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Announcements

Our Team

Editorial

Samita Sen

Shamil Jeppie

Carlos I. Degregori

Ever since we embarked on the e-magazine project, we have been receiving contributions on various aspects of media and culture, with a strong focus on cinema. When we began to think in terms of having one special thematic issue, this was the natural choice. This has meant that we held over some of the contributions on related themes for a rather long period. We must thank the long-suffering authors for bearing with us with patience and good humour. The number of spontaneous contributions on this theme is itself a testimony to the growing interest in this field, a field that has begun to mark itself into separate domains in the last decade or so. The omnibus 'culture studies' notwithstanding, we are witnessing the emergence of 'film studies', 'theatre studies', 'mass communication' and others as specialised areas within academic institutions. The growing interest in media, especially in the South in recent years, has prompted this special issue.

The deployment of new media is and has very often been a sign of the modern. This has been so all over the South just as in the North. It is not possible to talk about any new media without also adding the prefix "mass" because of the ever larger constituencies that are covered and incorporated by these new media. These media enable new forms of communication and interaction across vast spaces and time zones. Barriers are constantly broken, remade and broken again with new frequencies of speed as newer technologies are created, marketed and domesticated across the globe. New possibilities for imagining other worlds, new selves, and fresh possibilities are almost an inherent part of these media transformations. Cinema,

television and a whole variety of changes associated with it such as the circulation of videos and DVDs, and the most recent electronic media, such as the www— the media we are ourselves relying upon for this magazine— in various ways and at different moments in history have been means of change and transformation through which wider fields of vision and imagination have been made possible. But there have also been the inevitable tensions between these media and other, older, media and art forms— such as theatre and story-telling— they have and continue to compete with and/or displace or attempt to displace at different times. There is no simple uncontroversial, non-contradictory process by which new media are introduced and utilised.

It is modernity that these new media come to represent, a reflection of the globalisation process. Our worlds become ever smaller through these media. They have the potential to allow us to imagine other worlds and appropriate various aspects of these other places in our everyday lives. They have made it possible to take inspiration or lessons of political struggle from one context into another— think of the popularity among South African political activists of the movie *Battle of Algiers* about an episode in the vicious war of liberation in Algeria or *Lion of the Desert* about the struggle against Italian colonialism in Libya. But they also enable us to imagine and try to bring home a world of glamour and glittery cosmopolitanism as in the way Western cinema and television serials are consumed but also Hindi cinema— in South Asia, and almost throughout the South and among diasporic populations in the North whether the language is under-

stood or not. But there has also been a growing traffic of movies and television serials within the South so that Latin American soapies have found markets in Africa, for instance, or South African sports channels are picked up in Lebanon via cable television. A whole range of examples can be offered.

In this issue of the magazine— its fifth appearance, second number of the second volume— we carry a number of contributions on cinema in the South. Related to this theme we have articles on the making of a historical documentary by Gairoonisa Palekar, a student in South Africa, and on an important aspect of the movie industry in Nigeria. We also carry reviews of some recent important movies and discussions on events related to cinema in the South. Chandak Sengoopta reflects on Satyajit Ray, considered by many as the greatest Indian film-maker. We have also an interview of a theatre activist, Badal Sircar, who affected a paradigm shift in Bengali theatre. Aishika Chakrabarty writes on a modern dance movement, also in Bengal. Meg Samuelson, from South Africa, focuses on the power of myth in story-telling and the modern novel. We have a number of contributions on recent media-related events in different parts of the South. There is a special feature on Calcutta (the city where the magazine is produced) focusing on an annual festival, Durga Puja, an event dubbed the 'Biggest Sculpture Show in the World' by the mass media a few years ago. The issue covers a range of south countries and media forms, but is not systematic in either aspect. We offer you a potpourri. Let us know if you enjoyed the issue.

Letters

The discussion on NGOs ignores the complexities of the situation. We do not get a sense of the variety of NGOs and their significance. They play very different roles in different south countries. In Philippines, for instance, they have had a very positive influence on the organisation of some categories of workers. In many cases they have also contributed critically to developmental initiatives. Could we have a more extended discussion, which addresses a wider range of issues and provides a more balanced view?

Nidhi Kumar,
Kanpur, India.

Response:

Thank You. We do realise that this is just a beginning. We have tried to provide a vignette in the last issue. We shall certainly try to include more comprehensive discussions on the subject.

— Eds.

The quiz was a great idea. Can we have more interactive features in the e-magazine?

Robin Sanders,
Johannesburg, South Africa.

Response:

We are trying to develop more interactive ideas. Unfortunately, we have not been able to do much in this issue. It is already quite a long one. Definitely something in the next issue.

— Eds.

Would it be possible to have a wider coverage of recent publications? The reviews section is limited in scope. The magazine would be a good platform within which students of the South get a sense of debates and discussions in other South countries.

Nadia Alberto
Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Response:

This has been suggested before. We are trying to put in place a segment covering publications. We have not been able yet to establish a network for the regular information flows. We would be very grateful if readers would send us relevant information on these lines.

— Eds.

Please visit www.sreejoni.com for detailed information on Sobhanlal Datta Gupta's forthcoming book *Comintern and the Destiny of Communism in India. Dialectics of Real and a Possible History*. (Expected to be published in the first quarter of 2006 by Seribaan from Calcutta). Please note that we are the sole distributor of the book.

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Interview

Third Theatre in Bengal: An Interview with Badal Sircar



Manujendra Kundu

Manujendra Kundu is now working at the Anandabazar Patrika, Kolkata (India). He was educated at Presidency College and Jadavpur University, Kolkata. Everything that falls within the range of literature attracts him. He believes in discursive Marxist philosophy. He has written three plays, yet to be seen in print. He reviews theatre for the Anandabazar.

Badal Sircar was born in 1925 in Calcutta. Having received a Bachelor of Engineering degree from Calcutta University, he took courses in Town Planning in Calcutta and London. As an experienced town planner, he held many important offices within and outside the country. His theatre career started in 1951. Up to the 1970s he acted in and produced some remarkable plays for proscenium theatre. He was already recognised as an outstanding dramatist, when the presentation of Sagina Mahato on the Anganmancha created history. Its tremendous success gave Sircar and his group Satabdi the impetus to move out of the proscenium stage and shift to Anganmancha and open-air presentations. Sircar developed a unique concept of Third Theatre for which he wrote many new plays. In 1968 he was awarded the Sangeet Natak Academy Award, and was felicitated with the Padmasree Award the following year.



(The interview, conducted in November 2004, was in Bengali. The translation has attempted to retain some flavour of the original. An abridged version of the interview first appeared in *Anandabazar Patrika*.)

MK: In which political situation did you start writing plays? What was the political motivation in your conceptualisation of the Third Theatre?

BS: At one stage of my life I was actively involved in politics. I was also a party member. Then, for several reasons I gave that up. Actually, I lost faith in party politics.

MK: Which party?

BS: The Communist Party (undivided). Having left the party, I had to fill an empty space in my life. I tried my hand at several things. Doing theatre was one of those endeavours: Secondary, not primary. I had started taking town planning courses in the evenings, which could not be pursued simultaneously with party activities. Town planning was my first love for a long time; theatre was secondary. At that stage I could not believe that theatre could be as effective as politics, although I had a great interest in theatre from childhood. At the start, I accepted the urban form of theatre for the proscenium stage. But it did not seem suitable to me. I have written in my books about my misgivings. Historically, my separation from the proscenium theatre was not a matter of a political perspective. It was a question of theatrical communication. In the proscenium theatre there is too much distance between the viewers and the actors. The audience is engulfed in artificial darkness as if they were not there, whereas, the whole set of activities is meant for

them. I wanted more participation from the audience, less silence, more attention.... I wanted to see them seeing each other. Thus I came to the Anganmancha. I felt that there was no need to delude the audience with trickeries of set and light. Everything was so close, there was no need to use make-up. Thus our theatre was rid of the weight of superfluity and also became inexpensive. Eventually, I realised that through these processes there arose the possibility of a portable, flexible and therefore inexpensive theatre. I had never thought of theatre of this kind before. We could visit places, even villages, just carrying one kit bag with us. There was no need to depend on money any more. This was a great realisation. I never relinquished politics although I could not pursue the political path expounded by the party. Like everyone else I too have political views. There are those who want to maintain status quo to achieve their own ends. I want change. Thus, our content, the message, became gradually stronger and the form secondary. Of course, both are important. What we wanted to convey to the people decided our modes. Thus, *Sukhpathya Bharatbarsher Itihas* (A History of India Rendered for Easy Reading), Bhoma etc. were written. These represent my political views, of which freedom from the dominance of money is a big aspect. If only theatre could be "free"! No need to sell tickets! No need to go on begging for government grants or private sponsorships! We could depend on the voluntary offerings of the audience. This is my theatre. Its great strength is that this theatre is free from money. Other groups are unable to produce quality

The Third Theatre, published by Badal Sircar, 1978.

Ekti Hatyar Natyakatha [Dramatic Tale of a Killing], *Rupantarita Natak*, Raktakarabi, Kolkata [1979] 2003.

Theatre-er Bhasa [Language of Theatre], (Dwijendralal Roy Memorial Readership Lecture at the University of Calcutta) Raktakarabi, Kolkata [1981] November 1983.

The Changing Language of Theatre, (Moulana Abul Kalam Azad Lecture) printed by Bit Blits, Calcutta (no further details available).

Uddogparba [Initial Efforts], *Angan*, special issue, September 1987.

Androklis O Singha [Androcles and the Lion], *Angan* (18-28), Kolkata [1982] October 1993.

Sada-Kalo [White and Black], *Angan*, Kolkata [1986] November, 2003.

Bioscope [Cinema], *Angan*, special issue, Kolkata, December [1988] 1990.

Nanamukh [Many Faces], published by Anjali Basu, distributor: Sahitya Sansad, 1988.

Natya-Sanchayan [Theatre Collection], Raktakarabi, Kolkata, 2005.

Voyages in the Theatre (Shri Ram Memorial Lectures, 1992) printed by Bit Blits.

Ka Cha Ta Ta Pa, *Angan*, Kolkata [1993] January 1997.

Charui Bhati [picnic], *Rupantarita Natak*, Raktakarabi, Kolkata [1994] 2003.

Baglacharitmanas, *Angan*, Kolkata [1997] June 2000.*

Interview

plays for want of money. We say we don't need money. We never stopped producing good plays for want of money. Nobody gives; nobody takes anything from anyone. This way the movement was developed. Apart from our group, *Satabdi*, some others like *Pathasena* of Kanchrapara, *Ayna* of Sarsuna, *Tirandaj* of Krishnanagar were formed at that time. The movement spread as far as Barak valley. At several workshops, especially in Tamilnadu, I noticed such movements. The people, who attended my workshops, took their lessons to the remotest villages, conducted workshops and formed their own theatre groups. They are still doing this kind of theatre. This has nothing to do with a political party. It is a leftist movement outside party ambit. You could say non-party-left I suppose.... Barin Saha, a friend of mine, used to say, insightfully, that true Marxists keep themselves outside communist parties. I too believe with all my heart that (the ideals of) communism cannot be followed within the party.

MK: You have adapted several foreign plays. But structurally. What are the foreign influences on your plays?

BS: Certainly, there are many such instances. My philosophy is to write plays on socio-political conditions, use theatre to publicise those conditions, aspire towards social change. I will copy then, steal from every source I come by. I have no compunction in that, because the real purpose is not that.... Whether I have written it or not is not that important. People now consider me a dramatist, but basically I am not a dramatist, not a writer. I am a theatre-worker, a theatre-man. That was why those plays had to be written. The main job has been to work in theatre. So, I borrowed and adapted whenever necessary. For example, I did not produce *Caucasian Chalk Circle* to explore the Brechtian mode. My intention was not to introduce Brecht to the Indian audience. I thought this play to be absolutely Indian, very contemporary, perhaps more relevant than to Brecht's Ger-

many. Land belongs to the farmers: What does a German farmer make of this idea? Our agricultural workers understand this (burning) issue. That was why when our group produced plays in the Sunderbans, to the audience neither Brecht nor Badal Sircar was important. For them a small piece of land was very important. For that purpose, I edited Brecht's text. The prologue was irrelevant; I removed it from my play, changed it. *Sukhapathya Bharatbarsher Itihas* is not an adaptation of any play. Therefore, either through adaptations or by writing original plays I tried to present (a particular type of) content to people.

MK: Do you think the communism of Hattamalar Oporey (Beyond the Land of Hattamala) is feasible in a world where there is a multiplicity of voices?

BS: Well, impossible, that is manifest. But we should try to make it possible. A dream should be created in at least one play to show where I want to reach. 'From everybody according to his ability, to everybody according to his need': This is the Marxist idea I have been following. Members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (leading the Left Front, which has been in power in West Bengal for nearly 30 years) commented that Hattamala is utopian. Why? Because they do not want to go there (laughter). I remember one line of a song from a very old musical comedy, which had a great influence on me: 'you have to have a dream for the dream to come true.' This dream is getting lost. Where do we want to go? Everybody knows that communism is not possible in this world. But it should be tried out, at the least. The problem now is that on the one hand, the industrialists have to be wooed; on the other, verbal allegiance to the movement has to be maintained. For all these reasons, I wrote that play, one of my most favourite plays. With simple language and elements of laughter this play is to the liking of all, the young and the aged alike....

Select List of Badal Sircar's plays.

(The years mentioned in the bracket on the right denote when the plays were written.)

Bara Pisima [1959] **Ballavpurer Rupkatha** [1963], **Kabi Kahini** [1964] and **Solution X** [1966], *Ranganatya Sankalan*, Opera, distributor: Nabagrantha Kutir, Kolkata, 1998.

Sanibar [1959], **Bhoma** [1975] and **Basi Khabar** [1977], *Natya-Sanchayan*, Raktakarabi, Kolkata, 2005.

Ram Shyam Jadu, Opera, distributor: Nabagrantha Kutir, Kolkata [1959] 1997.

Evam Indrajit, publisher: Anjali Basu, Kolkata [1961] 1997.

Sararattir [1963] and **Tringsha Satabdi** [1966], *Nanamukh*, published: Anjali Basu, Kolkata [1963] 1988.

Baki Itihas [1965], **Pare Konodin** and **Prolap** [1966], *Natya Sankalan*, Baulman Prakashan, Kolkata, 2001.

Bagh [1965] and **Gandi** [1977], *Rupantarita Natak*, Raktakarabi, Kolkata, 2003.

Circus, Angan, Kolkata [1967] September 1988.

Sagina Mahato, Pratibhas, Kolkata [1970] 1993.

Spartacus, publisher: Anjali Basu, Kolkata [1972] 1997.

Michil, Pratibhas, Kolkata [1974] 1994.

Lakkhicharar Panchali, *Tritio Dharar Natak*, publisher: Anjali Basu, Kolkata [1974] 1998.

Natyakarer Sandhane Tinti Charitro, *Angan*, Kolkata [1974] 1998.

Rupkathar Kelenkari [1974] and **Hattamalar Oporey** [1977] [*Beyond the Land of Hattamala and Scandal in Fairy Land*] translated by Suchanda Sarkar, Seagull, Calcutta, 2003.

Sukhapathya Bharater Itihas, Opera, distributor: Nabagrantha Kutir, Kolkata [1976] 1981.



Bhoma

Source: *Kolkatar Natyacharcha*, Rathin Chakravarty, advisor, Devnarayan Gupta, Paschimanga Natya-Academy, Tathya O Sanskriti Bibhag, Paschimanga Sarkar, January, 1991, p.97.



Michil

Source: *Kolkatar Natyacharcha*, Rathin Chakravarty, advisor, Devnarayan Gupta, Paschimanga Natya-Academy, Tathya O Sanskriti Bibhag, Paschimanga Sarkar, January, 1991, p.97.

Interview

MK: *I noticed in your theatre-journal, Angan, that many groups, which once subscribed to the idea of Third Theatre, have returned to proscenium practice. Why did this happen?*

BS: By many groups you mean the one of Gautam Sengupta. The rest abandoned theatre completely. There are groups—formed recently in West Bengal, in and outside of Calcutta, in the villages and the cities as well—which produce both, proscenium and non-proscenium plays. These groups also perform “group theatre”. This is eyewash. Non-proscenium theatre is their proscenium practice.

The difference between the proscenium and the non-proscenium is not the only difference between our ideologies. In my essay, *Theater-e*

Becha Kena in *Nanamukh* I argue that proscenium theatre means a road to a brighter career: ‘from there I would go to act in a TV serial or movies’. Such instances are many in the history (of popular culture). Proscenium theatre-artists have gone on to Jatra, TV serial, movies and maintained a relationship with the proscenium stage simultaneously. For them theatre is a stepping-stone. Nobody in our group can even think thus. Theatre is our philosophy. If we lose faith, we just leave it.

MK: *Where and how do you see Third Theatre at present?*

BS: Why, what is there to see? We just do it. Our co-group, *Pathasena*, once said, “This is our destiny. We have to do it.” (Laughter). Many people ask me, “You are doing theatre

for so many years now. What did you get out of it?” I say, “Practically nothing. I never did theatre in order to get something in return.... What would you suggest we do instead?”



Spartacus by Badal Sircar
Satabdir Projojana: Curzon park-e
Spartacus, publisher, Anjali Basu (268 Jodhpur Park), Kolkata, 1997.

Caribbean Indian Folktales

Caribbean Indian Folktales is an interesting, authentic and useful book. It is the first and largest collection of its kind to be written in the original English dialect of the storytellers. Each tale is also accompanied by a Standard English translation, which has been sensitively written so as to retain the spirit and rhythm of the original narration. The book consists of a collection of 25 stories, which have been passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth from India to the Caribbean for over a century and a half. The tales were tape-recorded from tradition-bearers in Trinidad, Guyana, Jamaica, St Lucia and Grenada since 1980.

The book can be used

- as a textbook for language and literature courses in secondary schools
- as resource material to learn more about the Indian culture in the Caribbean, and
- to enhance multicultural understanding.

The book includes

- stylised drawings, and
- questions requiring discussion, analysis, group activities and individual work.

“This book is a valuable document of our language and cultural practices.”

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“It represents a major contribution to the cultural heritage of the Caribbean.”

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“Dr. Mahabir continues his brave effort in collecting, restoring and preserving artifacts of Indo-Caribbean culture which may otherwise have disappeared.”

-Dr Frank Birbalsingh, Professor of English,
-York University, Canada.

Caribbean Indian Folktales

Collected by Kumar Mahabir, Ph.D.

Illustrations by Angali Dabideen & Preddie Partap
English text

San Juan, Trinidad and Tobago: Chakra Publishing House.

2005. xviii + 164 pp. TT \$80. (US \$18). Paperback

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Articles

Navanritya: Her Body, Her Dance**Aishika Chakraborty**

She started dance lessons at the age of five with Bharat Natyam and then Kathak, both classical dance forms. In 1987, at the age of sixteen she joined Dancers' Guild. She started performing with Manjusri Chaki-Sircar in 1990. She performed at the Konarak Festival, Puri Beach Festival and the International Dance Festivals in Delhi (India). She toured Nepal and the UK in 1991. She put up her own composition *Ayati* in 2000. She is also a historian and is currently working on the social history of dance in Bengal.

Abstract

For years it was believed that dance is an 'intangible art', living in and dying with the dancer. In recent times, however, dancers have proved this to be untrue. Dance, they say, stretches across and spans through the whole range of life and steps beyond death. The art of dancing is timeless and deathless. A dancer who performs simply through her or his body is someone more than an entertainer. This paper discusses the evolution of a movement in search of a new Indian dance, *Navanritya*. Alongside, it explores the life and career of Dr. Manjusri Chaki-Sircar, one of the pioneers of the modern dance movement in India, who portrayed a new daring dream through and within the female body.

"Dance takes place within the arc between two deaths...."

Without dance, without the daring, there is no action, no life."

Doris Humphrey¹

My first encounter with the new dance called *Navanritya* was at the age of 17 when I went to a new dance school—the *Dancers' Guild*. I had acquired training in Indian classical dance; but I knew nothing about the *new* vocabulary of dance. I was told that I had to learn a new body dynamic and unlearn some of the old. But my first class left me dumbfounded. I could barely dance. The artistic director, Manjusri Chaki-Sircar, kept on repeating one basic instruction—keep your spine straight. Reverberating the Grahmanian doctrine, "Your spine is the line connecting heaven and earth", Manjusri underscored the centrality of the backbone. Each turn, each leap, each fall was guided by one single command—"straighten your spine". Whether we stood, or sat or rolled on the floor we had to keep our spines straight. We had to hold our heads high and to lift our chins up. Indeed, we were tired of the director's obsession with the spine. Later I realised how conscious she was of the woman's spine. Women often seek to hide their bodies and are made to forget that they have such a thing called a 'spine'. The culture of patriarchy grooms, conditions and demands the feminine vertebra to be stooped. Manjusri's task was to remind us all the time to hold aloft that delicate spine to stand straight and tall. While creating *new* dance forms she consciously constructed a *new woman*. Manjusri's *Navanritya* thus taught me not only new ways of dancing, but also new ways of thinking about my body, my self—as a woman. Our lessons in *Navanritya* were thus lessons of life. Reaching out to a new discipline, her dance helps us to stand straight and

stretch forward.

Navanritya literally means Neo-Dance. The association of *neo* with dance is itself new. Until recently, dance had flourished by claims to antiquity, classicism and tradition. Dance was one of the first expressions of the primitive. The earliest dances may have been simple expressions of pleasure, of entertainment, of acts related to courtship. Birds and animals, even spiders, it was believed, dance to attract a mate. Dance also played an important role in the social life of all civilisations being part of its ritual and religion, of celebration and festivity. In India, dance was indigenous to religious ceremonies and dances of worship or temple dance preserve the style and tradition of ancient culture even today.

What was 'new' in *Navanritya*? Newness has myriad definitions. It can mean changed, revived in modified form, based upon and altered. It can also define contemporary or modern. *Navanritya* is all these and more. Ranjabati Sarkar, the danseuse-daughter of Manjusri, once defined *Navanritya* as "contemporary and creative." Manjusri hastened to correct her, creativity cannot be exclusively monopolised by *Navanritya*, as all artists are inherently creative. And the term "contemporary" is a weak reed. Today's contemporary (*samakalin*) is tomorrow's outdated (*gatakalin*). *Navanritya*, Manjusri said, should be of all times, hence eternal (*sarvakalin*): A dance that would mirror our times; not in snapshots but in all its rich changes, its flux and fluidity. *Navanritya* is a new way of conceiving and inventing the body with a new ideological

approach.

As for 'modernity', modern dance is often thought to be western, something alien and exotic. Modernity, however, is not necessarily imported. Modern dance is that which breaks the restraints of tradition to reflect the restless, irresponsible modern spirit. *Navanritya*, the Indian modern, is an alternative approach to Indian dance that attempts a new relationship between space, language and body within the contemporary setting. Manjusri's desire to renegotiate tradition (classical) with modernity (contemporaneous) and to reconstruct her 'own' style gave birth to this Indian modern, *Navanritya*. Formally *Navanritya* evolved in the 1980s, but Manjusri's experiments with this movement started in the 1950s in Calcutta. In a sense, *Navanritya* is of Calcutta, mirroring the spirit of the urban metropolis with its colonial past and post-colonial influences. Calcutta's art reaches from the local to the global—from the nineteenth century to the twenty-first—*Navanritya* is part of that Calcutta and that trajectory.

Navanritya is not only a new dance with a new name, it demands a new approach altogether. While a great part of it is about methodology and techniques (*angik*), not a little of it is about ideology (*adarsha*). "*Navanritya*", said Manjusri, "challenges and rejects the content of dance that is determined by Brahminic patriarchal cultural tradition".² In Hindu India, dance was one of the most ancient entertainments. In the name of worship the female body became the object of lust and desire of priests and kings. Rabindranath

¹ Cited in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol 12, William Benton, London, 1978, p. 293.

² Manjusri Chaki-Sircar, *Nrityarase Chittamama*, Miranda, Kolkata, 2000, pp. 12-14.

Articles

Tagore once wrote in one of his letters to Uday Shankar, "There was a time when in the heart of our country, the flow of dance followed a buoyant life. Through the passage of time that is nearly choked... exposing stagnant pools of muddy impurities. In an unfortunate country where life's vigour has waned, dancing vitiates into a catering for a diseased mind that has lost its normal appetites."³ Reverberating similar indignation, Manjusri said, "My dance is a protest against that *classical* conviction which deprecates, denigrates and decries women." She affirmed, "From Kalidasa to Jaydev, the stress has been on male romance."⁴ Within this framed tradition, women were frozen in stereotypes—as *abhisarika*, *darpanasundari* and other enticing bodily images. The dance that perennially traps women within the image of a *nayika* (heroine) portrays her body, almost without exception, for erotic purposes. Thus Dassiattam (later rechristened Bharatnatyam by Rukmini Devi Arundale) developed through the *Devadasi* system that was oppressive to and exploitative of women. Likewise in *darbari* dance like *Kathak*, in the name of spiritual and transcendental themes, dance was tailored to the pleasures of kings and nobility. Dominated by institutionalised religion, the classical tradition of dance catered to the sensual indulgence of a male audience.⁵ The woman, the danseuse, displaced from actual social and human contexts, was an object of desire.

Even today these paradigms persist. Sita, running after the golden deer still dominates the stage of classical dance. *Abhisarika* Radha, falling after *bahuballav* (polygamous) Krishna, is still the undisputed heroine. "Dance today can not be creatively reinvented", Manjusri used to tell us, "unless it is ripped up from its classical patriarchal moorings". However classical *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* may be, Shakuntala, tormented by buzzing bees, has no place in *Navanritya*. No creative dancer, Manjusri believed, can restrict the syntax of dance composition within confines of classical idioms.

The continuous search for change and the rejection of traditional approaches were characteristic of Manjusri who participated in path-breaking experiments in contemporary art forms. The evolution of her ideas was a reflection of her own personal history. Born in Murshidabad in 1934, she spent her childhood in Pabna (now

in Bangladesh). Her family had to relocate itself from Pabna to Calcutta during 1946-47. As a young girl of fourteen she experienced partition, riots, displacement and hunger. The upheavals of the Second World War, nationalism and the communal holocaust left indelible marks on her mind.

Migration to Calcutta enabled young Manjusri to explore the contemporary world of culture in a new way. Manjusri considered her days at Presidency College (1951-53) as the turning point of her life where she encountered a variety of intellectual currents.⁶ It was a time when far-reaching experimentations were taking place in the various art forms— music, film, theatre, sculpture, paintings— all swayed by gusts of innovative modernity. Satyajit Ray created a new language of cinema; the Bengali stage witnessed dramatic experiments under the leadership of *Bahurupi*. The Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) explored a new equation between politics and culture, punctuating songs with slogans. Everywhere tradition underwent deconstruction. A restless, excited and demanding generation wrought sweeping changes in every art form and set them on the move.



Uday Shankar

During the dramatic experimentations of 1930s-1940s, the language of dance, however, remained unchanged, witnessing rather a revival of classical tradition. While in post-colonial East Asia, nationalism prompted experimental works in contemporary theatre and dance, India refused to deviate from tradition. In communist China, Mao Tse Tung censored anti-democratic, feudal and erotic sentiments. The Peking Opera was reshaped portraying soldiers and workers as real heroes. National theatre in South Korea stressed on folk arts, masked dance and puppet plays while the Communist North encouraged "ideologically desirable" dance. Kabuki was

reformed in Japan eliminating excess stylisation. An element of the 'modern' (even the western) visibly changed a number of traditional dance forms. Within this trend, India remained a remarkable exception with dancers retreating into an unquestioning classicism.

In Bengal, experimentations with modern dance that started with Rabindranath Tagore in the 1920s-1930s were brief and sporadic. His major contribution was to provide the context for the emergence of 'respectable' middle class women in the world of performing arts, until then the stamping ground of 'unrespectable' public women. His experiments faced vigorous opposition as he opened up a new space for women to come before the public gaze. Shantideb Ghosh, in his memoir, noted that Tagorean experiments inaugurated a dance-movement in Bengal, leading to a slow evolution of a new dance style.⁷ Contemporary women learning dance in Shantiniketan in their personal narratives recalled the novel act of stage performance as a unique cultural experience.⁸ According to Manjusri, however, these experiments did not lead to the recognition of dance as a subtle art form. In the beginning, it was just a form of household entertainment for the *Jorasanko Thakurbari*. Tagore himself was aware of the limitations of *Shantiniketani nritya*, said Manjusri, so "he later took up the challenge of raising the standard of dance by introducing training by classical gurus at Vishwabharati."⁹ By and large, however, the septuagenarian poet had to content himself with 'amateur' dancers rather than fully trained ones.¹⁰

The 1930s was a significant landmark in the history of Indian dance owing to the contributions of one great master— Uday Shankar. Dance emerged as an independent profession and a modern art form under his charismatic influence. With relentless emphasis on training and physical development, both men and women dancers in Shankar's troupe achieved technical range and excellence. Young Manjusri was overwhelmed by Uday Shankar's *Kalpana*, and spent several sleepless nights after watching it. She was impressed by the vast dramatic scope of *Kathakali* in his ballets. "I must acknowledge my regard for him as a Bengali artiste who was so versatile." Manjusri said, "Yet my choreography is not influenced by him."¹¹ Manjusri questioned the

³ Reproduced in Mohan Khokar, *His Dance, His Life, A Portrait of Uday Shankar*, Himalayan Books, New Delhi, 1983, p. 75.

⁴ Interviewed by Sandhya Sen, "Body Language", *Amritabazar Patrika*, Interface, 31 July, 1994.

⁵ Chaki-Sircar, *Nrityarase*, pp. 13,14.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁷ Shantideb Ghosh, *Jibaner Dhrubatara*, Ananda, Calcutta, 1994, pp. 136-152.

⁸ Amita Sen, *Sirisha, Bakula, Amer Mukul*, Nabapatra Prakashan, Calcutta, 2000; Rama Chakraborty, *Pathe Chale Jetey Jetey*, Ananda, Calcutta, 2004; Rani Chanda, *Sab Hate Apan*, Viswabharati, Calcutta, first published 1984, reprint 1994.

⁹ Sen, "Body Language".

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

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celebration of masculinity in his dance. His dance was centred upon himself, and therefore on the male body. The roles he made famous were *Indra*, *Rudra*, *Kartikaya* and, of course, *Krishna*. The women dancers were integrated into the modern form, but their characterisations followed Puranic and mythical roles. "Why", she would ask, "of all Tagore's writings, did he choose *Samanya Kshati* in which the proud queen is humbled and the king emerged both powerful and magnanimous?"¹²

In search of powerful images of women, Manjusri wanted something modern as well as eternal. It was in the work of Tagore that Manjusri found her new icons, her subjects and the ideology of Navanritya. As a student of Bengali literature, she re-explored the inexhaustible storehouse of Tagore's writings and was deeply impressed with the density of metaphors used in his songs. Simultaneously she was convinced that neither the so-called *Rabindrikr nriya* nor the *Shantiniketani* style is strong enough to portray the depth of Tagore's thoughts. Especially, during the 1950s, Tagorean experiments with eclecticism hit an impasse. In 1954, Manjusri was cautioned by Nandita Kripalini, the grand-daughter of Tagore, and the chairperson of Sangeet Natak Academy, not to innovate further upon the Tagorean dance tradition. "After the death of *dadamashai* (grandfather)", Kripalini said, "It was an end in itself".¹³ Manjusri differed. Against classical/stereotypical subjects of dance and untutored/ amateur *Rabindra nritya* Manjusri was to discover her "own" style of dance.

Manjusri's choreographic experiments found hospitable space within Tagore's dance dramas. From the beginning of the twentieth century, Tagore had sketched *new women* in pages of his novels, short stories and poems, in strains of his songs and against all oppositions, straight on to the open stage. When these women were allowed to appear on stage, Tagore prudently borrowed images of strong and powerful characters from the classical literature and *Puranic* past. Chitrangada of *Mahabharata* is transformed into a self-realised warrior queen who changes forever the definition of wifehood— neither goddess, nor ordinary woman. In Manjusri's interpretation, Chitrangada, who takes up the task of winning Arjuna through external charm, took it up almost like a challenge to battle. Her second self is intoxicated by the discovery of sensuality through a new body; and yet soon begins to feel like a prisoner trapped inside her own

beauty.

Another favourite of Manjusri's was Tagore's *Tasher Desh* or the Kingdom of Cards, which she read as a social satire. The tyrannical patriarchal structure imprisoned women through several policing agencies. Then the prince came with a call for change and women led by Haratani took off their masks to salute the forces of change, leading to the collapse of the Kingdom of Cards.



Manjusri and Ranjabati with other members of Dancers' Guild in *Matrika in Tomari Matir Kanya*.

Perhaps the most forceful characterisation of women, said Manjusri, appeared in Tagore's *Chandalika* (The Untouchable Woman), which was derived from a Jataka story. Manjusri recreated it as a new dance drama, *Tomari Matir Kanya*, drawing on both versions, play and the dance drama, penned by Tagore. The story invoked the Buddhist protest movement against Brahminic caste hierarchy, challenging the power of tradition and scriptural sanction to subordinate and marginalise women, especially low-caste women. Manjusri consciously infused an element of theatre in the dance drama by interposition of dialogues from the original text. The interjections and conversations between the mother (Maya) and the daughter (Prakriti) transcend the narrow space of the 'private' to acquire the power of a social/political statement to challenge the patriarchal order. The emphasis was on three aspects: 1) It endorsed woman's agency as a force of social change, 2) it recognised their collective power and 3) it focused on the relative independence of lower caste women in ritual ceremonies that fall outside the Brahminic paradigm.

In *Tomari Matir Kanya*, Prakriti is not an isolated woman. She is accompanied by a group of untouchable women, a chorus, symbolising the collective solidarity of her community.

Her marginality as an outcaste is indemnified by the use of the group. Manjusri manipulated stage placement— the outcastes occupy the centre stage and the higher caste 'others' mostly perform off-centre and off-stage. Prakriti's confrontation with Brahminic patriarchy is expressed by the use of self-assertive body movements. She used a variety of elevations, kicks, jumps and lifts drawn from *Kalaripayattu*, *Chau*, *Candy* and *Thankta*, and other martial arts, which were conventionally prohibited for women.



Maya (Manjusree) and Prakriti (Ranjabati) in *Tomari Matir Kanya*

Manjusri was always seeking new methodologies to express her ideas. The most important influence that fashioned the style and technique of Navanritya was a little booklet called *Nritya* (Dance). Written by Rabindranath's daughter-in-law, Pratima Devi, *Nritya* reflected a great deal of Tagore's own thinking about dance. The idea of a 'chemical synthesis' of dance using diverse classical dance traditions without their 'associated contexts' influenced the technique of *Navanritya*. In the 1930s, Pratima Devi wrote, "It was not clear what exactly should be the form appropriate for a modern Indian dance style. It was like groping in the dark with a mixture of mime, musical expression and body movements. The mixture did allow scope for emoting but it was not completely fulfilling."¹⁴ The question remains, how capable was this form for expressing a fuller range of emotions, evolving into a modern dance? Pratima Devi looked for a rich and varied orchestration and synthesis of dance. The way Tagore composed his songs on the basis of a creative amalgam of diverse traditions— Indian classical, folk, *tappa*, *dhamar*, *dhrupad*, *baul* and western— so, argued Pratima Devi, modern dance had to be constructed from diverse movements. The new dance could be based upon classical techniques, she insisted, yet may not be

¹² Class lectures, 1990.

¹³ Chaki-Sircar, *Nrityarase*, p. 89.

¹⁴ Pratima Devi, *Nritya*, Viswabharati, Calcutta, 1949, reprint 1965, pp. 20,21.

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fully loyal to it. It required something more— a newness— a unique distinctive style.¹⁵ *Navanritya*, according to Manjusri, fully reflected this Tagorean vision of modern dance. Drawing from different classical dance forms and martial arts, Manjusri said, modern dance should be a continued process of innovation.

In her experimentations with Tagore, Manjusri found support in another rebel, Debabrata Biswas, her George-da. Both Manjusri and George Biswas consciously discarded confines of the *Rabindrik* style. Using dramatic steps and movements, Manjusri discarded the trite movements usually choreographed for the songs of Tagore.¹⁶ Her experiments were not accepted in all quarters. But Manjusri hung on.

In 1953 Manjusri saw a performance by the renowned American dancer Martha Graham. Graham had innovated, in the 1920s, a new breathing technique of "contraction and release". Opposing the lyrical body motions of classical western dance, Graham gave her dancers a hard and angular look. While some contemporary critics accused Graham of dancing in an "ugly" way, Manjusri felt that Graham's dance resembled modern poetry.¹⁷ The Grahamian approach emphasised the use of ensemble or corps of dancers rather than the solo figure. Graham also used pure abstraction rather than a literal representation. Both these innovations remained significant influences on the choreography of *Navanritya*.



A composition by Martha Graham

While toying with new ideas Manjusri got married in 1958, and left for South Africa with her husband. During her five-year stay in Africa she observed the physicality and energy of tribal and traditional African dance. In Nigeria, she started her first school to teach Indian dance to African students. Carrying her ten-month old daughter, Ranjabati, along her back, Manjusri entered on a new process of learning and experimentation. In 1966,

Manjusri left Africa to live in New York, which was the world's dance capital at that time. Modern dance movements were making waves there. Manjusri was now able to pursue her old fascination with Martha Graham. Alongside she was to explore other styles introduced by Merce Cunningham and Alwin Nikolais and attended their classes wearing leotards beneath her *saree*.

This was the time when classical ballet had reached a low point of artistic development, which focused on a display of technical virtuosity. In the 1930s, disturbed by the Great Depression and rising fascism in Europe, radical dancers had tried to raise consciousness by dramatising social and political crises of their time. Turning away from fairy tales and romantic legends of the ballet, modern dancers took up the social and psychological problems that beset their own time. They aimed to externalise personal experiences to communicate a wider, a more universal feeling to the theatre audience. Black dancers who rejected the Lilly White romantic tradition started barefoot dancing and dancing in black boots.¹⁸ By the early 1970s, social and political protest found its way into a dramatically oriented dance theatre. Costumes became plain, bare and exposed. Unrestricted by a limited vocabulary, modern dance was thus able to draw on a whole range of possibilities in human movement.



A composition by Doris Humphrey

Her worldwide travels enabled Manjusri to broaden the horizon of her ideas of dance. *Navanritya* developed wider vocabularies of body dynamics. Her journey finally culminated in her own dance institute, *Dancers' Guild*, in August 1983. In 1985, the first production of *Tomari Matir Kanya* put her firmly on the map. In 1994, twenty-five years after Uday Shankar won the Sangeet Natak Academy

prize, Manjusri was the only Bengali dancer to be given the same prize for her creative choreography. Though differing fundamentally from the great dancer, Manjusri shared the belief that "there are no bounds to the depths or to the expansion of any art, which, like dancing, is the expression of life's urge. We must never shut it within the bounds of a stagnant ideal, nor define it as either Indian or Oriental or Occidental, for such finality only robs it of life's privilege, which is freedom."¹⁹



Ranjabati Sircar in a *Fable for La Gran Sabana*



She Said, Ranjabati Sircar's last choreographic composition

Almost all through her career Manjusri attracted criticism from both traditionalists and modernists. The Bengali press led by *Ananda Bazar Patrika* found fault with her 'radical' experimentations with Tagore. *Navanritya* remains anathema to Tagore afficiandos. Some questioned the immodest footwork of her women dancers. Modern dancers of Western India like Chandralekha were impatient with her less than frank depiction of female sexuality. The narrative content was incompatible with modern dance, said the modernists. But Manjusri persisted. She was convinced of the possibility of a synthesis— modern eclectic dance forms with narrative content. She believed that the criticisms she was facing were largely because she was experimenting with the female body. Despite the emergence of a feminist movement in India at that time, such an experiment did not yet have a substantial and sympathetic audience. It took time to win acceptance, fetching in between

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁶ Chaki-Sircar, *Nrityarase*, pp. 14,15.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 42-46.

¹⁹ Cited in Khokar, *His Dance*, 75.

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national and international awards. Manjusri allowed her dancers to acquire an independent and individualist identity- "The dancing foot, the sound of tinkling bells, the songs, that are sung and the varying steps... find out these within yourselves and then... your fetters fall away."²⁰

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The front -page of *Nritya*.

Paintings by Rabindranath Tagore, arguably reflecting his ideas on modern Indian dance.
Reproduced in Pratima Devi's *Nritya*.

²⁰ Cited in Chaki-Sircar, *Nrityarase*, 35.

The South and Southeast Asia Resource Centre on Sexuality hosted an electronic discussion forum on "Sexual Pleasure, Sexuality, and Rights" from October 17 - December 16, 2005.

It engaged a broad range of participants, including activists, academics, practitioners, students, policymakers, and programme developers. The e-forum discussion was in four main sub-topics. Every two weeks, the e-forum highlighted a different subtopic. The major themes were: sexual pleasure and language and terms, the feminist debate, boundaries and limits, regulation and censorship, rights, how to incorporate into programming, power dynamics, disability, and how sexual pleasure relates to wellbeing, to name a few!

To learn more about this initiative, please visit the website at

<http://www.asiasrc.org>, where you can access a range of resources related to sexuality.

The South and Southeast Asia Resource Centre on Sexuality

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Film as History– Some Reflections on the Student Documentary Film *Cissie Gool*

Gairoonisa Paleker

Gairoonisa Paleker is a doctoral student in historical studies at the University of Cape Town. Her research focus is on the history of the South African state subsidy for film production and "black" films produced as part of this subsidy during apartheid rule. She is an avid film viewer and a secret reader of adventure stories written by misogynistic, racist, arch imperialists who nonetheless can spin pretty good yarns.

Abstract

This article introduces the debate around film and history and attempts to reflect on some key criticisms of film as history through an analysis of the student documentary film *Cissie Gool*. The debate around film and history has centred on two crucial aspects of the role of film in history: Film as historical source and evidence, and film as history. Film as historical source can be analysed in three distinct ways. First, film is analysed as a source for historical data and as ideological evidence. Secondly, it can be analysed for what it tells us about how film has been used to educate or shape public opinion. And thirdly, film can be analysed from the perspective of audience reception, which would tell us to what extent film has been reflective of public opinion.

It is, however, film as history which has generated the most controversy among historians and key criticisms have been centred on the subjectivity and constructed nature of film, its inability to provide detailed information, engage in debate with other historical material on the same subject, inability to footnote, etc.

The argument Hayden White has put forward; that filmic history has to be viewed as a supplement to written history has merits once some of the criticism of film as history has been put into a broader perspective.¹ Visual images, he argues, should be viewed as parts of a discourse in its own right, rather than as complements to written history. Visual images are able to provide new and different insights and perspectives, which cannot be gained through the written medium.

Zainnunnissa (Cissie) Gool was a leading figure in Cape politics from the late 1930s till her death in 1963. As the daughter of Dr Abdullah Abdurahman (a Cape "coloured" leader in his own right) and Nellie, a Scotswoman, Cissie had direct experience of race discrimination and dedicated her life to the fight for human rights and dignity in the Cape. She served as president and chairperson of various liberation organisations (National Liberation League, Non-European United Front) and as the first black woman councillor on the Cape Town City Council. The documentary film *Cissie Gool*, was an attempt to not only give scholarly attention to a historically marginalised figure, but to do so using film in the construction of a historical biography. It has thus been an attempt to also engage the debates within film and history.

Introduction

Robert Rosenstone has identified two dominant themes that inform the film and history debate. These are first, an approach that uses film as a reflection of the social, political and historical concerns of the era in which the film was made, and secondly, the approach that seeks to compare filmic representations of the past to that of written representations, thus 'reading' and critiquing film in the same manner as they would a book of history.

In a seminal essay that sparked an important debate around film and history in the *American Historical Review*, Rosenstone argues that filmic history cannot be judged by the same criteria as written history². The two mediums are governed by entirely different codes and conventions, which dictate structure, style and mode of delivery. Given this, a more useful approach, he argues, is rather to begin

with questions such as "what kind of historical world does each film construct and how does it construct this world? How do we get meaning from this construction and what does it mean to us?"³

This approach has generated controversy among historians, due in part, argue proponents like Rosenstone and Toplin, to the fact that historians compare filmic representations of history to written representations.⁴ But, as has been argued by Rosenstone, Nichols and White, written history can be critiqued for the same reasons that filmed history can, that written history "is a product of the processes of condensation, displacement, symbolisation and qualification exactly like those used in the production of a filmed representation."⁵ It is only the medium that differs, not the way in which messages are produced.⁶

The less controversial approach seeks to use film as a reflection of the social, political and historical concerns of the era in which the film was made, or, film as historical source. As historical source film operates in three distinct ways as argued by Bickford-Smith and Mendelsohn.⁷ First, film has been used as evidence in two ways: (1) For historical data which can tell us about the "look" of an individual, place, event or period, and (2) for ideological evidence— what film can tell us about the attitudes, values of a society at a particular time. Secondly, film as historical source has been analysed for the way in which it has been historically used to educate or shape public opinion by individuals, groups or governments. And thirdly, film as historical source can also be used as a measure of audience reception. Through this

¹ Hayden White, "Historiography and Historiophoty" in *American Historical Review*, 93, 5, 1988.

² Robert Rosenstone, "History in Images/History in Words: Reflections on the Possibility of Really Putting History onto Film", *American Historical Review*, 93, 5, 1988.

³ Robert Rosenstone, *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to our Idea of History*, Princeton, 1995, p.50.

⁴ Robert Brent Toplin, "The Filmmaker as Historian" in *American Historical Review*, 93, 5, 1988.

⁵ See, for instance, Rosenstone, "History in Images/History in Words" as well as Bill Nichols, *Ideology and the Image: Social Representation in Cinema and other Media*, Bloomington, 1981; and White, "Historiography and Historiophoty".

⁶ White, *ibid.*, p. 1194.

⁷ V. Bickford-Smith & R. Mendelsohn, "Film and History Studies in South Africa revisited: Representing the African Past on Screen", in *South African Historical Journal*, 48, 2003, pp. 1-9.

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kind of analysis one could investigate to what extent films reflect popular opinions and attitudes based on the measure of success (or lack thereof) they achieve.

Rosenstone believes that history in film and on video "is not history in the sense that academics think of it. It is history with different rules of representations, analysis and modes of reading and comprehension that we do not yet fully understand."⁸ This quote by Rosenstone addresses the fundamental problem of producing history in film. The debate around filmed history, specifically the documentary film, centres on the problem of "really putting history on film".⁹ That is, creating the kind of history that is full of the complexities of the subject matter, displays the nuances of interpretation, discusses methodologies and sources and addresses concerns of historians in the field. In other words, filmed representations of history fail the charge of comprehensiveness. Critics of film as history claim that film can at best only raise issues and questions or arouse an interest for further research. In and of itself, it cannot provide all the answers, all the research, because it is a poor medium for the exploration of detail or presentation of balanced information.¹⁰ It has a poor information load.

Cissie Gool

First, these criticisms are addressed at film in general and are not in their entirety, specific to the documentary film. Secondly, implicit in this criticism is the idea of film as an alternative to written presentations of history. The "double tyranny" of documentary film according to Rosenstone is the unrelenting pace at which film has to move so as not to bore audiences and the need to match visual image to the spoken narration.¹¹ Evidence of the latter aspect of this tyranny in the documentary film *Cissie Gool* centres on the film's neglect of Cissie's mother. The almost exclusive focus on Dr Abdurahman and his impact on Cissie's political development is the outcome of availability of information from both oral and documentary sources. Conversely the lack of focus on Mrs Abdurahman is due to the paucity of both visual and oral material. Apart from three pictures (of varying quality), no other visual materials were available. Similarly, oral sources could provide very little useful information with regard to the nature of the relationship between Cissie and her mother. The lack of any

discussion of the relationship between Cissie and her sister is similarly due to the lack of sufficient visual and oral evidence. In this respect, the criticism that film cannot address all issues is true to the point where discussion is circumscribed by the availability of visual material.

Detailed discussion in film is also constrained by the audience factor. The selection of material and the general construction of the film *Cissie Gool* are a result of projected audience reception. This has been guided by what Rosenstone has identified as the second aspect of the 'double tyranny'; namely the rapid pace at which film has to move so as not to bore audiences. With regard to this, screen time for the numerous interviewees has of necessity to be limited and selection of interview material is guided as much by what they have said, as by how quickly and succinctly they have said it. In instances where the oral testimony is interesting or important but will give excessive screen time to the interviewee, different visuals have been superimposed over the continuing oral testimony. There are numerous instances in *Cissie Gool* where this has been used to good effect. For example, when Mr R.O. Dudley speaks about events in the USSR that had an impact on the ideological alignments in Cape politics, the film cuts from his face to pictures of Trotsky, Lenin, Stalin and other associated posters and pictures. Or, when Mr Ali Fataar speaks about Cissie's focus as Councillor on the hawkers of District Six, archival footage of District Six in the 1960's is superimposed over his oral testimony.

The latter point raises another key criticism of film and history; namely, the manipulation of visual material by the filmmaker to effect a particular interpretation. This manipulation is both at the level of ordering shots and sequences as well as at the level of material selection. The archival footage of District Six was filmed in 1960, which creates a temporal dissonance in that there is a mere three-year overlap with Cissie's career as a City Councillor. It can be argued that on the basis of this, it is not an accurate reflection of District Six in the 1930's, 1940's or the 1950's. While this may be true, to some extent, about the topography of the area, a counter argument can be made for its reflection of the mood and ambience of the place; the manner in which produce vendors hawked their goods. In other words, "Movies aren't especially good at dealing with abstract

ideas, for those you'd be better off turning to the written word; but they are superb for presenting moods and feelings, the look of a battle, the expression on a face, the mood of a country."¹²



This underscores the point that film offers a glimpse of the lived realities of the past. It creates the potential for the historical past to be the personal experience of the individual audience. But this, according to Rosenstone, "also constitutes its chief danger".¹³ By creating the illusion of a past as it really was, it creates the illusion of an unmediated reality. It renders invisible the human role of the filmmaker. This is at the level of selection of images, the ordering and juxtaposing of sequences which tell a particular story or offer a particular interpretation. In *Cissie Gool*, a reflexive element has been introduced to offset precisely this danger of an unmediated reality.

More importantly, the above example of use of particular archival footage appears to corroborate the criticism that film makes a trade-off of historical analysis for visual and/or emotive appeal. In this respect, Cissie's career as a City Councillor has received little attention in the film. Bearing in mind both the 'double tyranny' and visual and emotive appeal factors, the audio soundtrack of the film's narration could only mention her numerous interests as a Councillor and list some of the committees she served on. The film could not therefore offer a lengthy analysis on this aspect of her career. This is one instance where written presentations of history fulfil the need to provide the kind of detail that a film is not able to.

This raises yet another critical aspect of the film versus written history debate. The charge, critics of film make, is that film is a constructed reality. The documentary filmmaker "... makes endless choices. He selects topics, people, vistas, angles, lenses, juxtapositions, sounds, words. Each selection is an expression of his point of view, whether he is aware of it or not, whether he acknowledges it or not."¹⁴ If film is a construction based

⁸ Quoted in Dan Sipe, "The Future of Oral History and Moving Images" in Perks & Thomson (ed) *The Oral History Reader*, London, 1998. p. 380.

⁹ Rosenstone, "History in Images/History in Words" p. 1180.

¹⁰ Toplin, "The Filmmaker as Historian", p. 1216.

¹¹ Rosenstone, "History in Images/History in Words", p. 1180.

¹² Roger Ebert, Review of 'Apocalypse Now', <http://www.suntimes.com/ebert/>

¹³ Rosenstone, "History in Images/History in Words", p. 1180.

¹⁴ Eric Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of Non-Fiction Film*, Oxford, 1983, p. 313.

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on such mediation by the filmmaker, then the textual narrative is equally a construction by virtue of the same criteria. Historians using the written word make similar decisions with regard to topic, people to be interviewed, structure of the written text, which aspects of a historical event or historical biography will be problematised and given prominence.

Furthermore, and as Hayden White has argued in respect of forms of historical and fiction writing, the narrative form of both written and filmed representations is dependent on the principles of coherence and correspondence.¹⁵ There is an internal logic that guides the narrative construction of each form of presentation. It is a logic that insists on ordering the historical facts into a coherent whole, on ensuring continuity, on progression of action and on the appeal to aesthetics of either the written word or the moving image. With the traditional documentary film there is the added responsibility of correspondence between the spoken word in the narration and the visual image on the screen. In both instances the human role of the historian and filmmaker is pivotal to this construction and neither forms of presentation are able to escape the charge of subjectivity.

The key difference however lies in the transparency of each form. This article argues that film has the potential for greater reflexivity, or self-awareness on issues of subjectivity and mediation by the filmmaker than written narratives. A contradiction at first glance perhaps, in that this paper is an exercise in reflexive critique. But film as a visual/aural medium arguably has a greater and more immediate impact than the written word. Given this, the potential for the filmmaker to claim authorship, inscribe herself in the process of selection, ordering and final production can become more readily visible than in written forms. In *Cissie Gool*, this reflexive process is evident in the brief intrusions the filmmaker has made. Specific instances are shots of the filmmaker scrolling through microfilm and sorting through newspaper clippings. Authorship is also made apparent in that the filmmaker is also the narrator. These instances have

been included in the film to indicate the process of selection and mediation that has taken place in the process of production.

The criticism that film contains an impoverished information load, though directed primarily at the feature film, is based on the premise that an hour-long documentary cannot provide sufficient historical information. First, there is no rule that stipulates that a historical documentary has to be limited to an hour. Claude Lanzman's film *Shoah*, (almost nine hours) is one example of a historical documentary that breaks all conventions of length. The question, for Rosenstone, is not that film cannot provide enough information, but whether the information provided is acceptable as history.¹⁶ In *Cissie Gool*, the use of archival footage of the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 is introduced without any oral narration. The images are made to speak for themselves and by themselves carry a vast amount of information about, for example, excessive police brutality, and the complicity of black policemen. The question as to whether the rapid pace of the moving images allow for the absorption of the information is a moot point, precisely because images are able to convey far more powerfully, the horror of that incident than written accounts.



The charge of subjectivity and questions around historical truth that are implicit in the criticism around construction in film is ironic given the very definition of documentary film. Defining documentary film is admittedly a problematic in its own, in that definitions are fluid and constantly evolving, but the basic premise is that documentary film is based on objective fact and verifiable truth. It is an objective historical fact that Cissie wrote numerous letters to the press. The film *Cissie Gool* has accessed this

historical evidence by means of having a young woman reading excerpts from some of the letters. It is not Cissie speaking. Yet the creative treatment of this does not dilute the historical truth of Cissie having written the letters.

Cissie Gool can be defined as an expository film.¹⁷ Key characteristics of this form are the 'voice-of-God' narration by an invisible narrator, the use of newspaper headlines, reports and photographs or archival images to illustrate, describe and inform, and the use of 'talking head' interviews. This form argues most strongly for the documentary film as a document of objective historical truth. The invisible narrator is set up in a position of authority, as someone who knows all the facts and is therefore in a position to make the necessary comments and judgements between oral testimonies. The narration is addressed directly to the viewer and serves either to comment on the image on screen or provide information that the visual image cannot carry. The use of newspaper reports, headlines and other documents confers a similar authority in that they are used to verify and support the oral narration. Interviewee testimonies have a comparable authority because of their knowledge based on experience.

But, and as discussed earlier, it also has elements of the reflexive form in which the filmmaker makes her presence known. This reflexivity signals the mediation of the historian filmmaker. It indicates that the historical facts as presented in the film are based on deliberate choices and that the film is a construction.

Conclusion

This article has tried to argue that criticisms of film as history based on a comparison with written representations of history are an exercise in futility because of the differences in medium, and differences in the codes and conventions that govern each medium. A more constructive approach would seem to be to accept that each medium serves a supplementary purpose and can bring to the production of historical knowledge different strengths and perspectives.

¹⁵ Hayden White as quoted in Michael Lynch and David Bogen, *The Spectacle of History: Speech, Text and Memory at the Iran-Contra Hearings*, Durham, 1996, p. 67.

¹⁶ Rosenstone, "History in Images/History in Words" p. 1177.

¹⁷ See Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*, Bloomington, 1989 for a categorisation of the forms of documentary film. These are the expository, observational, interactive, and reflexive modes of documentary film.

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Historical Time, Gender and the 'New' South Africa in Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness***Meg Samuelson**

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Zakes Mda, *The Heart of Redness*, Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 2000.

Abstract

Zakes Mda's novel, *The Heart of Redness* (2000) is a complex re-telling of the amaXhosa story of Nongqawuse, who urged her people to kill their cattle and burn their crops as a means of resisting European colonialists. The novel, set in two interconnected time zones, the time of the prophecies and the time of the post-apartheid present, has been widely acclaimed. It speaks to and of the 'new' South Africa and its place in the 'new' global economic order. However, the novel's reiteration of a set of gendered tropes spawned in both colonial and nationalist discourses hamper its ability to escape the poetic logic of nationalist and colonial temporality. Women speak for men, who perform the real work of history. Moreover, women speak through their bodies, which contradict the novel's ostensible efforts to inscribe time as entangled and heterogeneous.

Introduction

Between 1779 and 1873, nine frontier wars were fought between indigenous amaXhosa groups and European interlopers on the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony in what is now South Africa. Towards the end of this encounter, a young woman, Nongqawuse, stepped into the arena in which history is made. In the face of colonial encroachment, Nongqawuse urged the amaXhosa to kill their cattle and burn their crops. Her verbal entry into the 'public sphere' during this conflict radically altered the face and future of the region. The nature and cause of her prophecies remains contested to this day. Rather than attempting to posit a 'true' account of the nineteenth century event, my focus falls on the interpretative work performed by Zakes Mda's novel, *The Heart of Redness* (2000). *The Heart of Redness* is set in two interconnected time zones: The time of the prophecies and their aftermath, and the time of the post-apartheid present. Widely acclaimed as one of the most significant post-apartheid novelists to chart the formation of the 'new' South Africa, Mda delves into the historical past in order to raise pressing questions about the 'new' nation and its place in the 'new' global economic order.

Claiming to speak on behalf of the ancestors, Nongqawuse instructed the

amaXhosa to kill all cattle and cease cultivation, in return for which the ancestors along with new cattle would rise from the dead, new grain would be available in abundance, and the world would return to its original state.¹ Following the failure of the prophecies, approximately 40,000 amaXhosa died of starvation; another 40,000 had no option but to seek waged-labour in the British colony. Independent Xhosaland had been decimated and the last vestiges of Xhosa political sovereignty soundly quashed. From this point onwards, little stood between them and full incorporation into the colonial order.

Writing non-linear histories: *The Heart of Redness* and time as "entanglement"

In *The Heart of Redness*, Mda 'writes back' to the ur-text of colonial discourse alluded to in his title, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. This reply to empire celebrates what was once denigrated. The novel's reference to "redness" is specific to the Eastern Cape, where "red" denotes the ochre used as ornamentation by those amaXhosa who have resisted incorporation into Western modernity. The terms "school people" and "red people" distinguish those who have embraced 'modernity' from those who have not.

The presence of the past is palpable in the novel's twentieth century narrative, most notably in the social division between Believers and Unbelievers (which can partly be mapped onto that between "red people" and "school people"). This division is inherited from the time of Nongqawuse, where it marked a division between those who obeyed the prophecies (the Believers) and those who did not (the Unbelievers). Strong antagonisms erupted between the two groups as each blamed the other for the unhappy fate of the Xhosa nation following the failure of the prophecies. Unbelievers blamed Believers for recklessly destroying the nation by reducing it to starvation and dependence on the colonial economy; Believers blamed Unbelievers for the failure of the fulfilment of the prophecies, citing their refusal to obey the prophetic injunction.

Enmity between the two groups—Believers and Unbelievers—is reinvigorated in the present-day narrative as Qolorha-by-Sea, the site of the prophecies, faces a new crisis in the late twentieth century. This takes the form of a threatened 'development' project in their village. Believers and Unbelievers quarrel over the merits of 'progress' in the form of a tourist resort development marketed towards the global elite. The Unbelievers

¹ According to the historian-poet, William W. Gqola, Nongqawuse was told by the ancestors who appeared to her to: "Tell that the whole community will rise from the dead; and that all cattle now living must be slaughtered, for they have been reared by contaminated hands because there are people about who deal in witchcraft. There should be no cultivation, but great new grain pits must be dug, new houses must be built, and great strong cattle enclosures must be erected. Cut out new milksacks and weave many doors from bukka roots [administered to young women to make them pregnant and prevent miscarriages]. So says the chief Napakade, the descendant of Sifuba-Sibanzi. The people must leave their witchcraft, for soon they will be examined by diviners. [...] They [the cattle] were reared by dirty hands that were handling witchcraft and other things such as incests and adulteries". Quoted in J. B. Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-7*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1989, pp. 79 and 126. The full text of a later, adulterated version of Gqola's text appears in Jordan in English translation. (A. C. Jordan, *Towards an African Literature: The Emergence of Literary Form in Xhosa*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, 1973.) Peires adds to this account as follows: "On the great day [following full moon], two suns would rise red in the sky over the mountain of Ntaba kaNdodo where they would collide and darkness would cover the earth. There would be a great storm, which only the newly built and thatched houses would be able to withstand. Then the righteous dead [...] and the new cattle would rise out of the earth at the mouth of the Kei, Kwenzurha, Tyhume and Keiskamma rivers. [...] The English and their collaborators ('all who wear trousers' in one account) would retreat into the sea, which would rise up in two walls to engulf them and open a road for them to return to Uhlanga (place of Creation) whence they came" (Peires, *The Dead Will Arise*, 98).

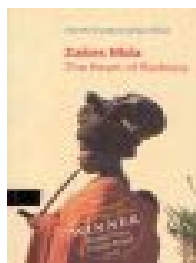
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campaign in favour of development, arguing that it "will bring modernity to our lives, and will rid us of our redness" (p. 105). The Believers resist it, because it will destroy the local ecology in the interests of national and global capital. Insisting on the contemporaneity of their "non modern" cultural practices, they resist also the attempt to package amaXhosa culture for tourist consumption. The proposed development, vaunted as being of "national importance" and carried out under the banner of Black Economic Empowerment, promises to modernise the village while retaining vestiges of "redness" in the fixed and static format of the tourist spectacle. Thus, it threatens to sunder a lived culture from its present and consign it to an edifying 'repast'.

The proposed development thus uncannily reiterates the colonial imposition of the nineteenth century, which aimed to consign the amaXhosa present to the static past of the museum exhibit, while transforming amaXhosa into a waged-labour underclass servicing colonial capital. The complicity between nationalist and colonial programmes— each bent on producing 'modern' subjects in the interests of economic 'progress' by fixing in the 'past' any identified 'non-modern' attributes²— is revealed through the novel's interpenetrating time zones and reiterated crises, through its inscription of time as "entanglement"³ which foregrounds the "foldedness" of past and present and forgoes the discourse of closure on the past so prevalent in a post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission South Africa.⁴

Resistant to the time of origin and telos, to the linear movement through past, present and future, Mda apparently gives literary voice to the preoccupations of theorists such as Partha Chatterjee, Achille Mbembe and Dipesh Chakrabarty (and, before them, Walter Benjamin).⁵ Chatterjee

and Mbembe argue for an understanding of time in the postcolony as "heterogeneous, unevenly dense"⁶ and "fundamentally fractured".⁷ These understandings of time in the postcolony are antithetical to the notion of "homogenous, empty time" employed by Benedict Anderson to speak of the origin and spread of nationalism,⁸ and identified by Chatterjee as "the utopian time of capital",⁹ with its attendant discourses of linear progress and development. Mda's return to Nongqawuse is thus radically different from President Thabo Mbeki's in his "I am an African" speech.¹⁰ Mbeki states: "I am the child of Nongqause. I am he who made it possible to trade in world markets in diamonds, in gold, in the same food for which my stomach yearns". He thus evokes Nongqawuse in order to speak a narrative of progressive modernisation, foregrounding trade within the global economy (in which gold is a central South African commodity, along with tourism). The meaning that Nongqawuse holds for Mda is quite different.



Chakrabarty's discussion of "subaltern pasts" or pasts that "resist historicisation" is particularly suggestive to my reading of Mda's novel.¹¹ Chakrabarty proposes that the historian approach "subaltern pasts" in a manner that allows them to "stand as our contemporary", "throwing light on a possibility for the present". Such a history, or literature for that matter, "puts us in touch with the heterogeneities, the plural ways of being, that

make up our own present [... and] help to bring to view the disjointed nature of our own times".¹² The Heart of Redness promises to achieve just this. Its blending of time periods and exploration of disjunctures in the present undoes the imposed binary of "traditional" and "modern" (or, in our context, "red" and "school") through the assertion of what Chakrabarty terms "a shared 'now'" or "a relation of contemporaneity between the non modern and the modern".¹³

The entanglement of past and present and the insistence upon the contemporaneity of "redness" that we find in Mda's novel is antithetical to colonial culture's "denial of co-evalness",¹⁴ which is exemplified in *Heart of Darkness*, in which Conrad's Marlow likens his spatial movement up the Congo to "travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world" (p. 48).¹⁵ Mda's inscription of time is equally antithetical to the progressive, modernising temporalities espoused by new-nationalist discourses, such as that spoken by Mbeki. Mda fends off the threat posed by 'development' to his fictionalised village by taking the "subaltern past" seriously, allowing it to disrupt the present rather than fixing it in the past.¹⁶ The present-day Believers triumph when the valley— the place of Nongqawuse's visions— is declared a heritage site. The prophecies, which promised to restore the world to its original state, are fulfilled as Nongqawuse finally saves the village from the ruthless impingements of 'modernity.'



² See David Lloyd, 'Colonial Trauma / Postcolonial Recovery?', *Interventions*, 2.2, 2000, p. 219.

³ Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, translated by A. M. Berrett, Janet Roitman, Murray Last and Steven Rendall, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2001, p. 14.

⁴ For a reading of the rhetoric of closure in the Truth and Reconciliation and post-apartheid fiction, see Meg Samuelson, 'Cracked Vases and Untidy Seams: Narrative Structure and Closure in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Post-Apartheid Fiction', *Current Writing*, 15.2, 2003, pp. 63-76.

⁵ Partha Chatterjee, 'The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question' in Kumkum Sangari & Sudesh Vaid (ed.) *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ, 1990; Achille Mbembe, 'African Modes of Self-Writing', translated by Steven Rendall, *Public Culture*, 14.1, 2002, pp. 239-272; Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Minority Histories, Subaltern Pasts', *Postcolonial Studies*, 1.1, 1998.

⁶ Chatterjee, 'Nationalist Resolution', p. 131.

⁷ Mbembe, 'African Modes', p. 272.

⁸ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso London, 1983, p. 31.

⁹ Chatterjee, 'Nationalist Resolution', p. 131.

¹⁰ Presented on the occasion of adoption by the Constitutional Assembly of 'The Republic of South Africa Constitution Bill' in 1996 when he was still Deputy-President, this speech has become Mbeki's signature speech and was performed on the occasion of his inauguration for a second term of office in 2004.

¹¹ Chakrabarty, 'Minority Histories', p. 18.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁴ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1983, p. 55.

¹⁵ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973 (originally published in 1899), p. 48.

¹⁶ Chakrabarty, 'Minority Histories', p. 24.

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However, the symbolic weight placed on women's bodies during the nation-building transition exerts a new set of pressures on the text. We are confronted with contradictory textual desires and a fissured textual politics. The novel's embodiment of time in women and its reliance on a set of gendered tropes spawned in both colonial and nationalist discourses hamper its ability to escape the poetic logic of nationalist and colonial temporality. While Conrad uses female figures to exemplify his "heart of darkness," Mda equally depends on the female form to house his "heart of redness," and shares with Mbeki a gendering of the child of the future as male ("I am the child of Nongqause. I am he ..."). The question then arises of whether it is possible to destabilise colonial and nationalist edifices while leaving intact the gendered representations that prop them up. I suggest not.

Embodied time: Gender and Redemption

Feminist historians have suggested that as a young woman of marriageable age in a time of cattle dearth that threatened to deprive her of the authorising subject position of legitimate motherhood, Nongqawuse may have laid claim to the voice of the ancestors as a means to enter the public sphere to which she, as an unmarried woman, had no access. They have also pointed to her injunctions against incest and extramarital sexual relations as possible hints that she may have claimed the voice of (male) ancestors in order to counter her (female) vulnerability and voice her (female) rage. But Mda does not explore such possibilities in his novel. If Nongqawuse is the figure around whom *The Heart of Redness's* narrative circles, her presence in the novel is like the eye of the textual storm: She is little more than a cipher in the novel based upon her. But the text does grapple with her contradictory and contested legacy in the present-day drama by twice splitting it between three female characters that inhabit the narrative present: Qukezwa, Xoliswa Ximiya and NomaRussia. All three women enter the plot as love interests of Camagu, the character most closely associated with the author.¹⁷

Xoliswa Ximiya and Qukezwa are, respectively, the only living descen-

dants of the Unbelieving and Believing branches of the family upon whom the novel centres and are emblematic of the social division of amaXhosa into "red" and "school" people. Xoliswa Ximiya represents the "school people". She is the principal of Qolorha-by-Sea Secondary School and is an embarrassingly effusive supporter of American-style 'civilisation'. Any attempts to maintain or reclaim the "history of redness" or the traditions of her people are dismissed by her as "backward movement" (p. 184). She epitomises the legacy of Nongqawuse celebrated by Mbeki, one that ushered the time of nation and capital into the precapitalist world of amaXhosa. Speaking the temporal discourses of capital and the modern nation, she exemplifies the disavowal of any resistance to their free movement through homogenous empty time.¹⁸ Revealingly, Xoliswa Ximiya's first mention in the novel refers to her childless state. Through its association with Xoliswa Ximiya, the discourse of progress is rendered barren. Qukezwa, in contrast to Xoliswa Ximiya, gives birth to a son in extraordinary circumstances. The only surviving child of the Believing line, Qukezwa is closely associated with heritage. Elsewhere in the novel, Mda commendably smudges the boundary between 'red' and 'school' ("non modern" and "modern"). But this boundary becomes utterly rigid when he writes the female reproductive body: The Unbelieving Xoliswa Ximiya is barren; the womb of the Believing Qukezwa is the site of miraculous fertility.

Mda admits to being a romantic, drawn to the beautiful dream Nongqawuse expressed.¹⁹ The authorial voice is openly sympathetic to her: "All [she] wanted was to save the amaXhosa nation" (p. 182), it informs us. At that same time, he is keenly aware of the devastation that occurred in the prophecy's wake. The unease this awareness of immeasurable loss introduces into the text is enhanced by a latent disquiet concerning the gendered power struggles that feminist historians such as Helen Bradford have found in the prophecies. Torn between the romantic dream and the horrifying consequences of an unsettling act of female authorship, Mda manages his ambivalence by again splitting aspects of Nongqawuse's legacy. This second

split is embodied in NomaRussia and Qukezwa. The duality established between them is that of the diseased and miraculous reproductive body. NomaRussia is a popular name in Qolorha-by-Sea, dating back to the time of the prophecies. When Sir George Cathcart was killed in the Crimean War, the Believers associated Russians with the awaited amaXhosa ancestors whom Nongqawuse promised would "emerge from the sea" (p. 94). NomaRussia's name—literally, "Mother of Russians"—positions her within this legacy as reproductive body. After disappearing for much of the novel, she reappears near the end of the narrative, dying of cervical cancer with a stream of blood gushing from her reproductive organs. Temporal juxtaposition is used to powerful effect when the narrative cuts back to the past and the devastating effects of the prophetic movement are revealed in all their horror: "People were dying. Thousands of them. At first it was mostly old people and children. Then men and women in their prime. Dying everywhere. Corpses and skeletons were a common sight. In the dongas. On the veld. Even around the homesteads. No one had the strength to bury them." (p. 292)

This aspect of Nongqawuse—a terrifying harbinger of death—is embodied in NomaRussia; her diseased reproductive organs become the vehicle through which the horrors of the failed prophetic movement are revealed.

NomaRussia's condition alludes to what some have called the "reproductive imagery" of Nongqawuse's prophecies—their references to blood-red suns and moons, to milksacks and to bukka roots, fed to young women to prevent miscarriages.²⁰ These elements of the prophecies mark them as explicitly female—to some, intrinsically female—and have been read, moreover, as pointing to a female, even a "protofeminist", agenda.²¹ The failure of the romantic dream of the prophecies is thus ascribed in part to its gendered nature, and the novel offers some muted yet anxious commentary on female assumptions to power and women's verbal entry into the public sphere.

If NomaRussia's body figures authorial anxieties, Qukezwa's figures authorial desires in at least two respects: Claims of autochthony and

¹⁷ See Maureen Isaacson, 'Free State Madonnas Prevail in Mda's New Novel', *The Connection*, 2003, <http://www.theconnection.org/features/zakesarticle.asp>, p. 3.

¹⁸ See Chatterjee on the discourses of capital and modernity: "When it encounters an impediment, it thinks it has encountered another time—something out of precapital that belongs to the premodern" in Chatterjee, 'Nationalist Resolution', p. 131.

¹⁹ Maureen Isaacson, 'Free State Madonnas'. *The Connection*, 2003, <http://www.theconnection.org/features/zakesarticle.asp>, p. 3.

²⁰ This phrase is used in an earlier version of Helen Bradford's paper, presented in the Africa Seminar Series, University of Cape Town, 1995. A later version of the paper was published as Helen Bradford, 'Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and Its Frontier Zones, c. 1806-70', *Journal of African History*, 37, 1996, pp. 351-370.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

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dreams of redemption. Qukezwa's body is marked by her Khoikhoi heritage.²² Her ancestral namesake, Qukezwa the first, was a Khoikhoi woman and the two Qukezwas carry much of the novel's symbolic weight. The emphasis placed upon them constitutes a textual celebration of autochthony and an investment in the politics of 'origins.'

According to Mbembe, celebrations of autochthony belong to an impoverished African nationalist tradition that "has come to conceive politics either along the lines of a recovery of an essential but lost nature— the liberation of an essence— or as a sacrificial process".²³ Autochthony and sacrificial redemption meet in the body of Qukezwa the second, the symbolic significance of which is developed in relation to NomaRussia's oozing, diseased body and Xoliswa Ximiya's (cultural) barrenness. When Qukezwa is found to be pregnant, the grandmothers attest that she is still a virgin, "that she has not known a man— in the biblical sense" (p. 250). Qukezwa's miraculous conception is situated within the frameworks of both Christian and Khoikhoi myth. The child born from these unusual circumstances is called Heitsi— after the prophet in whose honour Qukezwa the first named her own son. In Khoikhoi cosmology, Heitsi Eibib is both "the earliest prophet of the Khoikhoi" (p. 24) and a saviour figure: "He lived and died for all the Khoikhoi" (p. 24). 'Miraculously' conceived and named after Heitsi Eibib, Heitsi the second (the son of Qukezwa the second) is encoded as a messianic figure in both Khoikhoi and Christian cosmologies. The constellation that draws together the prophet Nongqawuse and references to the virgin birth of the Christ-child are almost ubiquitous in post-1990 inscriptions of Nongqawuse and are not unique to Mda's novel. An explanation for this contemporary revision of Nongqawuse's story may be that post-apartheid culture has absorbed and now reproduces a dominant script of sacrifice and redemption that emerged in the hearings of the Truth and Reconcilia-

tion Commission.²⁴ Virgin birth, with its intimations of messianism, expresses the notion of historical time as redemptive. Placed alongside the prophecies of Nongqawuse, with their injunctions for sacrifice, it revises the historical story in line with contemporary nation-building concerns. In post-apartheid South Africa, the new national narrative asserts that sacrifice has been rewarded with a new post-apartheid redemptive state. This narrative threatens to silence those who trace continuities between the apartheid past and the post-apartheid present and to foreclose past loss in favour of present unity.

Entering a virgin birth into its plot without ironic distancing, *The Heart of Redness* contradicts its attempts to write time as entangled by shifting instead into a teleological historical narrative of sacrifice and redemption. This both undercuts its more radical inscription of time and offers a particularly limited script for women to inhabit. Women are positioned as bearers of redemption through appeal only to their reproductive capacities, now even divorced of sexuality. Again this reiterates the gendered dynamics of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, where mothers testified on behalf their sons. Their own experiences of apartheid brutality were largely eclipsed and their own sacrifices and sufferings ignored in this theatre of national healing.

Splitting off all anxiety with regard to the troubling legacies of the prophecy's female authorship and unrecuperable losses, the novel posits Qukezwa's virginal and maternal body as the site of the text's desire. Becoming, literally, a vessel for Mda's message, she reveals the 'ideal' Nongqawuse of masculinist and nationalist fantasy: One who was no more than a mouthpiece for the patrilineal ancestors, one who wished for no more than to save the amaXhosa nation. Displaced is an image of Nongqawuse as a woman who entered the public sphere with her own gendered agenda. While the Nongqawuse of male nationalist fantasies transmits the male-authored

message through her mouth, Qukezwa, her representative figure in Mda's present-day narrative, transmits it through her body.

Given the textual value laid upon Qukezwa's body, it comes as no surprise that of the three female women, she is the one Camagu chooses for his wife. She embodies the ecological, cultural and biological heritage in which Mda locates his hopes for the future. It is certainly encouraging to find Mda subverting the hierarchical binary of "school" knowledge and "red" knowledge (indigenous knowledge systems), as when Qukezwa, who dropped out of high school, lectures Camagu, who holds a Ph.D., on the properties of indigenous plants. However, the alacrity with which the text— itself located in literate culture— dismisses Xoliswa Ximiya, the only highly literate woman in the story, is a source of some concern. Women bear men's messages through their bodies and are firmly discouraged from seizing the tools of writing themselves.

Conclusion

By splitting Nongqawuse's legacy, *The Heart of Redness* manages to dispel the uncomfortable fact of female 'authorship' and the unrecuperable loss of the devastating historical event. In this regard, it writes the relation between past, present and future in a similar manner to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and reiterates its gendered categories and consoling fictions. Women are cast as ventriloquists for men, who perform the real work of history; national mourning rituals assuage past losses and posit healing and unity in the place of the inconsolable. In *The Heart of Redness*, women speak loudest through their bodies, which contradict the novel's ostensible efforts to inscribe time as entangled and heterogeneous. Qukezwa's body, with its virgin birth, becomes the ultimate site of the text's desire and the splintered and non-linear time of the inconsolable is overwritten by the redemptive.

²² Khoikhoi groups were among the earliest inhabitants of southern Africa, their presence in the region dating back to the Stone Age; Bantu groups, of which the amaXhosa are a part, trace their presence in the Eastern Cape region back to the mid or late first millennium CE; white settlers began to enter the region in the late 18th Century.

²³ Mbembe, 'African Modes', p. 272.

²⁴ Richard A. Wilson, *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the Post-Apartheid State*, Cambridge University, Cambridge, 2001, pp. 114-119.

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Where is Thelma and Louise?

Nilosree Biswas

She is an independent filmmaker, writer and journalist extensively working on social development issues particularly on gender, environment, and education. In the last eight years she had made documentaries on issues of primary education, traditional crafts, and marginalisation of occupation. Her film "A Courtyard Tale" for Ministry of Textiles was a part of *Bharat Utsav* in Brazil and Morocco. "Bellmetal and Other Stories" her most acclaimed independent film was a part of the International Film Festival of Archeological Films at Oregon, US, Third International Social Communication Cinema Conference, 2004 organised by the *Roop Kala Kendro*, Indo-Italian Institute of Film and Social Communication. She also writes for *Anandabazar Patrika*, *The Telegraph*, *Tehelka* and *People* – a development journal published by the Press Institute of India.

She is currently working on the process documentation of the project titled "Developing Mechanism to Ensure Safe Migration and Combat Human Trafficking" executed by Sanlaap, Kolkata and supported by the UNDP. E-mail_ahalya31@yahoo.co.uk and nilosree@gmail.com

Released in 1931 in Europe, *Madchen in Uniform* by Leontine Sagan was a landmark exploration in lesbian cinema. It dealt with a student's desperate love for her enigmatic maternal schoolmistress. The film was several decades ahead of its time. Thereafter, lesbian films continued to be made by male and female directors who did not always have same sex orientation.



Hollywood and European cinema slowly awakened to the fact that films dealing with lesbian themes have to be non-judgmental, should rest on grounds of freedom of expression and allow enough flexibility to accommodate the real life of the reel characters. In the West, therefore, movies made on themes of homosexuality made their mark on the rights movement of gay and lesbians and vice versa. In a groundbreaking cinematic treatment of a hitherto taboo subject *The Children's Hour* by William Wyler (1961), which starred the legendary Audrey Hepburn and Shirley Maclaine, lesbian cinema received a boost. John Michel Ways of *Rear Window* was the scriptwriter for the film. As the movement for the rights of lesbians and gays became stronger, there was also a wider range in the treatment of gay and lesbian relationships.

One has to see lesbian movies as a genre of films that look into lesbian ethos from an objective point of view. In western movies, the theme of female bonding was often portrayed as a deliberate rejection of heterosexuality and even heterosociality. *Thelma & Louise* by Ridley Scot is an exceptional example of this genre, which achieved some commercial success, combining light entertainment with an insightful study of women's craving to be on their own. Strangely enough such experimental treatment remains highly

limited even though lesbian cult films begun to be released way back in the thirties.

Indian cinema never considered homosexuality as a theme until recently. Celebration of sisterly love, actual or extended kin bonding, was a common feature in Hindi cinema of the sixties and seventies. Films like *Patthar ke Sanam* starring Manoj Kumar, Waheeda Rahman and Mumtaz were exceptional in their depiction of sisterly affection. But nothing more evolved from these films, surrender to patriarchal norms of family and established gender hierarchy being an overwhelming imperative within the industry. *Parvarish* released in the seventies featured both male and female bonding. The depiction of two sisters aspiring for a better lifestyle was unusual to start with but the plot failed to carry it through to address the individuality of the two women. Rather than exploring, let alone developing, the theme of the homosocial bonding, the two sets of heroes and heroines were catapulted into stereotypical Bollywood romantic entanglements and settled into 'decent' heterosexual conjugal lives.

Time and again, Hindi films introduced the theme of female bonding only to mutilate the plot half way through the script. There was very little cinematic space for independent women in mainstream Indian cinema. Female characters primarily played supplementary or at best complementary roles to larger than life superheroes. In this genre women were yet to find 'a room of their own'.



Of course, it need hardly be said, that these trends in cinema were a reflection of the near-monopoly of men in the industry— both in production and in the various levels of

technical and directorial personnel. Not surprisingly, the strong self-censorship exercised by mainstream cinema does not extend to the prolific 'blue' subculture. Pornographic movies, perceived as a space in which aberrance and transgression has full play, provides hospitable ground for explicit lesbian themes. Such films do not seem to face problems of 'audience reception', providing handsome profits for their makers.



The first departure in India cinema was *Fire* by Deepa Mehta released in 1998. It was a landmark in its explicit depiction of a sexual and emotional relationship between two women (played by Shabana Azmi and Nandita Das) married to two brothers. This time there was a problem with 'audience reception'. Some of the Hindu right parties vandalised theatres screening *Fire* and in some cities sabotaged commercial screenings. They argued that the film maligned Indian womanhood and the family, undermining gender and age hierarchies that were the foundation of familial relationships.

The story acquired a new twist when Mehta rejected the 'lesbian' label, insisting instead that the film was about 'loneliness'. But the controversy over the film led to the surfacing of lesbian groups that had so far remained out of the public eye.

Six years after the *Fire* controversy, a new film *Girlfriend* by Karan Razdan rekindled public debate on lesbianism and its cinematic depiction. This film made explicit what was a more quiet assumption in *Fire*: that lesbians are made not born. Razdan projected a trajectory of the lesbian protagonist that was alarming if not absurd in its extremity. What made a

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film, on an acknowledged lesbian theme, like *Girlfriend* possible? Mehta's film was bolder, but she, for political or tactical reasons, disavowed the term lesbian in relation to her film. Have changes in Indian society and polity made Razdan's venture more plausible than Mehta's?

The answer is no. The clue lies in the extreme depiction, which foregrounds but simultaneously undermines lesbian politics. Thus the theme is addressed but with such strong negative connotations as to disarm and disempower. Isha Koppikar as Taniya is a man-hating, lady-hunting, blood-avenging lesbian who meets with a gruesome death. Such a death is projected as a logical consequence of her proclivities and is almost a skull and crossbones signal to women exercising same-sex preference. Moreover, the film veers between deliberation and disease. On the one

hand, the film warns against 'choosing' lesbianism; on the other, it highlights how lesbians are 'made' by introducing a childhood incident of abuse and reinforcing the notion of lesbianism as unnatural, a psychological disorder, a disease.

The notion of homosexuality as a psychological disorder or disease is no longer common even in India, though individual medical practitioners sometimes apply therapeutic remedies in such situations. What makes *Girlfriend* so uncomfortable is its simplistic and insensitive approach to the question of lesbianism. It remains constricted within the stereotypical and double-edged male gaze: on the one hand lesbian women are psychos; and on the other hand sexual acts between women provide titillating scenes that are integral part of such movies.

We have yet to see in India films like *Born in Flames* (released in 1983),

a fictional tale of feminist activism and women's empowerment from the "underground". The film is set in an imagined future ten years after a socialist revolution that leaves the repressive patriarchal power structure intact. Yet perhaps, none of this is astonishing. Such films remain on the margins even now even in the West. In Indian cinema, the celebrated 'new wave' that focused on class and 'revolution' has given way to a number of new 'alternative' spaces outside the mainstream. We have to wait and see how far themes like feminism and lesbianism find space in the low budget short films or telefilms or other experimental media. Undoubtedly, films like *Girlfriend* are going to hinder rather than help the possibility of sensitive handling of 'women-oriented' themes in cinema.

"Television in Asia" Initiative

Stage 2: Melbourne: 11-14 December 2005

The "Television in Asia" initiative brings together practitioners, scholars and managers of television from various countries of the region to map the television landscape of Asia and identify areas for research (from the practical to the theoretical), promote cross-border and cross-disciplinary research and generate research projects that will explore important problems, enthuse scholars, win international funding, contribute to understanding of communications in a global era and foster a new generation of border-crossing scholar-practitioners.

Stage 2 met at La Trobe University in Melbourne from 11-14 December 2005. Building on the Stage 1 deliberations, the meetings at La Trobe had three main themes:

- "television and health" in Asia, with particular reference to HIV/AIDS
- television and politics, culture and identity, with particular attention to sport
- postgraduate research and skills in Asia-related communications studies.

Each topic included presentations and guests from China, India and Indonesia.

Stage 1, held at the International Congress of Asia Scholars (ICAS) in Shanghai in August 2005, involved papers on India and China, with input from Indonesia. The papers and discussion focused attention on the health and HIV/AIDS questions and subsequently popular culture and sport (and their national ramifications).

Initiators: Stephanie Donald, University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) - China; Robin Jeffrey and Nalin Mehta, La Trobe University, Melbourne - India; Krishna Sen, Curtin University, Perth - Indonesia.

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Temples and tourism in Trinidad and Tobago



Kumar Mahabir

Dr Kumar Mahabir received his BA and M.Phil. degrees in English from The University of the West Indies (UWI), St Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago. He did his Ph.D. in Anthropology at the University of Florida. As a doctoral student, he won a Florida Caribbean Institute Award, an A. Curtis Wilgus Fellowship, and an Organization of American States (OAS) Fellowship. In 2005, he was awarded a travel and research grant by the Ministry of Tourism in India. In the same year, he was awarded a similar grant by the South-South Exchange Programme for Research on the History of Development (SEPHIS) in the Netherlands to give a lecture at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

He is the author of six books including two national best-sellers *Caribbean East Indian Recipes and Medicinal and Edible Plants used by East Indians of Trinidad and Tobago*.

He has also published several articles in scholarly journals including the *New West Indian Guide*, *Caribbean Studies*, *Florida Journal of Anthropology*, and the *Toronto South Asian Review*.

He is the President of the Association of Caribbean Anthropologists (ACA).

Dr Mahabir lectures at COSTAATT (Community College) and UWI (University of the West Indies).

He is also the CEO of the company, Chakra Publishing House.

For several years, he has been involved in research on Indian Culture in the Caribbean.

He did research on Indians in Trinidad, Guyana, Jamaica, St Lucia, St Vincent, Grenada and South Africa.

Spiritual rather than religious tourism is becoming the new buzzword in the travel-and-tours circuit. In recent times, countries like Egypt, England, India and the Bahamas have been seeing sky-high profits through spiritual tourism. These countries have been marketing their religious monuments as tourist attractions for the growing number of seekers of spirituality from all over the world.

This growing congregation of tourists, it is believed, rejects the restrictive teachings and closed structures of formal religion in favour of a more open tolerant set of spiritual beliefs. They are mainly people from the developed world who grew up in a milieu of materialism. They are intrigued by things exotic and are interested in seeing and experiencing unconventional and non-Christian monuments, festivals and ceremonies in distant lands.

remained untapped so far in the southern Caribbean, it has been exploited in the U.K. by groups such as The North Yorkshire Tourism Initiative. In like manner, Trinidad can definitely adopt this marketing strategy since it is the home of a wide variety of picturesque temples which adorn its multi-ethnic landscape. To be able to participate in this growing spiritual tourism industry, certain temples will have to be selected for participation to offer spiritual and aesthetic satisfaction.



One such temple is the richly-decorated mandir in Edinburg in Chaguanas with its many miniature sculptures decorating its walls and panels. Then there is the magnificent mural of natural art in the sanctums of the Trevini Mandir in Williamsville which has not been duplicated anywhere else in Trinidad or the Caribbean. At the Hare Krishna temple in Longdenville, there is an altar of breathtaking beauty with unique motifs of deities and saints, in addition to peacocks, feathers and flowers. In Penal, there is the Shiva Temple where scores of devotees converge weekly to seek the reputed healing powers of a symbolic "growing" stone. At the Dattareya Yoga Centre and Temple in Carapichaima stands a gigantic Hanuman *murti* [statue] which towers over 85 feet (25 metres) tall. In the same area is the monumental Temple-in-the-Sea known world-wide for its exceptional history, design and location. With a bicycle as his only means of transport, one man built this temple 500 feet (150 metres) off the sea-shore. This is a proud monument in Trinidad that would one day be de-

clared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

Spiritual tourism has the greatest potential for attracting foreign visitors year round, in addition to the busy annual Carnival season in February and March. According to the latest travel data from the Central Statistical Office (CSO), the majority of incoming visitors to Trinidad (a total of 350,000 in 2004) originate from USA alone. An analyst from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) states that inboard visitor spending ranks high with a total of about \$3.3 billion for the year.

There is a large potential overseas market to be captured in this venture. The target market would be Hindus and Indians in the United States who comprise a total of over two million people, and is reported to be the fastest-growing and wealthiest community in that country.



As a product brand, tour operators, hotel managers and entrepreneurial pandits [Hindu scholars] can become involved in promoting and inviting visitors to view the historic, artistic and architectural aspects of these traditional-religious sites. To optimise potential benefits, collaboration must be sought with this country's Tourism and Industrial Development Company Limited (TIDCO) and its subsidiary, the Tourism Development Company (TDC). This new initiative is a great opportunity for all stakeholders to negotiate and balance the reverence of the past with the secularism of the



In Asia, a wide array of sites offers unique and revelatory experiences for both curious visitors and devoted pilgrims. "Spiritual travel is one of the fastest growing segments of the travel and tourism industry," says Imtiaz Muqbil, the World Travel and Tourism Council's South and Southeast Asia representative. "Inhabitants of congested cities are seeking spiritual solace and trying to come to terms with themselves in an increasingly uncertain world."

Although this aspect of tourism has

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present by taking holiday tourism to a higher plane.

Indeed, a special tour can be packaged to meet the needs for those who want to experience the excursion as a form of pilgrimage. These types of tourists must be encouraged to take part in religious activities, worship their respective deities, listen to scriptural narrations, chant with the choir of singers, and taste sumptuous vegetarian dishes. If they are interested, they must be given the opportunity to have their future foretold before their eyes by the reading of their palms, or the decoding of the astrological signs of the Hindu almanac

[patra]. Those who want to guard themselves from the negative forces of the unknown must be provided with protective amulets [jantar] by the resident saadhu [Hindu ascetic]. Temple managers can even invite and facilitate religious groups to host conventions, conferences and retreats in some of the large buildings at competitive rates.

The Hindu tradition in Trinidad offers a garland of temples, a banquet of feasts, and a display of festivals to casual site-seers and spiritually-starved visitors. This dimension of tourism would definitely enrich the lives of visitors and the economy of the host country. In addition to bringing tax

revenues to the national treasury, this initiative would provide (additional) jobs for pandits, researchers, temple owners, food-caterers, drivers, hoteliers, airline owners, tour guides and operators. The travel and tourism industry currently represents 13.8 percent of the economy's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). No other industry in the oil-and-gas-rich country generates the high degree of employment (16.7 percent). The World Travel and Tourism Council states that travel and tourism in Trinidad and Tobago plays "a strong role as a generator of wealth and employment across all parts of the country."

Dr Kumar Mahabir received a special award for Excellence in Journalism on 4 December 2005. Mahabir received the award as the feature writer and editor of a magazine on the theme "Temples and Tourism in Trinidad and Tobago."

The glossy magazine was published by Indo-Caribbean Cultural Council in celebration of Divali [Hindu Festival of Lights] 2005.

Other award recipients included Driselle Ramjohn, Mark Meredith and Caldeo Sookram of the Express, John Babb and Anne Hilton of the Newsday, Lennox Grant of the Guardian and the late Keith Shepherd of the T&T Mirror.

INDO-CARIBBEAN CULTURAL COUNCIL

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September 18, 2005

PRESS RELEASE

Divali magazine on temples and tourism in Trinidad

The Indo-Caribbean Cultural Council (ICC) is inviting writers, designers and photographers to submit their work for publication in its free Divali magazine. Divali, the Hindu festival of Lights, will be observed as a national holiday on Tuesday November 1, 2005 in Trinidad and Tobago.

ICC is an educational non-profit organization dedicated to publishing a bi-annual magazine on issues, events and experiences affecting the lives of Hindus and Indians in the Caribbean.

Sincerely,

.....
Dr Kumar Mahabir (Editor and Publisher)
Tel (868) 674-6008 Tel/fax 675-7707 Mobile 756-4961.
E-mail: mahab@tsstt.net.tt, dmahabir@gmail.com

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Twists and Turns



Jishnu Dasgupta

Twist(ing) Copies

The debate around plagiarism in Bollywood, which churns out the 'Indian Masala' movies by the thousands, is nothing new. Be it stories or music, such questions have often (not) been troublesome to filmmakers. In fact, there is a whole website (www.bollycat.com) that documents various cases when (according to the website) films were totally lifted and poured into new bottles. Sorry, reels.



A still from *Pyaar mein Twist*

Recently, however, there have been two cases, which, while in this long and illustrious line, sparked more controversy than usual. The first, *Pyaar Mein Twist* (Dir. Hriday Shetty, 2005) was marked by accusations that sprang from copying from two films. The more controversial accusation was of copying from the Kannada film *Preeti Prema Pranaya*. The more muted one was of being 'inspired' by the Hollywood classic of 1968, *Yours, Mine and Ours*, starring Lucille Ball and Henry Fonda. The latter was quite easily brushed under the carpet, as accusations of copying from Hollywood are simply too common to cause a stir. Therefore, it got the polite credit of getting mentioned in a few of the more erudite reviews of the film. The former, however, did not go so quietly into the sun. Not only those associated with the film but also a section of the public took up the cudgels. What makes the story interesting is that the show of indignation was most visible (and audible) from the Kannadigas, speakers of Kannada. Even a cursory web-search of the issue reveals that it became a case of Kannadigas and Hindi-speaking people launching into each other with what can only be seen as claims of cultural superiority. While one group set out to prove that Bollywood depended inordinately heavily on South Indian films, and their sole credit rests in remaking these, the other claimed that Bollywood was original. Period. Given the long history of South India's fight

against all attempts to establish the hegemony of Hindi in postcolonial India, such a resurfacing of old hatreds comes as an interesting entry point into the cultural politics in our globalising world. The internet, that most global of instruments (though controlled from California), was used freely to give vent to those hatreds, subsumed in a day of shared experiences.



Director Ram Gopal Varma

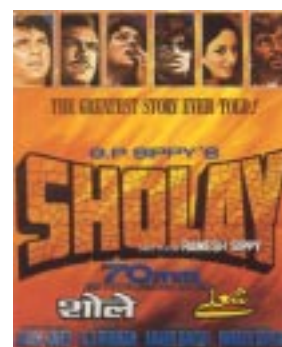
The net also came in handy in the case of the other controversy. Noted filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma is planning his own version of the most popular film ever made in India, *Sholay*. News reports pointed out differences even in the family of those who made the original film, referred to as the "Greatest star cast ever assembled". Ramesh Sippy, the director of the movie was deeply unhappy with it. But the producer, GP Sippy (Ramesh's father), was delighted and went to Varma's office and hugged him. Even *Sholay*'s (and India's) biggest cine star, Amitabh Bachchan, has signalled his acceptance of the idea of the remake by acting in the film. But, in a move that has caused some heartburn, the hero of the old *Sholay* is to play the role of Gabbar Singh, the bandit, possibly the most infamous villain in Bollywood's history.



An artist's impression of *Sholay*. Could this be another way of looking at the film?

Sholay being what it is in Indian popular culture, all sorts of speculation abounded as to the cast. In fact, some bloggers seem to have been dedicated enough to have their own version of a fantasy game. There

were posts where they made their own casting choices in great detail, showing how so many of Bollywood fans would love the opportunity that Varma has—of making their own *Sholay*.



This is going to be Varma's second foray into remaking a classic. He has already done *Sarkar*, based on the ultimate mafia classic, *The Godfather*. But while the Coppolas and Puzos of this world seem wholly unable or unwilling to push for any copyright litigation, particularly in a country with notoriously lax copyright laws, (that is, if they are even aware of *Sarkar*) another controversy has emerged. While the family around whom the film revolves has obvious shades of the Coreleones, another family, far more real, and, as some would argue, nefarious, also appears to have been the model. Critics argue that Bachchan, in the title role, has less shades of Marlon Brando/Vito Coreleone than of Bal Thackeray, the supremo of the 'Hindu Fascist' Shiv Sena. With *Sarkar* (the character) sporting Rudraksha necklaces around his wrist as Thackeray does and his whole family riding in Lexus cars, as the Thackerays do, the accusations can hardly be brushed off. Moreover, the film depicts the elder son, whom the patriarch had originally chosen as heir to have rebelled and being killed in the process, arguably an allegory of the elevation, being superseded and rebellion of Raj Thackeray, the SS supremo's nephew and initial choice as successor. The fate of the character possibly mirrors the political death that Thackeray acolytes see as reserved for Raj.

Such issues are normally not easy to prove. Films, like any texts, are subject to multiple readings. But in this case, Varma has made authorial intent quite obvious. The film starts with his statement that it is his, a fan's, tribute to *The Godfather*. The

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other model, of course, could not be so easily asserted, given its possible ramifications. But after the film and the controversy were dead, Varma made a statement dealing with the *Sholay* issue that made his thoughts quite clear. Referring to GP Sippy's warm reception of the idea, he said, "It was a very moving moment. Almost as moving as when Bal Thackeray hugged me after 'Sarkar' for capturing his life".



This portrayal of Thackeray as the hero, surely, is a far greater cause for concern than plagiarism.

The Multiplex Turn

I was, like many of those who had their viewing tastes formed before the advent of cable TV in India, brought up on a diet of films—both in Hindi and my native Bengali. While one watched Bollywood films with pleasure, one's education was not considered complete unless there was a fair mixture of 'art' films. Shyam Benegal, one of the pioneers of New (Indian) Cinema, was, naturally, a major part of the proffered diet. So, to listen to a man whose work had played such a major part in my growing up promised to be interesting and enlightening. Naturally, I was only too keen to listen to him at IIM's annual Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Oration.



Benegal at IIM, Calcutta

Memory and nostalgia, at best, are pretty bad tools to judge an artist and his work. I fondly (and respectfully) remembered the director of *Ankur*, *Charandas Chor* and *Nishant* for their leftist political message and realist acting, *Kalyug*, *Mandi* and *Suraj ka Satvan Ghora* for sheer beauty and the mesmerising quality that the films had for me, and here was a director whose sensitive portrayal of nationalism and its complexities was showcased in *Junoon*. I quite forgot the Benegal who made the semi-propagandising *Bharat ek Khoj* or *Manthan*. And I was (somehow?) blissfully oblivious of the jingoistic *Bose: A Forgotten Hero*.

The Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta has a most beautiful campus. It was so well maintained

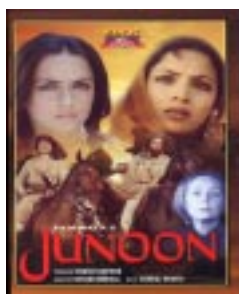
that I was a bit taken aback. What campus does not have cigarette stubs on the streets? Then, as I approached the Management Centre for Human Values (is that a contradiction in terms?), I saw a former Member of Parliament, and I remembered that Benegal's last film was about her late relative, (hyper-)nationalist hero and Axis ally, Subhash Bose. Then, I was asked to take off my sandals as no footwear was allowed in the Centre. What sort of seminar hall was this, I wondered?



The Maangement Centre, venue of the talk

The hall could have been perfectly ordinary (except for the superb maintenance again), but for the personalities that adorned the walls. The only non-Hindu figure to find a place was Rabindranath Tagore, whose Brahmo religion is, by now, a part of history and not a force of the present. Tagore, in any case, has long been appropriated (unwittingly or otherwise) into the pantheon of Hindu greats. The Human Values of the Indian Institute of Management clearly had place for taking of one's shoes to enter a temple of learning, an unmistakably Hindu practice, and Indian and Hindu seemed to merge quite seamlessly.

Benegal did not, as expected, prove to be a card-carrying wide-eyed radical. He clearly drew his inspiration from Nehruvian hopes of changing the world. While this fondness for statist optimism sat ill at ease, much of the rest was even worse to me. At the very beginning, he claimed that it was not for the filmmaker to theorise, the latter being the critics' job. I couldn't help thinking the responses that Godard, Trouffaut or Bertolucci might have to this. Closer to home, how could one place Satyajit Ray's *Our Films Their Films* in this framework? And that is only one of many such texts.



Benegal, to my distress, treated 'tradition' and 'modernity' as mutually exclusive categories, completely ignoring the myriad overlaps. Though he quoted Ashish Nandy at length, this aspect of Nandy's work seems to have

totally bypassed him. His understanding of postmodernism was even more naïve. Making savvy films on the urban rich, shown in multiplexes, seemed to be all the use he had for the term.

Benegal's 'postmodern' films (made in the last decade or so) focus on the 'urban rich', as also in television soaps today. In the soaps, at least, everyone is dressed in the most expensive clothes even at home! These images have replaced that of the common man that reigned in the 1980s. While he did not delve into this genre, taken together, these films and soaps represent the changing ideals and values of Indian society.

The standard fare of the 'rich girl leaving home to elope with poor boy' is not saleable to a generation nurtured on the globalisation diet. The turn towards Liberalisation-Privatisation-Globalisation that the Indian State and economy took in the early 1990s was accompanied by a blitz of satellite channels. In this (not so brave) New World, the Dilip Kumar of *Sagina Mahato* fighting for workers' rights or the Guru Dutt of *Pyasa* rejecting worldly pleasures with disdain would simply not be fashionable. Even the Angry Young Man of the 1970s and 1980s has lost its resonance. It is only to be expected that consumerism would infect the films and other cultural expressions of the day. Cinema, being the most expensive form of such expression, has less chance of reflecting alternative/discordant notes that might be music only to a few ears, at least among those who can buy (increasingly) expensive tickets in multiplexes.



As I walked back towards the gate, the only litter I could spot was the ash of my own cigarette. Benegal, at least, had not tried to surprise me. He had promised not to theorise and had failed to do so. The swamps were beautiful, and the sun was setting in all its glory. But no students were anywhere to be seen admiring the sight. There wasn't even a romantic couple on the bridge to savour the moment. But then, I was seeing the campus for the first time, they were used to its 'pleasures'.

The future of (corporate) India was, I thought, in safe hands. If the romance of the sun setting in the swamps could not distract them from learning to make profits, what chance could the now old romance of fighting poverty, injustice et al have? After all, social injustice and the dream to remove it are stuff we are all used to.

Archives and Field Notes

Bangladesh in the eyes of an observer



Abanti Adhikari

Abanti Adhikari passed her M.A. in history from Calcutta University in 1994 and has specialised in the economic history of Bengal and the Islamic history of India. She is a Lecturer in Narasinha Dutt College, Howrah. Her present areas of research interests are economic and intellectual origins of movements of protest and demand for autonomy in East Pakistan and religion, fundamentalism and politics in Bangladesh. Her hobbies include traveling, free-lancing and tinkering with computers. She takes part in different activities of non-governmental organisations apart from those of various research institutes. She has had many of her articles on the history of Bangladesh published in journals, both in India and abroad.

My visits to Dhaka during my years of preliminary research on Bangladesh was greatly aided by Dr. Nazrul Islam, his wife Roshan, and their two daughters, Simi and Kanti. They used to stay in residences provided by the Dhaka University, and always took care of the international guests and tourists. I also received warm hospitality from Dr. Meghna Guha Thakurta, of the Department of International Relations, Dhaka University. I met Dr. Nazrul Islam and his wife, when he came on a visit at the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies, and the Director, Dr. Barun De, introduced him to me. I used to travel in the premises of the Dhaka University by a rickshaw, and found numerous memorials to martyrs— the 'shahid-bedi's. This is proof of the great sorrow and misery that the University witnessed, when the movement for independence started. Among the intellectuals, the most remarkable name would possibly be that of Shaheed Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta, of the Department of Bengali, Dhaka University, father of Dr. Meghna Guha Thakurta. He was one of the first targets of attack on the intelligentsia. One of the best archivists of the University, Dr. Ratanlal Chakrobarty, was a very popular teacher. I received much academic help from him.

I used to stay at the Guest House of the Teachers-Students Centre of Dhaka University, and travelled around the city in rickshaws. These vehicles had gorgeous decoration, and the rickshaw-pullers came mostly from the suburbs, in search of livelihood. Another mode of transport was 'baby', i.e., auto-rickshaws that would travel around the whole city.

Teachers-Students Centre, where I used to stay during my first two visits, was a centre of cultural interactions. There were huge meetings on May Day, and the chief personality was a well-known journalist of Bangladesh, Shariyar Kabir, who has been imprisoned many times, for his anti-fundamentalist activities. It was indeed a remarkable experience to talk to him about the growth of leftist and radical ideas in Bangladesh. He is a prolific writer and has always protested

against the numerous instances of rape, atrocities and extortion on the freedom fighters of Bangladesh. His books and publications point to the miseries of different groups of people who were victims of the genocide of 1971. Another leftist writer of Bangladesh was Dr. Sukumar Biswas, whose writings focused on the part played by Japan in the freedom movement of 1971. Along with Japanese writers like Hiroshi Sato, he compiled books on the movement for freedom of Bangladesh. When he was an officer in the Bangla Academy, Dhaka, I used to go there in search of old newspapers and also to purchase books at the Bangla Academy book fair. At the Bangla Academy, I met Selina Hossain, the reputed writer and academician, known for her literary works in the both Bangladesh and West Bengal, and her trilogy *Gayathri Sandhya* is a remarkable novel about the waves of refugees from East Pakistan. She has other novels on communalism as well, and is famous throughout the country.

The Refugee Question

Migration from East Pakistan to West Bengal is a subject of serious debates and discussions among many historians. Premier Hosain Shaheed Suhrawardy had wanted to convert western Bengal into a Muslim-majority area, and passed a bill on 11 March 1947, on "Bengal Acquisition of Waste Land", and published it in the Calcutta Gazette. The idea of the government of Suhrawardy was to distribute land among the Muslims to make them settle in Calcutta, but his intentions were not fulfilled due to the opposition and machinations of Dr. Shyama prasad Mukherjee and his associates who thwarted the bill, and it never came into force. It is noteworthy that, the Hindus in present-day Bangladesh mostly live in rented apartments, that they call 'basha'.

From 1947-8 to 1961-65, there was large-scale migration to West Bengal, in the aftermath of the partition of the subcontinent. The inflow of migrants accelerated during the Police Action in Hyderabad in September 1949. By the end of 1949, however, it nearly

petered out. The first phase of migration was thus over. An idea of the extent of the influx may be formed from the fact that by March 1948, the number of migrants had swelled to a billion.

The second phase of the migration began in February 1950 in East Pakistan. This time the migrants came down in an avalanche. The entire administrative machinery cracked under the strain. The organised killing of the minorities and looting of their property started at Bagerhat in East Pakistan and then it spread to other areas.

The Delhi Pact of 1950 provided for the return of the migrants on both sides of the border to their homelands and assured them of complete proprietary rights to their immovable properties left behind. The pact somewhat checked the influx temporarily. Prafulla Kumar Chakraborty in his book points out that, in June 1951 the rate of influx registered a sudden increase and about 9,800 refugees were admitted to government camps.¹ The introduction of passports for travel from Pakistan to India on October 15, 1952, started a new exodus. It was the third phase of migration. Simultaneously there was the movement in defence of the Bengali language (*Bhasha Andolan*), in response to a governmental attempt at Arabicisation of the Bengali script. This gave rise to rebellion in different circles, particularly amongst the students of Dhaka, Rajshahi, Pabna and other districts. Different Bangladeshi authors, such as Badruddin Umar or Ratanlal Chakrobarty, have analysed the reports in different pamphlets and newspapers.²

During the period 1961-65, there arrived in West Bengal at least a million refugees. The exodus was the result of widespread minority killings in Rajshahi and Pabna districts in 1962 and Dhaka and other areas around 1964-5. A Canadian correspondent from Montreal gave a faithful account of the pogrom of 1964-5, which the United States and Pakistan government wanted to hide through a conspiracy of silence.

¹ Prafulla Kumar Chakraborty, *The Marginal Men*, Naya Udyog, 1999, Calcutta.

² See, for instance, Badruddin Umar, *Purba Banglar Bhasha Andolon o Tatkalin Rajniti*, three volumes, Papyrus, Dhaka, 1995.

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From India, the whole movement was observed and interpreted in newspapers such as *Anandabazar Patrika*. The English newspapers in the United States had their correspondents investigating the liberation movement in South Asia and the genocide of 1971.

As I visited the Ramakrishna Mission of Bangladesh and interviewed many people, I found that members of the Hindu community were willing to cross the border into India. I met different Hindu officers in the libraries, who were aggrieved that it is difficult to leave their jobs and come over to India.

After the liberation of Bangladesh, it was hoped that the border would lose much of its rigidity and bilateral relations would improve. Sadly, even after twenty-five years of independent Bangladesh, almost all the outstanding issues between India and Bangladesh continue to be related to the common border. These include sharing of resources of the common rivers, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, demarcation of maritime boundaries, illegal cross-border activities and migration.

On the Dhaka University campus, there are some intellectuals like Dr. Anisuzzaman and Professor Nazrul Islam, who are anti-fundamentalist and profess secular viewpoints. Dr. Anisuzzaman has described vividly the activities of the fundamentalists in different parts of Bangladesh. When I was sitting in his residence at Dhaka University, I heard the noise of a blast in the vice-chancellor's house, but he was hardly perturbed. Strikes by the students are a common feature in Bangladesh politics, so that, the education system always moves slowly. Moreover, most people observe roza (fast) during the month of Ramadan and offer prayers five times a day.

Memories of movements: Solidarity and fundamentalism

When we (myself and a few friends and acquaintances), crossed the river Dhaleswari, by a steamer and penetrated further into Bajrajogini, my native village, I found that most of the Hindu community have left their home and have migrated to West Bengal. The Muslim womenfolk were cordial, and we found the sanitary facilities quite clean and developed in the villages. Another place of interest is the Dhakeswari temple, which we visited, and learnt that it had been attacked during communal riots, the most disastrous of which in recent times were those of December 1992, which, in turn, were repercussions of the attack on the Babri Masjid. The Sannyasis of the Ramakrishna Mission narrated that they had to go into hiding during these riots. When I confessed that the subject of my

research was fundamentalism in Bangladesh, the Sannyasis were quite displeased. Still, we were given the traditional Bengali food, and we had a resting place and a student accompanied us throughout. This visit, in the summer of 2001, was my last to Dhaka for the collection of primary materials for my research.



Statue of Swami Vivekananda inside Jagannath Hall

In Dhaka and Mymensingh, the two places I visited, *Jamaat-e-Islami*, a communal party was quite strong, and it often called small strikes in the capital. My mother and myself visited Golam Azam. We interviewed the former 'Amir' of the *Jamaat-e-Islami*, who is one of the most controversial figures in Bangladeshi political circles. We were deeply impressed by his theoretical knowledge of Islam, and his courteous behaviour towards us. He has a lot of books to his credit, and he said that he was denied the citizenship of Bangladesh, when the country gained independence, and fled away to Pakistan. After the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, when Bangladesh was ruled by military dictatorship, he returned to Bangladesh, but now he mostly lives in seclusion and hardly meets any common Muslim citizen. Dr. K.M. Mohsin arranged the interview with Golam Azam, and my mother, who shares my deep interest in history, was astounded by his theoretical knowledge of Islam and belief in God.

During my earlier visits to Dhaka, I had visited Saheed Suhrawardy Udyan, where the Pakistan army had surrendered before the Indian forces in December 1971. There is a 'Chirantan Agnisikha' (Eternal Flame) inside the well-protected field, and the Bangladesh security forces are very alert about the protection of this area. It was in this region that a very big popular assembly was held, and the effigies of Golam Azam was burnt by the activists of Bangladesh Muktimancha, who are known for their anti-fundamentalism.

A prominent victim of fundamentalism is Shariyar Kabir, who was taken a political prisoner many times, due to his radical movements of protest. His books and works point out the atrocities

on the freedom fighters in Dhaka, Mymensingh, Chittagong and many other parts of Bangladesh. Another radical writer in Bangladesh is Tasleema Nasreen, who lives mostly in exile. Tasleema's radical ideas about women are not acceptable to a wide range of Bangladeshis, including some women who remain influenced by conservative religious doctrines. In Bangladesh, as elsewhere, women are divided by class and social position. In an interesting exception to the South Asian paradigm, many of them work in garment factories. A large number of poor women, urban and rural, are mobilised by non-governmental organisations. The students wear burkha or hijab, and hardly enjoy any freedom of thought or expression. Many scholars, have tried to develop an oral history of violence on women. They have found that women are reluctant to speak out about cases of persecution on them, and it was difficult for researchers to bring out the truth. Many victims are housewives in rural areas, who are unable to speak about the atrocities on them by the Pakistani 'faujdar' forces. There were tragic cases, like *Shaheed-Janani* (Martyr's Mother) Jahanara Emam, who lost her sons in the battle.

The Bhasha Andolon Shaheed Minar, which speaks of the beauty of Islamic architecture, is one of the most acclaimed structures in Dhaka. Constructed in the heart of the city, it is a memorial to students who were martyred in the 1952 war. Dr. Ratanlal Chakrobarty in his book points out that the poor parents of these victims hardly received any monetary compensation. Every year, on the morning of 21 February, garlands are placed on the 'Minar'. The Shaheed memorial in Jahangirnagar, in the newly built town of Savar, is another structure that speaks of the sacrifice of the freedom fighters. It is placed away from the Dhaka city, in the estate of the former Kumar of Bhawal, of the Bhawal Sannyasi fame.



From the Top of the Shahid Minar (6 May 1998)

Undoubtedly, the media has a very significant role to play in depicting the problems and ambiguities of a culture, in any given period of time, and Dr. Partha Chatterjee's works have shown that the media cannot be ignored in the process of nation-building.³ With the introduction of the press, native

³ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments. Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Delhi, 1993.

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literature and newspapers always manifested popular grievances. If the process of the independence of Bangladesh is scrutinised, then there is a host of literature on the subject, which can bring out the true nature of the movement organised by the freedom fighters of Bangladesh.

I visited the Lalbagh fort with the

Dhaka University students and Dr. Ratanlal Chakrobarty for a picnic. It was a beautiful old palace, but far more interesting for me was 'Ahsan Manjil', the palace of the Nawabs of Dhaka, where there are the relics of armaments and dresses used by them. The old palace is very gorgeous, and

speaks of the 'lost glory' of the Nawabs. Taking photographs inside the palace is prohibited, but anybody would be impressed by the grandeur of the old palace, despite its being only partially renovated. The huge staircase and ancient statues are very interesting objects of historical study.

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Photo Essay

The Biggest Sculpture Show in the World: Durga Puja in Calcutta

**Sanchari Sur**

After completing her Post Graduate degree in Social Work from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, with specialisation in Urban And Rural Community Development, she joined an organisation operating in rural West Bengal, which works for Community Based Rehabilitation of the disabled. A year later, she joined the Health Unit of CINI-ASHA, and had to handle Adolescent Sexual Health Initiatives. Her brother being a hearing impaired child and both her parents being involved in the functioning of a rehabilitation centre for the deaf, she personally enjoys working with challenged people. Presently, she is with the Tata Consultancy Services.

She is a trained classical singer and has myriad interests in various aspects of culture, which often finds her in Shantinerkatan.

**Shameek Sarkar**

He is an IT Professional CTS. Whatever time is allowed to him by the odd hours his job demands, he spends in pursuing hobbies that include photography and music, particularly that of the sixties.

Soon to be married, Shameek enjoys the good things of life. Irish whisky and the hookah are great favourites with him.

**Jishnu Dasgupta**

He is currently teaching history in Behala College as a part-timer. He is working on the politics of Bihar, for his doctoral thesis.

Jishnu had been actively involved in student politics since his high school days. His interests have now widened to a variety of public engagements. He is an organiser par excellence and a true Calcuttan in his passion for protest marches and street demonstrations. When he has some time, he reads, particularly the novel *The Godfather*, and wanders through the lanes and bylanes of old Calcutta.



Called the 'biggest sculpture show of the world', Durga Puja is the major religious festival of the Hindus of Bengal. But in time it has become the single biggest event, in terms of sheer scale, in Kolkata. At least 2500 sets of idols are immersed in the river Hooghly at the end of the five-day festival.

It is difficult to say when the wait for the Pujas begins. It could be well argued that at the very moment of immersion the wait for next year's festival begins. It is a wait that to the psyche of many constitutes much more than that of just another religious festival.



Photo Essay



The Puja signifies a simultaneous coming and going, not just in literal terms. It is the time when expatriate Bengalis come home. At the same time for those residents of the city who (somehow) cannot take the crowds' noise and general hullabaloo that it entails, it is the time to move away from the city, taking advantage of the almost week long holiday that the festival brings with it.



Entire localities are devoted to the making of the idols, whose basic material is clay. A curious ritual is that the soil has to be mixed with that taken from red light districts; therefore perhaps it is not unusual to find that two of Kolkata's localities most noted for their idol making artistes are also located besides the two most (in)famous red light areas.

The Puja is basically of the Mother Goddess, who represents *shakti* (prowess). Yet it is also the time when gender relations curiously play out their own peculiarities. For many, it is also the time to gaze at members of the opposite sex and the period often witnesses more cases of harassment than is even otherwise the case.

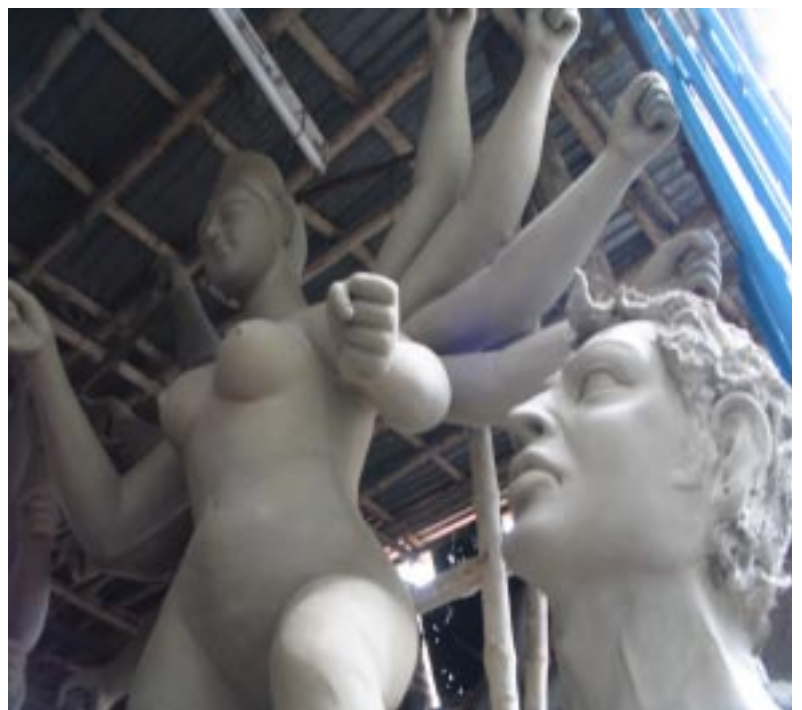


Photo Essay



Durga Puja signifies, at least supposedly, the victory of good over evil, of light over darkness. It is, at the same time, a starkly black and white festival for many, whom all the colours and light of the numerous pandals fail to reach.



Like many religious festivals associated with Mother Cults, Durga Puja is also, in its inception, a fertility rite. The timing is instructive as it happens right at the beginning of the autumn, at the end of the long and often arduous monsoons. The advent of the season is marked by floating white clouds embedded in light blue skies— a sight increasingly foreign to urban Kolkatans. The only blue that falls in their share might well be that in this pot which goes with veritable fiesta of colours, in lights, in décor, in dresses and so much more.



The final act before the Pujas is the *Chokkhu Dan* (literally giving of vision). In a curious inversion of roles, it is the human artist who gives vision and life to the God.

Photo Essay



It is impossible to document the various styles of idols that can be found in any given year. From traditional *Ekchalas* to idols made from biscuits and bangles and in the likeness of film stars, one can literally give vent to all sorts of imagination, often drawing the ire of traditionalists.



Certain things signify the coming of the Pujas. While like the blue sky, the kash flowers has become foreign to the urban Bengali of the twenty-first century, the sound created by the *dhakis* (drummers) continues to be an integral part of the Pujas.



More than the idols and the devotion, often what come to the fore in the Pujas are basic issues such as employment generated by it. From the individuals involved in making the idols to the artisans who decorate the pandals, various technicians and of course, those, who through their music evoke such emotions— all find their bread (*rozi-roti*) in these hectic days.

Photo Essay



The variety is not only in the types of idols or the adornments. The very ethos varies from those organised by local clubs to the traditionalist, more private ones held in the houses of the old elite of colonial Kolkata. While the latter celebrates the Pujas through rituals many would find quaint, the former is a gala celebration of massive scale involving multifarious objects of art and sponsorship from major corporate bodies.



One of the basic ideas behind the Pujas is a celebration of martial prowess. Even today, ritual forms like the firing of guns in the traditional Pujas held in private homes reflects this.



A ritual highlight is the daily offering (*Anjali*), consisting of flowers– a direct link between the devotee and the object of devotion.

Photo Essay



While Diwali is the traditional festival of lights, Durga Puja also entails ritualised *Aartis*, involving the supposedly holy number of 108 lamps.



A vitally important aspect of the Puja is the worship of the virgin (*Kumari Puja*). In a way it represents the gendered notions informing the entire festival. Only the pre-pubertal virgin is considered holy enough to be worshipped, though the Goddess herself is the Mother. It is an allegory of the position of women, who, worshipped as *Shakti*, can never be aligned, like the girl in the image, with her supposed exalted status.



The festival signifies different things for different people. It is also the time when Bengalis, voracious eaters at any time, make it a point to dine out whenever and wherever possible.

Photo Essay



More things change the more they remain the same. Not just for these birds but for many the joys that those 'diners' take for granted are simply not there. For so many *those* five days are just five days.



Yet to the average Bengali, Durga Puja signifies a coming together. Generations come together during these days. Durga herself symbolises this. Along with the commonly perceived image of the Mother Goddess, she is also, to the Bengali, the daughter coming back from her marital home for an altogether brief sojourn.



The married daughter's return to her conjugal home is preceded by the ritual of the *Sindur Khela*, where only her compatriots (those women who also share the marital 'bliss') can participate.

Photo Essay



Like life, the old must give way for the new. The idols, which would have been seen in any other culture as objects of art to be preserved are immersed on the fifth evening. The daughter is sent on a riverine journey back to her husband, and the farewell is often tearful, as it would have been had she been of flesh and blood. But the immersion itself creates space for artistic creativity next year– signifier of a lived culture, not a museumised relic.



The Goddess and the festive spirit depart together along with many other loved ones. For those who stay back, it is also a departure, or rather a return to the mundaneness of quotidian life and also to a 360 day wait for *those* five days– all over again.

Symposia South

Relocating Ray: Beyond Renoir, Renaissance and Revolution



Chandak Sengupta*

Chandak Sengupta grew up in Calcutta, where he was trained in medicine and psychiatry. He was also a free-lance journalist and contributed regularly to *The Statesman* and the periodical *Ekshan*. In 1988, he left for the United States, where he did his PhD in the history of medicine. He now teaches history at Birkbeck College, University of London, and has published three books and many articles in scholarly journals. Cinema and detective fiction have always been his greatest passions and he is now working on a revisionist study of the work of Satyajit Ray, which, among other things, will have much to say on those two subjects.
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Who was Satyajit Ray? To Western film-critics, he was (usually) India's greatest film-maker, a liberal humanist in the mould of Jean Renoir. To the adolescents of Calcutta in the 1970s, he was one of the interesting writers around. To the hard-left intellectuals of that era, he was the symbol of a dead bourgeois past, whose films, for all their technical sophistication, were scandalously counter-revolutionary: in his unswerving allegiance to the bourgeois humanism of the nineteenth-century 'Bengal renaissance', Ray did all he could through his art to impede the revolutionary momentum that seemed (from the vantage point of the College Street Coffee House at any rate) to be rippling through Bengal. For the vast majority of ordinary people on the streets of Calcutta, however, Ray was a great man, the living representative of all that was best in Bengali culture, a dazzlingly versatile and gifted artist who was second only to Rabindranath Tagore. Not only a film-maker (brilliant as he was in that art) but a major writer, lyricist, composer and graphic artist, he was Bengal's Mr Culture.



Satyajit Ray. Image courtesy of Google Images.

I could go on listing the multiple identities Ray acquired over his long life, but my point is too simple to need further illustration. Ray's roots were so diverse and his creative interests so variegated that commentators have basically concentrated either on his films (with the earlier films receiving the lion's share of attention) or on his supposed ideological affiliation with the 'Bengal Renaissance'. Virtually everything else about him or his work

is either downplayed or (as with his personality) dealt with at very anecdotal levels. Let me cite just one example of this strange tunnel vision: there is, to this day, not one serious study in Bengali or English that devotes equal attention to his films and his stories. But can there be one fully comprehensive view of an artist like Ray? Probably not. Even if such a total picture were possible, few scholars or critics would possess the diverse skills, let alone the space or time, to deal in reasonable detail with every aspect of Ray's enormous corpus. My plea, therefore, is not for some unattainable 'total picture' but only for deeper and less partial studies of Ray.



Pather Panchali. Image courtesy of Google Images.

There can, of course, be no formula for producing such works, but I would like to share a few very tentative thoughts and suggestions. First, one should accept, I think, that a straightforward biography— a chronological narrative of the man's life and its contexts— is no longer necessary. Marie Seton's book *Portrait of a Director*¹ is, on the whole, a detailed and faithful record. Because of Seton's interest in Ray's ancestors, the book is especially useful for establishing the mental world he grew up in. Its errors are admittedly numerous, but most of these are minor and easily identified. The other comprehensive study of Ray is Andrew Robinson's *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye*². Robinson, unlike Seton, focuses more on the man and his films than on his family. By the time Robinson began to work on Ray, he had embarked on the last phase of his career and Robinson,

therefore, was able to build his narrative virtually on the entire trajectory of Ray's career. The result is a very different book from Seton's, and certainly more immediately useful as a guide to Ray's work. The problem, however, is that although Robinson recognizes Ray's multifarious occupations and interests, the book is focused entirely on his films, with a couple of chapters trying to illuminate the 'other' Rays.

This kind of limited perspective is probably inevitable when the writer is not fluent in Bengali. All of Ray's major work, whether cinematic, literary, musical, editorial or graphic, was anchored so securely to the language and culture of Bengal (and specifically of Calcutta) that it is virtually impossible to get the measure of the man unless one knows Bengali and Bengal well. Robinson, to be fair, understands this more fully than any previous Western critic and wisely limits his examination to the films. One might expect that the Bengali biographies of Ray would be more comprehensive, but none of the few Bengali biographies rise even to the level of Seton or Robinson. (Some are almost plagiarized from Seton!)



Charulata. Image courtesy of Google Images.

When we look at the more analytical, 'academic' studies, we do not necessarily find much satisfaction either. Although I do not have the space to discuss the scholarly literature here in any detail, those who know that literature are likely to agree with me that it focuses almost exclusively on his films. Suranjan Ganguly's recent monograph *Satyajit Ray: In Search of the Modern*³ deals only with a few major films, and draws

* The author's photograph by Jane Henderson.

¹ Marie Seton, *Portrait of a Director*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1971, 2004.

² Andrew Robinson, *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1991, 2004.

³ Suranjan Ganguly, *Satyajit Ray: In Search of the Modern*, Indialog, New Delhi, 2000.

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weighty conclusions on the nature and contexts of Ray's 'modernity' from that restricted analysis. Darius Cooper, in his *The Cinema of Satyajit Ray: Between Tradition and Modernity*⁴ also focuses on a handful of films, and seeks to present an 'Indian' Ray, an artist whose soul, apparently, was steeped in the arcane principles of Sanskrit aesthetics. This kind of compartmentalisation may be novel but it is no less simplistic or procrustean than the ones Western critics tend to apply to Ray. Cooper's perspective fails as flagrantly in accommodating Ray's multiple allegiances to Bengali, Indian and Western ideas as do the conventional Western portraits of the neo-realist or the humanist.



Book cover of Kailashe Kelenkari, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 1977, 2003. Ray did the cover and other illustrations of his own books.

And of course, neither Ganguly nor Cooper seems even to have heard of Ray the writer. They are far from alone in this. Ray's literary work has been ignored almost completely by critics. The only substantial exception that I know of is Kshetra Gupta's *Satyajiter Sahitya*⁵ (which has recently been divided into two volumes, *Satyajiter Galpo* and *Satyajiter Chitranatya*), but except for the few films for which Ray himself contributed the story, Gupta leaves the cinematic corpus outside his purview. Once again, then, we get a very partial and incomplete view of Ray. Another study that attempts to explore Ray's stories is the well-known article by Ashis Nandy ('Satyajit Ray's Secret Guide to Exquisite Murders'⁶), but it is so eager to apply Freudian concepts to Ray's personality that it hardly has much time to analyse the works themselves. More importantly, it is simply not enough to talk about any simple 'partitioning of the self', as Nandy has done. Nandy's Ray is a pretty simple case of two selves in one— the first is a film-maker and the second is a literary artist; each has a separate ideology. The mechanics and modes of inter-communication and cross-fertilisation

between these two 'selves' do not interest Nandy, although it is that complex relationship which, in all probability, was what made Satyajit Ray so very atypical in either field. We need, in other words, not only to explore the various facets of Ray's creativity but also to illuminate the connections, tensions and contradictions between them.



Cover illustration of Jai Baba Phelunath. This novel was also made into a film by Ray. Courtesy Google Images.

The other desideratum, in my view, is a more historical approach to Ray himself. Critics often remark that the artist kept changing until the very end of his life, but there is no systematic study of these transformations. The oft-emphasised links with the Bengal Renaissance, Nehruvian optimism, or nineteenth-century positivism all, doubtless, apply to Ray, but probably not to the same degree at every period of his career. It is a truism to say that the maker of *Pather Panchali* was not the man who made *Heerak Rajar Deshey*, but it is far less easy to identify the route between the two. When dealing with some forty films and countless stories, charting the historical progression of Ray from the so-called humanism of his early films to the different world— indeed, different worlds— of his later films and tales and identifying the personal, political and cultural contexts of the numerous shifts and the enduring continuities in tone, content and ideology may well be daunting tasks, but we cannot possibly avoid them if we want scholarship on Ray to move beyond the simple certainties of 'Renoir' or the 'Renaissance'. Ray was a follower of Renoir, he was a humanist, he was shaped by the ideas of the Bengal Renaissance. Those facts are themselves not in doubt. But there was far more to the artist and the man than these isolated facts— and that is what we now need to recover and understand.

We have heard much about the Renaissance Ray, the Neo-Realist Ray, the Humanist Ray, the Cosmopolitan Ray and, heaven help us, even the Counter-Revolutionary Ray. What we

still have to do is to discover the mercurial, many-faceted and unpredictable artist who was many, perhaps even all of those things, but much else besides. And let us make a start by appreciating that many of these apparently exceptional qualities of Ray look far more exceptional from a Western perspective than they would from the viewpoint of an urban Bengali. Take the case of Ray's cosmopolitanism. Ray's openness to the world was but one of the characteristics of a certain class and a particular generation of Calcuttans — he was exceptional in his mastery of Western forms of art, but it was more a difference in degree than one of kind. The simple fact that Ray was fond of Mozart might astound the average Western critic but would not seem very remarkable to a Calcutta intellectual with any knowledge of the history of his class.



Illustration from 'Tarinikhuro o Betal' in Satyajit Ray, Tarinikhuror Keertikalap, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 1985, 2001, p. 90.

We must, in short, relocate Ray from the pigeon-holes of critics to his broader contexts— to the language, society and culture of twentieth-century Bengal. The Western Ray— the follower of Renoir, the Indian neo-realist— was fascinating enough once, as was the Renaissance Man of some Bengali critics. More than a decade after his death, however, it is surely time to move on to more complex, more contextual and less restrictive perspectives. Secondly, we need to view his creative output in more comprehensive and analytical ways and to stop seeing him only as a film-maker or, for that matter, only as a writer. That does not mean we must explore each of his films, stories and musical compositions— even if we could, no publisher is likely to allow us that much space!— but we must seek to relate the different aspects of Ray's creativity to each other as well as to their larger biographical, literary and historical contexts. The task is not simple, but it is essential.

⁴ Darius Cooper, *The Cinema of Satyajit Ray: Between Tradition and Modernity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000.

⁵ Kshetra Gupta, *Satyajiter Sahitya*, Pushpa, Calcutta, 1992.

⁶ Ashis Nandy, 'Satyajit Ray's Secret Guide to Exquisite Murders', in *East-West Film Journal*, 4.2, June 1990, pp. 14-37.

Across the South

Story of *Ike's Bookshop*, Durban, South Africa

Vishnu Padayachee

Vishnu Padayachee is Senior Professor, School of Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He has a PhD from the University of Natal in Economics and Economic History. He has authored or edited five books, written 25 chapters in books and published over 50 articles in accredited academic journals. He has held fellowships in Europe and the USA. In 2003, he was made a Fellow of the university in recognition of a life-time of distinguished service to the University. In 1996, the then President, Nelson Mandela, appointed him to the Board of Directors of the South African Reserve Bank, on which he still serves.

Joseph David (Ike) Mayet opened the doors of "Ike's Bookshop" in Chapel Street, Durban, on 8 August 1988. In so doing, he became the first South African "Africana and antiquarian" book-dealer of colour. The new South Africa was yet to be born, but the struggles that would make it a reality were to be found all around Durban, as they were in many other parts of South Africa.

Chapel Street is a small back-alley in Overport, Durban, and at that time, in terms of the erstwhile Group Areas Act, was an area designated as reserved for South Africans of Indian origin. Yet, by the late 1980s, a rich mix of South Africans of all colours and classes lived around the book-store. Small, old-world dukawallah shops, wood-and-iron shacks, new modern houses, crumbling buildings, high-rise apartment blocks, shebeens and brothels all competed for space and favour.

At the age of 62, it was there that Ike set up shop, not more than 100 yards from his two-bedroomed flat. His life, in many ways, represents the trials and ironies of twentieth-century South Africa. His father had inherited what was then a small fortune— his grandfather, Ahmed "Paraffin" Mayet, accumulated his wealth from the sale of paraffin fuel to poor, mainly black South Africans— but by 1926, when Ike was born, nothing was left of the "family silver".



In 1939, Ike contracted osteomyelitis. Penicillin was not readily available in South Africa at the time, and he spent nearly three years at St Aidan's Hospital. It was there that his love of books and reading developed. In 1941, Indira Gandhi, daughter of Jawarahal Nehru (independent India's first Prime Minister) and herself a future Prime Minister of India, stopped in Durban on her way to England. She was taken by some progressive

members of the former Natal Indian Congress to visit St Aidan's Hospital, where much to her surprise, she found a youngster reading Homer. That young man was Ike Mayet.



In 1948, the Nationalist Party won the general election and began to put in place the strategy of "grand apartheid", imposing a rigid racial classification that would henceforth determine all aspects of life for every South African. Ike was faced with a choice, one he made effortlessly in the end. In appearance, Ike could easily have passed as white. His maternal grandparents, an Irish-Scottish alliance, came from St. Helena, an island made famous by Napoleon's incarceration in the nineteenth century. Ike's paternal grandfather, Ahmed Mayet, was a native of Kathor in the Surat District of western India. The villages in this district were the prime source of the flows of Indian trading and merchant families who came to Natal from about 1872. Ahmed married Katrinka Barger, one of his four wives, who had come to South Africa as a child with her parents, Lutheran missionary workers of Dutch and German descent.

Ike and most of his family could have applied successfully to be classified white— a wise move, given the privileges this would have bestowed upon them during the era of apartheid in South Africa. However, they insisted on retaining their Indian identity, and went through the next forty years on the "wrong" side of the racial tracks, suffering all the pain and indignity that apartheid could throw at black people all the time. Despite training generations of younger white men in the engineering trade that he entered in the mid-1940s, Ike was never able to make the kind of progress that most,

often less capable, whites were able to achieve, and many soared past him in the occupational hierarchy.

When he finally retired from formal work in 1981, in part due to the complications caused by his earlier battle with osteomyelitis, Ike decided to try his hand at bookbinding. In this venture, he had the support and encouragement of Durban's "grand old man" of books— Mr Ernest Rabjohn of Adam's Books. In the mid-1980s, Ike undertook the major task of restoring a vast quantity of rare books in the Gandhi Library at 140, Queen Street, in the heart of Durban's "Indian Quarter", where Mahatma Gandhi had worked as a lawyer and activist hundred years earlier. There, Ike honed his skills as a binder, and rapidly moved from simple binding work to specialist restoration and preservation of books.

In 2000, when Ike decided to close the bookstore, two of his friends, Julian May and I (both professors of Economics), who are devoted to the tradition of bookselling, felt that it would be a shame for Durban to lose one of its most treasured booklovers' outlets. We purchased the store, and formally re-launched it as "Ike's Books and Collectables" at its present location of 48a, Florida Road. The new venue was officially opened on 18 January 2001 by the acclaimed South African author Professor J M Coetzee, who in 2003 was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.



Bookselling is not an easy business; in fact, as Julian often quips: "It is an elegant way to lose money". However, as we hold positions at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, we are able to combine our love of books with full-time jobs.

In 2004, Joanne Rushby, the shop's inspirational and dynamic manager, joined Julian and me, as a co-owner of Ike's. She and Renato Palmi (who has

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brought his own networks and creativity to Ike's) run the shop on a daily basis. Ike's also became a member of the Southern African Book-dealer's Association (SABDA) in 2004.

It was Ike's indomitable spirit, his steely determination, his uncompromisingly principled stand against the brutality of the apartheid regime, his adventurous nature, his unmatched sense of humour, along with his immense stature as a fount of historical information and urban trivia, that informed the establishment and

character of the original Ike's Bookshop.

This is the living culture and context that endures in and through his memory at Ike's Books and Collectables, and there is no doubt that his presence permeates the store's every nook and bookend. Few visitors to Ike's do not experience the welcoming wonder that envelops all who mount its well-worn wooden stairs, and many encounter a serendipitous bibliophilic "find" among the shelves.

To come into Ike's is to enter a unique, "world-between-worlds", where the past, in all its humours, is still vibrant and accessible, and where the future is being shaped through the interaction and understanding that fuels the flame of hope for the new Millennium. Just as Ike Mayet's life and work represented shared paradigms and perceptions, so his legacy charts for us an exciting journey into our world to come.

Ike Mayet died on 31 January 2002.

A recent trip to Thailand



Lakshmi Subramanian

She has written several pieces in the e-magazine to date. Lakshmi Subramanian is the Coordinator, Sephis Resource Centre, CSSSC.

On a recent visit to Malaysia and Thailand that I undertook in connection with my research, I had the opportunity of visiting colleagues located at the Universities of Chulalongkorn, Thammasat and Silpakorn in Bangkok. The Bangkok chapter of my visit was partially supported by Sephis, the objective being to familiarise faculty members in the social science departments with Sephis related programmes that the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences in Calcutta as a Sephis resource centre organises, especially the International Research Training Programme and the Cultural Studies Workshops that have been a continuing feature for ten years.

My principal contacts in Chulalongkorn were Dr. Sunait Chutintaranond and Dr. Alec Cooper, both of whom both of whom are engaged in teaching Post Graduate courses in South East Asian history and which incorporate themes of Globalization, Nationalism and Democracy. Dr. Sunait Chutintaranond's special area of interest is Myanmar

and its relations with Thailand and has been active in developing contacts with Myanmar scholars. He expressed his interest and concurrence in developing closer academic linkages with South Asia. These could take the form of joint programmes, conferences on comparative issues of migration, gender and labour and governance and suggested that Sephis could consider supporting such a joint effort. He arranged for a visit to the Asian Research Centre for Migration (ARCM) housed in the Institute of Asian Studies at Chulalongkorn and where I had the opportunity of consulting a range of publications relating to migration and speaking with scholars working on the problem. The visit suggested to me the possibility of expanding the original idea mooted in Bahia for a joint seminar on Global Poverty and Slavery and which could include scholars and students working in Southeast Asia.

At Thammasat University, I met Dr. Kesian Tejpapira who despite a busy schedule met me and expressed his

enthusiasm and interest in the activities of the Sephis Resource Centre in Calcutta. With his own research interest in the problems of ethnicity and Nationalism and governance in Thailand, he agreed to help us to more effectively disseminate information in the IRTP, Cultural Studies Workshop and Occasional papers. We realised that there were language constraints standing in the way of Thai students but we agreed that these were not so formidable as to preclude any dialogue.

I am hoping to follow up these meetings by sending the two Universities a detailed information sheet on the Cultural Studies workshop for 2006, the Occasional papers that we have so far printed and even request senior Thai scholars to offer their publications under the same series. I am also hoping to persuade my colleagues in Bahia and Dakar to share their information with these Universities in Thailand and thereby be in dialogue for future programmes of collaboration.

Across the South

Weaving a filmmaker's dream

Zulfah Otto-Sallies

As an accomplished playwright, author, poet, scriptwriter and filmmaker, Zulfah started her career in the theatre. She wrote and directed several plays and musicals, and toured Malaysia and Indonesia with her highly successful dance musical, *Rosa*. Among the many short stories, she also published a book, called *Diekie Vannie Bo-Kaap*, which is already in the thirteenth print-run, and serves as a set work book for schools. As scriptwriter, she made her film debut with the award winning short films called *Kap an Driver* and *Stompie and the Red Tide*. Soon after, she wrote and directed a short film, *Raya*, as part of the Mama Africa series. She won the adjudicators award at the Apollo film festival (2002) as well as the "Bana ba thari ensho" (Children of the Diaspora), award from the All Africa Student Association, for her work on *Raya*. *Raya* was the opening film at Sithengi (2001), it received great reviews and is distributed internationally. She also served as festival director of the Cape Town world cinema festival (2003). She also served as jury member for the short film category competition for the Cape Town world cinema festival (2004). Jury member of the feature length film category competition of the Apollo film festival (2005). For television she has written and directed numerous inserts and television documentaries for local and international television stations. Her first feature film *Don't Touch* is due for release in 2006. She obtained her Masters Degree in Visual Arts/Multi-Media and Theatre at Das Arts in Amsterdam, Netherlands in the year 2000.

I remember as a child watching films in my neighbour's kitchen for 20 cents. Films were projected on a white sheet and played from a 16mm projector. The main selection on every Sunday afternoon was a war movie. A film like *Kelly's Heroes*, I probably saw more than twenty times. Westerns featuring, John Wayne and Clint Eastwood were the favourite films amongst the kids on a Saturday afternoon added with the bonus of a karate film, featuring Bruce Lee, and your normal short film of *The Three Stooges*, *Spiderman* or *Giant Robot*. The film world was as alien to me as a being from another planet. I was the recipient of these images that entertained me, made me cry and often also made me feel like a super hero myself. These films were my window into the world other than Cape Town and my small community of Bo-Kaap. I dreamt only of being a teacher and writing poetry and novels. Then in 1975, television made its appearance into South Africa. All the children and adults flocked to Loop Street with their folding chairs and makeshift cardboard to look in the shop window at this small wondrous screen of moving images. Sound was relayed on speakers to the outside and like clockwork we waited to watch a series called *Mr. Long Street*. Whilst South Africa's turmoil escalated, and the face of politics changed with the student uprising in 1976, weaving a dream of a filmmaker did not form part of my psyche at the time. In the 1980s I was introduced to protest theatre and in the early nineties I formed my own community theatre group called Bo-Kaap Productions. This group mainly did plays on social issues and dilemmas facing the community of Bo-Kaap. I started to formalise my training in theatre and attended many courses held at the Nico Malan Theatre (now called Arts cape), on directing plays. As the socio-political landscape changed in South Africa in 1994, actors started to question the entry into the television and film market. I frantically started to research this issue only to find that no formal training existed in the country for people of colour and that most people in the industry are white Afrikaners

who are ex teachers that plunged themselves into the television industry. No formal training existed for them too and they learned on a hands on basis. With the birth of the new democratic South Africa white producers rallied to mobilise and secure their industry and called for meetings with all interested parties in the film and television industry. Those meetings were attended by a handful of people of colour and it were whites mainly talking to themselves, being the experts and expressing strong desire to make contact with the rainbow nation. In one of those meetings I came across an NGO, called Community Video Education Trust, an organisation geared towards training people of colour in the television industry. The training was based on a three months foundation course for aspirant filmmakers from disadvantaged backgrounds. It was here where some of my drama group actors pursued their training. In 1995, I was offered a job as Director of Community Video Education Trust. A job I took and never looked back. My first encounter with the industry was a head on collision. The Olympic Bid Committee was applying for a broadcasting license for a community television station to enhance the Olympic bid. This application was strongly opposed by Community Video Education Trust (CVET). The dilemma of white producers and directors securing themselves new jobs, as they were the ones with experience proved to be a dilemma for the CVET. Community television was at risk; being run by the same white producers who learned their skills from the old SABC, which, we all know, was used as a propaganda machine of the apartheid regime. This view I hold with respect to the white journalists and cameramen who risked their lives to get footage to the outside world that reflected the wrongs of the apartheid regime. Nevertheless CVET's opposition, which was led by three women, proved to be enough to let the Olympic Bid committee lay off the idea of community television. This plunge in the industry has changed my notion of celebrating our democracy; the work, I concluded, has only begun in the film

and television industry.

It is ten years on in our Democratic New South Africa, the question I kept asking myself was, what has changed. The images on television, the language use and culture of programming have changed. Prominent actors of colour have become our new heroes. The diet of American programming has lessened though not enough. Black producers are still a rare commodity in the film industry. Female directors of colour are non existent, in the history of a 100 years in cinema. The year 2004 saw the debut of the first black female director, Meganthrie Pillay with a movie called *34 South*. This year also saw Zulfah Otto-Sallies shooting her first feature film called *Don't Touch*, due for release in 2006. Rayda Jacobs who is working on her first feature called *Confessions of a Gambler* follows this. The Sithengi Film market celebrates its 10th anniversary and has to date never premiered a film directed by a South African female. Once again the landscape changed and South African films now form part of the Ster kinekor premiers, e.g. *Flyer*, *Forgiveness*, *Max* and *Mona*. All these films were produced by DV 8 films, who to date have not released a film directed by a female. The philosophy of South Africa being a third world country with first world values springs to mind. It is a country that is willing to take the film industry to new heights with the National Film and Video Association on the fore front of these developments. Needless to say it is the country which I am passionate about, yet in the same breath I say we have problems. Whilst films like *Yesterday* and now *Tstosi* puts us in the running for an Academy Award nomination, the smaller independent filmmaker has a harder time to compete. The slate of co-productions requires experienced filmmakers to secure funding. The question then arises who are the experienced filmmakers. The industry is losing sight of the nurturing factor of independent filmmakers. "Too much too soon" becomes our moral dilemma. A most progressive constitution yet implementation seem to be slow. Awards won internationally are now stamping the standard and

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voice of South African cinema. No longer are we nurturing our own standards, our own aesthetic of filmmaking, much rather we prefer the intervention of international festivals to award and acclaim our films. Awards are great for a filmmaker but should not be the only criteria by which films are measured. Films that reflect our South African voice and style that do not win awards should be seen for what they are. A film relevant to South Africans, reflecting South African stories should not fall by the wayside.

Filmmaking all over the world is male dominated and every independent filmmaker I know whispers about the difficulty of raising money to make a film. The experience of female filmmakers remains the biggest challenge all over the world. As a mother of three teenagers (ages 17, 14 and 13), a wife and a filmmaker the issue of time management is the biggest stumbling block. To fully spend quality time with your family whilst making a film is a great challenge. Filmmaking requires your passion, hundred per cent commitment, total absorption and absolute precision in knowing what you want to convey, clear communication with your crew, particularly cinematographer and actors. Where do my family fit in all this whilst my psyche is owned by the film I am making, my love transferred onto actors, crews and the dream of a vision on big screen. Like a secret love affair with an illusive lover I prepare my first moves, my dialogue, my method of directing actors, intoxicated with these thoughts I enter the set with fresh enthusiasm, secret excitement as I see the chemistry between the lover and beloved unfold. The filmmaker in the role of the lover and the filmmaking process in the role of the beloved. Like a jealous muse the film guards my every move for no other lover will be tolerated. How do I

hold my family together amongst all this? Perhaps lady luck will smile upon me one more time. Making a film could mean destabilising my family, losing sight of their needs, particularly the needs of my children, being able to be there with them psychologically as well as physically. As a mother I see myself pivotal to the development of my children. The issue of motherhood is like a dance where you cannot ever be out of rhythm. Sometimes the songs of guilt, songs of praises, songs of resentment will play but you as the mother have to dance on through the conflicting songs, you've got to move to your own rhythm of love. It is hard being a mother, a wife and a filmmaker as each one has the same demands, same expectations, that you will give only hundred percent. How did I overcome this dilemma? I started to work from home, where though sometimes I am not psychologically there, I am in the home present and if need be available. I am blessed by the fact that my husband is in the film industry as a cameraman, so he understands the creative process. My children are involved in the films I make, my daughter as actress, my eldest son as trainee cameraman, the youngest one as an extra or clapper. In this way they know what the job requires, they share their thoughts with me, dinner discussions around the film are all inclusive, they are not alienated and are a part of my life as I wish to be part of their life too. I do not know how else I would have been able to make films; the compromise of losing touch with my children might have been too big. How other mothers do it I do not know, for me this is the only way I can keep a balance by waking up at 5.00 am for a film shoot with my children all excited and double checking that I do have everything I need, my husband smiling and intense over the day's challenge that lay ahead for him as cinematographer.

This is how my films get made and I manage to remain committed as mother, wife and filmmaker.

The playing field for women and people of colour in South Africa is ten years old, an infant that needs to find its own criteria and aesthetic of story telling. Weaving a filmmaker's dream is somewhat like an artist with an empty canvas in front of her. What colours to use and what the picture will look like is visible only in the end product. Filmmaking to me is an art form, new technology may make it more accessible but honing your art can only become reality with experience. "You need to make films to assert yourself as a filmmaker. The baker does not say I am a baker whilst he does not bake anything". Actors can only become great by being challenged in different roles, having a part in many different films. Filmmaking is hard work, people of colour still have to prove themselves over and over again, and female filmmakers struggle to be heard in a male dominated industry. The Hollywood model of glamour and Dollars still haunt us, as the ultimate measurement stick. The notion of being part of the global film scene dominates our philosophy, whilst we still battle to find our own independent voice. Co-productions seem to be the order of the day; short films the way to enter the film market. Investors are still reluctant to risk investing in first time feature filmmakers. The slate appears to be clean and all are equal in the rainbow nation with our white counterparts far ahead in the game with over twenty years of experience, we independents of colour try to convince the powers that be to invest in our films. Such is the experience of a female filmmaker in South Africa. Still we remain hopeful, believe in our rainbow nation and continue the work of rectifying the imbalances of the past. The struggle continues!!!

ZUBAAN DIARY 2006 features posters from the Women's Movement since the 1970s. Poster Women, is a Zubaan project that is a visual mapping of the women's movement in India and will culminate in a travelling exhibition in 2006. In case you wish to order a copy(s), please do so by sending an email to: contact@zubaanbooks.com and zubaan@gmail.com

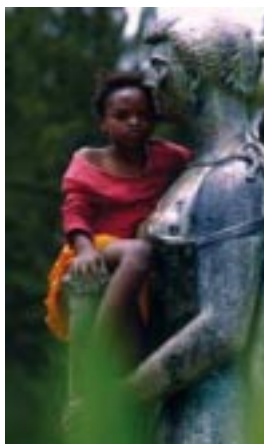
Across the South

Cinematic South: Shifting Centres, Human Rights and the Tri-Continents Film Festival



Gairoonisa Paleker

In a space of three short years, the Tri-Continental Film Festival has grown to become one of the major cinematic events on the festival calendar in South Africa, eagerly awaited each September since 2003.



Showcasing both documentary and feature films, the festival is a form of activism on two important fronts: A focus on human rights and the promotion of south-south dialogues through cinema. Given the predominance of popular cultural forms such as film and video, festival organisers have recognised in these forms an important means of disseminating and publicising issues of human dignity, equality and freedom. Given this the central philosophy of the festival, according to their website, is to: "(F)orge links between those engaged in cinematic production from the Americas, Africa and Asia; promote the use of audio-visual medium as a communication tool that encourages and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom; presents socially relevant and appropriate films that explore the interconnectedness between oppression, denial of fundamental rights and social and economic decay and alienation" among others.

While the focus of the festival is undoubtedly the south, it does not limit itself to films only produced in the southern regions, but has also showcased films produced outside the south, which deal with issues of human rights, political oppression and social justice. The 2005 festival in South Africa included for example the film *Weapons of Mass Deception* (Danny Schechter, USA, 2004) that takes a critical look at the mass media and their role, particularly in the invasion of Iraq.



The festival has not limited itself to a specific target audience, but organisers have expressed concern that these films and their messages need to reach as wide and diverse an audience as possible, especially the audience that cannot make it to screenings in theatres located in South Africa's historically disadvantaged areas. In order to achieve this desired audience profile, the festival is both rooted in the theatre while simultaneously enjoying a peripatetic life through mobile video units, which travel through some of the poorer communities in both the urban centres as well as the rural areas. The films have also been screened at numerous tertiary institutions across the country, giving students and faculty an opportunity to engage in discussions about the issues raised in the various films.



The Tri-Continental Film Festival is the collaborative effort of radical documentary filmmakers from Argentina grouped under the Movimiento de Documentalistas and South African human rights activists. The festival arrived in South Africa from Buenos Aires in September 2003. Last year saw the festival travel for the first time to India where screenings were held in Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata. According to Karam Singh, one of the South African festival directors, the response in India was absolutely phenomenal, with a cross section of the population forming the core audience. The festival will visit these parts of India in January 2006 after its conclusion in Venezuela and Caracas in November 2005.

The composition of the festival varies from region to region with each

region giving prominence to films that resonate with local and regional experiences. The African line-up of films for the South African festival included among others: *Angola-Saudades from the One Who Loves You* (Dir. Richard Pakleppa), a film documenting the wounds of war and the joys of continuing life, savouring peace and simplicity; *Sisters in Law* (Dir. Kim Longinotto) is a documentary about legal reform, women's rights, gender based violence and child abuse in Cameroon; and *Darwin's Nightmare* (Dir. Hubert Sauper) which takes a damning look at the impact of global economic and political interests on a fishing community in the Lake Victoria district.



Films focused on other regions of the south include among others: *Paradise Now* (Dir. Hany Abu-Assad), a feature film focused on the daily struggles of the Palestinian people who face humiliation and death just living their lives; *The Concrete Revolution* (Dir. Xiaolu Guo) is a chronicle of the changes in China, changes symbolised by concrete and construction; *Daughters of the Wind* (Dir. Joel Zito Araujo) is a feature film that focuses on the 'lack' of a race problem in Brazil in which people with darker skins 'are not' subjected to social and economic discrimination.



The struggle and the imperative to shift the centre, and in the words of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, to "name the world", has been a characteristic of nationalist and independence struggles across the south. This imperative is embodied not only in the films showcased in this festival, but by the festival itself.

Across the South

Report for the VIII Fábrica de Idéias

Angela Figueiredo

She is associate professor of sociology at the State University of Bahia in Santo Antônio de Jesus. She is also coordinator of the Advanced Course of the Factory of Ideas Program at the Centre of Afro-Oriental Studies in Bahia, Brazil. She has a PhD in sociology (2002) from the prestigious Rio de Janeiro Graduate Program IUPERJ. Her research focuses on black hair in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro; middle-class blacks, black entrepreneurs and professionals in Brazil; she is currently developing a projects on the careers of a number of outstanding Brazilian black intellectuals over the last century.

The advanced course in ethnic studies "Fábrica de Idéias", the Idea Factory, was a great success in its eighth edition. The success was due to the commitment of the organising team and the institution that hosted it, to the competence of the academics involved, and to the efforts of the students throughout the three weeks of the course. This year, we had twenty Brazilian students and eleven foreign ones; seven held masters' degrees, thirteen were enrolled in masters' programmes, eight enrolled in doctoral programmes and two held PhDs. Gender wise, amongst the Brazilian students were eleven females and nine males, and among the foreign students four females and seven males.



In this edition we had the participation of twelve academics, five foreign lecturers and seven Brazilians, as well as four collaborating professors from UFBA. The presence of lecturers from UFBA was crucial in the final week, when the individual project of each student was discussed, since some of the research themes developed by the students are directly related to the research interests of the collaborating professors. During these years some of these professors have been integrated into the organising team—professors Valdemir Zamparoni (UFBA), Maria do Rosário Carvalho (UFBA) and Ramón Grosfoguel (UC Berkeley). Their participation has greatly contributed to the success of the Fábrica project, since they have been involved in all phases of the course, including its evaluation and reformulation.

In its initial conception, the main aim of the course was to meet the demand of black postgraduate students enrolled in social science courses who were interested in engaging in race relations. At that time, we noticed the relative increase of black students in the small number of postgraduate courses related to the

theme of race relations and the difficulties in finding adequate supervision in this area of study. The lack of access to library material was also an impediment for these students, who were distant from the bigger academic production centres of Rio, São Paulo and Brasília.

In the years following this first edition, the Fábrica de Idéias course has adapted its content to the more recurrent themes appearing in the students' projects, facilitating access to extensive bibliographic material that can also be used after the course. The project has, for example, offered as 'subject II'—Teoria da etnicidade (II—Theory of Ethnicity), initially by Professor Giralda Seyferth, then by Professor Maria do Rosário de Carvalho and this year by Professor João de Pina Cabral.

The eighth edition of the Fábrica de Idéias was quite different from previous ones. We included some suggestions of previous Fábrica students. Every year, students return an evaluation questionnaire including suggestions for possible topics to be covered and participating professors for future Fábrica courses. This year, we introduced a new topic 'Biographies and genealogies in black political thought in Africa, Caribbean, North America and Brazil', the aim of which was to enable students to relate the different subjects offered and to encourage a wider perspective.



Different theoretical positions were looked at through the works of black intellectuals from Africa, United States, the Caribbean and Brazil. The works of several black authors, for example Amílcar Cabral, Aimé Césaire, Franz Fanon, Du Bois and Lima Barreto were analysed, not in an isolated way, but embedded in a wider context, engaging with other authors both from within and outside the Continent. (See <http://www.ceao.ufba.br/fabrica>). The students' self-acknowledged lack of

familiarity with these authors became, in time, a feeling of extreme satisfaction of their discovery. Their enthusiastic faces in the corridors and their engagement in after-class conversations attested to the need for these topics to be introduced in the course. Equally important was the enthusiasm shown by the foreign students, particularly those coming from within Latin America. The choice of topic for the eighth Fábrica de Idéias also altered the dynamic in the choice of students, since this year's participants had research interests very close to that proposed this year by the Fábrica course. The end result was a cohesive group, contributing to dialogue and exchange among students themselves and between students and professors. The Fábrica de Idéias has developed into a unique experience contributing towards the education and exchange of researchers from different regions and countries. The first Fábrica de Idéias course took place during July 1998, in CEEA (Centro de Estudos Afro-Asiáticos) of the University Cândido Mendes. In its first edition the course lasted four weeks, with eight four-hour modules, each organised around a topic, alongside five evening lectures, with a total of 170 hours. This year covered three weeks between 8 and 28 August, including a week in the historic town of Cachoeira, situated in the Rêconcavo region of the state of Bahia.

The Fábrica de Idéias course is organised around classes, reading and study groups, lectures and thematic seminars. The course is organised in seven modules, five being based on lectures, the remaining two being discussions between students and participating professors on the students' research projects. During the first module, which takes place during the first week of the course, students present their research projects. Students incorporate their research interests to the debates—although it is not the aim of the course to merely analyse in detail each and every student's research project—as well as being encouraged to explore questions related to their research projects during each of the three modules of the course. During the final week of the course, students are divided into smaller groups, divided along research lines, and are supervised by a professor in the discussion of their research projects.

Across the South



During the course we also organised lectures open to the public, given by the professors responsible for the teaching of the modules, our aim being to introduce to any person interested in the topic of race relations the themes covered during the course. Regarding infrastructure, we provided

around ten computers (five of them with internet access) to be used in activities related to the course by participating students. Students also received a hard copy of all the readings suggested in the bibliography of every module of the course. The participation of foreign professors has increased every year. This is due to several factors. First, an increase in the number of foreign students, which stimulated us to reformulate the content of the course, initially planned to meet the interests of Brazilian students. Secondly, the positive experience of past Fábrica participating professors as well as their interest in further participation. Lastly, our initiative to establish academic links with some institutions, exemplified by our links with UC, Berkeley through

Professor Ramón Grosfoguel, member of the Ethnic Studies Department of that University. These links aim to expand the academic exchange initially proposed by the Fábrica course, enabling Latin American and African students to visit this institution. A similar initiative is taking place with the University of Witwatersrand–Johannesburg, through our contact with Professor Achille Mbembe. Our interest lies in expanding and institutionalising the links created by the Fábrica de Idéias into something beyond a yearly meeting. The Sephis Program, with its support for the participation of eight foreign students, has been essential to developing the Fabrica into a truly international, South-South event.

Trip to Mexico City



Lara Mancuso

She is the coordinator of Sephis Regional Resource Center at CEAO, UFBA. She received her PhD from the Center for Historical Studies, El Colegio de Mexico, and her current research is on popular Catholicism in Latin America (mancuso@ufba.br).

On behalf of the Sephis programme, I visited Mexico City between 14 and 26 June, to further regional linkages of the CEAO at Bahia. I met professors, researchers and students from El Colegio de México, UNAM, INEHRM, Instituto Politécnico, ENAH, Instituto Mora. I talked to them about Sephis, and presented CEAO and the new Graduate Program on Ethnic and African Studies (Pos-Afro). I gave them Sephis Newsletters, CEAO and Pos-Afro folders, and showed Sephis publications.

I did not have time to visit FLACSO, the Graduate Program on Latin American Studies– UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) and UAM (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana). I think the three of them would also be interested in participating in Sephis. All in all, there was a very good reception to the Sephis programme.

There were two main concerns. First, how would South-South relations accommodate special relations within Latin America and/or between Latin American institutions? The second

concern was whether Sephis only supports activities stated on the website (workshops, lecture tours, grants)? Are they open to financing other kinds of activities/events?

I had a meeting with Micaela Chávez Villa, the Director of the Biblioteca Daniel Cosío Villegas (El Colegio de México's Library), and María Lourdes Guerrero Andrade, librarian in charge of African and Asian collections and resources. There, I managed to establish an exchange contract between Revista Afro-Ásia (CEAO's journal) and Estudios de Asia y África (journal of the Center for Africa and Asia Studies, El Colegio de México). Such exchange will include not only new issues, but also the complete collections. An exchange deal of Sephis books and El Colegio de México Publishing House publications was also arrived at.

There was also a meeting with Carlos Javier Echarri Cánovas (Academic Coordinator of the PhD Program in Population Studies of the Center for Demographic, Urban and Environmental Studies, CEDUA) and José Luis

Lezama (Director of CEDUA). Both committed to advertise the activities of Sephis and CEAO to students and professors, and through their network. At the CEH (Center for Historical Studies) there were meetings with Guillermo Palacios (Director) and Sandra Kuntz Ficker (Academic Coordinator) and with Marco Palacios (professor-researcher). I also met with various people at the CCyDEL (Centro de Comunicación y difusión de Estudios Latinoamericanos,) of the UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México).

The meetings in Mexico City have helped to set up a number of new and regular institutional linkages, which will facilitate flow of information. Also, we hope that students and faculty will benefit from the bibliographic and exchange networks that were set up. This visit was a beginning. We hope thus incrementally to build a rich and dense academic network within the Latin American region, which, when hitched to the Sephis programme, will contribute signally towards our common South-South agenda.

Reviews

City of God: the life of black people in Brazilian slums



Nubia Pinto

Nubia Pinto studies Social Sciences in the Federal University of Bahia. She researches on the black middle class in Brazil and is currently the administrative assistant of Sephis Research Center at CEAO.

In the last few years Brazilian cinema has been revitalised, becoming a cultural phenomenon and gaining a wide audience not only in Brazil, but also world wide. *City of God*, by Fernando Meirelles, was an important step in this direction. Released in Brazil in 2002, it has even been considered as one of the best Brazilian movies ever. It had an audience of over three million people. People from Japan to Spain, from Cuba to France have been amazed by it. John Powers from *The Los Angeles Weekly* wrote that "from the beginning to the end, *City of God* does not just hold you; it clutches your lapels with its lurid exuberance." (17/23.01.2003) *City of God* was one of the nominees for the Cannes Festival in 2002, and it received four nominations for the Oscar award in 2003.

In what follows, I do not doubt the high artistic and aesthetic value of *City of God*; the story is, in fact, very well told. The problem with *City of God*, I argue, is that it sends a truly deplorable message about the Afro-Brazilian population to the world. What do people keep in their mind from *City of God* if not that (a) Afro-Brazilian people are violent, and that (b) there is no possible solution to improve the circumstances in which the black Brazilian population lives?

Based on the book *City of God* (1997) by Paulo Lins, the movie tells the story of the life of Buscapé in a *favela* (slum) called *City of God* in Rio de Janeiro. Buscapé's life is an ongoing struggle against being involved in crime and violence. His dream is to become a photographer. But much more than Buscapé's life and struggle it is the sadism of the *favela* which is the main character of the movie.

Fernando Meirelles portrays the Brazilian *favela* as a place where primitive people live in an environment of crime, promiscuity, drug addiction and drug trafficking, where their daily struggle for survival involves the humiliation and even killing of their fellow man: truly an urban jungle. The character *Zé Pequeno* stands exactly for this evil 'attitude' or 'disposition' of the inhabitants of the *favela*. He seems to have a natural tendency towards crime. The movie shows him from an early age on and follows his criminal career: *Zé Pequeno* becomes a drug dealer, a rapist, a murderer,

and even a teacher for the children in the *favela* - he teaches them to become killers themselves. At one point in the movie *Zé Pequeno* captures two little boys from the *favela*. He asks one of them to kill the other. Only after shooting in the foot of the child, he succeeds in teaching his 'lesson'. *Zé Pequeno* (Leandro Firmino da Hora, in an extraordinary performance) represents how people from outside of the *favela* imagine the poor black population in Brazil.

The way children are portrayed also corroborates to the awful image of people from the slums. Children do not have a family, they live on the street, they do not go to school, and they are 'educated' by the drug dealers, who are omnipresent in the *favela*. As well as the adults, they are very cruel and violent. Their destiny is to become delinquents.

Meirelles shows the brutality of life in the slums, but he forgets to explain the social, racial, and economic conditions that created the violence in the first place. Therefore, in the movie violence is not constructed as a social problem, but as an individual tendency among poor black people.



The movie addresses how the slum *City of God* was established in the 1960s, but the constitution of slums is prior to this time. Slums in Rio are related to historical questions such as the abandonment of the black population since the abolition of slavery in 1888, and the uncontrollable development of the big cities in Brazil since the first decade of the twentieth century. Thus, it is not a coincidence that most of people from slums are black. It reveals the historical process of racial exclusion in Brazilian society, which has been and still is an obstruction to integrate blacks in society.

Violence in the slums increased

Cidade de Deus, drama, 135 minutes, released in Brazil, 2002.

<http://cidadedededeus.com.br>

Studio: Videofilmes / O2 Filmes

Distribution: Lumière / Miramax Films

Director: Fernando Meirelles

Screenwriter: Bráulio Mantovani, based on novel by Paulo Lins

Producer: Walter Salles

Music: Antônio Pinto and Ed Côrtes

Cinematography: César Charlone

Art director: Tulé Peake

Editor: Daniel Rezende

with the emergence of the drug trafficking in the 80s and 90s. Fernando Meirelles emphasises this in *City of God*. The movie gives details about the production of drugs and the hierarchy of people who are involved in the trafficking. According to the movie, all the people from the slums consume and/or sell drugs. Even Buscapé, the one who wants to become a photographer, and *Mané Galinha*, a bus-ticket seller, despite being quite different from other characters, get involved in drug trafficking and other crimes at some point. I strongly criticise such approach. Although people live in inhuman conditions, not all of them react in the same way. A significant number of poor black people remain honest and law-abiding while they try to survive with the US 140 dollars Brazilian minimum monthly salary.

Instead of providing minimum survival conditions to *favelados* (people who live in the slums), the Brazilian Government usually sends the police 'to take care of the problem'. Many of the police men have their own interests in this ongoing war in the *favelas*, a place where the long arm of justice does not reach neither the corrupt police nor the criminal drug dealers. The first victims are, of course, innocent inhabitants of the *favela*, who are getting killed by the firearms of drug dealers and police men alike.

Slums in Rio de Janeiro represent a hard reality produced by the social "Brazilian apartheid" – extremely unequal income distribution and steady negligence of competent authorities. Ultimately, slums reveal how difficult it is to be black in Brazil. People from the slums are living in miserable conditions, are disregarded by the government, controlled by drug dealers, oppressed by the police, ignored by the society and lately exploited and unfairly portrayed by a cinematographic industry, which is not committed to social justice.

More about City of God:

Official Website (English version)

<http://cidadedededeus.globo.com/>

Comments from international magazines, newspapers and famous websites:

www.rottentomatoes.com/m/city_of_god/

Review

Transforming the Celluloid: Nollywood films and Nigerian Society

**Zakariyau Sadiq Sambo**

Zakariyau Sadiq Sambo, a PhD student in History at Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, also teaches History at the Department of History, School of Arts and Social Sciences, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, Nigeria. His extra curricular activities include travelling and reading. He is also an enthusiastic spectator of the game of soccer. E-mail: zakasambo@yahoo.com

The Nigerian film industry, popularly known as Nollywood has, no doubt, grown tremendously since the early 1990s. This is evident in the number and quality of movies the industry has put into the market. Today, about fifty films are released into the market both on VCDs and VHS cassettes. Each film released has a potential of more than fifteen million local audiences and five million foreign one. Each film also has a total market value of 5.3 million naira. The Nollywood industry is estimated to be worth \$45 million annually. The average film costs approximately \$15000 and about a week to produce. Sales on VHS or VCD can average about 100000 in one day.



Frank Ukadike (2003)¹ identifies the video films produced in Anglophone West Africa, particularly Nigeria and Ghana, as constitutive of a 'real "first" cinema' which can compete with the "First Cinema" of the western world on its own terms. He cites a number of reasons, the most important being that video films have been successful in cultivating a domestic and diasporic African audience, which has enabled and assured it economic viability.

This economic viability has come about despite, or if one accepts Ukadike's argument because, of the economic failure of measures such as the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) imposition of the Structural Adjustment Programme which sought to 'regenerate' the economies of countries such as Ghana and Nigeria. Ukadike believes that with the colossal devaluation of the Ghanaian cedis and the Nigerian naira, filmmakers in these countries were denied access to hard

currency with which to purchase film equipment, raw filmstock, etc. And that given these exigencies video film was a natural outcome of creative frustrations.

Nollywood has also been able to make some top-ranking actors and producers of international repute. The industry is estimated to employ about nine per cent of the country's total workforce. Generally, the cities of Lagos, Onitsha and Kano are the major centres of film production in the country with each serving as a base for film production in different languages. Lagos is noted for films in English and Yoruba; Onitsha is for films in Pidgin English and Igbo while Kano is known for films in Hausa.

Typically, Nigerian video films are portrayals of local African experiences in the form of generic comedies, satires, musicals and dramas. The films address issues of relevance to the local audience, ranging from polygamy (and its consequences both in terms of gender relations and domestic harmony), *magun* (a 'magic' killer of adulterers) and urbanisation and its consequences, among others.

The film under review is a Hausa movie titled *Gidan Danja*² literally meaning "House of Pandemonium". In the film, Yakubu (Sani Musa Danja) is a young wealthy man who faithfully tries to fulfil his dead mother's wish of adequately providing for his young sister's upbringing. In the course of catering for the sister, Shila (Farida Jalal), Yakubu over-pampered her by meeting all her numerous needs and wishes. Shila thus grew to become a very rude, mischievous and undisciplined young lady.



When Yakubu married his first wife, Shila became very hostile to her and planned a miserable life for the wife by

advising Yakubu to marry another wife. In a very short period, Shila succeeded in influencing her brother to marry five wives and also succeeded in throwing one out. Shila practically became the boss in the house and the wives naturally resisted her overbearing influence. As Shila displays her antics, Yakubu became helpless because he couldn't scold her for the fear of reneging on the promise he had made to his mother. The entire Yakubu household was, therefore, thrown into unending conflicts and pandemonium as the wives battle for supremacy over Shila on the one hand and over one another on the other. A disciplinarian uncle of Yakubu, Kawu Kashim (Ishaq Sidi Ishaq) finally remedied the situation. When he got the report of Shila's behaviours, he forced her to get married in order to serve as punishment for all the atrocities she had committed. With that, Yakubu and his household finally got a respite.



The message of *Gidan Danja* is very clear. It reveals the problems inherent in typically polygamous African families where marital affairs are interfered with by the kith and kin of the husband. It also teaches the moral lesson of giving proper upbringing to children as normally encouraged by African customs so that the society can produce adults of good upbringing. In addition, the film is replete with action and excitement as the actors displayed captivating expertise in the different roles they played. A noticeable minus of the film is the fact that its Director (Sani Musa Danja) made almost all the scenes indoor affairs.

Gidan Danja is neither supporting nor condemning polygamy. It is only explaining the situation as it normally

¹ N. Frank Ukadike, 'Video Booms and the Manifestation of "First" Cinema in Anglophone Africa' in Anthony Guneratne and Wilmal Dissanayake (eds.) *Rethinking Third Cinema*, Routledge, New York, 2003.

² Released in 2004 and directed by Sani Musa Danja.

Review

happens in polygamous families here. Surely, Yakubu's wives accepted their being in a polygamous marriage. In Northern Nigeria, where the population is predominantly Muslim, polygamy is the rule rather than the exception.

Yakubu's wives of course were jealous of one another and they exhibited it in whatever they did. Like Shila, the wives are dependent on Yakubu. Normally, wives in a polygamous marriage live in seclusion or purdah where they largely rely on the provisions of their husbands.

As for Shila, it is not her being a young woman living in the family that was the problem but the kind of

character she has been made into by Yakubu. He practically spoilt her. It is likely that she would find herself too in a polygamous marriage although in the film she was to be the first wife of her husband. However, if she is lucky, as some women are nowadays when married to men who don't believe in polygamy, she could be free from the experience.

Gidan Danja is one film that bridges the gender difference in the variety and length of roles played by male and female actors in Nigerian films. Particularly, young female actors like Umami Nuhu, Maryam Abubakar,

Hadiza Kabara, Maryam Aliyu etc. played most of the roles in the film. However, this neither has any defect in the plot nor fails to pass the intended message. In this sense Nollywood films can be seen to act as catalysts in certain transformative processes in society. Where previously acting by women was a socially proscribed practice, it has now become a respectable occupation for Nigerian women. With the potential to create overnight stars, Nollywood has gone some way towards achieving social and economic parity between men and women, at least in the acting profession.

<http://www.parabaas.com/translation/database/reviews/brAnandamath.html>

Ketaki Kushari Dyson reviews *Anandamath, or The Sacred Brotherhood*, a recent translation by Julius J. Lipner of Bankimchandra's famous novel.

HJBRL: A Nonsense Story of Sukumar Ray, translated and adapted by Jayinee Basu. Available in Amazon (<http://www.amazon.com>) as well as in Barnes & Noble (<http://www.bn.com>)

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Review

Memories of War



Cecilia Gallero

Maria Cecilia Gallero is a recent MA graduate in Social Anthropology. She has Graduate Studies Scholarship for a PhD. in History at the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research (*Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas* -CONICET). She is the mother of Pedro Martin and lives in Misiones, Argentina.

The film *Enlighten by Fire* premiered more than a month ago in Argentina and since then I have been looking forward to viewing it in order to write this review. I live in Misiones, a Northeast province of the country. In Posadas, its capital, there is only one cinema. As it is very expensive to premier a film outside the big urban centres, usually they come to the provinces months after their premier in the cities. Despite this "cultural periphery", there are many resources and ways of getting information such as the Internet.

Based on the book by Edgardo Esteban (who wrote of his own experiences as an excombatiente or ex-soldier), the film is a chronicle of the experiences of war and the shattered lives of those who live with memories of war. On 2 April 1982, Argentina began a war with Great Britain for the "Malvinas" islands or more familiarly known as the "Falklands". Many of the soldiers that went to the front were young boys just beginning to enjoy life. This film is about their experiences, about how a young soldier relives this war when a trench fellow soldier tried to commit suicide.

The film is controversial in that it shows how soldiers were victims of their own superiors and not only of the British enemy, precisely because of the abuses perpetrated by those in authority and the deprivations suffered as a result of deficient war preparations to engage an enemy. Much like the Vietnam veterans, the seventeen- and eighteen-year old combatants fought a war they didn't ask for and suffered a war they were not ready to face or fight, with almost no food, no weapons and no training. The movie shows how the boys of war became today's suffering veterans struggling to survive with no help, trying to live alone in a country that seems to be ignorant of the terrible reality they lived.

Twenty-three years have passed, but the wounds are still open. The Falkland war took place in a very special moment for Argentina and still generates contradictory feelings. On the one hand, it was a war for sovereignty, and on another hand, it ques-

tions what it meant for a society broken by a dictatorship. Public opinion has been contradictory. For some it is a film that reviews and revisits the story of "the poor boys", but for many people it is a film that – although submerged in a painful memory- is valuable and should be viewed by every Argentine. And according to the director, this historical testimony is "never to be forgotten".

Director Tristan Bauer, a veteran filmmaker, writer and cinematographer of over twenty films, believes that all films are political. In an interview on CubaNow.net, Bauer says "I think that all films are political, whether the primary intention is being political or not. All films are political. I believe that cinema has its own language and political analysis can be reached through it. Some are obviously political, and others less obviously political but, without a doubt, all films are political."



As a member of the Argentine film industry, Bauer has been witness to many changes in the Latin American industry; from financial difficulties to repressive censorship, lack of support from national governments and difficulties with distribution to a world market. On the question of differences between Hollywood and the Latin American industries, Bauer says, "Well, between American and Latin-American fiction films, the differences are enormous; the same differences that exist between an imperial power and poor countries that produce culture; tremendous differences. A single Hollywood super-production economically equals 3 or 5 years of production of the entire Latin-American continent. That is, the entire continental production of 3 or 5 years was done with 150 or 200 million dollars,

Title: Iluminados Por El Fuego / Enlighten by Fire

Director: Tristan Bauer, (2005)

which is what one US film would cost. This economic difference, this abysmal difference, also has its effects later in the distribution. American films have, in some cases 85 per cent and in others 90 per cent of the screens of the entire planet, which puts us in a totally unequal plane."

Despite these enormous challenges, Bauer is optimistic about the future of the Argentine and indeed the broader Latin American film industry. The Argentine film industry has been experiencing a growth curve for the last few years. "This year we broke a national record of first films. For the first time, 64 films will have been presented. This never happened during the so-called Golden Times of Argentine Cinema, and this is mainly due to the talent and production capacity of so many young people who approached this language, to the effort of directors, actors, and technicians; but mainly to a film law for cinematographic protection."

Protection of the local industry has also come in the form of screen quotas that limit the exhibition of primarily Hollywood films. This creates space for the screening and exhibition of locally produced films, giving local audiences the opportunity to view films that resonate with their own experiences.

"*Iluminados por el fuego*" has won numerous awards:

1. First prize for the script from a subsidy from the National Film and Audiovisual Arts Institute.
2. "Choral" prize for best original script at the Latin American Film Festival at La Havana, Cuba.
3. First prize for the script at the 1st convocation under the law #5280.
4. "Encouraging Investments in the Cinematographic Industry" from the Culture and Education Minister of the Government of San Luis Province.
5. Prize "Cine en Construcción" 52nd San Sebastian International Film Festival, Spain, 2004.
6. Signis Prize, San Sebastian International Film Festival, Spain, 2004.

Announcements

Divali Festival Souvenir Magazine 2005

Trinidad and Tobago, Caribbean

Theme– Temples and Tourism in Trinidad and Tobago.

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Announcements

Divali Festival Souvenir Magazine 2005

Trinidad and Tobago, Caribbean

Theme– Temples and Tourism in Trinidad and Tobago

The Indo-Caribbean Cultural Council (ICC) wishes to announce the publication of its latest souvenir magazine– Divali 2005, Trinidad and Tobago. The theme of this edition of its annual magazine is "Temples and Tourism in Trinidad and Tobago."

Divali is the second largest open-air national festival after Carnival in multi-ethnic Trinidad and Tobago. The Hindu Festival of Lights is marked by the lighting of thousands of deyas [clay lamps] on decorative designs of split bamboo tubes. The lights twinkle in the shadows of free public performances by actors, models, drummers, dancers, musicians and singers. During the days and nights preceding Divali, non-Hindus and non-Indians actively join in the celebration by lighting deyas, wearing saris, and partaking in eating traditional Indian foods and sweets.

The concept of spiritual tourism has become the new buzzword in the travel-and-tours circuit all over the world. This brand of tourism has remained untapped so far in the southern Caribbean, but has been exploited in the U.K. by groups like North Yorkshire Tourism Initiative. Spiritual tourism has the greatest potential for attracting foreign visitors outside of the busy Carnival season. One tourist destination can be the temple in Carapichaima which has a gigantic Hanuman murti [statue] towering 85 feet (25 metres) high. In the same area is the monumental Temple-in-the-Sea known worldwide for its exceptional history, design and location. The target market for this brand of tourism would be Hindus and Indians in the United States. They comprise a total of over two million people, and are reported to be the fastest-growing and wealthiest ethnic community in that country.

November 2005.

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Of related interest is the website on books on (East) Indians/South Asians in the Caribbean: <http://www.geocities.com/chakrapub/index.html>. Please visit the updated website for magazine articles on (East) Indians/South Asians in the Caribbean: http://www.geocities.com/icc_tt.

Call for Articles

Afro- Ásia Journal

Afro-Ásia – a journal founded in 1965– is published twice a year by the Center of Afro-Oriental Studies (CEAO) of the Federal University of Bahia (Salvador, Brazil). It publishes articles on issues related to African and Asian populations and their descendants in Brazil and elsewhere. Afro-Ásia is one of the few Brazilian publications fully dedicated to African and Afro-Brazilian studies, in a country and state (Bahia) where Africa's vital role in history and culture is widely known. Articles published in Afro-Ásia have promoted academic debate on the history of slavery, racial relations or the complex processes of identity construction, and have also been crucial in informing a progressive socio-political agenda in the struggle against ethnic and racial inequality in Brazil.

Note to contributors

Unpublished papers written in English, French or Spanish can be submitted for evaluation, but if accepted for publication the author will provide a Portuguese translation. In special cases Afro-Ásia may take responsibility for the translation. Also in exceptional cases papers already published in a foreign language may be accepted for publication according to their relevance for the Brazilian reader.

Texts will be reviewed by members of Afro-Ásia Editorial Board or other qualified individuals appointed by the Editors.

Approved manuscripts will be published according to the order in which they were received.

Submissions must adhere to the following style guidelines:

1. Texts should not exceed 35 pages, paper format A4, line spacing 1.5, in 12-point Times New Roman, and must be e-mailed as Word Documents (*.doc) in Microsoft Word 7.0 or later.
2. An abstract is required, in Portuguese and English, 10 lines long, written in an impersonal style. A maximum of five key words are also necessary.
3. Quotations of other works and documents: If shorter than six lines they must be included in quotes within the body of the main text; if longer than this they must be separated from the main text with a 1cm left margin and a 1cm right margin, and no quotes. In neither case should italics be used.
4. Tables must be formatted using Microsoft Word's "Table" function. Tables (or other figures) must always include a title, a reference to their source(s) with a complete bibliographical citation, and all of them must be sequentially numbered.
5. Photographs (or figures) must be digitised in black and white with a minimum resolution of 300 dpi, format TIFF, and must be e-mailed in separate, sequentially numbered files. The photographs' locations and their legends must be indicated in the text. Figures (i.e. maps) must include a title and their source with a complete bibliographical citation.
6. Notes must be included as footnotes and include all the customary references to sources, according to the following citation style:
 - a) The footnote numbers in the text must be placed after periods, commas, semicolons or colons. Example: The differences generated tensions:¹ Catholics and Protestants struggled for the territory.²
 - b) References to primary sources (whether written, iconographic or other) must indicate precisely the institution, series, document and date, the latter in the format dd/mm/yyyy (the same format should also be used for any other date indication). Example: Public Records Office, series T.70, Royal African Company, various, doc. 1545, Abson, Whydah, 04/12/1783. Following citations: PRO, T.70/1545, Abson.
 - c) Journal article citations. Example: Robin Law, *Ethnicity and the Slave Trade: 'Lucumi' and 'Nago' as Ethnoyms in West Africa*, *History in Africa*, 24 (1997), p. 215. Following citations: Law, *Ethnicity and the slave trade*, p. 212.
 - d) Book chapters. Example: Yvan Debbasch, *Le Maniel: Further Notes*, in Richard Price (org.), *Maroon Societies*, Garden City, Anchor Books, 1973, p. 145. Following citations: Debbasch, *Le Maniel*, p. 144.

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- e) Books. Example: Emilia Viotti da Costa, *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood: The Demerara Slave Rebellion of 1823*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 217. Following citations: Costa, *Crown of Glory*, pp. 203-204.
- f) Theses and dissertations. Example: Rachel Elizabeth Harding, "Candomblé and the Alternative Spaces of Black Being in Nineteenth-century Bahia, Brazil: a Study of Historical Context and Religious Meaning", PhD thesis, University of Colorado, 1997, p. 177. Following citations: Harding, "Candomblé", pp. 55-63.
- g) Citation of electronic and Internet resources. Example: Sarah Orne Jewett, "The Country of the Pointed Firs", (<http://www.columbia.edu/acis/.bartleby/jewett>), 15/08/2005 [date of access to the site]. Following citations: Jewett, "The country".

Papers that do not comply with these guidelines will not be considered.

By agreeing to publish an article in *Afro-Asia*, an author allows its publication in the paper edition of the journal as well as in the on-line edition, or in other non-profit websites.

Papers must be sent to: afroasia@ufba.br.

Poster Women

A Call for Poster Collections on the Feminist Movement

Zubaan

Zubaan announces the launch of an exciting new project— Poster Women. It aims to collect, document, publish and archive a history of the feminist poster in India.

The poster has played a crucial role in the history of the feminist movement in India, particularly since the early or mid seventies, the period that is characterised as giving rise to the contemporary movement. Many of the early feminist organisations in this current phase of the movement were born at that time: They grew out of the early left and peasant movements, out of the students movements led by Jaiprakash Narayan, and out of the politicisation of universities that began at the time. Much of this history of activism, or organising and mobilising, of the euphoria of the early days of activism, has been lost to the movement because organisations, particularly activist ones, are not good at documenting their histories. While some record exists in written works there is very little that documents the movement visually.

Some of us have been feeling, for quite a while, the need for a visual record of the campaigns that have formed so major a part of the movement. Virtually every campaign has been marked by the production of really interesting, sometimes colourful, always eye-catching posters. And yet, because the feminist movement has not been very good at documenting its history, all of the material that was generated in the form of posters and pamphlets has been lost, or is lying with groups and individuals in personal collections. Our idea is to document this rich history by putting together a selection of posters that were created for particular campaigns, and also some that are more general. We'd like to scan the posters, put them in digital formats, and then to organise a selection of them into an exhibition, and also to make a book of them, along with brief histories of the campaigns they relate to, and the story behind that particular poster. If we can find a home for them, we'd also like then to place these images, in digital format, in an archive, so that there is a permanent record of this valuable history. We've not yet begun to identify homes for the collection, but any suggestions would be welcome. The originals of the posters will, of course, continue to stay with the original owners— we're only talking of reproducing them.

This project aims to collect feminist posters in India, focusing on certain key campaigns in the movement as a first step towards documenting the history of the movement. Here's our list of campaigns, do tell us what you think:

01. The anti rape campaign.
02. The campaign against dowry.
03. The campaign against sati.
04. The campaign against injectable contraceptives.
05. The campaign against violence against women.
06. The campaign for the environment.
07. The anti alcohol campaign.
08. The campaign for better representation in the media.
09. The literacy campaign.
10. The campaign for sexual rights.
11. The campaign for political participation, specifically women in panchayats.
12. The campaign for Dalit women's rights.
13. General/miscellaneous posters (and many others including Human Rights, Chipko Movement etc.).

The project is important also because it fits in with the recent emphasis on visual history: The photograph, the visual image, the poster, provide at least as important a record of particular histories as official documents and oral narratives do. Visual history as a discipline is still young and among some of the histories which have been thus documented are those of the Vietnam war, of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, of the Students' Agitation for Democracy in Thailand, of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. Women's movements, by and large, have remained outside this focus, despite the fact that the histories of women's movements are intimately linked to other histories, particularly those of social exclusion and marginalisation.

Would you be willing to help with this? We hope you will say yes, for we'd like to spread this net as widely as possible. For the moment, we've identified the few campaigns mentioned above, but nothing is cast in stone, and if there are others you can suggest, as well as names of people we can contact for images that would be a big help. But also, if you have any posters that you think can form part of this exhibition and book, would you get back to us please, and as soon as possible. You could write/email/phone me (Urvashi Butalia) or my colleagues, Jaya Bhattacharji and Preeti Gill at the following address:

Zubaan, K-92, First Floor, Hauz Khas Enclave, New Delhi 110016, INDIA

Tel: +91-11-26521008, 26864497, 26514772

Email: zubaanwbooks@vsnl.net and zubaan@gmail.com.

Website: www.zubaanbooks.com.

Any other suggestions would be welcome. But do please get back to us and let us know what you think of the idea and if there is a way in which you can help. For instance, if you can contribute to the collection of posters, direct us to collections held by individuals, organisations and institutions.

Announcements

The First World Congress on Gender-Specific Medicine

Men, Women and Medicine: "A New View of the Biology of Sex/Gender Differences and Aging"

23-26 February 2006

Berlin, Germany

To send abstract online: <http://www.gendermedicine.com/Abstract.asp>

Abstract Deadlines:

Oral Presentation: 1 November 2005

Poster Presentations: 1 December 2005

Abstracts will be published in Peer Review Journal "Gender Medicine" published by Elsevier.

To sign up to the mailing list write to us at: gender@gendermedicine.com

A Labour History Conference in South Africa

Rethinking Worlds of Labour: Southern African labour history in international context

28- 31 July 2006

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Organised by the History Workshop and the Sociology of Work Unit at the University of the Witwatersrand.

The aims of the conference are to

1. Promote a transnational and regional view of labour history, with reference to southern Africa, and to compare the less developed and semi-peripheral regions of the global "South"

2. To reflect on the implications of the "first" globalisation of the 1870s to the 1930s for the "second" globalisation that started in the 1970s

3. To foster collaborative work between scholars, particularly those based in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The **online conference web page** contains more information, including a basic timetable, a schedule of registration fees.

<http://www.wits.ac.za/historyworkshop/conferences.htm>

You can pre-register your proposed paper, or panel, online here: <http://www.wits.ac.za/historyworkshop/prereg.htm>

If you have trouble registering online, please contact us for an e-mail or paper form.

history-workshop@social.wits.ac.za

History Workshop

University of the Witwatersrand, Central Block 44

Tel: 717 4281/2 Fax: 717 4289

E-mail: history-workshop@social.wits.ac.za

Postal address: History Workshop, Wits University, Private Bag 3

Wits 2050, SOUTH AFRICA

Core Faculty Positions

Water resources and Energy and Pollution

The Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Environment and Development (CISED)

The Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Environment and Development (CISED) seeks to recruit Core Faculty in the thrust areas of (a) water resources and (b) energy & pollution.

Qualifications: Candidates must be dynamic and highly motivated scholars, typically with a Ph.D., with a strong track record of academically rigorous but socially relevant research in the areas indicated above. They could be trained in any branch of either the social sciences or the natural/ physical/ engineering sciences or both. But applicants must have a strong interest in interdisciplinary research and teaching on environmental issues.

Responsibilities: Core faculty will design and conduct long-term academic, policy and action-oriented research programmes that address important issues in sustainable development. They are expected to contribute to ongoing multi-disciplinary projects and develop new collaborations within and outside CISED. They will participate in developing short- and long-term training/teaching programmes in environment and resource management. Seed funds are available for initial programmatic support. Core faculty are also required to engage in institution-building activities.

Appointments & Emoluments: Appointments will be at the level of Fellow (equivalent to Assistant Professor) or Senior Fellow (equivalent to Associate Professor). Appointments will be on a contractual basis, initially for a period of 3 years, followed by longer-term contracts. CISED pay-scales are competitive with other academic institutions in India. **Affirma-**

tive Action: CISED believes in affirmative action, and strongly encourages women candidates and candidates from other historically disadvantaged groups to apply. **About CISED:** CISED is a Centre of Excellence promoted by the Institute for Social & Economic Change, Bangalore. CISED's mission is to promote environmentally sound and socially just development by contributing critically and constructively to public and academic debates on issues at the interface of environment and development through rigorous interdisciplinary research and teaching, and by creating a dialogue with civil society. CISED faculty teach in the ISEC PhD programme.

Visit www.cised.org for more information.

Applications: Interested persons should submit a detailed curriculum vitae, list of publications, copies of 3 key publications, names & contact information of 3 referees, and a plan of activities for the next 3 years.

For submitting applications and further information, contact:

Dr. Sharachchandra Lele

Coordinator, CISED

ISEC Campus, Nagarabhavi, Bangalore 560 072, INDIA

Tel: +91 (80)2321-7013, Fax: +91 (80)2321-7008, E-mail: slele@isec.ac.in

Announcements

Visiting Fellowships

Interdisciplinary Research and Writing on Environment-Development Issues
The Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Environment and Development (CISED)

The centre is offering Visiting Fellow positions for persons interested in pursuing a writing project in residence at CISED for 6 months to 1 year.

Qualifications: Candidates from either an academic, activist, policy-making or practitioner background, with a strong record of work on issues at the environment-development interface. The proposed writing project must be based upon field data or experiences mostly already gathered, and must be related to the thrust areas of CISED, viz., forests, water, or forest-water-agriculture interactions, or energy and pollution. Complementarity with the ongoing activities of CISED and/or the interests of CISED core faculty would be desirable.

Responsibilities: The Visiting Fellow would be expected to be in residence in CISED continuously for 6-12 months, during which the writing project would be completed and its outputs ready for publication in various ways. The Fellow will also be expected to give some research seminars and public lectures as a part of CISED's academic and outreach efforts.

Emoluments: CISED's package of emoluments is competitive with that of other academic institutions in India. Exact fellowship amount would depend upon the qualifications and experience of the applicant.

Affirmative Action: CISED believes in affirmative action, and strongly encourages women candidates and candidates from other historically disadvantaged groups to apply.

Visit www.cised.org for more information.

CISED's Visiting Fellows programme seeks to bring to CISED persons from diverse backgrounds and experiences to enrich and broaden CISED's understanding and analyses of environment-development issues. CISED in turn hopes to contribute indirectly to the writing project through academic interactions and library resources.

Applications: Interested persons should submit a detailed curriculum vitae, list of publications, copies of 3 key publications, and names of 3 referees. Also required is a specific proposal for a writing project that clearly identifies the basis of the research, the nature of the analysis to be taken up, the likely outputs, and the links with CISED thrust areas, projects and faculty interests.

For submitting applications and further information, contact:

Dr. Sharachchandra Lele

Coordinator, CISED

ISEC Campus, Nagarabhavi, Bangalore 560 072, INDIA

Tel: +91 (80)2321-7013, Fax: +91 (80)2321-7008, E-mail: slele@isec.ac.in

Three Guest PhD Scholarships

The Graduate Researcher School of International Development Studies
Roskilde University, Denmark

The Graduate Researcher School of International Development Studies at Roskilde University, Denmark announces a limited number of short-term scholarships intended for PhD. students already engaged in a formal PhD. study programme, but who would be interested in pursuing part of their programme with IDS, Roskilde. A certain preference will be given to students from the developing world.

3 scholarships are available for PhD. students for a period ranging from 3 to 5 months. The scholarships are in the amount of DKK 6.800 per month and should cover basic living expenses. Travel to and from Denmark will have to be borne by the students themselves. IDS, Roskilde will, to the extent possible, assist students in finding accommodation, assist with visa requirements, etc. The scholarships are available starting February 2006 or soonest after.

Further information about the Graduate Researcher School in International Development Studies, including research priority themes, can be obtained at our web-site at: <http://www.iu.ruc.dk/GraduateSchool.html>

Enquire regarding next application cycle

Secretary of the School, Ms. Inge Jensen, House 08.2, Roskilde University, P. O. Box 260, DK-4000 Roskilde, Denmark.

Fax + 45 46 74 3033 Phone + 45 46 74 2005 (direct dial). E-mail: inge@ruc.dk or Director of the Graduate School, Professor Christian Lund (email: clund@ruc.dk)

PhD Scholarships

The Graduate School of International Development Studies
Roskilde University, Denmark.

The scholarships are open to university graduates or students whose graduation is imminent. The application must include a project description which falls within one of the Department's research areas (please consult the Department homepage: www.ruc.dk/inst3/IDS).

- Globalisation and Institutional Frameworks for Industrial Development
- Natural resource Management; Political Processes and Institutional Dynamics
- Political Culture, Conflict and Development

The application should be in English and include CV, documentation (copies) of examinations passed and a project description of maximum 8 pages. The description should cover the problem area to be studied, the research questions raised, the theoretical approach taken and methodological considerations as well as work and time plan. The project description and other material should be forwarded in three copies.

The scholarship covers a period of three years. The successful applicant will be asked to contribute 840 hours of work to the Department of International Development Studies.

Further information from the director of the Graduate School, Professor Christian Lund, (ph. +45 46 74 25 26/ email: clund@ruc.dk) and the secretary of the Graduate School, Inge Jensen, phone +45 46 74 20 05. (please consult the Graduate School homepage: www.ruc.dk/inst3/IDS/Graduate).

Enquire regarding the next application cycle

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