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) and Mahila Milan (Women Together), two of the groups that make-up the Bombay chapter of Slum/ Shack Dwellers International (SDI). SDI seeks basic housing, infrastructure and services for the urban poor, and is a global network that owes its existence to a programme of international exchanges initiated largely by a mixed bag of activists working in central Bombay. The resource center is a support network for NSDF and Mahila Milan members across the city, and acts as a nerve-center for the national and international network of which the NSDF and Mahila Milan are a part. It is a hub of activity: the three phones ring frequently (every couple of minutes or so, mostly for male leaders of NSDF) and people from the local area constantly come in and out, some depositing money, some asking for loans, and some for advice from the NSDF individuals available. During telephone calls, as Appadurai has commented based on his work with these groups, leaders "exchange information about breaking crises, plans and news across these various locations in Mumbai – and also across India and the world...a call [is] as likely to come from Phnom Penh or Cape Town as from Mankhurd or Byculla [in Bombay]" (2002: 30) .

The third organisation in this Bombay network is an NGO called the Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), an NGO set-up by middle-class activists in the early 1980s. This tripartite group refers to itself as the Alliance (McFarlane 2004, 2008). Mahila Milan is predominantly but not exclusively a women's organisation. Most of the women live in pavement huts and are generally formally uneducated, although many have now been members of municipal committees and have travelled to different countries to take part in exchanges with other groups. The Byculla group is made up of fifteen predominantly Muslim 'leaders' (one is male) most of whom have gone to around five different countries

in the past fifteen years or so. However, as one SPARC official said, they "never introduce themselves as international leaders...their identity is very local...they view their role as peer support, and will talk about their own area". In Byculla alone, 600 women are members of Mahila Milan (Patel 2001: 7), and group members generally work well together despite their often different religious, ethnic and caste backgrounds. Mahila Milan's work predominantly involves organizing and running daily savings schemes; providing a forum for mobilizing and discussing women's support, rights, and short and long-term plans; negotiating with local, state, building and police officials; and participating in exchanges. These exchanges involve groups of poor people traveling from one settlement to another to share stories and experiences with other poor people in what amounts to an informal 'training' process. The exchanges have facilitated the formation of the loose transnational network, SDI.

SDI is a host of civil society groups supported by a range of donors and governments (see Edwards 1999; Patel and Mitlin 2002; SDI 2003; McFarlane 2006a). The network spans predominantly Asia and Africa, including Cambodia, Colombia, India, Kenya, Namibia, Nepal, the Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Thailand and Zimbabwe, and is associated with groups in many more countries. SDI, following Batliwala (2002: 396) has a 'grassroots' focus. This is to say that the network is predominantly constituted and controlled by those "who are most severely affected [by urban poverty] in terms of the material condition of their daily lives" (Batliwala 2002: 396). There is a regular program of exchanges internationally that has been ongoing since the late 1980s. Patel, Bolnick, and Mitlin suggest SDI's work "is not a global process that focuses on international policies and practices but it is global in outreach and strengthens groups' capacity to deal with what is oppressive and exploitative within their local environment" (2000: 402). In SDI, the struggle remains the locality (for example, the local municipal corporation), and this is informed in part, as Saskia Sassen has remarked, by "the knowledge and tacit innovation of multiple other localities around the world engaged in similar localized struggles with similar local actors" (2003: 11). It is a capacity-building movement that seeks to develop the skills of the poor in order to negotiate with government, and even to self-build housing and infrastructure solutions. In campaigning for housing, infrastructure and services it is modernist in its objectives, but in its methods SDI differs from many twentieth century movements in that it is cautious of the state, seeking to negotiate with whoever is in power without ever becoming aligned to a single political party.

SDI's work has been driven by a set of strategies that largely originated with the central Bombay group, including daily savings and credit schemes, supporting women in development, enumerations[7] of settlements, mapping of settlements, exchanges of poor people between settlements (locally, nationally and internationally), the forming of national networks, house and toilet exhibitions, land-sharing models,[8] and partnerships with authorities based on a commitment to 'non-party alignment'. This 'box of tricks', as one SPARC leader puts it, has travelled through exchanges. The Indian group has played a key role in co-ordinating, designing and participating in exchanges and in the movement of strategies and ideas around the network. The strategies listed above are explicitly framed as guidelines to be translated from place to place, rather than as models that are to be copied. For instance, in the translation between places, daily savings may become monthly savings in accordance with different earning patterns, and model houses for exhibitions may draw on different materials and deploy different spatial dimensions in accordance with local conditions and preferences. Alternatively, one group may prioritise sanitation, whereas another may prioritise data collection through

enumeration in the hope of using the data to influence authorities. In contrast to the global circulation of high-end interior and exterior design we find in parts of globalising Bombay, design in SDI is grassroots oriented and based on basic local needs and preferences informed by global conversation and exchange.

Through both a programme of learning that has emerged around the travelling strategies described above, and the production of new modes of solidarity, SDI constructs a particular critical cosmopolitanism. I do not wish to suggest that there is a singular cosmopolitanism in SDI, but trace the general form that these cosmopolitan imaginaries take and the practices that inform them. Solidarities reflect the notion that SDI member groups, while living in different contexts, share a perceived common space on the socio-economic and political peripheries of the city. These solidarities are reproduced through the travelling of knowledge, ideas and practices that takes place around the strategies outlined above. SDI's cosmopolitan imaginaries are social: they are produced through learning practices that take place in group activities (McFarlane 2006b). The social form of SDI's particular kind of cosmopolitanism marks a contrast from the emphasis in much of the cosmopolitan discourse on the agency of the individual (Calhoun 2003; Rattansi 2004). The next two sub-sections will expand on social learning and solidarities in more detail.

Social learning

The most frequent way in which learning is referred to in SDI is in terms of 'learning-by-doing' in groups (ACHR 2000; SDI 2003; Patel and Mitlin 2001). Learning is conceived as taking place "in situ" (Homeless International 2000: 7). For example, SPARC has written about learning in exchanges: "Normally NGOs design workshop-type exposure programmes where the week's programme is organised in advance. We have never used that system, because we are quite clear that the most effective way in which people learn is practically, by doing things" (Homeless International 2000: 7). This means that learning occurs through an "immediate immersion in the ongoing projects of the host community" (Appadurai 2002: 41). This immersion can be any of a whole range of activities, ranging from "scavenging in the Philippines and sewer digging in Pakistan to women's savings activities in South Africa and housing exhibitions in India" (Appadurai 2002: 41). Taking part in practices in a given place mediates the relationship between different groups. Visiting groups tend to participate in whatever local activities are going on at the time of the exchange, from methods for designing toilet blocks to fraught negotiations with local contractors around the delivery of construction materials. The insistence on social learning taking place through groups of urban poor rather than through professionals characterises learning in different parts of the SDI network, as the following quotation from Amita Mbaye, a member of a Senegalese Savings and Loan Network, indicates: "When I asked the technician (who works with us in Dakar) to show us how [housing] layout plans are designed, he used such sophisticated jargon that I barely understood a word he said. In Protea South (Gauteng, South Africa) during our last evening, we asked a woman to draw us a plan. When she explained house modelling, I understood and felt that I too could do it" (Patel and Mitlin 2002: 132).

To some extent then, learning in SDI is a product of displacement. This is learning as a relational process combining 'near' and 'far', a process that in some measure calls such binaries into question. SDI members learn about daily savings, enumerations, exhibitions, exchanges,

or negotiations with authorities, by participating in the practices of groups and through local, national and international exchanges. Knowing in SDI, then, is the ability to participate in the practices of social groups, and to be open to the ideas and activities of struggle in different localities. This means that both learning and the result -- for example, a model house, toilet block or a set of documents for an enumeration -- take on a cosmopolitan character. Ideas about housing construction, enumeration, daily savings or negotiating tactics with the state, garnered through years of experience living in often neglected parts of the city, circulate and are translated through exchange in different urban contexts, with the Bombay groups taking on a key 'teaching' role in the SDI network.

In exchanges, particular individuals and groups within SDI are more or less influential, and there is a politics of replication at work in the network that reveals community groups as not simply part of SDI networks but subject to them. For example, in the Piesang River area of South Africa, a member of the Homeless People's Housing Federation "explained that the visitors from India [Bombay] had advised them to build communal water points, as a collective space where women could talk about the Federation – however, the Federation women of Piesang River had their minds set on the conventional on-site access to water, and this had remained their demand" (Huchzermeyer 1999: no pagination). This indicates a tension in SDI. On the one hand, SDI seeks to encourage autonomy and change in the learning process as knowledge travels. On the other hand, SDI, by virtue of encouraging the travelling of knowledge, creates the possibility of travelling knowledge and ideas, especially from influential SDI leaders in groups such as the Bombay Alliance, marginalising local concerns.

Despite these difficulties of negotiating insider/outsider relations, the specific form of worldliness that SDI leaders reflect is constituted by local experience and translocal interaction, and is productive of the particular kinds of imaginations and practices of SDI members. There are political consequences of this locally: cosmopolitan knowledges are mobilised in local political negotiations, for instance through the use of enumeration data or housing exhibitions in political negotiations (these politics are not without their difficulties, and I do not wish to appear to romanticise SDI's work – see, for instance, critical commentary in McFarlane 2004, 2008). This account of SDI's cosmopolitan practices parallels Craig Jeffrey's (Jeffrey 2008) description of Jat young men's 'straddling strategies' (see his earlier work on low caste leaders' political strategies, Jeffrey *et al* 2005).

Solidarities

While much cosmopolitan literature has described solidarity as solidarity to an abstract humanity at large (Rattansi 2004), solidarity in SDI is not universal but specific and grounded. These are solidarities to other groups of urban poor, and the specific solidarity networks are multiple and over-lapping, including neighbourhood SDI co-operatives, nation-wide SDI federations, and SDI as a translocal network of the urban poor. They are solidarities that reflect a sense of being in a similar position on the social, economic and political margins of the city, exterior to the global design and promise of capitalist modernity (Mignola 2000; Pollock *et al* 2000). They are structured in part through, for instance, class, gender, caste, ethnic, religious, and family based solidarities that might extend to rural areas or other towns and cities. Gender based divisions are perhaps the most important in SDI. These come in the shape of male dominated city groups, which in terms of decision-making and government

negotiation often sit hierarchically above the female dominated savings groups. Translocal solidarities negotiate these multiple divisions and evolve through a range of activities that accompany exchanges, such as the sharing of stories about coping with housing demolition, musical events, festivals to mark the opening of new toilet blocks or the completion of new housing blocks, the vernacular documentation of exchanges through reports and, not uncommonly, even poetry about exchanges.[9]

Local solidarities do not just overlap with translocal solidarities in SDI, but are reconfigured by translocal exchanges. There is a fragmentation in this process as new solildarities get produced and existing solidarities are challenged. For instance, it is usually the same people that constitute exchanges, people that SDI leaders believe have become key illustrators of SDI's activities, such as the Byculla Mahila Milan group. ACHR has described these groups as "vanguard communities":

> The ones up at the front of the line [are], the innovators, the risk takers, the go-getters. So in Bombay, you have your Byculla Mahila Milan, and in Pune [India] there's Rajendranagar. Then South Africa has its Philippi and Zimbabwe has its Mbare. In Phnom Penh you have Toul Svay Prey and in the Philippines it's Payatas. These communities become demonstration centers and hosts of innumerable exchange visits (ACHR 2000: 9).

The use of these kinds of groups has the consequence of implying that these are more learned and worldly members of SDI. While this can create local tensions, some of these tensions have been addressed both through existing solidarities found in local SDI co-operatives, and through a sense of participation and exposure to SDI's international horizon through visits from other international groups. Solidarities produced through exchange are also gendered: it is generally women who go on exchanges, sometimes producing pride or resentment in husbands left at home. This is particularly unusual in societies such as India's, where it is, generally speaking, men who are more mobile, with women remaining at home or accompanying men, for instance in migration for work. Translocal solidarities in SDI are not universalistic 'citizen of the world' solidarities, nor are they necessarily about tolerance and openness. They emerge in the form of mutual support, even if that support and encouragement is often superficial (for example, sensitive issues such as domestic abuse only rarely emerge, and generally do so only among closer-knit local women's groups). While translocal solidarities are part of SDI's imaginaries, they must be seen in conjunction with SDI's travelling strategies outlined above -- enumeration, exhibition, savings, land-sharing, etc -- which are the loci of learning practice. It is through a combination of practices of social learning around particular strategies with a sense of translocal solidarity extending across urban peripheries, that SDI's particular critical cosmopolitanism is constituted.

While most discussions of cosmopolitanism in Bombay focus on communal tension, the Indian Alliance and its work in the SDI learning network is a distinct example of a critical cosmopolitanism reproduced through participation in group practices. SDI's cosmopolitanism offers a counterpoint to those of Western elites which have captured the attention of much of the resurgence of debates around cosmopolitanism, and emerges from groups whose experience of imperialism, contemporary development and globalisation differs markedly from some of the objects of analysis often explored in cosmopolitan debates. The social

nature of cosmopolitanism in SDI contrasts with a tendency in literature on cosmopolitanism to focus on the agency of the individual subject, their imaginative and physical mobilities, and their appreciation of cultural diversity (Calhoun 2003; Rattansi 2004). In doing so, it marks a contrast to the global cosmopolitan modernity rooted in high-end consumption that is reflected in recent transformations in Bombay and portrayed in new family film. This is a cosmopolitanism that does not hover above the city in luxurious apartments and offices, nor does it seek to imitate the city of spectacle. It is produced through a translocal engagement in the everyday spaces of the city of debris, and resonates with struggles of the past in linking cosmopolitanism and modernity in an effort for basic urban services.

Conclusion

The relationship between Bombay and cosmopolitanism has been multiple and changing throughout the post-Independence period, but it has always been crucial to debates and imaginaries of urban social justice. Cosmopolitanism has been closely linked to notions of Bombay as a modern city, and at stake in these connections are some of the limits of what a socially just Bombay might look like and require. The postcolonial model of national development has been destabilised since 1947. This has been due to a confluence of state developmental and planning failures to meet the growing demand of housing, infrastructure and services, and the stoking of communal tensions culminating in horrific periods of violence, especially during the emergency in the late 1970s and the riots and bombings of the early 1990s. These histories have been captured and reflected in popular Bombay cinema, recalling Nandy's assertion that Bombay film is "Indian modernity at its rawest, its crudities laid bare" (1998: 7).

However, cosmopolitan imaginaries and practices have far from disappeared from the city, and those that exist inventively recast the relationship between cosmopolitan and modern. The claim that the city has experienced a general social transformation to a 'decosmopolitanised' city through the 1990s assumes that the city before this was cosmopolitan and attributes too much causal efficacy to the riots. This conventional narrative about Bombay's cosmopolitanism needs to be tempered by the multiple forms of cosmopolitan imaginations and practices that exist in the city. SDI is one such example, existing in contrast to the elitist consumption-oriented cosmopolitanism that Mazumdar (2007) traces in the lifestyle changes of different groups in the city and in the transformation of select urban interiors and exteriors, often captured vividly in film. These contrasting narratives and images outline an inclusive cosmopolitan modernism that is locally oriented but outward looking, against an exclusionary cosmopolitan modernism that is globally oriented and seeks to escape the local geographies of the city. While there are important distinctions, these cosmopolitanisms resonate with the Bombay that existed before the 1990s. SDI's cosmopolitan imaginary and modernist aims echo Kapoor's vision portrayed in *Shri 420* that looked optimistically for a Bombay that welcomed migrants and guaranteed collective provision and urban social justice. By contrast, however, SDI is suspect of the state, distancing itself from party-political alliances and seeking to negotiate with whoever is in power (McFarlane 2004).

However, I do not wish to replace a binary of cosmopolitan/decosmopolitan with another of exclusive/inclusive cosmopolitanism. All forms of cosmopolitan are to varying extents inclusive or exclusive, implying that one important role for the critic is to illuminate

the politics, limits and exclusions of different forms of cosmopolitan imaginary and practice. The paper underlines the need to pluralise and reconsider cosmopolitanism beyond the spaces and lifestyles of the global North. In addition, the discussion of SDI marks a counterpoint to the tendency in discourses of liberal cosmopolitanism that emphasise the agency of the individual, instead highlighting particular forms of cosmopolitan imagination and practice that are learned socially.

Methodologically, the paper has sought to demonstrate that relating often analytically separate realms such as film and civil society can provide a wider politico-cultural lens through which to examine urban change. Bombay cinema often reflects and sometimes interrogates changes that are taking place to the city itself, and registers distinct and significant impacts on urban discourse and imagination. Taken together, the juxtaposition of film and civil society offer broader sightlines for investigating changing forms of cosmopolitanism in postcolonial Bombay that do not necessarily take communalism, violence or Hindutva as their key points of reference.

Endnotes

1. Bombay was renamed Mumbai in 1995 by the state government controlled by the Hindu fundamentalist party Shiv Sena, which currently controls the municipal corporation. This renaming has been part of a volatile debate around the identity of the city, nationalism, and ethnicity (Appadurai 2000; Hansen 2001). In this paper, I use Bombay to signal the affiliation of that particular term with the notion of a cosmopolitan city in contrast to the provincialisation folded into the Sena's deployment of 'Mumbai' (Varma 2004).

2. The definitive, peer-reviewed version of this article is published in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 26, pp. 480-499, 2008. The Editorial board of *South Asia Journal for Culture* would like to thank the author and the original publisher for granting permission to republish this article given its regional relevance and the relative inability of regional readers to access the original.

3. I am grateful to Alex Jeffrey, Craig Jeffrey, Tariq Jazeel, Geraldine Pratt, and the anonymous referees for very useful comments on the earlier version of this paper.

4. Indian cinema is a complex industry, and at its widest includes Bombay-based 'Bollywood' films produced in Hindi, and films produced in Tamil, Telegu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Bengali. Bombay-based Hindi film predominates in India and has taken on a large international audience amongst Indian diasporas as well as in the Middle East, parts of Africa, Russia and throughout South and Southwest Asia. It operates on a far smaller annual turnover than Hollywood, but produces a much higher quantity of films, most of which fail to return a profit. In this paper I am concerned with Bombay-based films, which have generally sought to be 'all-inclusive' in audience appeal (Kaarsholm 2007) and which have combined dancing, simple melodies and extravagant spectacles with narratives of everyday life.

5. It also involved the renaming of various roads and buildings, including the city's iconic Marine Drive, the backdrop for many films set in Bombay. Although still known throughout the city as Marine Drive, the formal name is now Subhash Chandra Bose Marg, after the nationalist anti-colonial leader who was often accused of fascist sympathies due to his links with the Nazi party in Germany.

6. Indeed, part of the explanation for the popularity of Indian films in the Middle East has to do with the portrayal of the large, relatively stable and traditional family unit that resonates still in new family film as opposed to the narrative of family dysfunctionality often shown in American films (Kaarsholm 2007).

7. Enumeration in SDI refers to a census conducted by people on their own and in other urban areas.

8. 'Land-sharing' refers to state housing policies that involve housing construction for the poor being cross-subsidised through part private sale, a scheme that has proven highly controversial in Mumbai in the form of the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) scheme (Mukhija, 2004).

9. For instance, Patrick Hunsley Magebhula, President of the South African Homeless People's Federation, has indicated some of this solidarity in his poem about the exchanges between South Africa and India, entitled 'Face to Face': "Face to face with one another / Face to face with reality / Face to face with poverty / It is for real we are poor / It is for real we need each other / The grass cannot live without roots / Government cannot survive without people / Fish cannot live without water / We have to live for each other / We have to come face to face with reality / It is for real that we need each other / The city cannot survive without the hobos who will eat the crumbs that fall from the rich / We are part of daily city life / We have come face to face with other squatters / We have come to learn from each other / Yes, we saw pain, courage, endurance and perseverance in one another's eyes / There were no solutions to our needs / We only had each other's unity, strength and experience / We were face to face with reality and poverty / We cannot live without India and India will suffer without South Africa" (ACHR 2000).

Bibliography

Appadurai A. 2000. 'Spectral Housing and Urban Cleansing: Notes on Millennial Mumbai'. *Public Culture*, 12: 3, 627-651.

Appadurai A. 2002. 'Deep democracy: urban governmentality and the horizon of politics'. *Public Culture*, 14:1, 21-47.

Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR). 2000. *Face-to-Face: Notes from the Network on Community Exchange.* Bangkok: Asian Coalition for Housing Rights.

Bakshi, R. 1998. 'Raj Kapoor: From Jis Desdh Mein Ganag Behti Hai to Ram Teri Ganga Maili'. In A. Nandy A (Ed.,) *The Secret Politics of Our Desires: Innocence, Culpability and Indian Popular Cinema,* pp. 92-133. New Delhi: Paul's Press.

Banerjee-Guha, S. 2001. 'Shifting Cities: Urban Restructuring in Mumbai'. *Economic and Political Weekly*. January 12th , Pp. 121-128.

Batliwala, S. 2002. 'Grassroots Movements as Transnational Actors: Implications for Global Civil Society.' *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 13: 4, 393-409.

Bombay First. 2003. *Vision Mumbai: Transforming Mumbai into World-class City.* Mumbai: Bombay First-McKinsey & Company, Inc.

Bose, S and Jalal, A. 1997. 'Nationalism, Democracy and Development'. In, Bose, S and A. Jalal, *Nationalism, Democracy and Development: State and Politics in India,* Pp. 1-9. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Calhoun C. 2003. `Belonging' in the cosmopolitan imaginary'. In, *Ethnicities*, 3, 531 - 553

Chatterjee, G. 2003. 1992. *Awara.* London: Penguin Books.

Chatterjee, P. 2004. *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World.* Delhi: Permanent Black.

Corbridge, S and Harriss, J, 2000. *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

D'Monte, D. 2002. *Ripping the Fabric: The Decline of Mumbai and its Mills.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Edwards, M. 1999. *Future Positive: International Cooperation in the 21st Century.* London: Earthscan.

Gidwani, V. 2006. 'Subaltern Cosmopolitanism as Politics.' *Antipode*, 38, 1: 7-21.

Gidwani, V. and Sivaramakrishnan, K. 2003. 'Circular migration and rural cosmopolitanism in India.' *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 37, 1 & 2, Pp. 339-370.

Grant, R. and Nijman, J. 2002. 'Globalization and the Corporate Geography of Cities in the Less-Developed World'. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 92: 2, Pp. 320-340.

Grant, R and Nijman, J. 2004. 'The Re-scaling of Uneven Development in Ghana and India'. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 95: 5, Pp. 467-481.

Hall, S. 2000. 'Political belonging in a world of multiple identities.' In, S. Vertovec and R. Cohen R. (eds.,) *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hansen, T.B. 2001. *Wages of Violence: Naming and Identity in Postcolonial Bombay.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Huchzermeyer, M. 1999. *Current Informal Settlement Intervention in South Africa: Four Case Studies of People-Driven Initiatives.* Unpublished paper, Department of Sociology, University of Cape Town.

Iyer, P. 2003. 'Bombay: Hobson-Jobson on the Streets,' Pp. 2-15. In, R. Pinto and N. Fernandes (eds.,) *Bombay, meri jaan.* New Delhi: Penguin.

Jeffrey, C. 2008. 'Kicking Away The Ladder: Middle Class Mobilities in Provincial North India'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26 (4) 517-536.

Jeffrey, C, R. Jeffrey and P. Jeffery. 2005. 'When Schooling Fails: Young Men, Education and Low Caste Politics in North India'. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, Pp. 39, 1-38.

Kaarsholm, P (ed). 2007. *City Flicks: Indian Cinema and the Urban Experience.* London: Seagull Books.

Kaviraj, S. 2007. 'Reading a Song of the City: Images of the city in Literature and Films,' Pp. 60-81. In, P. Kaarsholm (Ed.,) *City Flicks: Indian Cinema and the Urban Experience.* London: Seagull Books: London.

Legg, S. 2006. 'Post-colonial Developmentalities: From the Delhi Improvement Trust to the Delhi Development Authority,' pp. 182-204. In, S. Raju, M.S. Kumar and S. Corbridge (Eds.,) *Colonial and Post-Colonial Geographies of India.* London: Sage.

Mazumdar, R. 2007. *Bombay Cinema: An Archive of the City.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

McFarlane, C. 2004. 'Geographical imaginations and spaces of political engagement: examples from the Indian Alliance'. *Antipode* 36: 5, 890-916.

McFarlane, C. 2006a. 'Transnational development networks: bringing development and postcolonial approaches into dialogue'. *The Geographical Journal*, 172: 1, 35-49.

McFarlane, C. 2006b. 'Knowledge, learning and development: a post-rationalist approach'. *Progress in Development Studies*, 6: 4, 287-305.

McFarlane, C. 2008. 'Sanitation in Mumbai's informal settlements: state, 'slum' and infrastructure'. In, *Environment and Planning A*, 40, pp. 88-107.

Mignola, W.D. 2000. 'The Many Faces of Cosmo-Polis: Border Thinking and Critical Cosmopolitanism'. *Public Culture*, 12, 3: 721-748.

Mukhija, V. 2004. *Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai*. Ashgate: Alderhot, UK.

Nandy, A. 1998. 'Indian Popular Cinema as a Slum's eye View of Politics,' pp. 1-18. In, A. Nandy A (ed) *The Secret Politics of Our Desires: Innocence, Culpability and Indian Popular Cinema*. New Delhi: Pauls Press: New Delhi.

National Alliance. 2005. *Bombay Slum Demolition Drive, 2004-2005*. http://dupb.blogspot.com/2005/02/fact-tentative-sheet-related-to-large.html. Website visited on August 5th, 2005.

Patel S. 2001 (September). *Shack/Slum Dwellers International: Exploring Global Spaces for Local Action in New York*. Mumbai: SPARC.

Patel, S. and Mitlin, D. 2001. *The work of SPARC, the National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan. International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED): Poverty Reduction in Urban Areas Series, Working Paper 5*. London: IIED.

Patel, S. and Mitlin, D. 2002. 'Sharing experiences and changing lives'. *Community Development Journal*, 37: 2, 125-136.

Patel, S, J. Bolnick J. and D. Mitlin. 2000. 'Squatting on the Global Highway: Community Exchanges for Urban Transformation,' pp. 396-409. In, M. Edwards and J. Gaventa (eds) *Global Citizen Action*. London: Earthscan: London.

Pollock, S, H.K. Bhabha, C.A. Breckenridge and D. Chakrabarty. 2000. 'Cosmopolitanisms'. *Public Culture*, 12: 3, 577-589.

Prakash, G. 2005. 'Edward Said in Bombay'. *Critical Inquiry,* 31, 498-504.

Prakash, G, 2006. 'The Idea of Bombay.' *The American Scholar,* 75: 2, 88-99.

Punwani, J. 2003. ''My Area, Your Area': How the Riots Changed the City'. In, S. Patel and J. Masselos (Eds.,) *Bombay and Mumbai: The City in Transition*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Punwani, J. 2006. 'Mumbai Bomb Blasts 1 – Denial of Constitutional Rights'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41: 36, pp. 3841-3843.

Rattansi, A. 2004. 'Dialogues on Difference: Cosmopolitans, Locals and 'Others' in a Post-National Age'. *Sociology*, 38: 3, pp. 613-621.

Rao, V. 2006. 'Slum as theory'. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 30: 1, pp. 225-232.

Sandercock, L. 2003. *Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities*. New York: Continuum.

Sassen, S. 2003 'Globalization or denationalisation?' *Review of International Political Economy*, 10:1, 1-22.

SDI. 2003. *Slum / Shack Dwellers International.* http://www.sdinet.org, Website visited August, 2003.

Shaikh, J. 2005. 'Worker politics, trade unions and the Shiv Sena's rise in central Bombay'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, pp. 1893-1900.

Shaw, A. 1999. 'The Planning and Development of New Bombay'. *Modern Asian Studies* 33: pp. 951-988.

Vasudevan, R. 2000. 'Shifting Codes, Dissolving Identities: the Hindu Social Film of the 1950s as Popular Culture,' pp. 99-121. In, R. Vasudevan (ed) *Making Meaning in Indian Cinema*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Varma, R. 2004. 'Provincialising the Global City: From Bombay to Mumbai'. *Social Text* 22: 4, 65-89.

Vertovec, S. and R. Cohen. 2000. *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context and Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Virani, P. 2001. *Once was Bombay.* New Delhi: Penguin.

Zaidi, H.S. 2003. *Black Friday: The True Story of the Bombay Bomb Blasts*. New Delhi: Penguin.

Image 1: Painting depicting the destruction of the Akal Takht after the army assault, 6 June 1984. Photo: Radhika Chopra

Visual Mnemonics: A Museum of Martyrs

Radhika Chopra

The past, Marx wrote bitterly in the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, "weighs like a nightmare on the minds of the living" (Marx 1852/1973: 147). Knowing his views, Marx perhaps would have been horrified to learn that the place where he sat and wrote his major treatise on capitalism in the British Museum is now a memorial of sorts, gazed upon with reverence by countless academic tourists, partly as a mark of respect for his scholarship but also in the hope that his mental energy, though long dead, is not extinguished and might still infuse the space and flow like a magical force into the mind and pen of the contemporary scholar transforming their work into a luminous masterpiece. Not everyone shares Marx's cynicism. Remembrance of things past is a fundamental resource for actors and social groups living in the present who, to Marx's disgust, "conjure up spirits of the past to help them... borrow their names, slogans and costumes..." (Marx 1852/1973: 147). We do not leave our past behind; it's a palpable presence in our present, and we actively commemorate and remember the past in monuments and memorials, in texts, images, songs, stories, rituals, art, and in the evocation of the spirit of persons.

But Marx warned us that the past can be a nightmare, its memory producing an intense sense of disquiet. The serene aesthetic of the Vietnam Memorial, for example, suggests a moving away from the horrors of violence and peaceful reconciliation with a specific past. On the other hand, the monumental memorials of the Nazi regime impelled some German artists to create "counter monuments" (Young 1993) that offered no closure or solace, but evoked a deep disquiet and an uneasy remembering. Drawing inspiration from the work of artists and architects constructing memorials of the dark side of a society's brutal past, we can appreciate memorials as objects that embody emotion and also as objects designed to evoke emotions and feelings in the viewers and participants. Emotional landscapes are critical in any discussion of memorials, and need to be seen not as fossilizations of memory but as meticulous remembering and active forgetting of the past. Remembering is an inherently generative process, selective, creative and performative, mediated by material culture and ritual performances (Blair 2004: 2), embodied in the written, spoken and the visual word. An uneasily remembered past is the subject of this paper and though I locate my argument primarily in one 'set' of material memorials – viz- the Museum of the Golden Temple, Sikhsim's most sacred site in the north Indian city of Amritsar. It is important to state at the outset that

remembrance and memorialising of the event expand beyond portrayals in museum objects, 'travelling' across time and space.

Emotional landscapes

The orchestrated military assault on Sri Darbar Sahib Complex and its eponymous Golden Temple in Amritsar by the Indian Army during 'Operation Bluestar' was executed in the first week of June 1984. Cited most frequently as the source of 'hurt' of the entire Sikh community, the battle of Bluestar produced the monumental hurt -- the architectural mutilation of the Akal Takht, a premier building of the Golden Temple complex that represents political authority and autonomy within the Sikh community.

While the emotion of 'hurt' is powerfully stressed in political documents and charters, the other tenor in remembrance is the loss of *maryada*, a contextual term that connotes honour, way of life, ritual and traditions. *Rehat maryada* is the code of conduct incumbent on all Sikhs. But as Uberoi has pointed out, it is the bodily observances of men that symbolically constitute the collective body of community (Uberoi 1996) and its collective codes. The hurt to *maryada* therefore is understood as debasement of *mards* -- men who sustain and embody *maryada*. Numerous men interviewed during 2006-2007 recounted the deep sense of personal affront when accosted by police and Central Reserve Police Force personnel because they wore turbans, had long open beards, signs of their faith, but also of their political commitment to defend the faith. The male body as an expressive site of honour and hurt is matched by built landscapes that embody codes of the sacred and its desecration. The shattered shell of the Takht destroyed by a rocket propelled grenade launcher, was -- and is -- represented continually as the 'hurt'[1] that struck at the heart of sacred community (*sangat*). Within the overarching landscape of the sacred complex of the Darbar Sahib at Amritsar, the placement of relics, artefacts and sacred sites, evokes a particular vision of persecution, sacrifice and the loss and recovery of *maryada* or male honour and of desecrated spaces.

In this paper I shall not be able to address the politics preceding the attack on the Complex except to say that the Indian government represented the military act as the only possible response to militant violence and as an endeavour to 'flush out'[2] militants who had taken sanctuary within the Golden Temple Complex and fortified it. Chief among the notorious was Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. Head of a Sikh seminary located on the outskirts of Amritsar, Bhindranwale was a charismatic preacher and vociferous advocate for the imagined nation of Khalistan.[3] The assault on the sacred site is most frequently spoken of as a deeply traumatic event evoking intense recollections,[4] and uneasy remembrance.

Residents of Amritsar confined to their homes during the course of a 32 hour curfew imposed on the walled city from 1 June 1984 (The Tribune, 2 June, 1984) heard the staccato gunfire[5] and felt the ground shake. When curfew was finally lifted many ran through the narrow gullies toward the Golden Temple, in frenzy akin to mourners hearing the news of death. Looking at the damaged dome, women broke out into spontaneous *siyapa* (mourning laments).[6] The first viewing of the shell of the of the Akal Takht is a hurt remembered, and people come back again and again on successive anniversaries of Operation Bluestar to mourn the death of the Temple. The image of destruction of the Temple circulates continuously printed, painted and published to this day.

The remembrance of the hurt of Operation Bluestar has a double tenor. The death of specific people is mourned as part of the rituals of remembrance. But the desecration of the sacred complex as a wellspring of hurt is powerfully stressed. The two sources of hurt are not evoked in the same way or with the same intent. I would argue that among all the violent incidents that engulfed Panjab for almost three decades (Grover 1995; Gurharpal Singh 2000; Narayanan 1996; Pettigrew 1995; Puri *et.al.* 1999), the siege and attack on the Golden Temple Complex and the shelling of its sacred buildings in June 1984 is remembered as pivotal,[7] especially hurtful because of the place of the Golden Temple in Sikh history and hagiography. In the sacred geography of Sikhism, the Sri Darbar Sahib and the eponymous Golden Temple are the center of a moral and religious world. For Sikhs, pilgrimages to the Golden Temple on designated days of the ritual calendar or to mark personal life cycle events or for no special reason at all other than because someone "felt like it", is a performance of membership of the *sangat* (religious collective). Visits are part of personal and collective memory, recounted and re-performed to produce a sense of community. Religious souvenirs -- paintings, calendars, horoscopes, books of religious discourses and replicas of the sacred complex purchased from the surrounding bazaar shops layer memory with artefact. Bathing in the sacred pool, making offerings to the 'Book' housed in the Harmandir, the symbolic centre of the sacred complex, listening to scriptural recitations, reciting the *Ardas*, the prayers of supplication, and eating at the *langar*, the community kitchen of the complex, are all part of creating a sense of *sangat*, the gathered community of believers. The sense of community is created by the care of the complex through voluntary ritualized labour -- *kar seva* -- to maintain monuments and perform quotidian tasks. Anything from regular sweeping, washing, cooking, to building and repair work in the Temple is done through *kar seva.* Building contractors give their labour and expertise in a spirit of worship. Throughout the performance of *seva* (care of a superior being or site) some, though not all, workmen wear ritual clothing of blue turbans and *chogas* or long shirts denoting the practical as ceremonial, distinguished from the mundane. Within this intensely felt and observed landscape of belief, the army action was seen not merely as a military occupation but a desecration of a sacred landscape and a sacred community, continuously cited in commemorations as an irreparable hurt.

'Operation Bluestar' is an event at one site, but memory and rituals of remembrance associated with it move across space and time. The double deaths of Bhindranwale, the acknowledged leader of the militant movement and Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister who ordered the army action in June 1984 are commemorated across a string of memorial sites fragmented across city spaces and calenderical moments including newly created public spaces and days of remembrance. In the city of Delhi for example, there are two memorials to Indira Gandhi -- her home where she was assassinated and her riverside *samadhi* or cremation site. Days of remembrance of the two 'leaders' are observed as June 6th for Bhindranwale and October 31st for Indira Gandhi though there is a peculiar imprecision in the commemoration dates and spaces. Most official ceremonials of remembrance are conducted at Shakti Sthal though Indira Gandhi was gunned down at her residence on October 31st; but the site at which she was cremated -- Shakti Sthal-- on November 4th, 1984 is where most official ceremonies of remembrance are conducted on October 31st of every year. The exact date of Bhindranwale death is unclear, and until very recently some of his supporters in the seminary refused to acknowledge that he had died at all declaring that he is *chardi kala* -- in rising spirit. However, it is speculated that he was killed sometime on the night of 4-5th June

when the 'storming' of the Temple complex began or on the night of 5th-6th June when some of the heaviest shelling of the Temple complex occurred. His death and the death of others killed during the course of the army action, are most fully memorialized on the 6th of June, which may or may not be Bhindranwale's death anniversary. The Day of Genocide (*Ghallughara Divas*) is enacted in the first week of June at the Golden Temple, though the pogrom of killing Sikhs, the genocide itself, occurred in Delhi in the first week of November following the Prime Minister's assassination.[8] For many years following the construction of the double sited memorial for the slain Prime Minister, there was an official embargo on the construction of a martyrs memorial for Bhindranwale, and to this day there are controversies surrounding physical memorials for him.[9] The fragmentation of sites and memorials have produced invented styles of remembrance that signal transformations in the meanings of what these memorials are for, leaving open the question of who is commemorated in the rituals or physical memorials, and what needs to be remembered.

Within the controversies of the absence or double sited presence of memorials, the museum at the restored and rebuilt Akal Takht is a special kind of memorial. Set within the sacred precincts of the Temple complex, the museum seeks to create its own counter history of the event anchored in expressions of religious persecution and martyrdom. Museums as heterotopias of memories of sacrifice enable the segregation and conversion of individuals from ordinary men to martyrs. Repositories and material manifestations of cultural memories preserved as well as exhibited objects and paintings in the Museum signal what is to be actively remembered and what is marginal to memory. Portraits preserve the memory of those made famous by the style of their death, marking them out as extraordinary in death.[10]

Memory and metamorphosis

There is no physical memorial that marks the death of the *uggarwadi*[11] Bhindranwale. No 'official' public memorial has been built in his memory, and walking through the gullies approaching the Temple or within the sacred complex no noticeable visual signs suggest his significance. The refusal of the state to permit the construction of a memorial in Bhindranwale's memory is compounded by the refusal of many of his followers to acknowledge his death. The absence of a martyr to mourn and the spectacular presence of the damaged dome of the Akal Takht clearly visible on the city skyline for many years after 1984 inflect the memory of Bluestar with indecision, elision and dissent. It is not always easy therefore to ascertain and excavate what is remembered on the 6th of June of every year, when the day of genocide, *Ghallughara Divas* and its attendant martyrs, are commemorated.

The Golden Temple is an exemplar space haunted by diverse memories, a theatre of rituals that recreate particular events in commemoration. Formal gatherings, solemn discourses, personal memories, ritual recitations and the history embedded in the name of the day mark *ghallughara* as a newly inserted event in the ritual calendar of the sacred complex. Through the course of the full ritual day, people hang around in the complex for hours moving across and around the different spaces of the temple, a habitus of the past. Under the shade of *shamiyanas* (canopies) in the forecourt of the Akal Takht, groups gather to listen to *dhaddi jathas* (bands of bards) singing *vars*, the ballads that hark back to a heroic history. They wander toward the community kitchens to eat together in an act of sharing

bread; as the crowds swell, the *langar sevadars* (kitchen volunteers) seat pilgrims in the long verandahs that run around the overcrowded halls. Pilgrims perform *kar sewa* (voluntary labour), many of them collecting steel buckets to fill with the water to wash the *parikrama*, the walkway around the central pool and cool the marble of the uncovered path. As the June sun rises, some sit in quiet contemplation along the sides of the *sarovar*, the sacred pool, against marble plaques donated in the memory of family members or comrades lost in battle. Continuous recitations of the *Granth Sahib* (the sacred scripture) cast an aural canopy over the complex. It is at once a familiar ritual day, replicating many others, seeming to invest an overt normalcy into the commemoration. It is the contemporaneity of the insertion of *Ghallughara Divas*, or day of genocide, into the *Gurudwara* ritual calendar and the fact that its observance is still mired in controversy that militates against any assumption of normality.

That ritual insertion is substantiated in the commemorative plaques set at the base of the steps leading upto the Akal Takht. Like the other descriptive plaques set before each shrine or sacred spot within the complex, the plaques at the base of the Akal Takht steps (in three scripts – Gurmukhi, Devnagri and Roman) outline the significance of the Takht; but in doing so simultaneously lay out events in the life of the Takht and its significance in the politics of Sikhism.

The fourth paragraph in the English translation of the plaque reads: "...Its building was pulled down several times in the 18th century by the MUGHAL ARMY and AFGAN raiders. in June 1984, the Indian Army under OPERATION BLUESTAR destroyed and desecrated it. But each time the die-hard Sikhs sacrificed their lives while contesting the assailants and rebuild (sic) it with great enthusiasm..." The inscriptional style of capital letters and the different colour used to highlight the words "Operation Bluestar" underlines what needs to be remembered as events in the life of the Takht, and the political community, as targets of violence.

Perhaps one of the most interesting sets of spaces within the complex are the galleries and exhibition rooms of the Akal Takht Museum. Most writings on the Akal Takht Museum talk of the burning of rare manuscripts and objects destroyed or displaced during the last days of Operation Bluestar. When fires broke out in the Akal Takht a great deal of the art, manuscripts and religious objects of the Sikh kingdoms preserved in the Museum were burnt. Since 1985, the restoration of the museum has been a special concern. I have not been able to establish whether current exhibition spaces of the Museum replicate earlier arrangements, but it's clear that 'new' post-1984 objects, paintings and memorials were added in a specially earmarked gallery. Among the assorted exhibition spaces within the Museum, one of the most interesting is the wall of martyrs portrayed as defenders of *maryada*. Down the center of a long gallery, empty tank and bullet shells used in the 'fauji hamla' (army assault, the popular term for Operation Bluestar) recovered from the walls and debris of the ruined Akal Takht are displayed in glass cabinets. At one end of that gallery the facing wall is dedicated to a 1987 painted rendering of the destroyed Takht, with a caption that unequivocally states "Sri Akal Takht fauji hamleh toh baad (6 June 1984)" [See image 1: The Akal Takht after the army assault, 6 June 1984].

The painting is set at the center of a group of portraits of men involved in the assassinations of individuals responsible for the assault (*hamla*) on the Takht. The portraits of these men surround the Takht painting; they portray the men who died or were put to death by the Indian state as traitors or assassins though the captions of the paintings hung in the Museum describe the men as *shaheed* [martyrs] (see image 2). I return to this aspect later.

The realist rendering of these portraits differ in style from some of the other paintings of martyrs displayed on other gallery walls who are depicted "in action" as it were, with arrows in their chests or being thrown in the air to be caught on bayonets, or tossed into fires. The two 'sets' of paintings create a dialogue of portraiture style and the meanings generated in juxtaposition. To fully appreciate the significance of the style in which the Bluestar martyrs appear to the viewer, it is important first to consider the portrayals of medieval martyrs. While the paintings of medieval martyrdom are important in and of themselves, it is their significance in the contrast they present vis-a-vis the modern Bluestar martyrs that is my concern here.

Passing through the passage from medieval to modern martyrdom it's clear that we also traverse a particular version of Sikh history. Read as a set, the paintings of earlier martyrs forefront the persecution of religion and innocent believers of the faith. None of the martyrs in this set of paintings are 'soldiers'; instead they are crafted as innocent victims, brutally put to death by functionaries of a clearly antagonist state.

In the first painting, innocence is accentuated by the overwhelming presence of women and children, sitting on the ground holding the bloodied bodies of children in their laps, or standing in mute supplication to men with reddened swords and butchered corpses of babies held upside down, or tossing bodies in the air to be caught on spears (see image 3). Hovering vultures, scavenging dogs and a barren tree intensify the impression of carnage. Military presence and a warlike context are suggested in the group of horsemen in the distant background on the top right corner of the painting as well as the uniformed soldiers mounted on horseback encircling and holding captive the group of women and children. Historical 'location' is evident in the style of military uniform but even more clearly in the mosque in the background that evokes the Mughal Islamic state and/or invading Afghan armies hostile towards believers of another faith.

The second painting underlines the defencelessness of victims, portrayed here in the unresisting body of a boy held by his captors just prior to being tossed into a fire (see image 4). Innocence and valour fuse in the peaceful expression of the boy's face combined with his pristine white and blue clothes, unruffled by any sign of struggle or resistance. Pliant body postures evoke more than defencelessness; docile bodies are active in producing the idea of an acceptance of death in the literal and metaphoric hands of violence, embodied in the fierce stances of the executioners. It is exactly this sense of acceptance of violence and non resistance that is the key to understanding the depictions of this category of martyrs whom the modern viewer can pity but also admire for their fortitude. No attempt at identity however is sought to be crafted between the image and the viewer other than one of compassion tinged with admiration.

The frame of the modern is removed in both paintings between docile and aggressive bodies; a modernist militaristic vocabulary of 'non-combatants' and 'collateral damage' that projects a non-combatant as an exemplar of innocent victimhood, but also of extreme passivity and surrender is made irrelevant in understanding compliant body postures. Both paintings in the Museum create an altered frame for docility; the second painting in particular produces docility as active, creating and adopting the identity of martyr as a volitional act. What comes through clearly is that this is a category of martyrs set apart, sacralised by their incorruptibility in death, but also volitional in the adoption of death. Unique to these depictions is the idea that these are not images of martial 'defenders' of faith, as much as

innocent believers who held their faith and were put to death for this unwarlike act. The contrast within the paintings between the unarmed victims and their executioners armed with bayonets and swords, the weapons of warfare, elucidates the constant shifts between active and passive acts and bodies that constitute purity of innocence and strength of belief in the face of violence.

The paintings position medieval martyrs in a visual storyline just below the painted depictions of two major 'battles' of Sikh history, the Vadda and Chotta Ghallughara (the major and minor carnage) fought against invading Afghans as well as paintings that visually describe other assaults on the Golden Temple in medieval history. Together these 'war paintings' and martyr images underscore the emphasis on a history remembered as one of persecution of faithful and innocent believers, and the assault on sacred buildings referred to in the plaques set before the Takht in the Temple described above.

There is a stark contrast between the stylisations of medieval and modern martyrs. The elaborated visual narratives within each painting (see images 2 and 3) and the juxtaposition with images of battle create a detailed storyline for each medieval martyr. Images of modern martyrs on the other hand, are seemingly devoid of such narrative devises. How then is martyrdom constructed and visualized in images shorn of concrete storylines?

To address the issue of a story without a story as it were, I want to briefly look at a small set of images that enable us to understand the journey into 'modern' martyrdom. These images allude to a specific period of post-1947 Indian politics. In the sixties, the linguistic reorganisation of states within the Indian Union led to huge agitations within Punjab to claim 'Punjabi speaking' areas. Termed the Punjabi Suba agitation, the movement created a particular context for martyrdom, of men who died in defence of what at the time was broadly encapsulated in the term *punjabiyat*, denoting Punjabi culture most palpable in language. Linguistic identity however expanded and became synonymous with religion; Sikhs were 'naturalised' as Punjabi speakers and inhabitants of the territory of the Punj- Ab -- the land of the five rivers, creating a set of exclusions that finally translated into a communal divide between Sikhs and Hindus. It's interesting though that these agitations could not fully capture the sense of a faith under threat so evident in the imaging of medieval martyrs, but were primarily anchored in the idiom of territory and political rights within the overall frame of state re-organisation. And this indeed is their significance -- the idea of persecution absorbed and converted to political right.

In the Museum, the images of the Punjabi Suba martyrs portray this ambiguity and conversion. Most are newspaper images, reproduced as 'portraits' with small captions that resemble news items (see image 5). The sepia of faded newsprint steeps the image as belonging to an archived political past that cannot be forgotten. The key to these martyrs is the fact of their death, and they appear to the viewer as corpses, as a last viewing of person in mourning rituals. Captions celebrate the fact of their death, creating an identity of politically charged and 'active' martyrs dying in defence of an identity fastened to faith. It is the 'induction' of politics in faith that has impelled modern day political movements in Punjab, from Punjab Suba to Khalistan, projecting the demand for separate territory as inspired by the politics of belief, a territory within which faith is 'free'. The idea of martyrs dying for a linguistically and culturally distinct territory in the sixties was expanded toward the demand of a separate 'nation' for the Khasla, the ritually 'purified' initiates and faithful citizens of Khalistan.

The martyrs of the pure nation, Khalistan, have their own separate wall (see image 2). The main wall facing the entry into the gallery of martyrs is devoted to the Bluestar martyrs.

Unlike their medieval forbearers to whom fortitude is central, or the early moderns reproduced as newsprint corpses, the Bluestar martyrs face out toward the viewers, resembling faces in passport photographs, looking directly at the camera/viewer. The photographic replication suggests not only a realist aesthetic sensibility, but also proposes an identity of 'likeness' through the direct gaze. Looking a person in the eye -- "aank milana "-- is a deeply gendered gesture to establish relations of correspondence between men, and here it establishes a relationship of reciprocal resemblance between contemporary martyrs with their modern viewers. Subegh Singh, the mastermind behind the fortifications in the Temple complex (see image 6) and Satwant Singh, one of the assassins of the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, are painted in their full army and police uniforms, while others are in formal attire; Beant Singh, the other assassin of the Prime Minister, wears a coat and a necktie, with a carefully tied turban, immediately recognizable to the viewer as a presentation of the public self. Unconditional intimacy however is elided by the use of the third person honorific 'aap ji' and 'shaheed bhai' in the captions that reach out toward the viewer but simultaneously create a distance through deference, evoking attitudes of respect. The captions below the portrait painted in 1997 of Jinda (see image 7) and his co-conspirator Sukha, both accused and hung for the assassination of General A.S. Vaidya, Chief of Army Staff at the time of Operation Bluestar, address each man in the plural honorific, and end with the words "9 October 1992...phansi di saza ditti, jo eihnah neh hasdaiyan-hasdaiyan pravan karke Sikh qaum da nam roshan kitta" (on 9 October 1992...he was sentenced to hang, a punishment of death he embraced laughing, making/causing the name of the Sikh community to shine). An identity of sameness is first established (like when some martyrs such as Shabeg Singh and Satwant Singh are spoken of as being in the police force, or the army, or born in specific villages); and then the likeness is disrupted in the captioning through the distancing styles of deference. The details of the style of death of these men signify them as extraordinary people to be emulated, but simultaneously distinct as martyrs.

It is interesting that in almost all the captions of the portraits the year of birth is noted without a day or date; but the exact date of each man's death is meticulously recorded because this is the day to remember each by. The year of birth of Amrik Singh and Subegh Singh killed in the Operation, is noted to indicate the beginning of the life span of these shaheed or martyrs (1954 and 1923 respectively) but the exact day and year of death of both are indicated clearly -- 6th June, 1984. The life span of Beant Singh, the assassin of Indira Gandhi is indicated as 1949-31st October 1984, while the caption under the portrait of Satwant Singh executed later in the same case, reads "phansin the latka ke kattal kitte gaya. Us vakat aap di umar 22 sal si, aap ji pulice vich naukri kardeh san" (he was made to hang and killed. At the time, his [the respectful plural pronoun 'aap' is used] age was 22 years, and he had a job in the police). The movement of visitors through the interlinked galleries creates a visual lineage of medieval to modern martyrs;[12] paintings of the medieval Chotta and Vadda Ghallugharas (minor and major massacres), the visualizations of the Punjabi Suba agitations of the 1950s and 1960s with their attendant martyrs, literally lead into the gallery of 1984.

The galleries finally open into a corridor leading to the exit, a special exhibition space in itself (see image 8). The corridor walls are a memorial inscribed with the names of those whose bodies were discovered within the complex and could be identified or those who were not cremated by the army. The name, father's name and village of each person,

organized by district are inscribed in blue on white. For many family members of those whose names are thus inscribed, the corridor list is a substitution for the cremation they could not perform in the regular way; the list-in-the-corridor provides a space and occasion for a periodic commemoration that doubles as personal and collective mourning.

The visual field is not independent of the narrative but forms the ordering landscape of significant sites and momentous events. The endless lists sign off, as it were, the Museum as memorial. But people who wander through the galleries of exhibits in the Museum sit in the corridors for a while staring at the names listed flatly before them, mimetically replicating the ritual act of *apsos* (sorrow, grieving) when mourners arrive to share in the grieving after a death. The replication of mourning rituals gives the whole act of sitting in a public corridor the colour of collective memorialising on a marked and signified day.

Troublesome charisma, ambivalent memory

The series of memorials within and outside the Museum coupled with the ritual events observed by the gathered assembly constitute *ghallughara divas* as a day of remembrance of an emotive event that marked a sacred landscape with violence. But within the material, ritual and aural commemorations there is a remarkable absence -- no paintings of Bhindranwale are exhibited in the Museum;[13] no rituals are enacted specifically in his name; and nowhere is his name and 'patta' (location/ address/ identity) listed. He is mentioned in the captions detailing the death history of Amrik Singh (Bhindranwale's close associate, killed on 6 June) and General Shabeg Singh (whose body was found in the forecourt of the Akal Takht on 6th June). These are oddly tangential references for such a significant figure who many identify as the animating spirit of the Khalistan movement. The absence of memorials for Bhindranwale might signify the telescoping of all martyrs, a fusing reinforced and substantiated by the organization of space and visual mnemonics of interconnected galleries displaying endless images to suggest an unbroken lineage of martyrdom and a collective history. Nevertheless the absence of specific memorials for Bhindranwale and the ambiguity surrounding his memory needs to be addressed.

The predominant debates around Bhindranwale's actions from September 1981 (when he was arrested for the murder of the head of the Nirankari sect) to his death sometime on the night of 6-7 June 1984 cast him simultaneously as the leader of terrorists (*uggarwadi*) and the honed warrior (*khargku*) who represented the spirit and honour of true Sikh *maryada*. In the two years between 1982 and 1984 (while he was at the Golden Temple) he was often represented as the charismatic Sant who embodied *chardi kala* -- the blossoming spirit -- and *piri* or the spiritual way more effectively and completely than the legitimate *Jathedars*, the ordained leaders of the Akal Takht who 'ruled' by committee, and certainly more powerful than many political leaders of the Akali Party. Bhindranwale promoted the willingness to fight and destroy the 'enemies of religion' as essential qualities of devotion, citing Baba Deep Singh, hero and martyr, who died defending the Golden Temple against Afghan invaders in the 18th century.[14] Reinstating individual charisma and the energized community, Bhindranwale was seen to epitomize that recovery of spirit. Bhindranwale usurped the legitimate authority of the Akali Party as well as of the Jathedar of the Takht, evoking charismatic authority.

In the Indian context, the concept of charisma is viewed as the presence of divine energy -- *chardi kala* of Sikhism or *tejas* within Hindu thought. It is believed to reside in

extraordinary human beings, including exceptional religious teachers or preachers. The concept also legitimizes fresh commentaries on canonical texts, or new sacred scriptures, expanding the Weberian notion to include the reanimation of cults and images in the range of charismatic agendas (Dalmia et al 2001). When the tenth Sikh Guru Govind Singh closed the line of spiritual succession, he not only prevented future rivalries for the status, but also invested the Holy Book of the Sikhs, the Granth Sahib with the status of ultimate spiritual guide and non-human embodiment of charisma. A canon was declared Guru and became the charismatic center of the Sikh community located at the Golden Temple (von Stientencron 2001: 25). The investiture of the book with a personhood is complemented by a disavowal of a living guru or divine person, a transfer presented as fully accomplished and uncontested. That is the canonical memory. But the theatrics of memory rituals and their continual reiteration of the centrality and inviolability of the canon through repeated disavowals of 'living' gurus seem to me to suggest an incompleteness of the transfer of charisma to the Book, and the underlying threat that a magnetic preacher of the canon can pose to the non-human text.

The ambivalence -- indeed the almost complete absence -- surrounding the memorialisation of Bhindranwale to me seems to rest only partially on the refusal of his followers to acknowledge his death. Nor is his usurpation of the authority of elected *jathedars* and wresting political power from the leaders of the Akali Party reason enough to explain the absence of commemoration. The ousting of elected officials and party men can really only be the overt text of political science. The unspoken transcript centres on the anxiety about the depth of his claim to charisma. The unease inscribed in speech, image and ritual can be excavated from successive performances and the range of martyrs depicted in the Museum galleries that reiterate the collective over the individual. Repeated demands for an 'apology' from the Indian state for the collective hurt incurred by the Sikh community in the Bluestar Operation and the constant harking back toward the death of 'innocents' referencing them as key figures of remembrance bypass the significance of individual actors. Visually, the telescoping of individual heroes within a lineage of martyrs combined with familiar sacred rituals submerge and minimize the extraordinary within the customary, creating an alternative text of memory in which Bhindranwale is only tangentially located. I would argue that the successive architectural restorations of the Akal Takht and the intense debates about the process and the actual doing of the restoration signal not just the centrality of a premier political building but also the inviolability of the *sangat*, that needed to assemble to exhibit its presence to itself in the act of restoring the Takht through collective labour. I suggest, even speculatively, that in the restoration of the Takht, and the display of new martyrs, the restitution of the authorized collective and its legitimate representatives, both non-human and mortal are centred. Performative and visual commemorations that place the destruction of the Takht at their centre reiterate legitimate sources of power and order. They also produce a deliberate forgetting of the hurt that cannot be enunciated -- individual charisma and its power to displace a canon.

Endnotes

1. 'Hurt' is signified across different domains of experience. Hurt was, and is, projected as political. For instance, the constitutional inclusion of Sikhs under the category 'Hindus' under Article 25(b) of the Indian Constitution, is resented and represented as 'hurting' the collective self. A sense of political "hurt"

is embedded in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, the charter outlining political and cultural demands for the nation of Khalistan, a separate nation bitterly fought for throughout the 80s and 90s.

2. The term 'flush out' is deployed in a multitude of civic and policing contexts; city drains and sewers are flushed out to rid them of dirt and vermin (Corbin 1986). Criminal gangs are 'flushed out' from disorderly neighbourhoods. The twinning of regulation and purification were critical tropes used in military narratives of Operation Bluestar and the subsequent, more sweeping Operation Woodrose that cleared villages of militants. Television newscasters have seamlessly adopted the term -- most recently news reports announced that radicals in the Lal Masjid in Islamabad, Pakistan, had been "flushed out" (CNN; CNN-IBN 10 July, 2007; Hindustan Times, July 11, 2007, p.1). *Hindustan Times* in fact headlined the army siege and assault on the mosque "Pak's Bluestar" (Hindustan Times, July 11, 2007, p.1).

3. The imagined demography of Khalistan effectively excluded non-believers as well as *patit*, or non- observing, Sikhs who did not conform to the code of *Rehat Maryada* (Sikh way of life enunciated in religious documents and pamphlets). The Anandpur Sahib Resolution which might be viewed as a constitution in the making of this imagined nation, demanded the right over river waters of Punjab; the right to regulate the movement of food grain outside the state; the right to carry religiously prescribed weapons like the *kirpan* (dagger); and so on. The Resolution challenged the Indian Constitution's categorization of Sikhs "as Hindu" (and therefore among other things, not entitled to the special privileges of reservation). The emotive language of disavowal drew simultaneously on scriptural tropes and political disaffection of dissent.

4. In an opinion poll conducted by a news channel, on the eve of India's 60th anniversary of Independence, 44% of the respondents felt that Operation Bluestar and the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 were India's "greatest political blot" (The Hindu, August 13, 2007, p.12).

5. On 1 June 1984, some of the heaviest exchanges of fire between security forces and men inside the Golden Temple resulted in eleven deaths. Six bodies were handed over to the authorities by officials of the SGPC (Shiromani Gurdwara Prabadhak Committee, the body that manages gurdwaras or Sikh places of worship and the activities within them). Amrik Singh, of the All India Sikh Student Federation, a close associate of Bhindranwale, reported to the press that 26 bullet holes from military firing had damaged the Temple complex on June 1 (The Tribune, June 2 1984). Another report stated, "As a result of the firing the situation has become explosive in the city...there is a general feeling of scare among the residents and people are in a state of shock" (The Tribune, June 2 1984).

6. Interview with Lakkha Singh Phadda of West Drayton (September 2006, Southall Day Center, Southall, UK). Phadda, works in a catering unit at Gatwick, but had been in Amritsar during that fateful week in June 1984. After that experience and the deep outrage it evoked in him, he began to grow his beard and wear a full *dastar* (turban), even though it created a problem for him at his job at Gatwick Airport.

7. Operation Bluestar was not the only time the temple complex was entered and taken over by the state in the course of the period referred to as the 'militancy period'. Its memory however is marked because of the simultaneous concurrence of events; it was the *Gurpurab* -- Day of Remembrance -- of Guru Arjan Dev and thousands of Sikh pilgrims had gathered in the Temple precincts to celebrate the anniversary. Many killed in the army action on those two days included such pilgrims. The temple and its sacred buildings also suffered major damage.

8. Imprecision argues against memorials as inextricably tied to a discrete place or a single date, a point made by Lowenthal (1979: 121) in his discussions of WW memorials.

9. In the absence of a physical memorial to anchor collective memory, the commemoration of Ghallughara Divas (Day of Genocide) has also become a transnational ritual, and with its movement across space, meanings have shifted.

10. Ajeet Singh Khera (a former associate of Jagjit Singh Chauhan who declared the independent state of Khalistan in Bayswater, London) ironically said in an interview, "we've learnt how to die but not to live." Interview with Ajeet Singh Khera, September, 2006, Southall, UK.

11. *Uggarwadi* was the term officially deployed in all references to Bhindranwale and his cohorts. Loosely translated as 'terrorist' or 'extremist', the term was a contrast to the more popular term *kharghu* or freedom fighter. Slain kharghus automatically became 'shaheed' or martyrs.

12. Fenech (2001) also writes about the juxtaposition of recent 'martyrs' from the Punjab conflict placed alongside depictions of historical martyrs from the annals of Sikh history in Gurdwaras of the Diaspora.

13. On 29 November 2007, the SGPC, the body that manages Sikh shrines, or Gurdwaras, installed a portrait of Bhindranwale in the Central Sikh Museum at the Golden Temple amidst intense controversy. The gesture was read as an attempt to forestall the attempts by radical Sikh organizations to install a portrait depicting Bhindranwale armed with weaponry. A newspaper report noted that the "low key ceremony" was a way of keeping radical organisations at bay (The Tribune, Friday, 30 November, 2007, p.1).

14. Baba Deep Singh was also the founding head of the Damdami Taksal, .the seminary or school of exegesis of scriptures, located near the city of Amritsar, of which Bindranwale was the head for a period.

Bibliography

Blair, William. 2004. *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Corbin, Alain, 1986. *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odour and the French Social Imagination*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Dalmia, Vasudha, Kristen Malinar and Martin Christof (Eds.,). 2001. *Charisma and Canon: Essays on Religious History of the Indian Sub Continent*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Fenech, Louis E. 2001. *Martyrdom in the Sikh Tradition: Playing the 'Game of Love.'* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Grover, Verinder. 1995. *Story of Punjab: Yesterday And Today*. New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications.

Lowenthal, David. 1979. 'Age and Artefact: Dilemmas of Appreciation.' In, D. W. Meinig ed., *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press,

Marx, Karl. 1852 (1973). 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.' In, *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works,* Vol. I. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Narayanan, V.N. 1996. *Tryst with Terror: Punjab's Turbulent Decade.* New Delhi: Ajanta Publications.

Pettigrew, Joyce. 1995. *The Sikhs of the Punjab: Unheard Voices of State and Guerrilla Violence.* London: Zed Books.

Puri, Harish K., Judge, Paramjit Singh, Sekhon, Jagrup Singh. 1999. *Terrorism in Punjab: Understanding Grassroots Reality.* New Delhi: Har Anand Publications.

Singh, Gurharpal. 2000. *Ethnic Conflict in India: A Case Study of Punjab.* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Uberoi, Jit Pal Singh. 1996. 'On Being Unshorn.' In, Jit Pal Singh ed., *Religion, Civil Society and the State.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Von Stientencron, Heinrich. 2001. 'Charisma and Canon: The Dynamic of Legitimization and Innovation in Indian Religion.' In, Vasudha Dalmia et. al eds., *Charisma and Canon: Essays on Religious History of the Indian Sub Continent.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Young, James E. 1993. *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Image 2: The wall of 'Bluestar' martyrs. Photo: Radhika Chopra

Image 3: The martyrdom of pilgrims in Sikh medieval history. Photo: Radhika Chopra

Image 4: Medieval martyrs. Photo: Radhika Chopra

Image 5: Political martyrs. Photo: Radhika Chopra

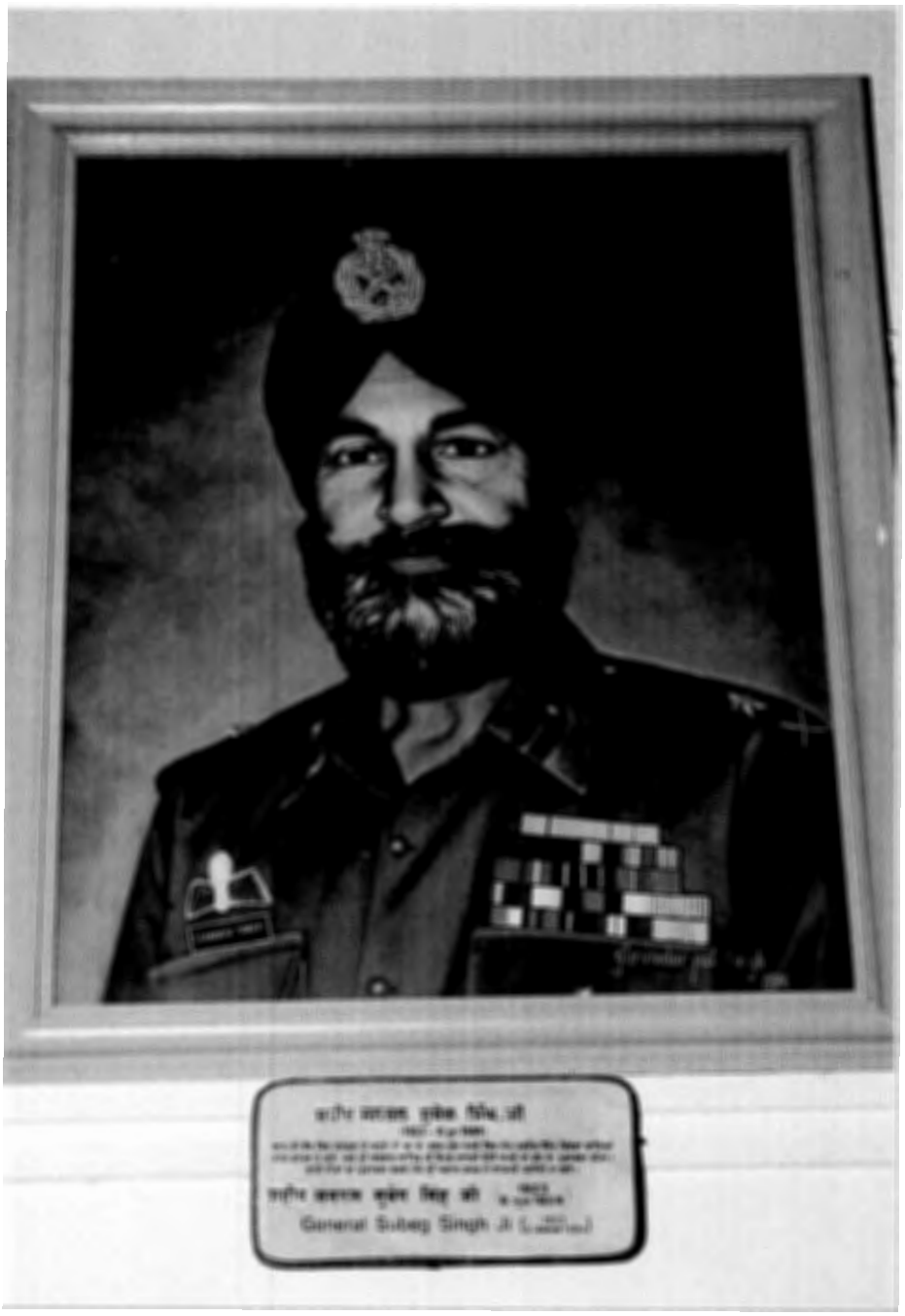


Image 6: Portrait of General Shabeg Singh, Bhindranwale's chief military advisor. Photo: Radhika Chopra

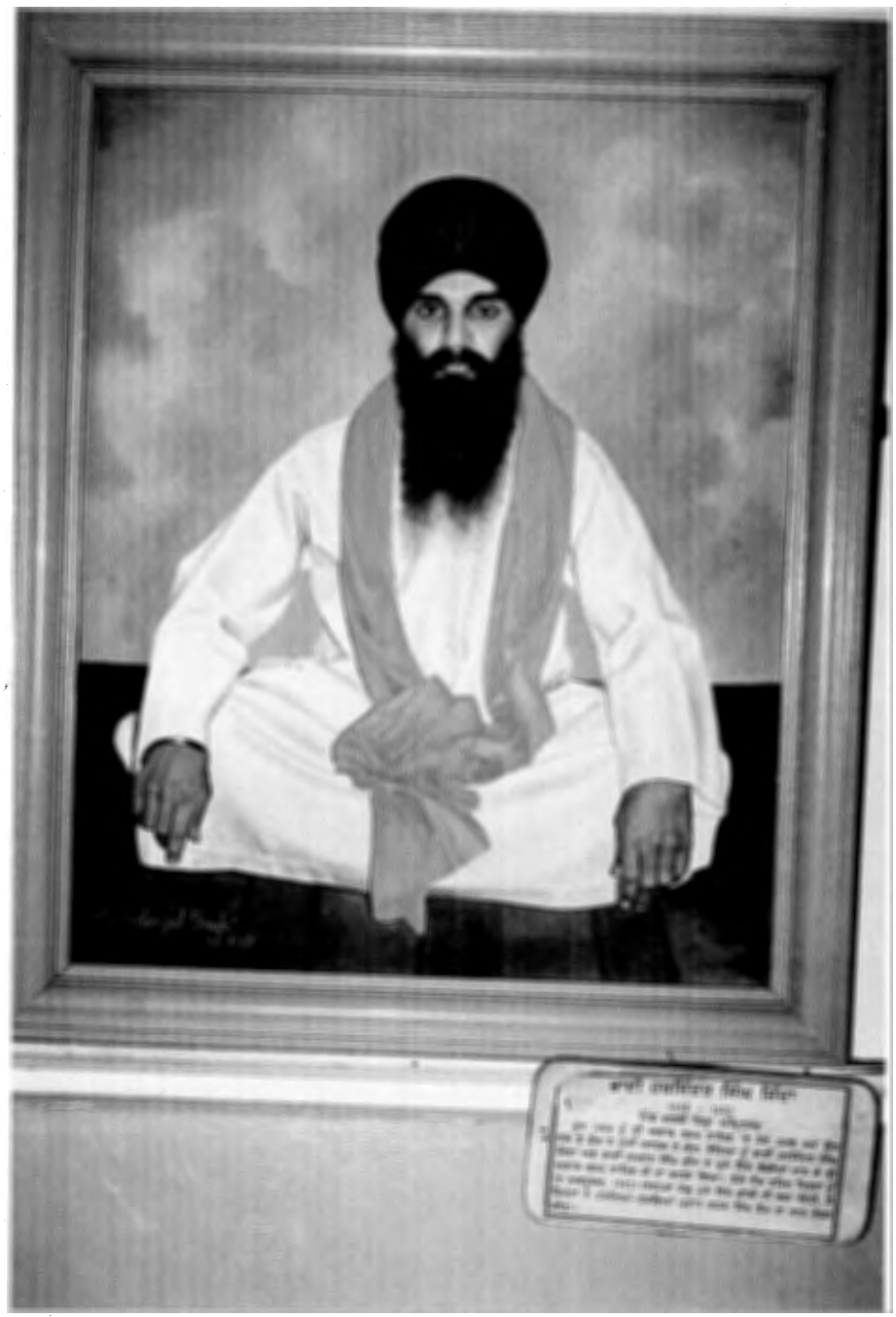


Image 7: Jinda, one of the Bluestar martyrs. Photo: Radhika Chopra

Image 8: List of ordinary pilgrims killed in the army action of Operation Bluestar. Photo: Radhika

Image 9. mages of heros for sale in shops near the temple complex. Photo: Radhika Chopra

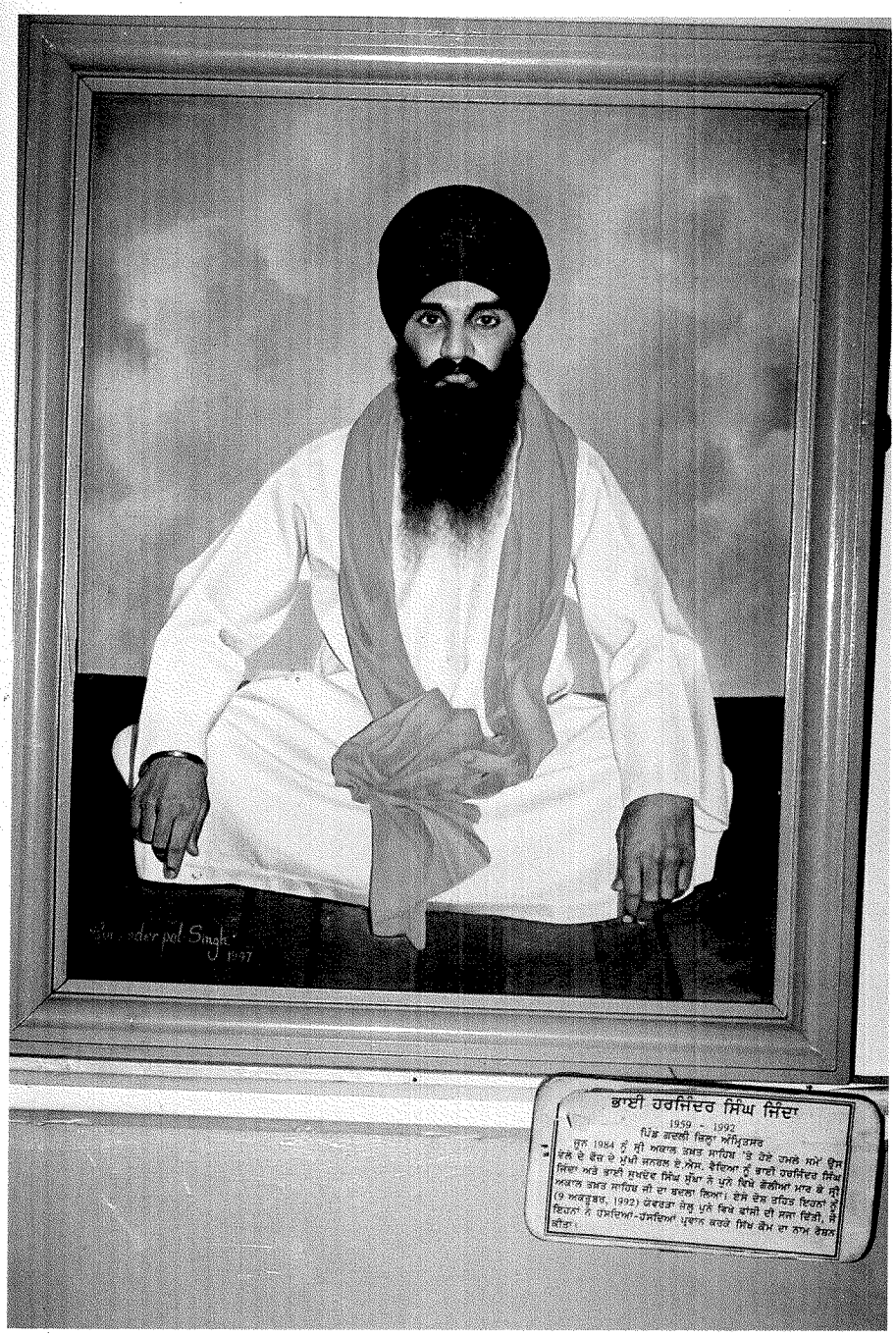


Image 7: Jinda, one of the Bluestar martyrs. Photo: Radhika Chopra

Image 8: List of ordinary pilgrims killed in the army action of Operation Bluestar. Photo: Radhika

Image 9. mages of heros for sale in shops near the temple complex. Photo: Radhika Chopra

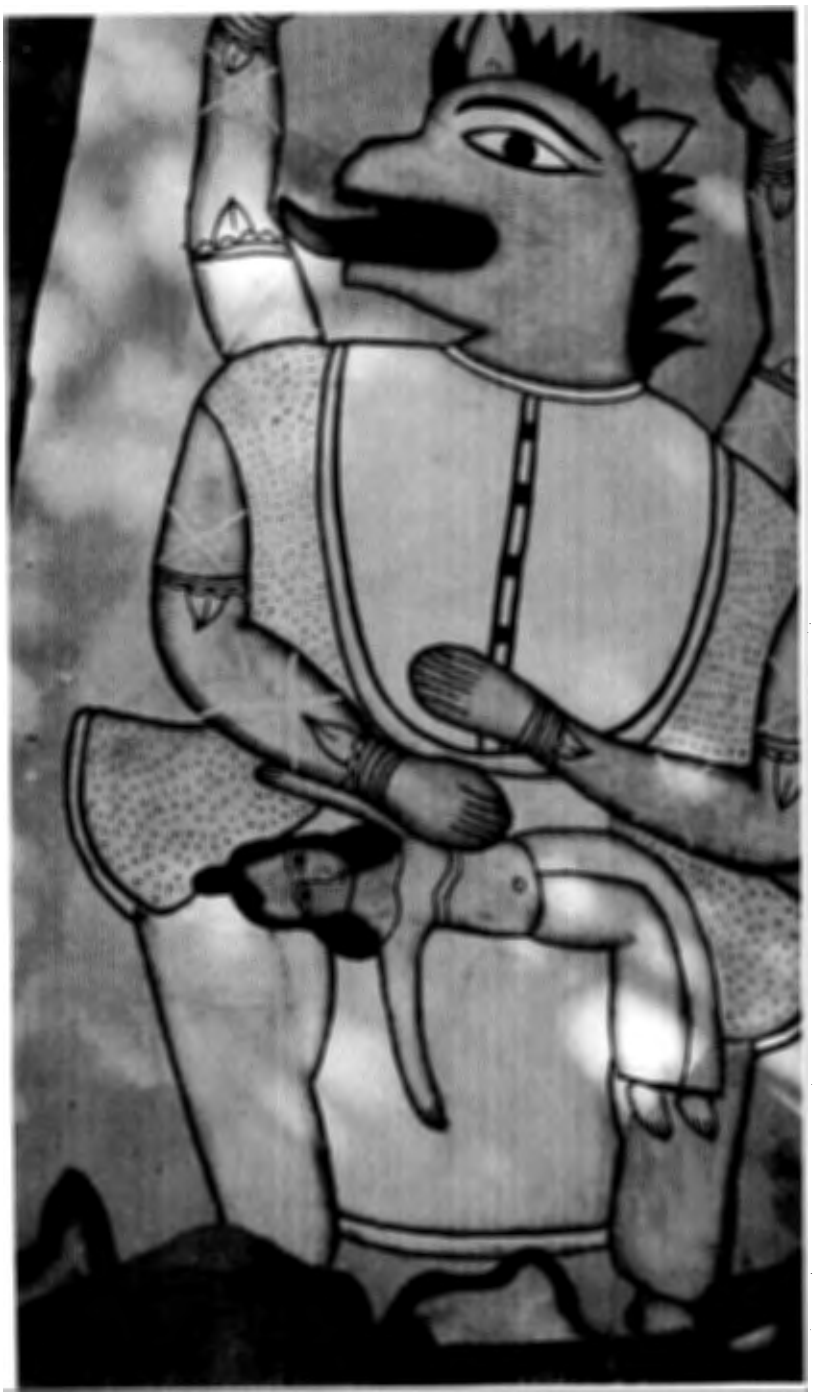


Figure 7: Narasimha in 'Kalighat style' painted by Bappi, 2008

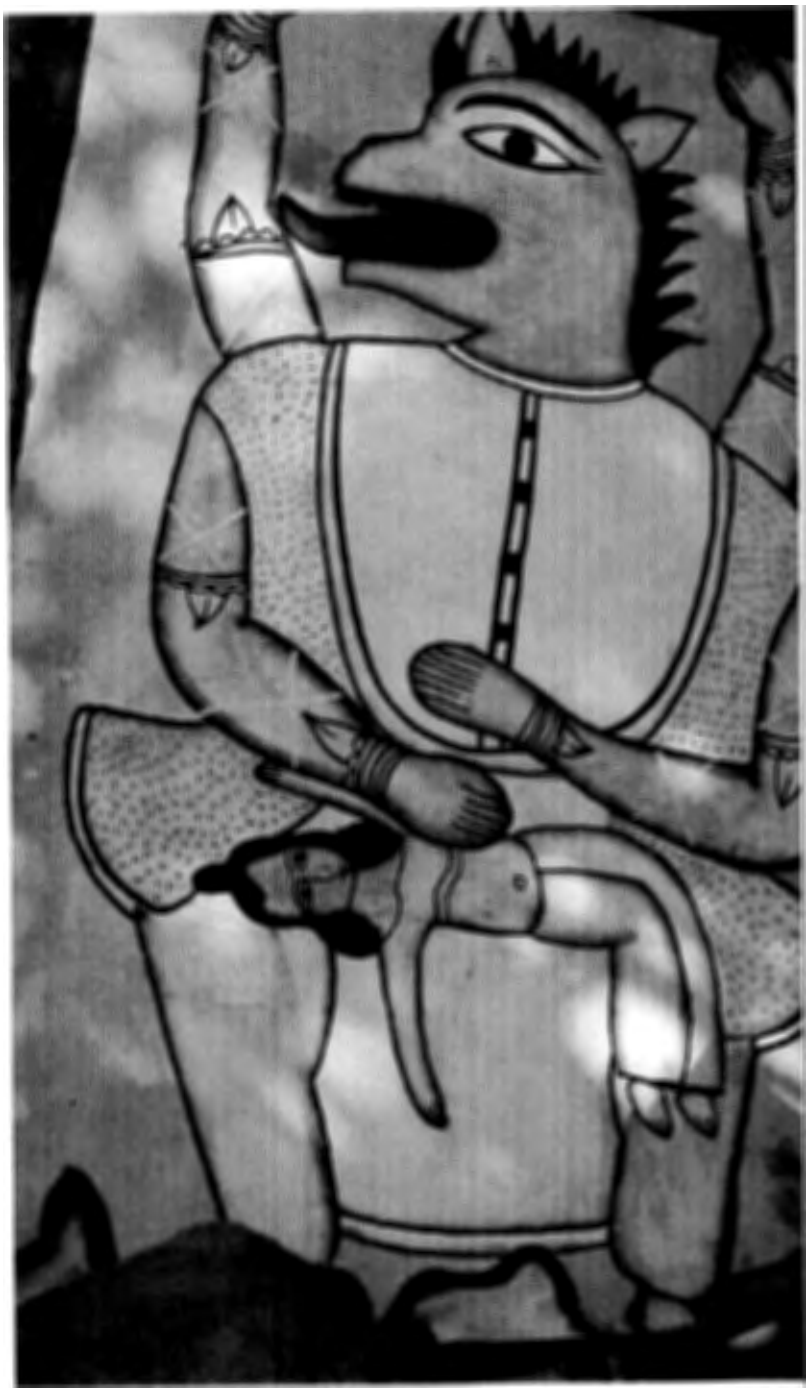


Figure 7: Narasimha in 'Kalighat style' painted by Bappi, 2008

The Transmission of Art Traditions: Children and Folk Art in India

Roma Chatterji

Long regarded as an embodiment of India's ancient craft tradition, the folk arts today are at a historic juncture. The interface of folk art with the global market has led to its transformation into an autotelic system as folk artists learn to interact with modern art institutions and become increasingly self-reflexive about their own art practices. State patronage in post-independence India played a major role in re-configuring traditional forms of folk culture and transforming them into commodities that could find a home in new contexts of exchange and performance. National institutions like the Crafts Museum in Delhi serve as a repository of the folk art forms of different regions in India and play an important role in 'reviving' and 'preserving' craft practices that are falling into disuse in their traditional contexts.[1] Crafts-persons from the different regions of India are invited to give month long demonstrations in cities such as Delhi or Chennai so that members of the general public can be exposed to these art forms by interacting with the practitioners. In my interviews with folk artists I have found that it is through such forms of interaction that they develop their initial contacts with the art market. It is also via such institutions that an awareness of one's art form as a distinct style that is different from other regional styles first comes to be articulated.[2] Perhaps it is in response to recent efforts to incorporate the work of folk artists in modern art worlds that they increasingly have to evolve forms of self-description and self-organization. Even if folk art in India today is not a full-fledged social system with its own system of communication and exchange as Niklas Luhman (2000) might envisage, it is nevertheless an emergent phenomenon with systemic features.

Emergent art forms as social systems

An exploration of the process of systems formation must necessarily consider the position of the child artist as one who will inherit a traditional art practice. In this paper I describe the processes of transmission by which children come to acquire the skills necessary for them to become practitioners in the modern art world. The transmission of tradition is a complex process involving the 'objectification of memory' so that previous motifs and patterns can be recollected and repeated but is also future oriented as no design is repeated mechanically, and innovations are incorporated which, in turn, become part of the tradition (Gell 1998:

255). Levels of complexity increase with the formation of the system, when self-description, the process by which the system becomes its own theme, is part of the ensemble of practices that have to be taught (Luhman 2000).[3] How do children become self-conscious about their art traditions? Do art objects change as a consequence of this emerging self-consciousness? Folk art forms that have been successful in marketing themselves have had to go through a long process of transformation by which the different strands of their art traditions were first untangled and those that were most likely to travel well and become intelligible in new contexts were selected for transmission. I take examples from two different regional styles of folk art, viz., Gond painting from Madhya Pradesh and Pata (scroll) painting from Medinipur, West Bengal. Each of the two styles demonstrates different levels of systems formation and has very different historical trajectories as I will show. However, in spite of the institutional differences between them, the processes of transmission of the art practices to succeeding generations are remarkably similar.

The making of tradition: a historical review

The Gond style of painting is a new tradition that goes back approximately thirty years. Its history is tied to Bharat Bhawan, a state sponsored institution of art and culture established in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh in the early 1980s. J. Swaminathan, the famous modern artist was asked to set up a museum of fine arts. A fortuitous combination of circumstances led to the establishment of an experimental institution, the Rupankar Museum, which housed the work of established modern artists as well as folk artists and untaught painters under the same roof. Swaminathan was fortunate in being able to work with Ashok Vajpayi, the director of Bharat Bhawan, an administrator who was also a scholar and a poet and Arjun Singh, the energetic chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, who took a personal interest in the experiments that were being carried out in Bharat Bhawan. Swaminathan was able to gather around him a group of motivated students from the various art colleges in Madhya Pradesh and send them to survey the tribal areas in this region. As Mushtaq Khan, one of the members of the team, told me, they were asked not merely to identify and collect samples of the different craft traditions available in these remote areas but also to carry drawing paper, colour and other implements necessary for making art objects.[4] They were instructed to ask the villagers if they wanted to experiment with any of the new material and to try out new ideas. It was in this way that Vivek Tembe encountered Jangadh Singh Shyam, a Pardhan Gond, who became the founder of the Gond style of painting. The Pardhan Gonds are the bards of this group and have a tradition of epic singing and story telling. Even though they do decorate their homes with wall paintings, the Gond style of painting is new and does not resemble the rudimentary figures painted on the walls of their houses.[5] Jangadh Singh decided to stay in Bhopal and was given a job in the graphics department of Bharat Bhawan. Encouraged by Swaminathan, he experimented with different media and soon developed a rich visual vocabulary that was strongly influenced by the religious and narrative traditions of the Pardhans. There was a great demand for his paintings and soon members from his kin group in Mandla started coming to Bhopal to work under him. Over the years, the Gond style has become an autonomous art style with its own thematics and has achieved global recognition. Many of Jangadh's former apprentices are important artists in their own right and the work of his son Mayank has been put up for auction at Sotheby's.

Unlike the Gond artists discussed above, the Chitrakars are a caste of scroll painters and singers in West Bengal. Even though the tradition of painting and displaying scrolls is very old and came to the public eye as early as the 1930s when Gurusaday Dutt started collecting scrolls and songs from the artists, by the 60s and 70s it was in danger of dying out due to lack of patronage.[6] It is only since the late 80s that the tradition is seeing a revival when the socialist government of West Bengal started using traditional performative media to spread awareness about its health and developmental programmes. Chitrakars were recruited to compose patas (scroll paintings) on themes such as adult literacy, malaria eradication, tree plantation, female infanticide and so on. They went from village to village singing songs that propagated the governments' message. Government initiatives aimed at the revival of this folk art form have helped set up cooperatives and self-help groups and to train traditional artists to work in other media such as cloth, leather and wood so that they can produce objects that are saleable in urban markets. It has also led to an exponential increase in women painters and performers as most governments in India promote women's empowerment programmes.[7] However, some of the important initiatives that have had a lasting influence on the aesthetics of this form came from private individuals. David McCutchion, a teacher in comparative literature at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, and his student Suhrid Kumar Bhowmik began to commission scrolls for sale in the late 70s and early 80s. Newly arrived from England, McCutchion developed a keen interest in Bengal's rural culture. He and Bhowmik tried to revive the scroll painting tradition by commissioning works for sale in England. Since it was the painted scroll rather than the performance that was for sale, they encouraged the painters to incorporate narrative context into the paintings which would make them intelligible to uninformed viewers.[8] Traditionally, the painted scroll is not considered a stand alone object from which one can read a story. It is the song that accompanies the scroll that gives it meaning. The performer would sit before his audience and unroll a scroll frame by frame pointing to significant characters in the story with his/her finger. The audience would see only one frame at a time and never the whole scroll unfurled. Scrolls used for decoration are generally hung on walls so that the complete story can be viewed simultaneously. Pata performances in the past were never judged on the basis of the painting. Rather, it was the performer's voice and his/her ability to generate emotion which were the qualities that were valued above all else.

Apart from the sacred subjects that form the main corpus of their performances, Chitrakars are also known to compose on secular themes of local significance such as floods, cyclones and household scandals. The new emphasis on the painting and its impact on an ever widening market have also led to the incorporation of subjects that have global significance such as the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York and the tsunami. Song composition is still considered to be an important part of the conceptualization of new themes even though patas are increasingly seen as stand alone objects that must appeal to a clientele that is unfamiliar with Chitrakar traditions.

Learning the craft: apprenticeship and the household

One of the most influential theories of pictorial representation was propounded by Nelson Goodman (1976) who said that all images were conventional symbols. His work has had a major influence on art education (Kim 2004). Spontaneous drawing by children is supposed to

be significant in that it reveals how children experiment with ideas about themselves and their worlds by using symbols (Kim 2004: 34). However, it was Ernst Gombrich in his path breaking work, *Art and Illusion,* who first drew attention to the influence of cognitive structures on representation (Gombrich 1969). All cultures have schematic styles that are ubiquitous. To represent the world in the form of pictures, we first construct graphic models or schemata which reveal our conceptual understanding. Such schemata are not invented anew by each child but rather transmitted across generations either through imitation or by story-telling and come to form culture specific traditions (Kim 2004: 35) [See figure 1 and figure 2].

Much of the literature on children's' art is concerned with spontaneous drawings of children and the importance of make-believe in grounding the images in human relationships (Gombrich 1969). While this aspect of picture-making is important in the cases discussed below, it is the actual process of learning to inhabit the universe of pictorial symbols that is much more significant. Painting is serious business for these children – a craft to be learnt and a resource for material sustenance.

In an influential essay on Pahari painting, the art historian B.N. Goswamy drew attention to the importance of the family in transmitting innovations in art traditions across generations (Goswamy 1968). Thus in Indian craft traditions, it is the family that is the unit within which artistic style is crystallized and through which it is disseminated (Goswamy 1968). This is certainly true of the two art traditions that I discuss in this paper. However, even when we take the household as the operational unit of art production we see that each child in the household relates to the tradition in a way that is unique. I now present vignettes from households in Naya village, West Medinipur and Bhopal to show how different children within the same household relate to pictures and to art production.[9]

Chitrakar child artists

Let me begin with Sonia Chitrakar, a 9 year old girl from Naya village, who has been traveling with her parents to craft fairs in different parts of the country from the time that she was 7 years old. Sonia has a brother and a sister both of whom are older than her and who also paint. Sanjay, Sonia's brother, aged 12 years, also travels with his parents sometimes but since he cannot sing well, he does not attract the kind of audience that Sonia does. Moushumi is 16 and was married last year. Her husband was apprenticed to a plumber in Mumbai but after his marriage he has moved in with his wife's family and is learning to paint under Moushumi's supervision.[10] I have known this family for almost three years and have been following developments in their art work since then.

At the time when I first met Sonia and Sanjay at the Crafts Museum in Delhi they were painting birds, fish and chain figures passed off as pictures of Santal tribals [See figure 3 and figure].

Both children sat in the stall with their parents and painted to pass the time. Their works had a certain naïve appeal that went down well with the Delhi audience. Sonia could also sing effortlessly and was able to draw attention to the paintings hanging in their stall. An uninhibited child, she would also practice the smattering of English and Hindi that she learnt at school with the people who came to their stall [See figure 5].

Unlike many less fortunate children in Naya, neither Sonia nor her siblings have had to go through the arduous process of learning by apprenticeship. All three of them began

painting as a form of play and their parents were prosperous enough to let them experiment with art implements[11] Many children begin their careers as painters by doodling on walls or drawing on damaged and discarded scrolls [See figure 6: Painting by Piltu, 2 years; Naya, 2006].

K.G. Subramanyan (2007), a modern artist who has worked with traditional craft techniques, discusses the components that go to make up the work process of any craft tradition. Craftsmen break up the work process into simple and repetitive action sequences. An apprentice learns the craft by performing the action sequences over and over again, imitating the master craftsman, until s/he has internalized the overall programme. Tools are an intrinsic part of the craft design – of its sensory experience. The apprentice must learn to incorporate them in his body rhythm. As Subramanyan says, tool use is part of the 'body dialect of the material and the work process' (Subramanyan 2007: 187). Thus apprenticeship involves both incorporation into a social world of craftsmen and patronage, but also into a material culture of tools and the complex of practices associated with them, both symbolic and utilitarian.

The Chitrakar apprentices first begin by filling in the floral borders that demarcate the different registers of the scroll painting. The horizontal line of the border (beed, in the vocabulary of the Chitrakars) is used to anchor the figures in the frame and help establish the relationship between the different characters depicted. Since the pata is supposed to tell a story, the successive registers of the scroll must demonstrate not only narrative continuity but also generate enough dramatic excitement to hold the attention of the audience. It is only through the somewhat mechanical process of filling in colours and drawing border patterns that the apprentice acquires knowledge of the picture surface and the space within which the figures are to be organized. Detailing and shading – activities which require a steady hand and keen vision are among the techniques that are acquired last, only after the apprentice has learned to combine and match colours with taste.[12]

As I have said, the three children that I am talking about did not learn painting in this way. When I first knew them, Sanjay and Sonia were experimenting with motifs taken from larger narratives. Sonia would draw rows of Santal figures or fish clustered around a plate of rice, a motif taken from a popular 'fishes' wedding' *pata*. Sanjay painted the same theme but with birds instead of fish [see figures 4 and 5]. Both children painted single frame pictures that did not necessarily tell a story. Mantu, their father, told me that beginners usually paint figures with a single eye (*ek chokkha*). Two eyed figures (*du chokkha*) necessary for depicting face-to-face encounters are more difficult to draw because the position of the head and face determines the placement of the body, limbs and clothing. Typically, Medinipur *patas* show figures in three-quarter face so that the figures seem to be looking both at characters within the scene as well as out at us. In a face-to-face encounter, one of the figures is depicted in profile facing the other figure while the latter looks out at the viewers, drawing them into the dramatic scene.

Moushumi at that time had already graduated to short scroll paintings with rudimentary story lines. I have a Birds and Beasts (*poshu-pokkhi*) scroll by Moushumi – a contemporary theme first suggested to the Chitrakars by a Delhi environmentalist. It has become very popular over the years because it allows the artist free reign of the imagination. I have seen artists incorporate a fantastic bestiary into their jungle scenes complete with dinosaurs and prehensile creatures. Moushumi's first mature work was a scroll on this

subject. But as a 13 year old girl who still listened to ghost stories told by her grandmother, she incorporated ghosts and demonic figures into her painting. She also incorporated some of her father's signature motifs such as a stylized tiger and cow.[13] This is probably the last scroll in which she gave fantasy a free reign [see figure 8]. Even though she is on the way to becoming an accomplished painter, she has lost the desire to experiment. Her recent work is purely imitative and apart from some awkwardness in technique is indistinguishable as far as composition is concerned from her father's work.

Bappi, her 19 year old husband, has graduated from helping Moushumi and Mantu to copying pictures in the Kalighat style.[14] He has, however, not been able to sell any of his paintings as yet [see figure 7 and figure 8].

Sanjay, the only child in Naya to have received an award for his work, seems to have lost interest in painting though he continues to produce 'bird wedding' pictures sporadically.[15] Sonia's progress has been dramatic in the last three years. From compositions that are purely additive and in which all the figures are on the same scale, she has moved to experimenting with differences in scale, and to actual story telling [see figure 9 and figure 10].

Unlike her sister, she does not imitate her parents' work. Thus she gives the Bin-Laden story her own interpretation. Instead of a battle scene (i.e. the Afghan war) she shows a reconnaissance plane that has just landed after surveying the scene of devastation[16] [see figure 11].

The challenge for her will be to actually move to song composition. This is a difficult skill to acquire especially for school-going children who have had to unlearn the techniques of oral composition[17] [see figure 12].

Gond child artists

Narmada Prasad Taikam is of the first generation of Gond artists. He was slightly older than Jangadh Singh Shyam when he first came to Bharat Bhawan and probably did not have the latter's charisma but is a fine painter with his own unique vision. There was a certain savagery in his early work. This, coupled with a distinctive decorative pattern with which he covered his motifs, gave his paintings powerful aesthetic appeal. Over the years his work has become very stylized and quite formulaic. He has three sons and one daughter who all paint. His wife, Rama Bai, learnt from him after marriage. All the children paint though each one has a distinctive style – the eldest Ravi's is perhaps closest to his father[18] [see figure 13].

I asked Ravi when he first started painting. He said that he had gone to a 'camp' with his father when he was 10 years old. He was given paper, paint and brushes to work with but nothing came to mind. "So I started copying Bhuri auntie's horse," he said.[19] "Jangadh *mama* (uncle) said, 'Look Bhuri – he is copying your horse,' so I rubbed it out and did something else. I don't remember what it was, but I remember taking the plus sign from the pupil of Bhuri auntie's horse's eye and using it as my personal signature design."

All Gond artists adopt a personal signature design to distinguish their work from those of others. Narmada Prasad uses fine vertical lines to fill out his figures and Rama Bai has a running stitch pattern. Like his father, Ravi paints animals from the jungles around Mandla. But he also loves painting divine figures from Gond cosmology and scenes of ritual activity like his mother [See figure 14 and figure 15].

The youngest child, Vinod, is 11 years old, and unlike the rest of the family, who love bright colours, he prefers line drawing or pictures in pen and ink to which he sometimes adds a touch of colour. He has yet to develop a personal signature but is already exploring the potential of combining different design elements to articulate form – a skill that is usually acquired at a later stage [see figure 16].

The middle son, Vivek, has taken to this style of painting only recently. He is quite imaginative but has still to acquire the skills necessary to execute his ideas in the form of images. Until quite recently he was more interested in 'fine art' than in Gond painting [see figure 17].

'Fine art' generally refers to poster painting or painting realistic pictures in oils. Many of the artists that I have spoken to in Bhopal talk about their attraction to film posters and the appeal of the urban visual landscape. Two of the artists were actually professional hording painters for some time and one worked in a studio in Mumbai as an assistant to a poster painter. Gond artists have to make a conscious decision when adopting this style. By choosing to paint in the Gond style they are making a statement about their *parampara* – their cultural tradition. But at the same time, they are also trying to find a personal voice in that tradition. "We need to find creativity in our tribal tradition," a struggling young artist told me.[20]

Gond painting is rooted in a narrative tradition but not all artists tell stories through their pictures. Jangadh became famous for giving form (*akara, roop*) to their gods who until then had been formless (*nirakara*). All the early artists painted images from nature – fantastical animal and bird forms that would morph into trees, rocks and rivers [see figure 18].

Forms overlapped; artists would paint complex patterns over the flat surface of the image so that figure and ground seemed to interpenetrate suggesting multiple interpretations. The Gond style is enigmatic. It points to a *parampara* (tradition), but each artist has to stake a personal claim to it by exercising his or her creativity as an individual, by finding a personal voice. All artists talk about executing a personal vision – *darshaana*. When asked to interpret someone else's work, they say that they do not know what idea occurred to the artist, but when you ask them to explain their own paintings, they tell a story.

The use of a personalized symbolism even though it is on the way to developing into a stable code is what differentiates the pata tradition from Gond art. The former uses stable narrative codes and performers who display *patas* do not necessarily use their own work. Painterly convention assumes that the scroll painter will not be the one singing and displaying the scroll. It is this feature that makes the *pata* images polyphonic. Different singers may interpret the figures in the painting differently.

The challenge facing a young artist who adopts the Gond style is to be able to acquire the skills of painting in the traditional mode of apprenticeship and then emerge out of the tradition with a personal signature.

As I have noted, many of Jangadh's assistants have become skilled painters. Jangadh died several years ago but artists like Anand Singh Shyam and Kala Bai, his wife, still maintain a workshop in their house where young men from the village stay for long periods and learn painting by assisting them in their work.[21]

Venkatraman Singh Shyam, the son of another of Jangadh's brothers, talks about the long and painful process of carving out an identity (*pehechaan*, literally, to recognize) that was distinct from that of his famous uncle. He is one of the most intellectual artists in the Gond tradition and is conscious about developing an oeuvre. He loves contemporary art, among

them the work of Dali and Souza. He has preserved samples of his early work in landscapes and portrait painting and keeps all his old sketch books. In fact, it is possible to chart his development as an artist from these sketch books as each sketch is dated and signed.[22] His young son, who is about the same age as Sonia Chitrakar, has already learnt the value of the personal signature. Many of Venkat's sketches showed signs of his son's handiwork. "He selects the ones that he likes," said Venkat, "and rubs out my name and puts his own. He is practicing his signature."

Mayank, Jangadh's son, was 14 when his father died. He said, "Then I painted for myself (*apne shauk ke liye*). Now I want to be recognized as an artist (*kalakaar*) not as a craftsman (*karigar*).[23] People should not be able to say that this is the work of an *adivasi* (tribal) artist. Rather, they should say that this is Mayank's work." Mayank decided to take up this art form seriously four years ago. He told me, pointing to a photograph of one of his father's paintings which showed a bird swooping down on a snake, "Some people said that any one can paint like that. Why should it be hung in a gallery?" I was furious. I took up the challenge." He slapped a painting in front of me – paper, black on white, and said, "Now let them copy this!" [see figure 19].

Unlike Jangadh, who had a passion for pure unmixed colours that he would apply directly on the surface of the painting, Mayank prefers black and white.[24] He said, "Look at Swami Uncle's paintings – we don't always know what they mean but the colours have a life of their own. I want to bring that life to black and white pictures. Like Venkat, his cousin, Mayank loves to talk about his paintings. The work of both of them seem to be strongly rooted in metaphor.

Mayank showed me a picture of a fish entangled with a snake. "The fish dreams of seeing the world, leaps out of the water – but the world is a dangerous place for it. It gasps for air and is caught by a snake. The fish could also be the airplane that took my father to Japan," he explained. "He loved the adventure, the novelty. But that is what killed him." Mayank is referring to his father's famous airplane motif. Jangadh killed himself in a fit of depression in the Mithila Museum in Japan. A very sensitive person, he was lonely there and was unable to communicate with the staff in the museum. He wanted to come home but was not permitted to leave without fulfilling the term of his contract [see figure 19].

Mayank is conscious that he is an urban artist. He has painted a series of city-scapes in which forest motifs are transposed on the outer walls of modern high-rise buildings. He told me that he was experimenting with a form of reverse imagery: "Our traditional paintings were done on the walls of our huts. I have transferred the jungle motifs that my father used on to the outer walls of modern buildings. I was born in Bhopal not in the village and it would be wrong for me to pretend otherwise" [see figure 20].

In practically all his paintings Mayank positions himself as an *adivasi* at home in modern urban life. His sister Japani also feels the need to evolve her own style.[25] Unlike Mayank who uses symbols from his *adivasi parampara* metaphorically to articulate his own ideas, Japani has gone back to the traditional work process. She uses the layered style of wall painting – one layer of pigment on another – on canvas. She first coats her canvases with a rough pigment to approximate the mud wall of a village hut and then applies white paint with an icing cone, giving the canvas a textured look[26] [see figure 21].

All the three artists discussed above have a complicated relationship to the Gond art tradition. When I asked them about the sources of their inspiration, none mentioned a

Gond artist. Mayank talks of miniature painting as a source of inspiration, Venkat, of modern painters like Souza and Dali. Jangadh, though profoundly important as an icon and as a source to be mined for the corpus of traditional motifs, is seen most often as having set a standard that has to be bettered.[27]

The awakening of symbolic imagination

Among the children that I have met, the ones who are serious about painting have moved through the stages of first doodling, then executing figures in some detail and finally telling stories about them. Traditional art is supposed to be symbolic but children have to learn the language of symbols. Due to the dominant influence of Greek and Roman naturalism in academic art education, we are used to thinking of narrative art as event-centric. In so-called 'naturalistic' art, characters, through their gestures – frozen in the dramatic moment, enable us to pose the how and what type of questions to the event being represented in the painting (Gombrich 1960). In traditional Indian art however, events, when presented, are not historically unique situations but archetypal events that can be read as emotive symbols.[28]

Chitrakar children have to learn how to combine different emotions in their compositions. Story-telling is more than just mastering plot structure and learning to string together a series of events. They have to learn how to select episodes in a story through which they can express contrasting emotions – wonder and pathos or playfulness and horror.

In her seminal work on painted narratives in Orissa, Joanna Williams (1996) says that traditional Indian narratives are structured according to a theory of the *rasas* (mood or emotion). It is the choice of *rasa* – the 'distilled emotion' that is sought to be evoked in the audience rather than plot that determines narrative structure. *Rasas* are generalized emotions depicted through actions and situations. Since it is the emotion itself that is foregrounded, action does not have to be dynamic. They do not have to take the narrative towards a climactic end. Instead, it is in the selection and combination of different *rasas* that the success of a performance is supposed to be judged.

Narrative performances by the Chitrakars that involves singing and displaying scrolls are also based on the theory of *rasa* – predominantly on two *rasas*, i.e. *karuna* (compassion) and *chamatkar* (wonder). *Hasya rasa* or the comic mood is also present sometimes though far more difficult to achieve as I have been told by senior Chitrakar artists.[29] Sonia, though far from being a seasoned performer, has already started composing narrative *patas*. In her Laden Pata, as it is known, she has learnt to vary the bin Laden image so that in some frames it appears as a demonic image atop the killer plane about to crash into the World Trade Centre and at other times it is a saint-like figure. The face remains the same but emotive content is evoked through the surrounding figures. Thus body parts scattered over the first frame of her Laden *pata* evoke the demonic face of bin Laden while people praying at a mound that looks like the shrine of a holy man (pir) in the last frame presents the other face of bin Laden. This is reinforced by a pictorial device that is commonly used in this tradition. The pictorial frame is divided into two parts so that under the grassy mound we see an arch enframing the image of bin Laden astride his horse. None of the songs that I have heard on the Laden theme talk about bin Laden as a *pir*, but Sonia did tell me that she had shown people praying (*dua mangche*) for him [see Figure 22].

The Gond children learn a different set of pictorial skills. Story-telling is not an essential part of their painting tradition, but they too have to bring the inert figures on paper to life. They do this by 'enlarging the visual reference' of the object depicted (Subramanyan 2007: 120). Trees have personalities so that they seem human; human forms mimic animals and vice versa, the Narmada river, sacred in Gond cosmology, branches into the tree of life and so on. Important points of intersection, when one figure is about to morph into another, become occasions for storytelling – almost as if a hierophany was about to be revealed.

This brings me to my last point. The narrative themes that make up these art traditions are rooted in a mythic universe. Myths, as Audrey Cantlie (2003) reminds us, are a kind of hierophany which actualize events by presenting them as part of present reality – a present that cuts across time, bypassing any notion of historical succession. Thus we see the juxtaposition of different registers – the banal with the sublime, the everyday with the extraordinary or the horrific with the saintly. The characters and events in these stories move between the different registers, taking on contrasting meanings without seeking resolution.

Chitrakar children graduate from painting single figure pictures or pictures based on repetitive sequences to a conception of a whole in which dualities are juxtaposed. They learn that meaning is located not in the image per se but in the lateral relation between one image and another. Thus in Sonia's Laden Pata the full significance of the figure of Osama bin-Laden, part monster, part saint, emerges only in the last frame. Meaning is deferred till we have traversed the length of the scroll, frame-by-frame.

Similarly in the Gond tradition the aura of mystery created by the deliberate distortions of the figures contrast with the mundane events that are sometimes depicted. When I asked Ravi to explain a particularly enigmatic painting of his – a scorpion with a tree emerging from its head - he told me, in a matter-of-fact way, that it was a scorpion crawling up a tree, a common sight in the forests of Mandla. The naturalization of a particular perspective based on an immobile eye taught to us in art classes is probably what coloured my expectation. Instead, Ravi's picture assumed a mobile gaze that was supposed to move from the scorpion to the tree. The objects in the painting were not placed with reference to a horizon so that there were no differences of scale or gaps between objects that would help the spectator to recognize them as discrete entities. The scorpion and the tree both jostled for attention – each one rising up in turn to occupy the whole of the spectator's vision [see Figure 23].

Both Ravi and Sonia are growing up at a time when the folk arts are emerging as an alternative to more established forms of aesthetics. Forms of new media are increasingly applying digital technology to folk art forms to incorporate them in new aesthetic spaces and new audiences are loosing interest in old themes and demanding new subjects that are meaningful to them. Interestingly, children themselves are becoming the new audience for these art forms. Thus there have been several children's' book projects that use illustrations in folk art styles and cartoon films that employ folk artists. Montu, Sonia's father, had to turn to Sanjay, his 12 year old son and an avid viewer of the Cartoon Network channel on television, for help in composing a Tom and Jerry Pata that had been commissioned by a Delhi patron for her child's birthday party. Such innovations have already started making an impact on these art styles. Artists are conscious that if their traditions have to survive, they will have to open themselves up to new forms of technology. In these endeavours it is to the younger generation that they turn to for guidance [see Figure 24].

Endnotes

1. Under the influence of the work of 'nationalists' like Ananda K. Coomaraswamy (1990) and E.B. Havell (1986), 'folk art' in India was seen as part of a continuous craft tradition that spanned thousands of years. It was anchored in an organic society based on a caste hierarchy that eschewed novelty and on the spiritual discipline of the crafts persons. However, modernity and the influence of 'western materialism' led to a new classificatory division between the fine arts and craft, which was threatening this tradition. In post-independence India, state sponsored institutions like the Crafts Museum in Delhi were guided by this nationalist ideology in incorporating India's regional diversity within an overarching craft tradition.

2. In some cases it can lead to a reification of a style; but I have also seen interesting experiments in which artists who represent one tradition tried to incorporate details from another tradition into their own work (also see Greenough 1996).

3. Beginning with the pioneering work of Talcot Parsons, many sociologists have used the idea of 'system' to understand complex modern formation. Briefly 'system' is an analytical concept. Modern institutions organize themselves into systems of interaction. They achieve internal coherence by differentiating themselves from a heterogeneous environment, i.e. by establishing a boundary maintenance mechanism that allows only certain elements to enter the system from the environment. All systems have to engage with issues of self-identity and reflexivity for purposes of survival (cf. Luhman 1982).

4. Mushtaq Khan, at present deputy director of the Crafts Museum in Delhi, has been extraordinarily generous in sharing his experiences with me. As with most other institutions in post-independence India, record keeping is not given a high priority in Bharat Bhawan, and I have had to rely on oral testimonies of the members who participated in what came to be a radical art movement in Madhya Pradesh. Vivek Tembe, Chandan Singh Bhatty and Yusuf have all given me time, and I am grateful to them for their accounts of the field surveys.

5. There are artists from other tribal communities like the Bhils and the Marias whose work also figures in the Bharat Bhawan collection. For the Bhils, painting is a ritual art and there are specialists in charge of painting.

6. The traditional patrons of the Chitrakars were village people. The Chitrakars were peripatetic entertainers who went from village to village displaying their scrolls and singing songs. Even though the majority of Chitrakars in Medinipur consider themselves to be Muslim, they paint and sing stories with primarily Hindu themes.

7. I am grateful to Malini Bhattacharya for this information.

8. Source: personal communication from Suhrid Bhowmik.

9. In India, most folk art forms still follow traditional modes of apprenticeship. The Mithila Art Institute set up by the Ethnic Arts Foundation in Madhubani, Bihar is an interesting exception. This art institute has been set up to teach Maithili painting in a way that is similar to modern art schools with systematic curricula and so on. Santosh Kumar Das, one of the principle instructors in this institution studied fine art at the Baroda Art School and then chose to adopt the Maithili style as his preferred medium of expression (Szanton and Bakshi 2007).

10. The Chitrakars practice both cross and parallel cousin marriage. Moushumi's husband Bappi is a cousin from the same village as her mother Jaba Chitrakar. Naya is known as the village of painters, and in-marrying members all learn painting as Jaba did from her husband Mantu after marriage. The Pardhan Gonds also have a preferential marriage norm with the Mother's Brother's Daughter or the Father's Sister's Daughter.

11. Chart paper backed by old cloth is commonly used to paint on. At one time, paper was scarce in the village and news print that had been coated with a base colour was used. Chitrakars still use natural colors. But since this involves a laborious and time-consuming process, they supplement these with commercial colours which are first diluted with the juice of the seeds of *bel* or tamarind fruit.

12. Chitrakars have taken to applying a continuous line of colour on the limbs just inside the back line with which figures are outlined to suggest volume. This technique has been recently adopted by the Naya painters from the Kalighat style of pata painting. Bappi Chitrakar, Moushumi's husband did go through an apprenticeship process as he did not learn to paint as a child. When I was staying in their house last year, I saw Mantu, his father-in-law draw an eye, nose, hands and legs on a sheet of paper so that Bappi could copy them over and over again. He was then asked to choose the best example of each and assemble them in a figure. While Bappi was busy with his sketches I overheard Mantu giving him a lecture on the passion that he, as a potential artist, should have while he strove to achieve perfection in his craft.

13. Mantu is known for these two figures and he paints them as separate single frame pictures. Both figures are motifs that occur in traditional *pata* narratives such as the Krishna Lila and the story of a tiger deity, *Satya Pir.*

14. The Kalighat style developed in the 19th century around the pilgrimage shrine of that name in Kolkata. Kalighat paintings are single frame pictures not usually based on a storyline. The style had practically died but is being revived now by Chitrakars from Medinipur and Birbhum.

15. Sanjay received the Kamala Devi Chattopadhya award in 2007. He was invited to Delhi to receive his citation and got a one year's scholarship.

16. Sonia's sudden spurt of creativity in the last year may be due in part to the attention that she has been getting from outside. Six months ago, a foreign folklorist spent three days in Mantu's house filming Sonia at work.

17. Performers in oral cultures usually memorize formulaic themes and motifs which they stitch together in the course of the performance (cf. Lord 1976).

18. I am greatfull to Rajan who assisted me in collecting data on Gond art.

19. Bhuri Bai is a Bhil artist who like Jangadh Singh Shyam was 'discovered' by J. Swaminathan. She was a construction labourer working on the foundations of the Bharat Bhawan building. The 'horse' is the famous Pithora horse motif in the ritual art of the Bhil community.

20. Dhavat, the author of this statement is Jangadh's son-in-law. He is trained as an engineer and picked up a brush only two years ago after marriage. Japani, his 18 year old wife, is his principle teacher.

21. Anand was Jangadh's father's brother's son and married his cross cousin.

22. Most of the early work of Gond artists is unsigned and most Chitrakars also do not sign their works. Some have started writing their names at the back of the scroll with their addresses and name of the pata story.

23. The phrase, "*apnipehechaan honi chahiye*" literally means, "my work should be recognized as mine."

24. Vivek Tembe, the art student who first brought Jangadh to Bhopal has described his reaction when he was first given acrylic paint. He opened the paint bottle, dipped his fingers in the paint, felt its smooth texture, smeared it on the sheet in front of him and broke into a radiant smile. Source: Personal communication.

25. She was born after Jangadh's first successful trip to Japan, hence the name 'Japani'.

26. Unlike their father, both Mayank and Japani are sparing in their use of colour. If Mayank uses black on white, Japani in a deliberate bid to differentiate herself from her brother prefers white on black.

27. Both Mayank and Venkat have incorporated Jangadh symbolically in their paintings. Mayank has several paintings of a shell (i.e. Jangadh) emerging from muddy water and Venkat has a series of sketches of Jangadh poised on a tightrope or on the point of a paintbrush. He also has a canvas of Jangadh astride the Eiffel Tower to commemorate the inclusion of his painting in the Magicians of the Earth exhibition that was held in Paris.

28. K.G. Subramanyan says that, "the visual language [of traditional art] had a fluid and removed naturalism which was realized in an additive ascent from a sign into a natural form, not a substractive descent from a natural form to a sign. ... Communication is not through literal signs but through emotive data" (Subramanyan 2007: 120).

29. Source: Interview with Gurupada Chitrakar, Naya village in October 2007.

Bibliography

Cantlie, Audrey. 2003. 'Myth: Text and Context,'. In, Veena Das ed., *Oxford Companion to Sociology and Anthropology.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 827-860.

Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. 1990. (1st published in 1909) *The Indian Craftsman*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass.

Gell, Alfred. 1998. *Art and Agency: Anthropological Theory.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Gombrich, E.H. 1969. *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*. Princeton: Princeton university Press.

Goodman, Nelson. 1976. *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols.* Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.

Goswamy, B.N. 1968. 'Pahari Painting. The family as the Basis of Style.' *Marg* Vol.XXI (4) 17-57.

Greenough, Paul. 1996. 'Nation, Economy and Tradition Displayed.' In, Carol Breckenridge ed., *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in Modern India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 216-348.

Havell, E.B. 1986 (1st published in 1912). *The Basis for Artistic and Industrial Revival in India*. Delhi: Usha.

Kim, Nanyoung. 2004. 'Ernst H. Gombrich, Pictorial Representation, and Some Issues in Art Education.' *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol.38 (4) 32-45.

Lord, Albert. 1996. *Singer of Tales*. New York: Atheneum.

Luhman, Niklas. 1982. *The Differentiation of Society*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Luhman, Niklas. 2000. *Art as a Social System*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Subramanyan, K.G. 2007. *The Magic of Making: Essays on Art and Culture*. Kolkata: Seagull.

Szanton, David and Malini Bakshi. 2007. *Mithila Painting: The Evolution of an Art Form*. California: Ethnic Arts Foundation and Pink Mango.

Williams, Joanna. 1996. *The Two-Headed Deer: Illustrations of the Ramayana in Orissa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Figure 1: Roopshona's drawing; Naya, 2006

Figure 2: Roshida's copy of Roopshona's drawing; Naya, 2006
Photos: R. Chatterji.

Figure 3: Sonia at the Crafts Museum; New Delhi, 2007

Figure 4: Sanjay painting Bird Wedding at Crafts Museum; New Delhi, 2007
Photos: R. Chatterji.

Figure 5: Sonia's combination pata. Santal Wedding and Fishes

Figure 6: Painting by Piltu, 2 years; Naya, 2006.
Photos: R. Chatterji.

Figure 8: Moushumi work, Birds and Beasts, Delhi, 2007.

Figure 9: Sonia's painting on the Tsunami, 2007. Photos: R. Chatterji.

Figure 10: Sonia, Laden pata, 2008. The First Frame.
Photo: R. Chatterji.

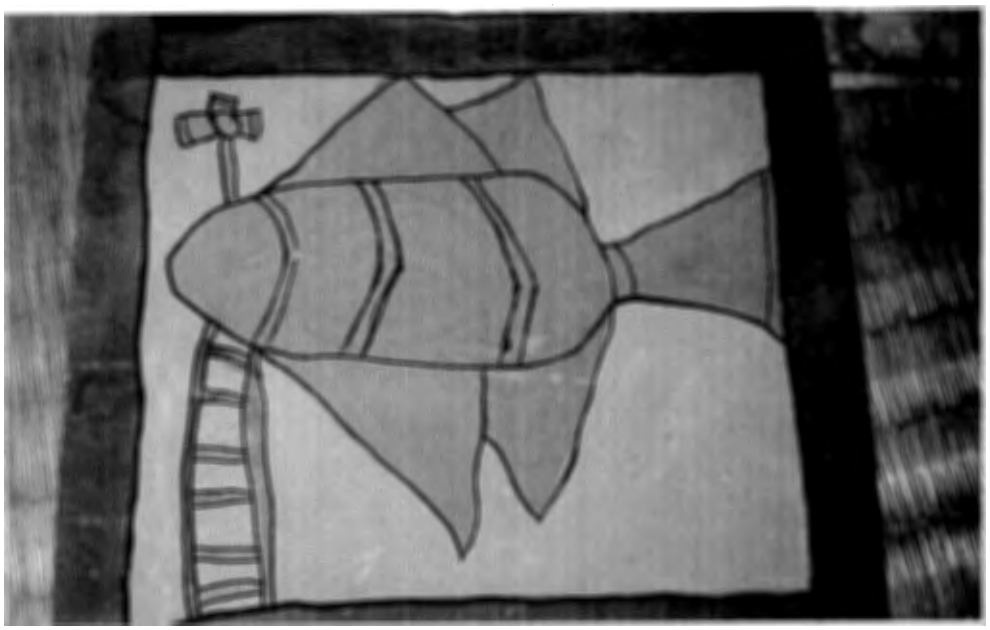


Figure 11: Sonia, Laden Pata (detail), 2008

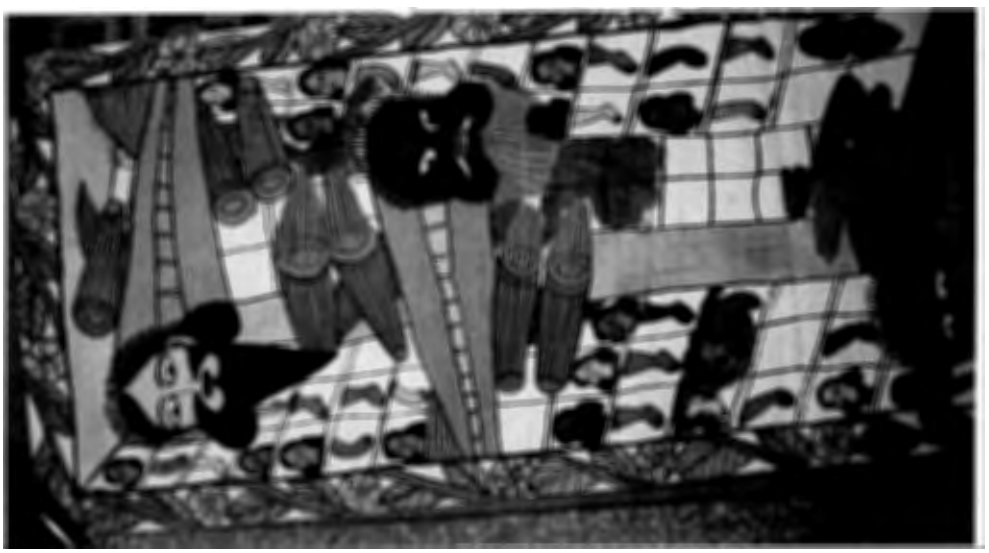


Figure 12: Moushumi, Laden pata (first frame), 2007 (Unlike Sonia's Laden Pata, Moushumi's is a copy of her father's on the same theme)
Photos: R. Chatterji.

Figure 13: Narmada Prasad, Vish Kanya (Poison Maiden); Bhopal, 2007.
Photo: R. Chatterji.

Figure 14: Work by Ravi (based on the origin myth of their *gotra*); Bhopal, 2007. Photo: R. Chatterji.

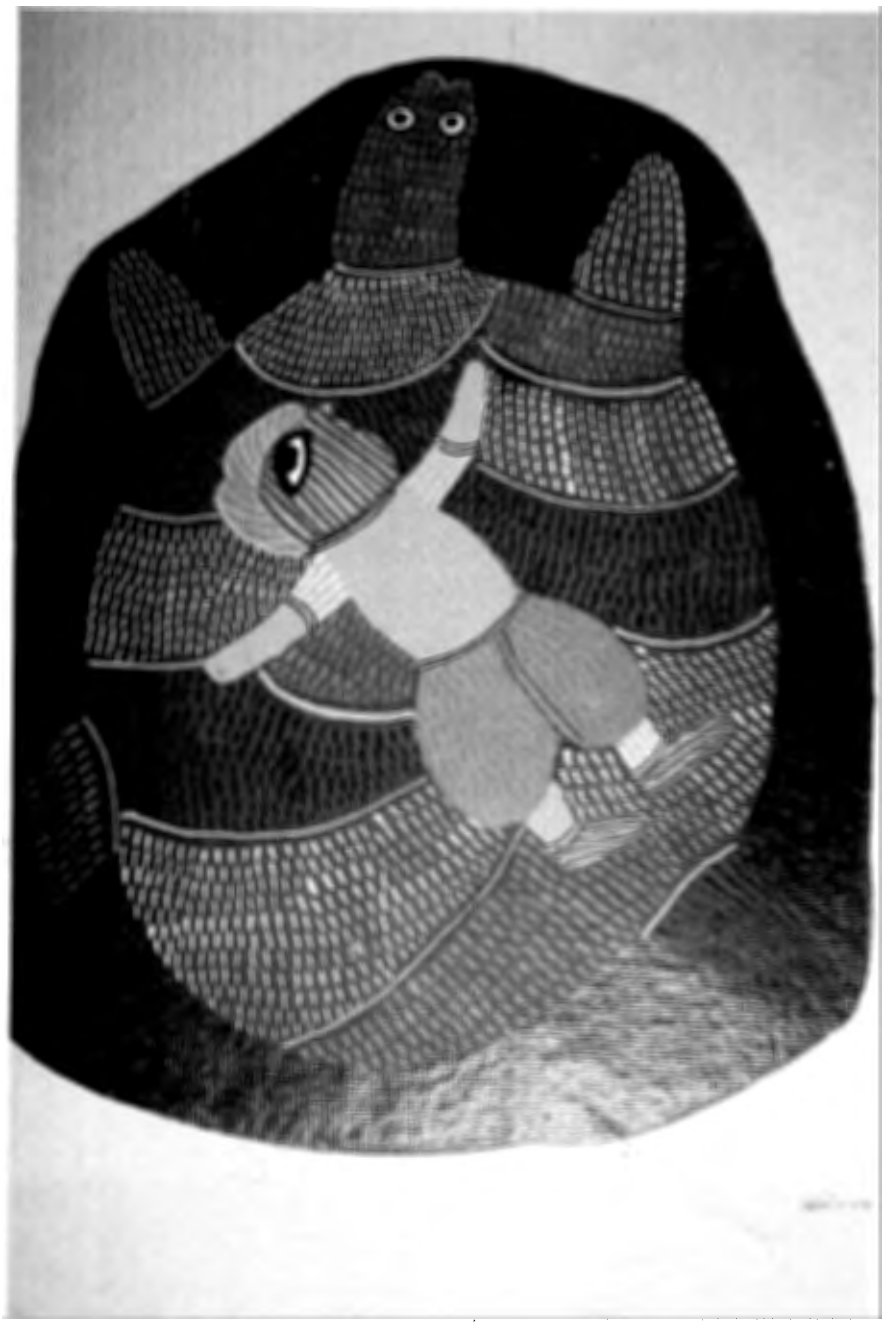


Figure 15: Work by Ramabai (on the same theme as Ravi's picture. See fig.14); Bhopal, 2007. Photo: R. Chatterji.

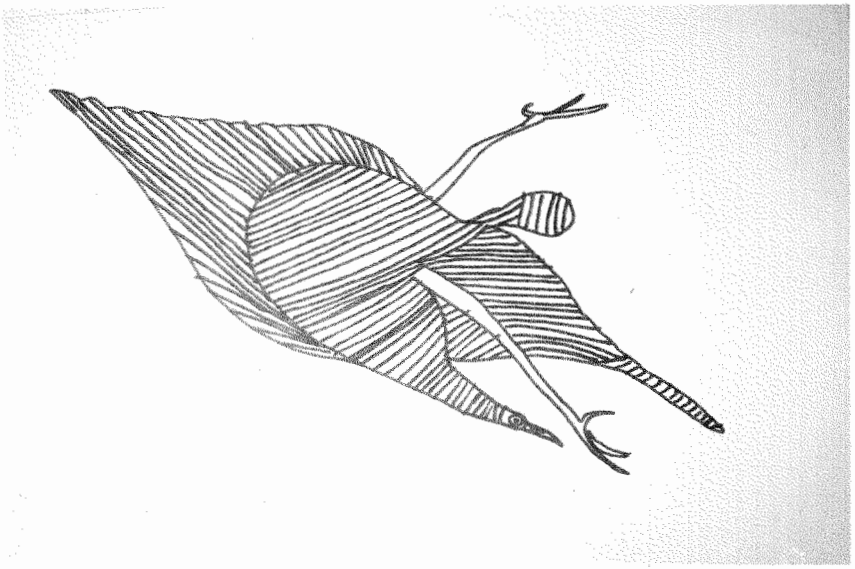


Figure 16: Vinod's work, Bird,

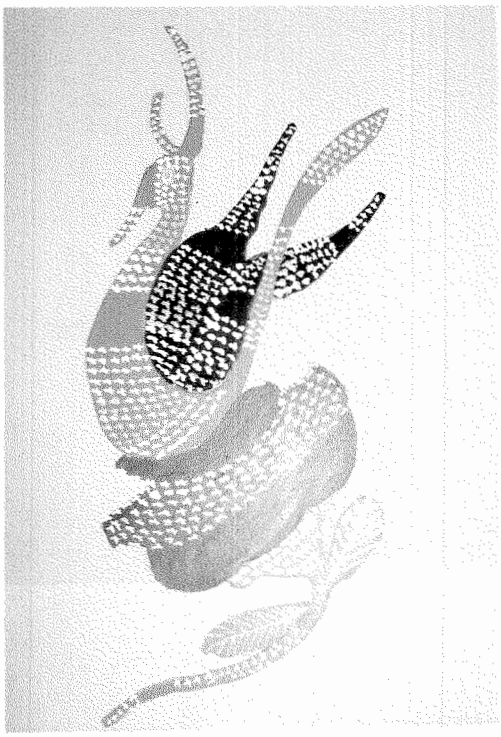


Figure 17: Vivek's work, Horse on Rose, 2007.
Photos: R. Chatterji.

Figure 18: Venkatraman's work, The Princess and the Ascetic, Bhopal, 2007.

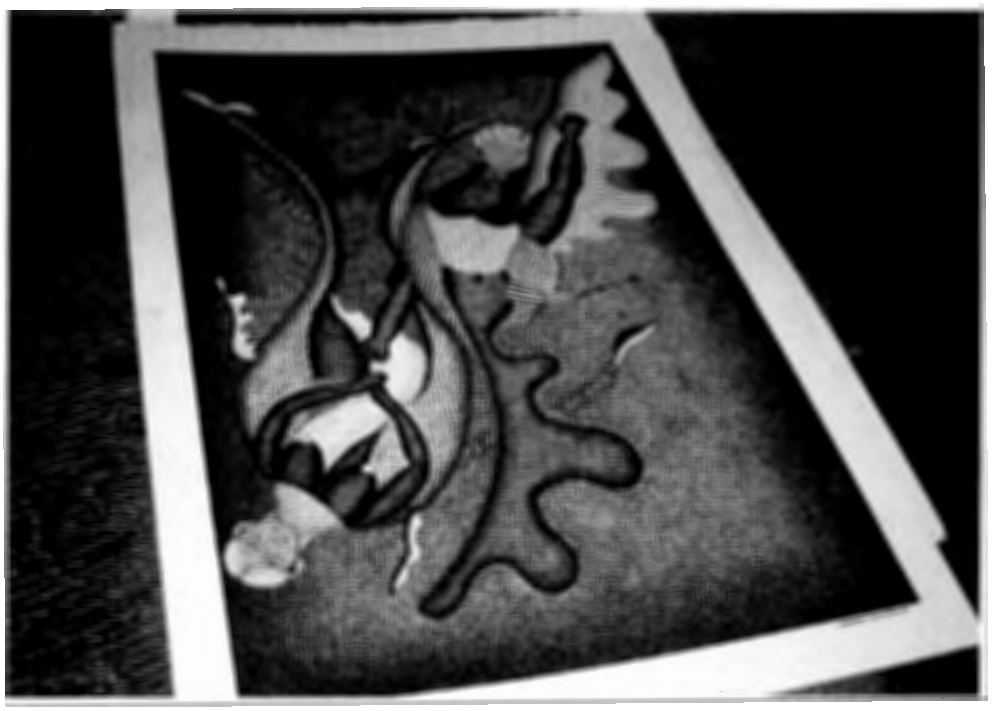


Figure 19: Mayank's work, Fish Aspiring to Fly; Bhopal, 2008.
Photos: R. Chatterji.

Figure 20: The airplane motif by Jangadh Sing Shyam. Courtsey Arpana Caur; New Delhi, 2008.

Figure 21: Japani's work; Bhopal, 2007.
Photos: R. Chatterji.

Figure 22, Sonia, last frame of Laden Pata
Photo: R. Chatterji.

Figure 23, Ravi, Bhopal, 2007
Photo: R. Chatterji.

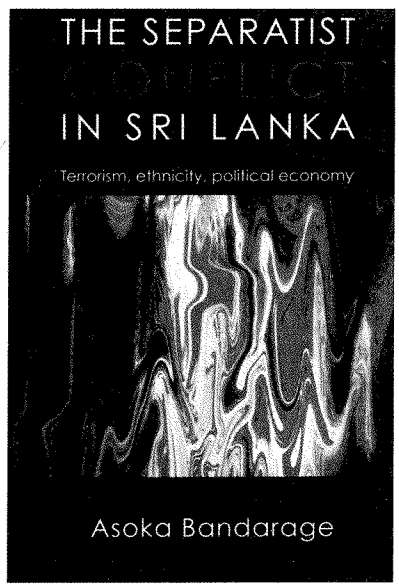
Figure 24, Montu's Tom and Jerry Pata, June 2007
Photo: R. Chatterji.

Asoka Bandarage

The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka; Terrorism, Ethnicity, Political Economy.

Vijitha Yapa Publications, Colombo, 2009, pp. 279, ISBN 978-955-665-039-6. SLR 900.00.

Nira Wickramasinghe



Sri Lanka's thirty year civil war has been, over the years, examined through many lenses and from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. The body of literature focusing on the growth of Tamil nationalism has looked at the origins of the insurrection either as a symptom of a crisis within Tamil society or as a reaction to an oppressive state (Tambiah 1986; 1992; Wilson 1988; 1994; 2000). The argument that the Tamil insurgency arose out of the twin processes of political mobilization and institutional decay in a majoritarian state or as a result of a 'control democracy' has also found much currency (de Votta 2000, 2005). While the state's position and participation in the secessionist war has been analysed in a solidly empirical political science tradition by Senaratne (1997) and more descriptively in a study based mainly on military sources by Rohan Gunaratne (1998) Darini Rajasingham Senanayake (2001) has contested the view of a number of analysts of intra-state wars who have suggested that it is 'greed' rather than ethnic or economic grievances that fuels the 'new wars' (Collier 2000).

Another approach to violence especially perpetrated against civilians has been to look at it as something beyond explanation or comprehension as some anthropologists have suggested (Jeganathan 2003). The focus here is on the victims of violence rather than on the structural and discursive conditions that make it possible. Spencer (2007) on the other hand argues that collective violence should be treated as part of the everyday rather than as a departure from the flow of the political. Other scholars have attempted to understand the motives of LTTE cadres in sacrificing their lives for the cause (Roberts 1996 ; de Mel 1998) focusing on the shift from a 'paraiyah' Tamil identity of victimhood to a 'Puliththamil' (Tiger Tamil) identity of power (Cheran 2001, Hellman-Rajanayagam 1994).

The book under review authored by Asoka Bandarage who teaches at Georgetown University purports to offer a comprehensive and historically based social structural analysis that draws from and synthesises many of these earlier analyses. She describes her approach as multipolar in so far as she examines multiple ethnic and religious groups, intra-ethnic, social class, regional and other divisions in order to understand the dynamics of the separatist conflict. She tries to cast a wider net when she suggests that the conflict is not a purely Sri Lankan one but has regional, South Asian and even international dimensions.

While it is true that few studies explicitly advocate an approach that privileges an intra-conflict perspective and divisions within the secessionist movement such as Bush (2004) or Senaratne (1997), most serious studies of the conflict have an implicit multipolar approach when they trace the formation, mobilization and politicization of communities over a period of time. A recent example is Dennis McGilvray's *Crucible of Conflict* (2008). This book deserves our attention however as the first full length work written by a well known academic that brings in all these issues into a single volume and deals closely with the developments of the last decade. This book is composed of nine clearly defined chapters, is mainly based on secondary source material and moves from interpretative sections to a sequential narration of events especially in the latter period. The approach is positivist and purports to be definitive. The book opens with two chapters that provide the reader with some details of the author's framework of analysis, clarifies her conceptual underpinnings and sets the historical background. The next two chapters explore the period from 1971 to 1983 locating the demand for separatism within a wider political economy frame. There is an equally incisive critique of the period of the United Front government and of the effects of the liberalization of the economy after 1977. The next four chapters highlight the internationalization of the conflict from 1983 and various critical moments such as the Indo-Sri Lanka accord of 1987, the 'peace package' period between 1994 to 2002, and the Norwegian peace initiative between 2002-2008. The last chapter concludes that a just solution based on decentralization of power should allow local Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese 'greater control over regional resources and decisions over governance'.

The strong point of this book is its focus on issues of political economy as explanatory factors. The liberal multicultural paradigm that sees all demands for self-determination as having to be entertained and cultures as clearly demarcated entities has today exhausted its possibilities. This book offers a welcome critique of this approach. But Bandarage tends to dismiss the politics of recognition very lightly. Surely, behind homo economicus' urge to rebel and make sovereignty claims are strong feelings of unfulfilled selfhood. What is missing in this book is an attempt to understand why many non-elite Tamils felt and still feel they have been treated differently and unjustly in democratic Sri Lanka. Where does this sense of cultural subordination stem from? By adopting a class based analysis, the author tends to give too much prominence to the reading of the movement as a rebellion of the lower classes/castes of Tamil society against the dominant Vellalas to the detriment of other circles of belonging that were equally challenged. Deprivation and humiliation came from various quarters, from Tamil society as well as from institutions and policies enacted by successive governments. One would have liked to read more about the ideology of Tamil nationalism from the early nineteenth century, and how it produced multiple avatars. What were the contours of the LTTE ideology and how did it succeed in mobilizing the discontent of the educated unemployed Tamil youth? If Bandarage had devoted some space to the analyses

of authors such as Cheran or Hellman Rajanayagam, she would have been able to give more depth to her argument.

A further weakness of the volume is the use of the conceptual tool 'terrorism' without either unpacking this term or reflecting about the difficulties that come with using the language of state and counterinsurgency in an academic work. Scholars located in the South have questioned the way in which 'terrorism' is infused with a national security logic. In South Asia this has led to a series of excellent works produced by the Regional Center for Strategic Studies (Ahmed 2006). Two recent works on counterterrorism legislation in Sri Lanka and on the politics of naming the LTTE (Manmohan 2006; Nadarajah & Sriskandarajah 2005) have highlighted the oppressive nature of counterinsurgency laws and how the politics of labeling groups as terrorists is often detrimental. Southern scholars do not deny that armed insurrectionist groups practice violence against civilians but they argue that naming these groups 'terrorist' at the outset is a form of closure as it precludes us from understanding the reasons behind such blind and indiscriminate violence.

What is troubling about this book is that while it makes a claim to authoritative knowledge, some of its 'facts' are clearly questionable or based on a selective choice of sources collected with the aim of corroborating the argument made by the author. For example, there is an underlining argument throughout the book which points towards an anti-Buddhist conspiracy of (essentially Christian and Catholic) groups supported by international forces and their proxies in Sri Lanka to destroy and undermine the legitimate state. The lack of evidence for this argument, particularly since it underpins much of the book, is striking. On page 6 for example, Bandarage states categorically that the leadership of the LTTE 'is largely Catholic rather than Hindu'. No footnotes or references accompany this highly contentious claim. Let me cite Cheran who has written extensively on the dynamics of the Tamil insurrection and Diaspora on this issue:

> Some of the leaders of the LTTE are catholic (Soosai, and Anton Balasingam for instance) and there have been a few protestants as well. As far as I know, the LTTE has been secular. Yes, they attacked Muslims, and one could make an argument that they were anti-Muslim. However, Hindus and Christians (of all denominations were part of the LTTE). Most of the top leaders (Prabakaran, Pottu Amman, Shankar, Nadesan, Thamilchelvan, Thamilini, Para-and the list is long) were Saiva/Hindu.[1]

If the author is so casual on such a crucial point, the reader may begin to question her claim to authoritative, impartial knowledge. Is this then a book that is trying to prove a point and musters data in order to substantiate a hypothesis leaving other options unattended? A similar critique can be leveled against the use in the volume of the term Dalit to qualify so called 'lower caste' groups in Jaffna. Dalit is the common word used in India to describe the so called 'untouchables'/depressed castes/scheduled castes and other oppressed people. In the Sri Lankan Tamil political discourse, the term Dalit has not been used although a few diasporic groups based in Paris and London use the term. The so called 'low caste' people and the depressed caste people, of course, are present in Jaffna. But the common term for them in Sri Lanka is not Dalit. *Panchamars* or *Thaalthappatta Thamilar* (Oppressed Tamils) are the correct terms. Bandarage's failure to refer to the works of reputed scholars familiar with caste issues among Tamils, is disconcerting.

In research, some sources are more legitimate than others, and the task and responsibility of the professional historian is to weigh all existing sources on a particular event before attempting to present a balanced version of the truth. Consequently, the presence of questionable assertions and labels, together with a failure to cite a wider range of sources may well tempt the reader to disregard the entire book as scholarly unsound. This is unfortunate as some sections in Bandarage's book present excellent and balanced analyses. I particularly enjoyed Bandarage's re-interpretation of the 1970s university admission issue where she demonstrates that the real losers were the westernized middle-class Sinhalas and Tamils rather than the entire Tamil community. It is nevertheless clear, that despite the author's professed impartiality, the book reflects a subjective appraisal of its topic. While India's role is dealt with at length, China's presence and influence is not well elucidated.

Another difficulty in fathoming this book is that it moves lightly from one position to the other, as though trying to please all constituencies. Few liberals would for instance dispute many of Bandarage's claims: she acknowledges that the government between 1970 and 1977 'failed to respond to the increasing grievances of the Tamils and that 'initiatives were not taken to address the language, decentralization and other Tamil concerns' (p. 70). She boldly asserts that today 'among the Sinhalese, a small group of politicians and army leaders have benefited from the war' (p. 221) and accepts the need for decentralization of power in a way that gives local people ' greater control over regional resources and decisions over governance' (p. 223) . But in other sections of the book, she is clearly against ethnonationalist regions, devolution of power and has no kind words for the Neelan Tiruchelvam-G.L.Pieris package (Bandarage forgets to mention the crucial role played by the latter during President Kumaratunge's term of office). The author's faith is in the state's willingness to reform its own institutions so that the underprivileged of all communities are given a better deal. However, she leaves unanswered how the state can ensure that minorities are not excluded from an ideal system founded on economic democracy and political participation.

This book offers a detailed narration of Sri Lanka's conflict as a multipolar and multi-dimensional civil war. Its shortcomings, as outlined above, unfortunately undermine the author's evident intention to present the work as a serious and objective analysis of the separatist/ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

Endnotes

1. I am grateful to R. Cheran's comments which he kindly forwarded to me by email.

Bibliography

Ahmed, Imtiaz (Ed.,). 2006. *Understanding Terrorism in South Asia*. New Delhi: Manohar.

Bush, Kenneth D. 2004. *The Intra-group Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka*. London: Macmillan.

Cheran, R. 2001. *The Sixth Genre: Memory, History and the Tamil Diaspora Imagination*. Colombo: Social Scientists' Association.

Collier, Paul. 2000. 'Doing Well out of War.' In, Mats Berdal and David Malone eds., *Greed and Grievance*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner.

De Mel, Nelufer. 1998. 'Agent or Victim? The Sri Lankan Woman Militant in the Interreg num.' In, Michael Roberts ed., *Collective Identities Revisited*, Vol II, pp. 199-200. Colombo: Marga.

De Votta, Neil. 2000. 'Control Democracy, Institutional Decay, and the Quest for Eelam: Explaining Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka.' In, *Pacific Affairs*, 73, 1, pp. 55-76.

De Votta, Neil. 2005. *Blowback: Linguistic Nationalism, Institutional Decay and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Gunaratne, Rohan. 1998. *Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis and National Security*. Colombo: South Asian Network on Conflict Research.

Hellmann-Rajanayagam, Dagmar. 1994. *The Tamil Tigers' Armed Struggle for Identity*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Jeganathan Pradeep. 2003. 'Violence as an Analytical Problem: Sri Lankanist Anthropology after July 1983.' In, *Nethra*, Special Issue: 'July 83 and after ', Vol. 6, Nos. 1 & 2, Apr-Sept 2003, pp. 1-44.

Mc Gilvray, D. 2008. *Crucible of Conflict: Tamil and Muslim Society on the East Coast of Sri Lanka*. North Carolina: Duke University Press.

Manmohan, N. 2006. 'Counterterrorism Legislation in Sri Lanka: Evaluating Efficacy.' *Policy Studies 28*, Washington DC: East West Center.

Nadarajah, Suthaharan, and Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah. 2005. 'Liberation Struggle or Terrorism? – The Politics of Naming the LTTE', *Third World Quarterly* 26 (1); 87-100.

Rajasingham Senanayake, Darini. 2001. 'Sri Lanka: Transformation of Legitimate Violence and Civil-Military Relations.' In, Muttiah Alagappa ed., *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Role of the Military in Asia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Roberts, Michael, 1996. 'Filial Devotion in Tamil Culture and the Tiger Cult of Martyrdom.' In, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 30, pp. 245-72.

Senaratne, Jagath. 1997. *Political Violence in Sri Lanka 1977-1990: Riots, Insurrections, Counterinsurgencies, Foreign Intervention*. Amsterdam: V.U. University Press.

Spencer, Jonathan. 2007. *Anthropology, Politics and the State: Democracy and Violence in South Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tambiah, S.J. 1986. *Sri Lanka: Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Tambiah, S.J. 1992.*Buddhism Betrayed? Religion, Politics and Violence in Sri Lanka*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Wilson, A.J. 1988. *The Break-up of Sri Lanka: the Sinhalese-Tamil Conflict*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

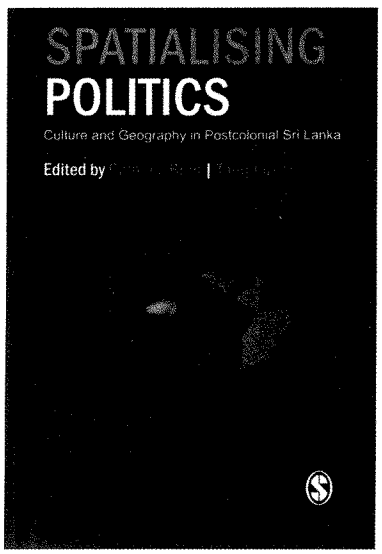
Wilson, A.J. 1994. *S.J.V.Chelvanayakam and the Crises of Tamil Nationalism, 1947-1977*. London: C. Hurst.

Wilson, A.J. 2000. *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism: Its Origins and Development in the Nineteenth Century*. London: C. Hurst.

Cathrine Brun and Tariq Jazeel (Eds.,)

Spatialising Politics: Culture and Geography in Postcolonial Sri Lanka. Sage, New Delhi, 2009, pp. 238, ISBN: 078-81-7829-929-7. INR. 695.00.

Roma Chatterji



This volume is a welcome addition to the growing body of social science literature on violence in South Asia in which Sri Lankan scholarship has played a pivotal role. An essay on the thematisation of violence in the anthropological literature on Sri Lanka by Pradeep Jeganathan, that appeared in the journal Nethra in the late 90s, marks a kind of watershed in ethnographic reflection on the subject. It encouraged us to think of violence as a kind of agency that not only inflects social relations but also has the power to re-configure cultures. Other works on themes that foregrounded the actential aspect of violence emerged from the same generation of scholars writing in and on Sri Lanka – a collective endeavour that stands out not only for its collaborative and interdisciplinary signature but also for the impact that it had on scholars writing on India and other South Asian countries. Attempts at publishing the Sri Lankan material in India is an important step in this regard. However, this is a gesture that is unreciprocated by the largely inward-looking scholarship on India. The book continues the tradition of interdisciplinary research on violence but shifts the focus to 'space' – not merely as a ground on which the politics of ethnicity and difference is played out but also as an agent capable of producing certain kinds of legitimising discourses.

To this end, the essays range from considerations of the contingent histories of events that crystallize over time to produce a territorialised and reified politics of ethnicity, to reproductions of spatial orderings through peace-work undertaken by non-governmental organisations. Other themes explored deal with voice and the politics of location; habitation and hybrid spaces; and the complex divisions and interrelations that have emerged as unintended consequences of the nation-state's endeavour to produce a homogeneous identity for its citizens.

Thus historians Nira Wickramasinghe and James Duncan foreground objects and commodities to trace the complex interconnections between global trade, place, and the emergence of new publics of consumers in the colonial period. Both essays map the trajectories of emergent objects like sewing machines and coffee, and show how they intersect with new forms of domesticity, population and ecology. Sharon Bell, Benedikt Korf and Tariq Jazeel problematise issues around voice and representation by critically reflecting on the much discussed insider-outsider binary in contemporary social science literature. Each of the three scholars chose a specific disciplinary discourse viz. ethnography, geography and fictional literature, to show how we can critically reflect on tropes such as 'authenticity' and 'insider position'. In the process they demonstrate how much these are imbricated in a hegemonic spatial present produced by singular nationalist ideologies. Camilla Orjuela, Nihal Parera and Oivind Fuglerud are also concerned with these issues though from different fields of research. Orjuela shows how well intentioned efforts at dialogue as part of peace activist and conflict resolution efforts assume bipolarity between equal parties often silencing power struggles and asymmetries of representation within each side thus reinforcing the status quo. The essays by Perera and Fuglerud also point to the dangers inherent in naturalising the dominant discourse on bipolar identity formation by showing how alternative spaces for such efforts are systematically reduced. All three authors highlight how seemingly homogeneous articulations of identity and space formation are also used as resources in the expression of new aspirations and identities. Perera tells us that chronic violence and dislocation has had an impact on gender relations within the home. Many Sri Lankan Muslim women who could not apply for political asylum abroad became wage earners in Gulf countries with long term implications for their domestic arrangements. Poor Tamil women who did not have the social capital to marry within the international Sri Lankan diaspora often preferred to join the LTTE. In this context, it is important to remember that parallel attempts at state formation that seem to emerge from legitimate democratic impulses, produce mirror effects that often result in the escalation of arbitrary violence and in the strengthening of dominant power structures. Ideologies of separatist movements like that of the LTTE not only accept the nation-state as a naturalised category but also help to strengthen its hegemonic roots.

Finally, in a thoughtful though by no means optimistic afterward, Pradeep Jeganathan takes up, once again, the theme of location but from an existential position of loss. He writes from a 'post-national location' that has implications not only for the lost vision of a utopian nationalism but also for anthropology and the intellectual tradition that it embodies – another utopian project perhaps whose limits must be explored ethnographically.

Senake Bandaranayake and Albert Dharmasiri

Sri Lankan Painting in the 20th Century.
National Trust Sri Lanka, Colombo, 2009,
pp. 208, ISBN 978-955-0093-02-1. Price not mentioned.

Sasanka Perera

The context and approach

This expensively produced volume on the 20th century history of Sri Lankan art immediately assumes significance for a number of crucial reasons. For one thing, as the book's front dust cover flap announces quite prominently, it is written by two of Sri Lanka's best known senior academics, one from visual arts and the other from archeology, and one has to naturally assume that the book is a significant contribution to knowledge. At the same time, it is published by a state agency, the National Trust Sri Lanka which also leads to the assumption that what is presented is not only the National Trust's but also the state's understanding of 20th century painting. Interestingly, the president of the National Trust notes in the 'Forward' to the book that the mandate to publish ten volumes covering the complex subject areas consisting of animals, birds, dancers, heritage buildings, instrumentalists, painters, photographers, plants, sculptors and singers falls under the Trust's duties (2009: No pagination). This classification system of heritage validity, though decidedly peculiar from the perspectives of the 21st century, nevertheless rests very comfortably within the overall logic of familiar colonial systems of cultural classification. On the other hand, it also indicates the National Trust's rather interesting understanding of heritage. In any event, in the above context, we can assume that the present volume indicates the recognition it wishes to give painters of the 20th century. As far as painters go, we can also assume that what is presented in the book reflects the nature of 20th century art as it is understood by the National Trust, the state as well as the two authors.

I propose to review this book in relation to the following aspects: first, what new knowledge does it add to the existing knowledge of 20th century Sri Lankan art history? In doing so, I will pay particular attention to late 20th century art as the period remains relatively undocumented except in selected subaltern sources, despite both the significant role it has played in local and regional aesthetic politics and as a repository of recent social and political history. Second, I would like to explore the kind of politics imbued in the pictorial narrative of the book by examining its silences as well as its voices. Third, I would attempt to understand whether the images and the description in the book as an art historical narrative provides the reader with a contextualization of paintings that goes beyond the mere chronology of formalist art history and reveals the socio-political dynamics that compelled artists to undertake such works, with the resultant significance within contemporary cultural politics.

Nature of new knowledge

Given the vast undertaking at hand – the documentation of Sri Lankan painting in the 20th century – the written text of the book is quite slim, consisting of merely 91 pages inclusive of acknowledgements and bibliography, while there are 116 pages of color reproductions containing many familiar images of 20th century paintings. In general, even though art history as a formal discipline is yet to take root in Sri Lanka, one could say that certain aspects of the evolution of Sri Lankan painting as a process and Sri Lankan painting of the 20th century are reasonably well documented as part of the existing knowledge. For instance, Bandranayake's own masterly text, *Rock and Temple Paintings of Sri Lanka* (1986), gives an exhaustive history of the painting traditions of Sri Lanka from prehistoric times right up to the mid 20th century with a focus on Buddhist mural paintings. Similarly, the work and influence of Sri Lanka's first modernist collective, the '43 Group and some of its individual members are also somewhat extensively documented in a number of well received books such as Manel Fonseka's and Senake Bandaranayake's *Ivan Peiris: Paintings, 1938-88* (1996), Neville Weeraratne's *'43 Group: A Chronicle of the Fifty Years in the Art of Sri Lanka* (1993) and Sunil Goonasekera's *Georege Keyt Interpretations* (1991). Compared to this, late 20th century art is not well documented in the mainstream art historical discourse though numerous discussions on the art of this period are available in a number of subaltern sources mostly written in Sinhala. I will focus on this aspect later in this review. The point I want to make is quite simply this: it is this reasonably well documented history of the early and mid 20th century painting that is concisely recaptured in the present book while its focus on late 20th century art is marginal at best. In fact, the book's main contribution is not in providing an exhaustive history of painting in 20th century Sri Lanka but in bringing together this history so far located in different texts and places (such as the ones noted above) via five brief chapters. In essence, reading through these chapters, one gets a brief, smooth and linear narrative of Sri Lanka's recent history of painting exclusively seen from a formalistic perspective of art history, devoid of any historical ruptures in the form of cultural and political contradictions or cleavages. This particular narrative style is the result of opting not to engage with the history that is being documented. For instance, the 'Introduction' contains a section titled 'Asia and Europe: Tradition and Modernization' (2009: 12-14) which initiates an important discussion on the varied external sources that have influenced Sri Lankan art, even though

it does not attempt with any degree of seriousness to explain why some changes were accepted locally while others were not, and the manner in which local innovations came about the way they did.

On the other hand, the book devotes significant space to a discussion of the 'modern' period and the advent of modernism into Sri Lankan art with a focus on the work of the '43 Group (2009: 41-76). The authors suggest that the work of the '43 Group was "by far the most significant development in Sri Lankan painting in the 20th century" (2009: 41). Clearly, the '43 Group reinvented the directions that Sri Lankan art would take from that point onward. This was achieved not simply by falling into the model of modernism already invented and used in Europe and North America but also by reinventing modernism in the social, cultural and political contexts that prevailed locally at the time. While the authors present to us the history of the modern period and the work of the '43 Group in considerable detail through the work of preexisting histories, they fail to engage with this information critically in order to establish if modernism in Sri Lanka was the same as what was seen and experienced in Europe. Geetha Kapur has consistently argued, particularly in her essays, 'Dismantled Norms: Apropose other Avant-gardes' (2005) and 'When was Modernism in Indian/Third World Art?' (1993), that in the Indian context, Indian modernism was not a mere replication of European modernism but an active local reinvention and reinterpretation. In other words, the Euro-American zone lost its hold, hegemony and insistent claims over 'modernism' when what it represented underwent a process of reinvention in Asia and the rest of the world, responding to local socio-cultural and political anxieties, and taking root in these regions in very different ways.

Bandaranayke and Dharmasiri have not been able to direct their text toward addressing such issues in a rigorous and sophisticated manner even though some of the hegemonic characteristics and exclusions typified in the writings of Kapur prevail in the present text also. As Weerasinghe points out, for Kapur, modernism in visual arts in India was re-invented by Delhi/Baroda/Bombay based artists in the context of which artists operating in other parts of India have become literally invisible (Weerasinghe 2007). Similarly, for Bandaranayake and Dharmasiri, not only modernism but everything else that came since that time is dominated by the '43 Group going by the over-emphasis given to their work in the book. Seen in this sense, the first five chapters of the book can be summarized as a brief narrative history of 20th century painting in Sri Lanka (particularly of the '43 Group) reproduced from the preexisting formal canon without any critical engagement.

Coverage of the art of the 1990s

This brings us to the last chapter of the book titled 'The Painters of the 1990s and the Art Explosion' which is where the most obvious historiographical lapse of the book becomes very clear in the context of the authors' attempt to narrate the work that emerged in the latter part of the 20th century and early part of the 21st century, particularly with regard to the work now known as the '90s Art. The 1990s saw many artists engaged in a variety of work like in any other era even though the most dominant genre of work at the time was the work of a group of artists who were essentially critiquing the existing aesthetic norms and practices. Weerasinghe identifies two significant and broad thematic preoccupations in the art of the 1990s: 1) Works that investigate the self, and the sense of being of individuals who

have been victimized and frustrated as a consequence of organized violence; 2) Works that investigate the allure as well as the frustrations of the city as an artistic expression (Weerasinghe 2004: 15-40). Both these trends are auto/biographical in the sense that the art works subsumed under these themes are visually articulated as narratives of personal experiences and as the experiences of a particular generation. Weerasinghe suggests that the last decade of the 20th century "stands out as a period of extraordinary revitalization of art in Sri Lanka, which paved the way for a diverse and multifaceted practice of visual arts in the country" (2005: 183). One way in which this period can be characterized would be to suggest that it paved the way for the emergence of a "whole new generation of artists equipped with a range of new ideas and concepts of art, themes for artistic investigation and, especially, with an understanding of the idea of the artist as a political individual" (Weerasinghe 2005: 183). This clearly articulated political consciousness is the clearest marker that identifies the artists of this period and of this genre from earlier periods and genres. They also experimented with the available methods and mediums of art-making, and opted often to combine media as they felt such exercises gave them better options for expression.

These are the artists (painters) that the authors focus on in this last chapter within a mere seven and half pages, which surely must be one of the shortest narratives of a complex history to be found in any exercise of historiography. This particular chapter outlines the emergence of the '90s Trend but does not engage with or analyze its politics to any serious degree except to make certain highly problematic and generalizing pronouncements. There is a great degree of attention paid to the initial work of Jagath Weerasinghe as one of the most important initiators of the 1990s art, but others centrally associated with this movement are present only through their striking absence and the deafening silence of their voices. Even in the case of Weerasinghe, there is no serious engagement with the complex politics that his art consistently tried to express and negotiate with, which included a head-on confrontation with the politics of violence in Sri Lanka, religion's role in that violence and the political manipulation of mass media. In a clinical tone, what is noted is merely that Weerasinghe's work is "contextual," "socially engaged" and among other things, deals with "contemporary life" (2009: 83). This apolitical reading of Weerasinghe's work has lead Qadri Ismail to comment that according to the writers "Weerasinghe could have been depicting potholes on our roads" (Ismail 2009: 37). In this highly selective process of rendering recognition, the entire spectrum of feminist artists of the 1990s, crucial anti-war painters such as Chandraguptha Thenuwara, Jaffna artists who were actively engaged in the public domain in the context of continuing war such as T. Shanaathanan and R. Vaidehi as well as other crucial southern painters such as Muhannad Carder, Pala Pothupitiya, Koralegedara Pushpakumara are missing from this state sponsored narrative, while some of them like Pushpakumara and Thenuwara have been given minor recognition in the pictorial narrative, even though the selection also does not embody any discernable logic. One of the major characteristics of the '90s Trend is that it encouraged artists to stretch artistic and formalist boundaries to a great extent, and within such freedom painters explored three dimensionality within the practice of painting, while retaining certain crucial aspects such as a demarcation of space within the frame. Many works of Pala Pothupitiya (eg., Hero Series - 2000) have been executed within this genre of painting, which also has a close link to Buddhist temple murals where figures of religious significance jut out from the two dimensional painted murals. This is a particular methodology and aesthetic formalism that became popular within the '90s Trend. By not

addressing in-depth the significance of the '90s Trend and its innovations such as the above, the authors have failed to grasp the changes that the practice of painting has undergone within Sri Lankan art history in the latter part of the 20th century and thereby have failed to recognize the avant-garde nature of an entire generation of contemporary Sri Lankan artists.

However, the authors articulate an excuse for this absence within the chapter itself. Even though the art of the 1990s that the authors think are typified by the work of Weerasinghe and Kingsley Gunatilleke (2009: 77) was well established by the late 1990s and some authoritative writing on it had emerged by 2004, they suggest that this "emergent art" and its "complexities" had not yet evolved adequately "to include it in any significant way within the scope of this review" (2009: 77). In one unconvincing line, the authors have managed to negate the historical significance, existence and the politics of an art movement that is the most influential in terms of its impact both locally and regionally since the '43 Group. Jagath Weerasinghe's essay, 'Contemporary Art in Sri Lanka' published in 2005 in the influential volume edited by Caroline Turner, *Art and Social Change: Contemporary Art in Asia and the Pacific* is one of the best known articulations of both the history and the politics of 1990s Sri Lankan art. Turner, with an international reputation as an art historian, found it important to include this essay in her book which has now become an authoritative text on the politics of art in Asia. On the other hand, there are numerous subaltern sources such as exhibition catalogs in Sinhala, English and Tamil published extensively by entities such as the Vibhavi Academy of Fine Arts and the Theertha International Artists Collective, essays published in Sinhala and Tamil in the journal *Art Lab* (from 2004 onwards) and the highly successful traveling exhibition on 20th century Sri Lankan art organized by Theertha International Artists Collective which travelled to remote parts of the country, attracting over 5000 students in Aludeniya near Kandy and similar numbers in Kalmunai in the Eastern Province. While most publications of this nature are written with informed knowledge and maintains a serious and engaged reading of contemporary art, the travelling exhibition, '20th Century Sri Lanka Art' was compiled through an extensive research agenda.[1] In most other parts of the world, such sources would be welcome in the process of art historiography. This does not seem to apply to the two senior authors entrusted with the task of writing about 20th century painting in Sri Lanka. It is a pity that such rich sources of information on the '90s Art as well as the visual art history of the 20th century were not accessed in-depth by the authors.

Pictorial politics

The pictorial politics of the book also places in context some areas of concern. In the 'Preface' and at other instances the authors note that it is not possible to list everyone who was a painter in the 20th century within an undertaking such as this. No serious reader would also expect such an effort from writers of history; but what would be expected is a reasonable depiction of what has taken place over a period of time when evidence exists, detailing major ruptures, departures from the norm and possible explanations for such departures. At least, this is what is ideally expected from the writing of history. On the other hand, images selected for a book such as this could achieve a number of crucial objectives as long as selection is made on some rational basis: images can give an indication of different genres

over a period of time, or images can mark the most crucial moments of the painterly process of an individual painter or a movement. However much one tries, it is simply impossible to find the logic of image selection or the placement of images in the context of the discussion presented in this book. Many of the images of 20th century temple murals, the work of early 20th century painters and the '43 Group that are included, are representative and quite familiar in the context of existing art history. Even so, the '43 Group's work is needlessly over-exposed given the fact that these images are readily available in numerous sources along with descriptive narratives of contributions by individual painters. For instance, there are 10 color reproductions of George Keyt's work, 8 of Justin Deraniayagala's and 10 of Ivan Peiris' excluding black and white images. However, many of these are at least well-known paintings of these artists which in certain ways mark the progression of their individual careers. At the same time, there are four large color reproductions of Albert Dharmasiri's paintings of no known significance which fall within a single genre. Why they have been included, what their historical significance is, what they narrate about the artist's career and what impact these paintings have had in the progression of 20th century painting remains unclear. This mysterious selection criteria with regard to Dharmasiri's paintings is also reflected in the reproduction of many other works. Take for instance, the large one page reproduction of a painting by Chandani Senarath Yapa (2009: 175) who may have produced less than ten paintings in her entire career and another one page reproduction of a work by Prageeth Ratnayake (2009: 208) who is a recent art graduate without an extensive public portfolio. One is left wondering what the art historical significance of these pictorial inclusions might be when juxtaposed with the failure to include any works of artists such as Muhanned Cader whose works have influenced many artists, as well as the absence of a significant pictorial record of many other better known painters who have made a more significant historical contribution. Similarly, Chandragupta Thenuwara is merely represented by two less significant works (in small images) from his extensive portfolio while ignoring his most prolific work on 'Barrelism' such as his early paintings on 'barrelscapes.' T. Shannaathanan is represented only by one of his early etchings when a much larger and conceptually well developed body of works by him is available and very well known to the art community, not to mention the absence of R. Vaidehi's work that reflected the female anxieties within the situation of war in the northeast. This rather puzzling list of bizarre selections permeates throughout the book. Image selection throughout the book seems to compromise its ability to present Sri Lankan painting, particularly in the late 20th century, as an evolving body of work that has had its moments of innovation, radicalism and experimentation. By resorting to this strange selective procedure, the authors have grievously denied the space for contemporary Sri Lankan painters to be presented as individuals who are capable of engaging with the contemporary global, regional and local art discourses in painting, both critically and innovatively.

Concluding comments

Let me bring this review to a conclusion at this point by referring to a number of assumptions that the book allows us to formulate. One assumption has to do with how the personal politics of the two authors play out in public through the book which has now entered the public domain. In the 'Introduction' to the 1999 collection of essays, *Mortality-Immortality: The Legacy of 20th Century Art*, Miguel Angel Corzo muses that "if we accept the notion that arts

reflect history, then contemporary art is, in some way, a monument to contemporary civilization. It is the cultural heritage of our time" 1999: XV). In the same volume, Roy Perry observes that "if we do not preserve the art of today for tomorrow's audience, their knowledge and experience of our culture will be, sadly, impoverished" (Perry 1999: 44). It seems to me that Bandaranayake's and Dharmasiri's art historical project sponsored by the National Trust Sri Lanka outlined above brings into focus what Angel-Corzo and Perry articulate in another context. Whether we like it or not, whether it suites our individual tastes or not, a variety of artistic genres are likely to emerge and evolve across eras as has been the case in Sri Lanka. This constitutes our collective history and is a monument to our civilization; the corpus of 20th century painting does not only consist of temple murals, the work of the '43 Group and other 20th century painters whose work the two authors have summarized and pictorially contextualized, but also the work of many other important painters whose work and place in history the two authors have opted to negate for some reason. As these reasons cannot be based on any serious methodological or scholarly assumptions we are left to assume that their selections must have been intensely personal as no formal historical evaluation supports one to comprehend the logic of inclusions and exclusions. However, such personal criteria are clearly not suitable for a public project overseen by a state agency.

This brings us to a second assumption that the book allows us to make. This has to do with the fact that the book was sponsored by a state agency which necessarily cannot be independent of the thinking of the state. As pointed out by Webb, the attention any national government would pay to art "is predicated on the fact that what is turned into art signifies what is perceived as worthy of attention" (Webb 2005: 3). In many countries where such things as national art collections have been institutionalized, the emphasis has been to select and preserve art that perceivably indicates a sense of national cultural identity; a sense of authenticity. This is because in such national contexts, art is seen as 'vehicles of social meaning' in the sense articulated by Cesar Grana (quoted in Webb 2005), which "both represent and realize 'the world'; and as a corollary can confirm (or deny) the stories of nationhood" (Webb 2005: 30). Webb further notes, "not just any art could become metonymic of nation, of course. The art selected to inscribe national identity, tended to be works that relied on orthodox images" (Webb 2005: 30). It is precisely to do this that the Department and Ministry of Cultural Affairs the Sri Lankan government and their auxiliary agencies function with their very limited and often parochial definitions of art and culture. Perhaps the two authors became prisoners of this system of political meaning through their close association with the National Trust and became subservient to the state's limited understanding of art, and in this case particularly the painting of the 20th century. There is of course another possibility as articulated by the National Trust itself in the 'Forward' to the book: "a serious obligation on the part of the National Trust would be to avoid handling any item of tangible or intangible heritage that is already under the jurisdiction of an existing state institution" (Silva 2009: No pagination). One can assume that the serious absences in the book, most manifestly indicated by the relative inattention given to the art of the 1990s is due to the fact that this aspect of contemporary art, in the wisdom of the National Trust, is handled by some other unnamed agency of the state.

These assumptions also nudge us in the direction of a specific observation: what are the criteria by which these two irreconcilable authors were coupled by the National Trust to deliver such an important product as the history of 20th century Sri Lankan art?

Bandaranayake for instance has an established track record of writing in archeology, some of which are seminal texts such as *The Rock and Wall Paintings of Sri Lanka* (1986). Dharmasiri on the other hand does not have such a track record as indicated by his somewhat linear and descriptive texts such as *Modern Art in Sri Lanka: The Anton Wickramasinghe Collection* (1988) and *Bellanwila Murals* (2002). In better intellectual climes, one could have hoped that what Bandaranayake missed as an archeologist, Dharmasiri would have picked up as a senior art teacher with a career exceeding three decades. However, as the book exemplifies, this was not to be.

Finally, where does all this take us and what does the book actually present to us? In the context of the potential personal politics and the mysterious workings of the state outlined above what we have is an intellectual exercise that has opted not to record important aspects and personalities of our recent history of painting. Quite simply, this book offers little that is new. It is essentially a synthesis of existent knowledge from obvious, familiar and dominant sources, and therefore a recycling of the conventional, conservative and formalistic Sri Lankan art historical narrative that predictably privileges Buddhist mural paintings and the work of the '43 Group. As a result, the book fails to achieve the enormous potential that is invariably linked to such a historical undertaking and has become an 'opportunity lost.' In this context what is presented to future generations is at best a partial understanding of the present and the recent past. When that future finally arrives and the past is assessed, future generations' knowledge of our culture and the art of the 20th century would indeed be rather impoverished.

Endnote

1. Interestingly, the present book refers to the Sinhala language catalog of this exhibition in its bibliography though authors do not seem to have grasped much of the work or the influence of the art of the 1990s narrated in it.

Bibliography

Bandaranayake, Senake. 1986 (2007). *The Rock and Wall Paintings of Sri Lanka*. Colombo: Lake House.

Bandaranayake, Senake and Manel Fonseka. 1996. *Ivan Peries: Paintings 1938-88*. Colombo: Tamarind.

Corzo, Miguel Angel.1999. 'Introduction.' In, Miguel Angel Corzo ed., *Mortality-Immortality: The Legacy of 20th Century Art*. Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute.

Dharmasiri, Albert. 1988. *Modern Art in Sri Lanka: The Anton Wickramasinghe Collection*. Colombo: Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd.

Dharmasiri, Albert. 2002 *Bellanwila Murals*. Dehiwala: Bellanwila Rajamaha Viharaya.

Goonasekera, Sunil. 1991. *George Keyt Interpretations*. Kandy: Institute of Fundamental Studies.

Ismail, Qadri. 2009. 'Redaing the Art of Jagath Weerasinghe.' In, *Art of Jagath Weerasinghe: Celestial Fervor*. Pitakotte: Theertha Red Dot Gallery and Theertha International Artists Collective.

Kapur, Geetha.1993. 'When was Modernism in Indian/Third World Art?' In, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 92, No. 3, Summer 1993.

Kapur, Geetha. 2005. 'Dismantled Norms: Apropose other Avant-gardes.' In, Caroline Turner, ed., *Art and Social Change*. Canberra: Pandanus Books.

Perry, Roy A. 1999. 'Present and Future: Caring for Contemporary Art at the Tate Gallery.' In, Miguel Angel Corzo ed., *Mortality-Immortality: The Legacy of 20th Century Art*. Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute.

Turner, Caroline. 2005. 'Art and Social Change'. In, Caroline Turner ed., *Art and Social Change: Contemporary Art in Asia and the Pacific*. Canberra: Pandanus Books.

Webb, Jen. 2005. 'Art in a Globalized State'. In, Caroline Turner ed., *Art and Social Change: Contemporary Art in Asia and the Pacific*. Canberra: Pandanus Books.

Weeraratne, Neville. 1993. '*43 Group: A Chronicle of Fifty Years in the Art of Sri Lanka*. Melbourne: Lantana.

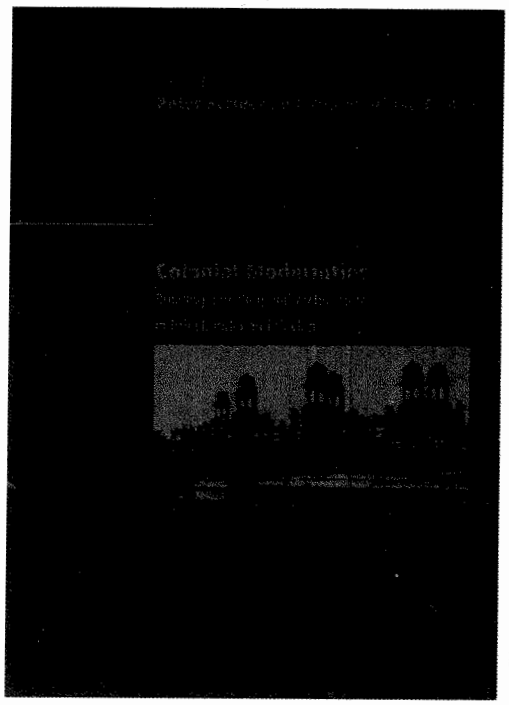
Weerasinghe, Jagath. 2004. '90 Pravanathawa saha Samakaleena Drushya Kala Bhavithaya.' In, *ArtLab,* Volume 1 (2004), 5-43.

Weerasinghe, Jagath. 2005. 'Contemporary Art in Sri Lanka'. In, Caroline Turner ed., *Art and Social Change: Contemporary Art in Asia and the Pacific*. Canberra: Pandanus Books.

Weerasinghe, Jagath. 2007. 'Asian Art Today: Exploding the Code – A Critique from the Margins'. In, *South Asia Journal for Culture*, Vol.1, 2007, pp. 83-89.

P. Scriver and V. Prakash (Eds.,) *Colonial Modernities: Building, Dwelling and Architecture in British India and Ceylon.* Routledge, London and New York, 2007, pp. ix + 287, ISBN 97 8041 5399 098. US$ 48.13.

Tariq Jazeel



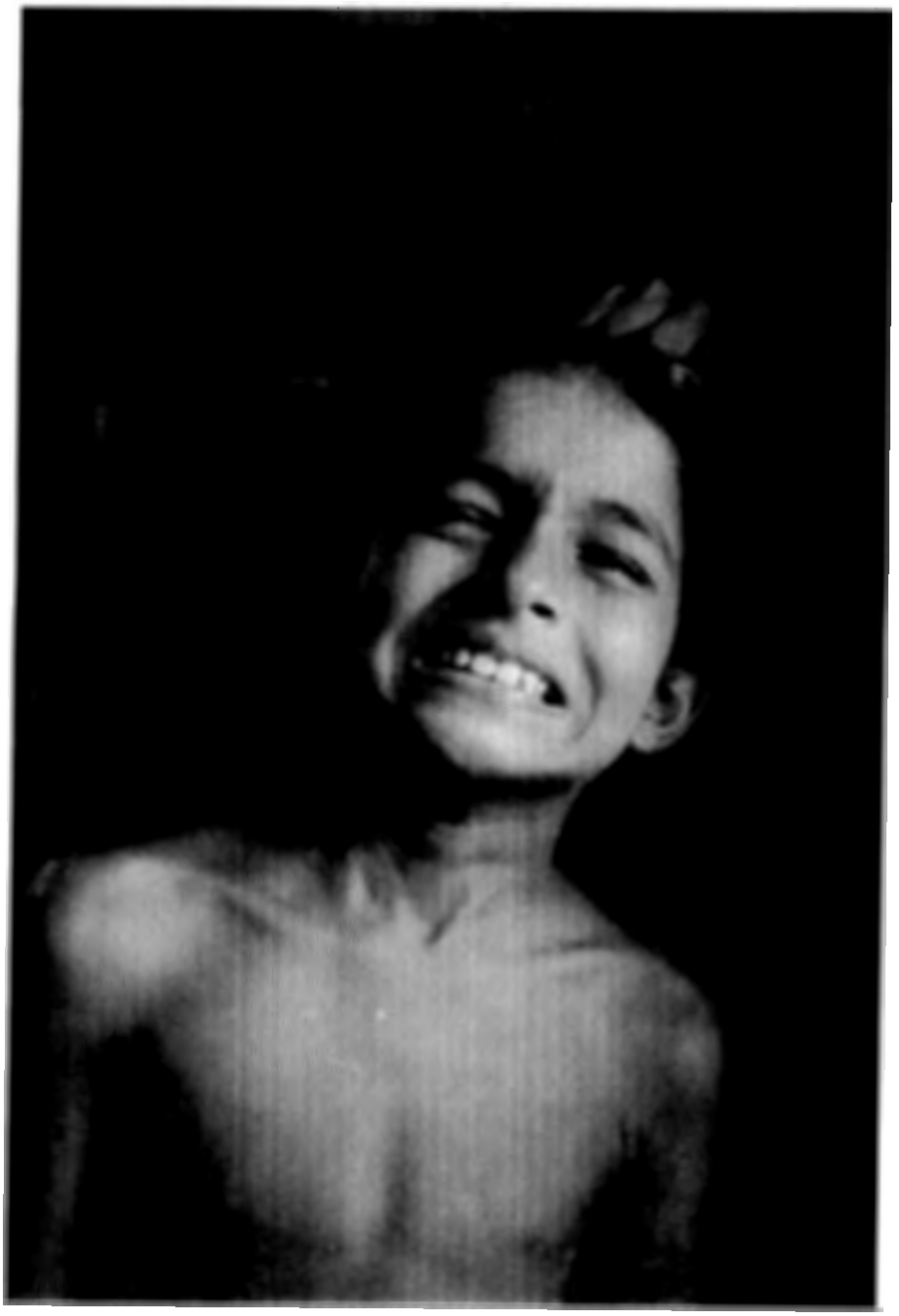
Edited by Peter Scriver and Vikramaditya Prakash and published as part of Routledge's excellent 'Architext' series, *Colonial Modernities* comprises eleven essays that explore the relationship between architecture and the unfolding of colonial society in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century British India and Ceylon. One of the aims of the Architext series is to tease out the connections between built space and social relationships. *Colonial Modernities* achieves this well, and in the geographically variegated context of the long afternoon of colonialism in British South Asia the book's interdisciplinary tunnelling into the performative and contested role of particular types of built space is a welcome addition to literatures on the historical significance of space in the region. The anthology is characterized by a critical engagement of architecture's imbrication in late colonial society, politics and culture. Each chapter refuses to celebrate the architect as hero. Instead, as the title of Scriver's and Prakash's introductory chapter emphasizes, proceeds get to grips with an epistemological space 'between materiality and representation' where buildings are inalienably 'a part of social knowledge and experience' (p.11).

The collection is organized in three parts. The first, 'Frames of Discourse', engages the field of architectural scholarship in South Asia. It includes a review of how architecture has traditionally been studied by architectural historiographers of colonial India (Scriver), and a discussion of how postcolonial theory framed around Edward Said's notion of 'imagi-

native geographies' might prove useful for engaging the materialities and contested meanings of British Indian built space (Cairns). Part two, 'Institutional Frameworks', explores the bureaucratic and governmental apparatuses that framed building practices in colonial India. Chapters tease out the tensions between British India's Public Works Department (PWD) and the Arts and Crafts Movement (Scriver), the super-exploitation of Indian craft labour by the PWD and the Metropolitan Department of Science and Art (Dutta), the significance of Swinton Jacob's Jeypore Portfolio of Architectural Details in the tense negotiation of identity and agency in the context of indirect colonial power filtered through a 'sovereign' local maharaja (Prakash), and the relationships between a building's implied audience and architectural 'style' through a reading of Robert Chisholm's Napier Museum in Trivanduram (Walker). The third section focuses on 'Domestic Frames of Practice', and perhaps most successfully engages those relationships between built space and social formation. Chapters tell the importance colonialism's persistent hybridization and appropriation of the past through the biography of a Mughal mausoleum turned Governor's house in Lahore (Shorto), the traction between British and Bengali ways of inhabiting the bourgeois 'garden-estate' in British colonial Bengal (Chattopadhay), a fascinating biography of nineteenth-century caste enablement through readings of domestic architectural innovation, material culture and performative praxis in colonial Ceylon (Anoma Pieris), and lastly the implications and native appropriations of the Delhi Improvement Trust's rational and scientific planning of suburban housing tracts (Jyoti Hosagrahar).

It is perhaps worth stressing here that the volume's four female contributors are bracketed within this last section focussing on architecture and domesticity. Though this is not meant as a critique of the book, this gendered division of the book is perhaps symptomatic of an enduring gendered division of intellectual labour within interdisciplinary, critical architectural scholarship. Similarly, it is worth stressing that Anoma Pieris' excellent chapter is the sole contribution on Ceylon; a fact that betrays an enduring and broader India-centrism within South Asian studies in the Euro-American academy.

The book provides exemplary and absorbing snapshots of the significance of built space in the unfolding, and ultimately undoing, of Empire in South Asia. And it does so through an engagement with a range of fascinating archival and other sources (novels, women's diaries, material culture), many of which are reproduced in the100 plus figures that nicely punctuate the text. This is an excellent, often inspiring collection of essays for critical scholars of architecture and built-space, and for South Asian studies scholars more generally. Nevertheless, one doubt the book left me with surrounded the colonial modernities specified in the title. Although most of the contributing authors engage the term and the editors flirt with it in their introduction, the book lacks a thoroughgoing articulation of what conceptual work the term achieves through the course of the volume. Indeed, quite why the term is the organizing rubric for the collection is left a little unclear. This reviewer would have liked some editorial guidance through this, and perhaps some greater effort to delineate how this volume's specific engagement with architecture in South Asia sits in relation to the wealth of extant literature that has sought to explore colonialism's relationship to modernity.



Ansuman.Photo: Theertha Archives.

Boys Own[1]
Photograpy of Menika van der Poorten

Anoli Perera

Boys Own is a delicate photographic recording of adolescence through the eyes of an artist, a mother and a woman. In this attempt, she looks into two interrelated realms: the realm of homo-social behavior where masculinities get formed and manifested in male children and *Boys Own* is a delicate photographic recording of adolescence through the eyes of an artist, a mother and a woman. In this attempt, Menika van der Poorten looks into two interrelated realms: the realm of homo-social behavior where masculinities get formed and manifested in male children and the sensitive and often emotional realization of 'sons growing up'.

Boys Own is essentially a collection of solo portraits of youth between 10 to 16 years. Another group of images tries to capture the 'somewhat intense gestures' of boys towards other boys, reflections of bonding rituals associated with the formation of masculinities. Both these series of works intimately show the anxieties, uncertainties and restlessness of adolescence through the eyes of another who is in close proximity witnessing the changes and the 'growing pains' of a group of boys. The whole series revolves around the artist's sons, their friends and acquaintances. Sometimes voyeuristically, sometimes as an inquisitive mother intrigued by the changes in her boys that are manifested physically, psychologically and gesturally, van der Poorten engages with her subject matter trying to find her own foothold in their tumultuous and transient passage to the world of the masculine. "Not only are my sons constantly growing and going through profound changes but I also find myself changing in the way I relate/react to them and it's a personally challenging journey in a way nothing else in my life has been. It's a universal experience but also very personal."[2] Therefore, what is represented here are not only the anxieties of the characters centrally represented in the photographs but also of the artist, the author of the photographs. This makes the artist a ghost character whose emotions are somehow present but with a bodily absence in the work. In many ways this leaves both the object of the artwork as well as the artist/gazer on an equal level transcending the usual hierarchies present in artist/model situations within the historical discourse of visual arts.

Getting into the thematic content and looking more closely at the artist's own anxieties as an inherent part of the work reminds me of Michael S. Kimmel's essay, *Masculinity as Homophobia* from which I would like to quote the following:

> Historically and developmentally, masculinity has been defined as the flight from women, a repudiation of femininity. Since Freud, we have come to understand that developmentally the central task that every little boy must confront is to develop a secure identity for himself as a man. As Freud had it, the oedipal project is a process of the boy's renouncing his identification with a deep emotional attachment to his mother and then replacing her with the father as the object of identification (Kimmel 1994: 126).

While the Freudian perception outlined above on the construction of masculinities and femininities have been significantly questioned through recent feminist critical interventions, what is obvious is that adolescence is one of the first visible rebellions against the authority, particularly of the mother as she is the comfort zone, that constant and overwhelming presence engaging in checks and balances in the lives of children. Perhaps the artist's attraction and the engagement with the subject is precisely to deal with these first signs of breaking away which she experiences with her own two sons. Close observations, analyzing and theorizing always brings in a sense of aloofness and a clinical distance to the object of study. In that sense, noting her own personal involvement and proximity to the subject and the objects of study, Van der Poorten's attempt in this series of work tends to be a two way mirror that reflects an emotional stance on one side and a sense of clinical aloofness as a strategy that equalize those emotions on the other.

Kimmel further discusses the masculine identity as a homo-social activity that comes into being "in the renunciation of femininity, not in the direct affirmation of masculine, which leaves the masculine identity tenuous and fragile" (Kimmel 1994: 127). Van der Poorten clearly recognizes the fragility in these adolescent bodies which she has cleverly and craftily captured through various subtle mannerisms and moods of the young models in her work. She observes that "it's more tough for boys to be masculine than women to be feminine. For women being non feminine is not exactly such an issue. The little girls being tomboys were never a cause for alarm. Negotiating both 'girlish' and 'tomboyish' behaviors in the same instance is easily done by them which in many senses give girls more space to negotiate their adult identities as women. But boys have to constantly reaffirm their boyishness within their peer groups so as not to be called 'girly.'[3] One wonders if this constant reaffirmation of masculinity gives that particular aggressive temperament in the bonding behavior among adolescent boys. Van der Pooten's *Boys Own* represents an attempt that demands the viewer to go beyond the realms of aesthetic and artistic interpretations.

Menika van der Poorten has been involved in the field of photography for over 20 years as a photographer, picture researcher, teacher, arts administrator and editor both in Sri Lanka and in England. The overall tendency in her work has been to venture into personal stories, private spaces and childhood moments. Her series of works titled 'Last Doll' and 'Dream Time' unveils a psycho drama which is layered and carries many meanings. In her work 'Dream Time,' the temporality gets fluid and loses its sense of location and space while projecting a transient mood without a clearly identified beginning or an end due to lack of any demarcation. In these works she looks at her own family history and reconstructs a memory book as a psychological play with a sense of nostalgia:

> Memory, personal histories, space, time, the transient, the fragmentary, ephemeral and the mundane bits of life are my inspiration... (van der Poorten 2006).

With the practices of art that were established by the '90s Trend', a liberated space for artistic expression allowed contemporary women artists to emerge and establish their art practices that were informed by a discourse dealing with identity and gender politics. In this context, one could see women artists engaged in a number of thematic tendencies dealing with identity and sexuality using a methodology of investigating intimate experiences and interrogation of self and gender tensions through reworking of topographical elements from one's own personal histories. Menika van der Poorten's art practice as a photographer reflects this particular tendency.

Endnotes

1. The photographs reproduced in this photo essay were originally exhibited in Menika van der Porten's exhibition *Boys Own* at the Red Dot Gallery in Pita Kotte, Sri Lanka, 09th to 26th November 2008. The essay on her work by Anoli Perera is an edited version of the catalogue essay published for the exhibition.

2. Excerpt from the author's conversation with Menika van der Poorten on 22nd October 2008, Nawala, Sri Lanka.

3. Excerpt from the author's conversation with Menika van der Poorten on 22nd October 2008, Nawala, Sri Lanka.

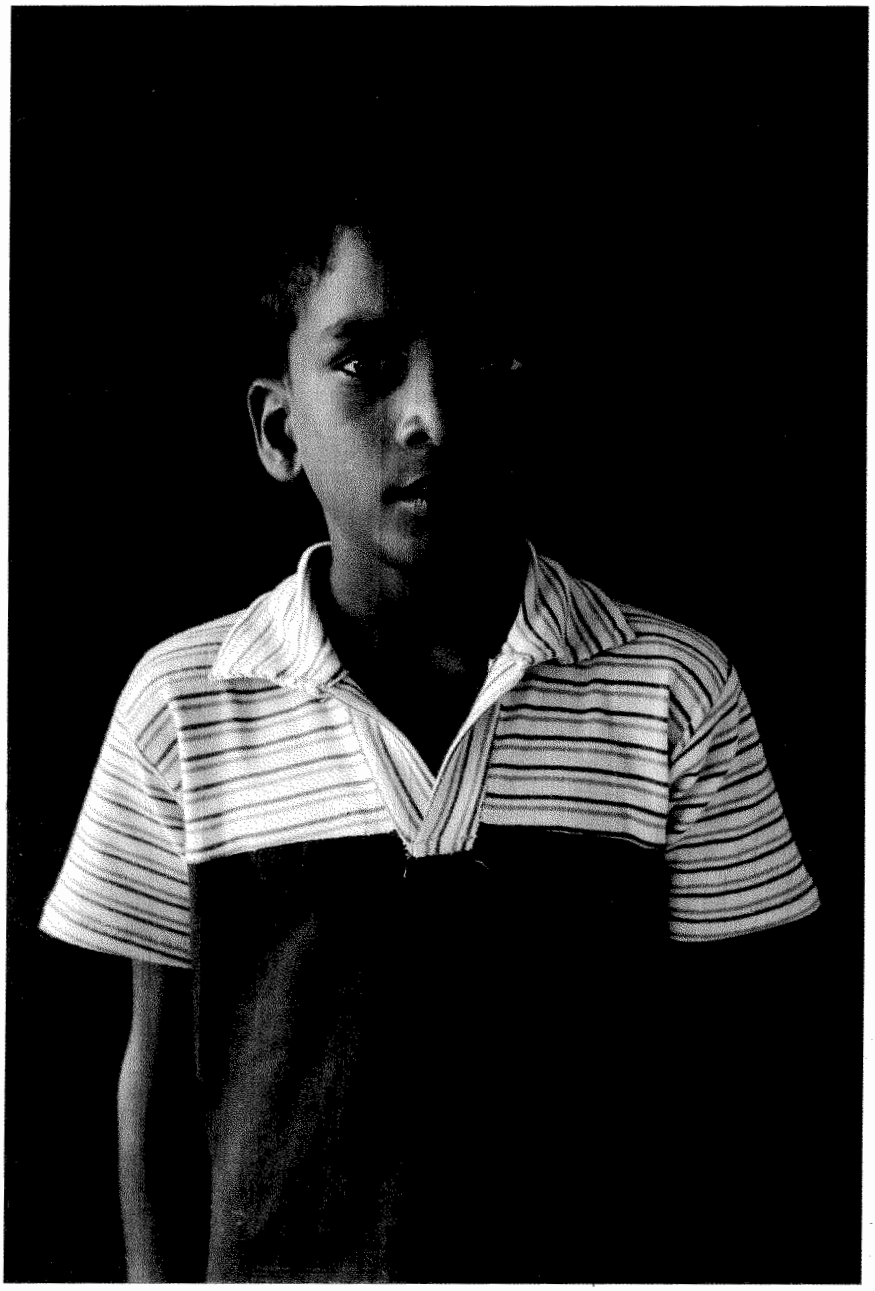
Bibliography

Kimmel, Michael S. 1994. 'Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity.' In, Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman eds., *Theorizing Masculinities*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Van der Poorten, Menika. 2006. In, *(A)critical Intimacy* (Exhibition Catalogue). Pita Kotte, Sri Lanka: Theertha International Artists Collective.

Top: Akilendra & Charudatta. Photo: Theertha Archives.
Below: Akilendra, Charudatta and Ansuman. Photo: Theertha Archives.

Anandaraj. Photo: Theertha Archives.



Indunil (2008). Photo: Theertha Archives.

Suramba (2008). Photo: Theertha Archives.

Ansuman.Photo: Theertha Archives.

Ansuman.Photo: Theertha Archives.

Notes on the Contributors

Colin McFarlane is Lecturer in Human Geography at the Department of Geography at Durham University. The main themes in his current research include urban materialities and inequalities and the geographies of knowledge production. His recent essays include, 'Everyday Interruptions: Urban Life in the Global South' (2009) and 'The Comparative City: Knowledge, Learning, Urbanism (2010, forthcoming).

Radihka Chopra is Associate Professor of Sociology at the Department of Sociology, University of Delhi. Her research interests include gender and masculinities, Punjab studies, urban studies and visual culture. She is the author of *Reframing Masculinities: Narrating the Supportive Practices of Men* (Orient Longman, 2006), *Educational Regimes in Contemporary India* with Patricia Jeffery (Sage India, 2005) and *South Asian Masculinities* (Kali for Women/ Women Unlimited, 2004) which she co-edited with Caroline Osella and Filippo Osella. She has guest-edited a special issue of *Men and Masculinities*, October 2006, Volume 9, No. 2.

Roma Chatterji is Professor of Sociology at the Department of Sociology, University of Delhi. Her research interests include folklore and narrative traditions, folk art and folk culture, medical sociology, the sociology of collective violence, ethnographies of the state, bureaucratization and everyday life. She is the author of *Writing Identities: Folklore and the Performative Arts of Purulia* (IGNCA and Aryan, 2009) and *Living with Violence: An Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life* (Sage India, 2007) which she co-wrote with Deepak Mehta. She also edited the Special Issue of *Domains 3* on 'Riot Discourses' in 2007.

Tariq Jazeel is Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Sheffield. His research interests include human geography and South Asian Studies with specific interests in postcolonial and critical theory, spatial politics, landscape, built space and 'nature'. He serves on the Editorial Collectives of the journals, *Social Text* and *South Asia Journal for Culture*. His key publications include *Spatialising Politics: Culture and Geography in Postcolonial Sri Lanka* (Sage India, 2009) which he co-edited with Catherine Brun.

Nira Wickramasinghe was Professor of History in the Department of History and International Relations at the University of Colombo until 2009. At present, she is Professor of Modern South Asian Studies at the Leiden Institute of Area Studies, Leiden University in the Netherlands. She has published widely on identity politics, nationalism and global civil society. Her present research focuses on everyday life in colonial societies through a foray into the life of objects. Her most recent books include *Sri Lanka in the Modern Age: A History of Contested Identities* (C. Hurst and University of Hawaii Press, 2006) and *Dressing the Colonised Body: Politics, Clothing and Identity in Sri Lanka* (Orient Longman, 2003).

Sasanka Perera is Professor of Anthropology and Head of the Department of Sociology at University of Colombo. His research interests include politics of development, visual culture, memory and spatial politics. At present, he is working on a book on the politics of memory

in Sri Lanka. He is the Editor of the *South Asia Journal for Culture* and the Sinhala language cultural studies journal, *Patitha* and serves on the editorial board of its Tamil language counterpart, *Panuwal*.

Anoli Perera is an artist, an art writer and curator based in Colombo. She is a founding member and General Secretary of the Theertha International Artists Collective. She serves on the Editorial Board of the Sinhala language journal *Art Lab*.

Menika van der Poorten is photographic artist based in Colombo. She received her photographic education at the John Cass School, London and University of Westminster, UK. She has been engaged in freelance teaching at the Vibhavi Academy of Fine Arts in Kotte, Overseas School of Colombo, and the Colombo Academy of Design.

Editorial Correspondence:

Colombo Institute
For the Advanced Study of Society and Culture
36 A, Baddegana Road South, Pitakotte, Sri Lanka
Tele: 94 0602083049
Email: colomboinst@gmail.com

Annual Subscription Information:

Sri Lanka: SLRs. 750.00
Shipping and Handling: SLRs. 125.00
SAARC Region and Global South: US$ 08.00
Shipping and Handling: US$ 03.00
Rest of the World: US$ 18.00
Shipping and Handling: US$ 06.00

ISSN 1800-4199