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Editorial

This year marks the Lincoln Bicentennial. Abraham Lincoln, almost more than any other man in history, is the face of democracy globally. And we take this opportunity to pay a critical homage to the principle of "government of the people, for the people, by the people." Perhaps, the ambiguities that many observers see in democracy today, particularly when viewed from a Southern perspective, were inherent in this man too. Lincoln could see democracy only from the perspective of his own location, and it was then easy for him to see democracy as inevitably the most developed in his own country: The United States, which he called a "favoured land". The sense of the unique and superior position was marked also in his faith in the Union, that allowed him to hold firm in the Civil War. The faith was so strong that Alexander Stephens, the Confederate Vice-President opined that Lincoln's devotion to the Union reached the levels of religious mysticism. And it allowed for the ruthlessness that this otherwise gentle man embarked on in crushing the opposition to the Union, which he viewed as "man's best hope".

This sense of superiority and its concomitant justifying ability of crushing internal dissension, of course, can be seen in a very different light in today's time of celebrating difference, and in a world increasingly torn by conflict. But the superiority is even more dangerous as it potentially endows its possessor with a moral mission to 'spread the word'. Thus, while Lincoln himself could think of only the moral power of setting an example as America's role in world politics, many of his successors have evoked this very notion of superiority to justify aggression. As recently as 2003, thus, George W. Bush proclaimed "mission accomplished" on board the USS Lincoln and, two years thence, quoted him to justify the regime change in Iraq. It is perhaps not so much the follibles of any one man, but that of a belief system that is premised on the equality of all, but falls prey to its own notion of superiority.

The first article takes up the effects of another such universalising claim-making phenomenon, globalisation. In continuance with our past few issues that have been carrying articles on globalisation viewed from varied standpoints, in this issue, Olivia Muza deals with it in terms of its effects on African children, and how it has made life even more difficult, if not impossible, for these children. The second article, by Mustapha el Hadji Diop, takes up the case of illegal migration among fishermen and how their livelihoods are destroyed not only by the policy towards illegal migration, but how they are forced to make such choices by the very forces that are then complicit in stopping their entry.

Radica Mahase, in her article about the health of Indian indentured labourers in the Caribbean in the colonial era shows up the criminal negligence of the planters in regard to the health of their workers. In doing so, she takes up various issues, from notions of health care to colonialism and the plantation economy to expose the plight of the indentured labourers, and those responsible for it. Thus, the two articles taken together help us to better understand migration and its conditions in different times, and allows us to see globalisation, operating at different times, or, perhaps to trace a pre-history of globalisation.

This brings us to our Special Feature, *Democracy in the South* that is part of our 'celebration' of Lincoln's bicentennial. Jishnu Dasgupta, through snippets from the state of democracy in various countries in the South, questions some of the notions of universality that are in-built in the metropolitan idea of democracy.   The second piece by Moses Khisa unpacks the category of Africa, showing how notions of the dark continent continue to afflict northern readings of democracy in the continent. He also shows the various ways democracy and its many disparate elements are negotiated by inhabitants of various African locations.

In the *Reviews,* section Percyslage Chigora analyses the problem of land politics in Zimbabwe and how it has effected the society and state in the post-independence days. Anindya Sengupta and Paramita Brahmachari reviews a film, *Dev D,* which is a contemporary take on the Bengali classic *Devdas.*

Hope you enjoy reading them!

Articles

Globalisation and its Silent Victims: Rural African Children at the Crossroads?*

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Olivia Muza

Abstract

This paper takes a look at how globalisation affects African children through the urge it produces to imitate idealised images from the first world. It shows how the condition of African children, particularly in non-urban settings, has further deteriorated in the globalised world. It analyses not only the processes that bring about such disastrous effects but also possible measures to counter them.

Introduction

Globalisation defined as transformation of local or regional phenomena into global ones has led to cross-cultural contacts, advent of new categories of consciousness and identities. This embodies cultural diffusion, the desire to increase one's standard of living and enjoy foreign products and ideas, adopt new technology and practices, and participate in a world culture. Yet, the increased interconnectedness hoped for and the idea of a homogenised world culture has been disrupted by diversity and difference. A paradigm shift in power relations, class formation and structure in the world order has been witnessed. Within nation states there exist an urban-rural divide, while at the global level, a gap exists between the third and first worlds. Difference revealed in representations, such as the 'rich and the poor', 'haves and the have nots', 'privileged and the less privileged' attest to identity formation and construction. Naturally, the desire to catch up and to fit in has been born. For the developing world, for instance, Africa and her populace, catching-up has been endorsed by commitment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The desire of rural children to catch-up and fit in the global culture is no exception. When I first met Phiwe[1] [twelve years] in her rural farm setting, it was her awareness of the 'exciting world out there' that seized the moment. Her description pertained to 'skinny and fair models, straight hair and make up, hip-hop music, tight jeans and boob tube tops, movie hunks and stars, Hollywood and the red-carpet...and much more'. Astoundingly, Phiwe had never set her foot outside her farm. Her envisaging and world-view of it was based on the public discourses: Graphic and video images she saw on her aunt's black and white TV and the newspapers and magazines she [the aunt] got from a friend. Nevertheless, Phiwe could not wait for her own breakthrough into this exciting world. Once that happened, she would never set her foot on the farm again:

> I would like to go out of the farm one day... far away from the farm... and I would not like to come back....

Based on this background, the major contention of this article is that children tend to have their own interpretation of the global culture/community. As shown in this article, there are contradictions between the imagined and the real world. How local processes affect the global and vice-versa, and the place of children in this seemingly intractable situation is the problem question. Therefore, how can rural children be prepared to make the right choices in an increasingly global world?

'The Dark Continent is still dark': Children in Africa and the case of vulnerability?

In 1878, Henry Stanley (1841-1904), a nineteenth century explorer of Africa, named Africa the 'Dark Continent', because it was not well-known and under explored.[2] More than hundred years later, the term is still relevant in highlighting the high level of misery of the continent's populace. In other words, the 'dark continent is still dark'. Africa still accounts for 24 of the 32 least developed countries according to the United Nations Human Development Index. Additionally, almost half of the population lives on less than $1 a day.[3] Africa continues to be marginalised by globalisation and liberalisation (increased integration among countries of markets for goods, services and capital, removal of cross-border impediments to the flow of financial services, trade, transportation and communication) even though tariff regimes have been lowered and free trade promoted.[4]

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* This article is part of a larger research on 'Childhood and Rural Livelihoods', a field of personal interest to the author.

1 In this study, Phiwe is a real subject and stays in the Ventersdorp area of South Africa's North West Province.

2 H. M. Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent*, Vol. 1, Courier Dover Publications, New York, 1878.

3 World Bank, *World Bank Annual Report 2006*, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2006.

4 A. Adepoju, "Regional Organizations and Intra-Regional Migration in Sub- Saharan Africa: Challenges and Prospects", *International Migration,* 39, 6, 2001.

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Poverty in Africa is predominantly rural. More than seventy percent of the continent's poor people live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for food and livelihood, yet development assistance to agriculture is decreasing. In Sub-Saharan Africa, more than 218 million people live in extreme poverty. Among them are rural poor people in Eastern and Southern Africa, an area that has one of the world's highest concentrations of poor people. The incidence of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa is increasing faster than the population. Overall, the pace of poverty reduction in most of Africa has slowed since the 1970s.[5]

Amidst all these problems, children in Africa have become a vulnerable group. In a recent report by Plan International, a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO), rural areas are declared unfit for children. 1,000 children across thirty African countries were interviewed and results indicated

> …an increasing divide between urban and rural areas: while urban children on the whole were relatively positive that there had been an improvement, rural children saw things getting worse not better. They talked of poorer health and education services as well as lower incomes. The children also spoke of their parents' apathy and of them "giving up" as a result of the increasing hardship....[6]

Furthermore, the increase in parental deaths and illnesses has rendered a new generation of households referred to as 'child-headed households' often overwhelmed by household responsibilities. This has increased cases of child-labour, child-prostitution, and street children in a bid to cope and survive. Yet, despite these problems, children remain invisible to policy formulation and decision making.[7] The Table below provides a summary of statistics on child vulnerability in Africa.

The Media as a Link Pin between Global and Local Level Processes
Much of the cross-cultural contact between the global communities is through the media. The global media facilitates translocal communities. Rural children in Africa are mainly exposed to the TV, magazines and books. These are the public discourses that shape their world-view on what life outside the rural areas ought to be. Unfortunately, in a globalised culture there are often imbalances, and the norms of good life and taste are modelled around the famous, elite and affluent.[8] Furthermore, life on the big screen is rehearsed and acted. It is a commercial industry governed by the profit maximisation principle. Sadly, not much is done to educate the innocent consumer (children) that some public discourses are highly commercialised and many times fail to portray the reality of life on the ground. Yet, children take life from this big screen as a given, and make real life choices based on it.
Emerging Identities and Consciousness
The fact of the rich, first world and privileged population in juxtaposition with the poor, third world and underprivileged population has led to convergent or sometimes divergent identity formations. Most rural kids like Phiwe feel detached from their rural areas regarding them as 'places where there is nothing to do'[9], 'cata-

Table 1: The Reality of Childhood in Africa

200,000 child slaves are sold every year in Africa. There are an estimated 8,000 girl-slaves in West Africa alone (sources: BBC, 5 October 2001 & Anti-Slavery Society).
About 120,000 African children are participating in armed conflicts. Some are as young as seven years old (source: Africa Children's Charter).   Children account for half of all civilian casualties in wars in Africa (source: Africa 2015).
One in six African children dies before the age of five. Most of these deaths could be prevented (source: Africa 2015).   Nearly one third of children in Sub-Saharan Africa are underweight (source: UNICEF).
In sub-Saharan Africa, measles takes the life of a child nearly every minute of every day. An effective measles vaccine costs as little as $1 per child (source: UNICEF).   Between twelve and fourteen million African children have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS (source: World Bank/UNICEF).
43 per cent of children in Sub-Saharan Africa do not have safe, accessible drinking water (source: UNICEF).   Only 57 per cent of African children are enrolled in primary education, and one in three of those do not complete school (source: Africa 2015).
For every hundred boys there are only 83 girls enrolled in primary schools (source: World Bank/UNICEF).

Source: Statistics available online at http://cozay.com/ [last accessed 13 November 2008]

5   http://plan-international.org/where-we-work/africa/publications [last accessed on 12.07.2009].

6   IFAD, 2008. available on http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/ [last accessed on September 10, 2008].

7   O. Muza, "Farm child, education and poverty: an elusive chase of missing links", Paper presented at the *Poverty Challenge 2007: Poverty and Poverty Reduction in South (Africa), India and Brazil*, Elangeni Hotel, Durban, 23-27 June 2007.

8   H. Teune, "Global Democracy", in *Globalisation and Democracy, The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 581, May 2002.

9   H. Matthews, M. Taylor, K. Sherwood, F. Tucker, and M. Limb, "Growing up in the countryside: children and the rural idyll", *Journal of Rural Studies,* 16, 2000, pp. 141–154.

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strophic and restrictive'[10]. The lack of satisfaction by children in their rural contexts is based on the constant comparative ideologies with the imagined better world. Within nation states, rural children tend to compare their rural areas with the urban areas, while urbanites tend to also compare their own lives with their global counterparts. Feelings of alienation are recorded. Migration of 'unaccompanied minors' from Africa in the hope of a better life 'out there' has been reported.[11]

Increased consciousness of children's real and imagined better world has further led to diverse identity formations: 'Same-Other' polarities and 'binarisms' are positionalities which situate these global actors as speakers or addressees of power. Furthermore, these variously facilitate or impinge on their participation. Within the nation states of Africa, for instance, there are emerging classes between the rural and urban children. Terms such as 'Salad' or 'Nozie' in Zimbabwe and 'Model C' in South Africa are used to portray an emerging group of modernised children. These children speak with a certain accent. Being able to do so dictates whether one will fit in. The dress sense also plays a part and certain labels qualify one to fit in the 'nozie brigade group'. On the contrary, rural children are viewed as 'others'. In Zimbabwe the term 'Strong Rural Background' (SRB), or '*Bana ba di plasi*' (farm children) in South Africa are terms used to denote those from rural areas. The SRBs and '*Bana ba di plasi*' are regarded as backward, lacking in fashion or style; and automatically they cannot fit in. Yet, these identities keep changing, and fitting in or catching up is itself an elusive process. The standards set by the media, are never static. Some aspects of identity are true in one season and irrelevant in another. In essence, one just has to keep reinventing oneself.

Towards a Globalised Childhood

The struggle for a globalised culture seems complicated and entails compromises and tradeoffs among the diverse populations. Ironically, those trying to fit in because they lack, have to do much of the trade off. They have to lose their own identity first and embrace the emerging identities. For rural children in Africa, there is the struggle to keep up with the Joneses, urbanites in their nation states as well as the imagined identities set by the media. The quest for a global culture opposes the UN Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 to ensure to every 'human the right to defend and practise his/her own culture'.   As discussed earlier, rural

children are exposed to poverty and vulnerability, which render them uncompetitive in the global arena. Their basic rights are being violated as in the absence of education, health, proper housing and shelter and many other basic forms of livelihood. The conditions of childhood in Africa exposes some definitions as abstract and irrelevant to the third world and rural children in particular. Childhood is thus a social, cultural, and legal construct. In the existing discourses Childhood is constructed as an object of concern, and such constructions are products of a particular cultural framework as shown below:

> Childhood is the time for children to be in school and at play, to grow strong and confident with the love and encouragement of their family and an extended community of caring adults. It is a precious time in which children should live free from fear, safe from violence and protected from abuse and exploitation. As such, childhood means much more than just the space between birth and the attainment of adulthood. It refers to the state and condition of a child's life, to the quality of those years.[12]

According to the Millennium Development Goals Report 2006, 'enhancing all childrens' education presents a significant challenge due to a large number of children who live in remote, rural areas of developing countries.' High rates of poverty in rural areas limit education opportunities because of demands for children's labour, low levels of parental education and lack of access to good schooling. Yet, Humankind owes the child "the best it has to give" according the 1959 UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child. Rural children in Africa seem to be receiving the worst humankind has to give. About ten million children in Africa live without facilities, mostly in towns as 'street children', the major cause being poverty.[13]

A Grassroots Approach to Childhood Development in a Globalised World

The above discussion shows that while both the rural children and urbanites strive for a stake in their imagined world, it remains an elusive chase against human reality. What they are chasing is an ideal world that they have constructed for themselves, but without actually being exposed to it. It is the world of actors and actresses, with the commercial goal of profit maximisation. The public discourses available to these children do not clearly spell out the actual kind of life in the first world. Yet, children are even migrating illegally in the hope of making it big in these new spaces. Yet, they are not fully equipped to make it in such a world. They lack the necessary skills and qualifications. Upon confronting

10 J. Davis, and T. Ridge, *Same Scenery, Different Lifestyle: Rural Children on Low Income*, The Childrens Society, London, 1997.

11 C. Watters, *Refugee Children: Towards the next horizon*, Routledge, London, 2008.

12 This UNICEF declaration is quoted in L. Mcnee, "The languages of Childhood and colonial policy in French West Africa", *African studies quarterly: the online Journal of African studies, 7, 4, 2004.*

13 P. A. Kopoka, "The problem of street children in Africa: an ignored tragedy", *International Conference on street children and street children's health issues*, Dar-es-Salaam, 19-21 April 2000.

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the reality of the imagined world, children find themselves in vulnerable situations. In actual fact, developed countries have problems of their own. The gap between rich and poor is getting wider in the world's richest countries— and particularly the United States— as children and low-skilled workers slide deeper into poverty. In a twenty year study of OECD's thirty member countries, children and young adults are 25 per cent more likely to be poor than the population average— with an even larger gap for single-parent families.[14]

At the local level, the role of authorities to guide and help children is of utmost importance. Grooming children in their local environments requires the local level actors to do their part, from households, communities, schools and the governments.

Households

Children should be taught to be able to separate the realities of life and the imaginary world. Parents need to supervise children about the various discourses that they are exposed to. Parents should teach their children how to use the information that they acquire from media sources and how they can, in turn, fit it in their local contexts. Instilling a sense of self-respect and personal acceptance are important roles for parents. Children should be taught to be aware of their own identities and resist wallowing in self-pity because of difference perpetrated by the bifurcated identities modelled on imagined identities. Children should be able to embrace what good they can learn from other identities but without necessarily becoming copycats and wannabes. After all, it is the uniqueness in this world that makes life more interesting. Children do not need to be slaves of globalisation, but globalisation should be the slave of children in teaching them about real life situations to become inspired and become their own success stories.

Communities

Local indigenous systems of knowledge should be available to the young generation. The communities that we live in normally shape our cultural constructions, particularly, children have to be taught about the contradictions between their local and global systems to negotiate relevant spaces where they can fit in.

Schools

Schools have the mandate of teaching and grooming the student as part of the child development role. The school curriculum should include globalisation studies right from the primary level of education. Normally, most children in Africa, particularly those from the rural areas, are not well prepared and exposed.

The Government

The government remains the legible agent for change in children's lives. The government must make sure that all the children's basic rights dictated by international protocols, national laws, and conventions are respected. The wide gap between the reality of children in Africa and what the international protocols proclaim as the norm and standard of life for children across the globe is amazing. Yet, there is also the question that should everything within the nation states be modelled on international, regional or local protocols? To what extend do these protocols harmonise or diverge? How do local actors respond to international ones and vice versa? At what levels of divergence or convergence will actors lose or gain? Perhaps the government has to come up with national standards, which create a sense of belonging and adherence to a common vision.

Conclusion

There is a growing interest among children from the vulnerable groups, particularly Africa, to become like their counterparts from privileged classes, either in the urban areas or global communities. The struggle to fit in and to catch up has been a slow process constrained by the reality of the situation on the ground. Yet, what they aspire to become like are ideal images, that are normally acted with the profit maximisation role. Children are caught up within these identities and sometimes end up making the wrong choices. What can the local level processes do to make sure that children are well-informed in a globalised world? This article therefore highlights the need for education at the local level processes to ensure that children are not carried away by their imagined world which is miles apart from their reality.

A child with a mudphone: Impossible dreams

www.wildlife-photo.org

Masai child wearing soiled western sportswear

www.media.photobucket.com

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14 OECD, "Growing Unequal: Income distribution and poverty in OECD countries 2008", Available on www.oecd.org/dataoecd/45/42/41527936.pdf [last accessed on 23 October 2008].

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Through the (Crackled) Looking Glass of Social Theory: The Case of Young Senegalese Fishermen Among 'Illegal' Immigrants in Spain

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El Hadji Diop

Abstract

No one can deny that today, illegal immigration to Europe through the Spanish Canary Islands lays bare the paradoxes and contradictions of European migration policies, notably the loose relationship that obtains between Schengen, as a transnational space, and tight, restrictive local regulations. What is seldom acknowledged, however, is the wide array of social configurations encountered among the migrants themselves, especially the young fishermen helming the *cayucos*. This paper engages with the managerial discourse of technocrats in their theoretical musings and ramblings on illegal immigration. I argue that instead of treating migrants as equally 'undocumented' with regard to social history, one has to inquire into the socioeconomic conditions making possible both the emergence of a new migratory trend in the fishermen communities along the coast of Senegal, and also the shift from a *vocational* fishing activity at the community-level to a *professionalized* fishing activity at the level of internal migrations. EU fishing agreements, UNCLOS and the inner social dynamics of coastal fishermen communities in Senegal will be the key coordinates in this analytical field.

Introduction

When asked about their 'suicidal' readiness to go through all the trials and tribulations of a sea journey in frail, crowded and supposedly unseaworthy *cayucos*, young Senegalese fishermen simply reply, in a sarcastic tone: "We're following our fish banks" or "We're just following the fishboats."[1] To ears not sufficiently attuned to the social reality in which these young fishermen live, this will inevitably sound like a Pythian oracle, and one could easily imagine a field situation where various candidates would try hard to crack the nut. Let us take three 'Western/ised intellectuals' who claim to bring their respective analytical or methodological discourses to bear on this phenomenon of illegal immigration: The journalist, the social scientist and the kind-hearted humanitarian. A reporter working for a mainstream newspaper or channel may reply that these sons of 'traditional' fishermen are, like all migrants from developing countries, just trying to legitimate their desire to set out on a journey to the Western promised land, in search of a better life– eliciting an enthusiastic nod– or a long-drawn sigh expressing utter weariness– from his implied readers, viewers or listeners, who are so concerned about Europe being turned into a *cour des miracles* for all the

misery, poverty and suffering in the world.[2] In the second case, an economist, say, will argue, in typical neo-Darwinian fashion, that in the new world order of globalisation these fishermen are ill-fitted to survive in an environment of fierce economic competition where mechanisation and industrialisation are the new watchwords. He or she will thus treat them as casualties, deplorable yet unavoidable, of this all-out neoliberal war, and perhaps, as a rhetorical flourish, will he or she mumble a few remarks about the need to 'enhance their capacity' to survive in such a demanding context– making thereby a thinly disguised allusion to the aid to development for economically 'backward' countries, still a cozy niche for the ever-growing legion of 'capacity-builders' from the West paid with the money 'loaned' to Third World countries. In similar fashion, our good-hearted, well-meaning humanitarian, generously helping these 'poor' souls landing on Europe's shores every summer like stranded whales on New Zealand's beaches, will place the burden on their victimisation and berate his or her country for failing to act humanely to stem the tide by providing accompanying measures likely to make developing countries more resilient in the face of a globalisation process they have never been consulted about

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1 The legions of illegal immigrants, this time as a *whole*, have for their part adopted the slogan *Barsa walla barsàq*, which means they will either go to Barcelona– from the Catalonian soccer team of the city where they will be dumped in mainland Spain after forty days in the Canary Islands– or to the other world (*barsàq* is a Wolof word designating the place where the souls of the dead will stay until Judgment Day). It is quite obvious that these 'suicidal' aliens are ready to go to extremes– but it is precisely where the researcher should go in attempting to grasp their action, unless the likelihood of having to question one's own embeddedness is too daunting.

2 As Edith Cresson was infamously quoted to say, "France cannot accept all the misery of the world." He certainly conveyed the feelings of the silent majority in Europe, back then in the 1980s.

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in the first place.

   All these answers are valid in their own right, and consistent with what may be termed the pathologisation of the non-Western: The clandestine immigrant is not only a legal anomaly, he is also anomalous in a cultural, medical, economic or whatever sense. Obviously, none of these potential riddle solvers would be a true heir to Oedipus– or Socrates, for that matter. Now it may be suggested that the anthropologist, as another type of social scientist, may come closer to, if not solving this conundrum, at least understanding it better, on account of the fact that he or she resorts to a form of objectification that is specifically grounded in *the social reality and system* in which these young fishermen live. Indeed, he or she could forcefully argue that these two quick-witted replies entail in a nutshell the whole history of the long-term adverse effects of fishing agreements between the European Union and West African coastal countries, including Senegal. One would be hard put to find statements in this vein or even slight hints at this crucial economic factor in the overwhelming mass of analyses purporting to grapple with this brand new form of illegal immigration by the sea. The economic causes of migration are duly invoked and insisted upon, but not so much because they shed light on the sheer human dimension of large-scale demographic movements than because, within an epistemological framework grounded in ethnography and its attendant skewed evolutionist presuppositions, the 'pursuit of happiness' is equated with the journey to the West: This is the ideological narrative that lies deep at the heart of all discourses on migration in the Western media.

   At the very least, one could expect from anthropology, given its specific focus on the internal dynamics of a human group, that when it comes to the phenomenon of illegal immigration, it would not only refuse to be the handmaiden of policy, but also refine its analytical tools accordingly– or forge altogether new ones. True, in many individual cases it would be very accurate to say– and easy to show– that reaction and action, structure and agency, social determinants and individual freedom are inextricably entwined, but the point is to cast the analysis in a larger *relational* configuration where the concepts take on a new meaning. In what follows we shall attempt a brief sketch of the intersection, the cross-disciplinary junction where that *wise* and knowledgeable anthropologist may situate himself or herself so as to better comprehend this *phenomenon*. Our main contention will

be that the fisherman-cum-illegal immigrant is a "forced re-settler" of a wholly different kind that has to be distinguished from all other types of migrants. Further, it shall become clear that there is an intricate set of correlations between three distinct levels of analysis: The social reality of fishermen communities contriving means of responding to the new reality of industrial fish boats encroaching upon their fishing areas; that numinous entity, the 'migration industry', and its unrelenting search for new investment opportunities; and, finally, the tough migration policies enacted by Western power blocs, in this case the EU.[3] We will further argue that, as a point of entry for the anthropologist refusing to play a mere ancillary role, the only valid parameters, indeed the causal links *par excellence*, should be the gradual transformation of the inner social texture and the concomitant generational rifts that partly account for these young fishermen's limbo state– for only once they are caught up in a labile, derelictional situation, do they become exposed to various 'pull factors' of migration and are thus willing to face the hazards of long sea journeys. A solid knowledge of the migration history of vocational groups in Senegal and of the country's social structure would be requirements in order to devise the right epistemological framework– something that Senegalese social scientists are in a better position to do than Western *apprentis sorciers* and intellectual *bricoleurs* of all kinds.

   Let us first try to unpack the fishermen's enigmatic statement that they are following the fish banks. Senegal, as many West African coastal countries with a long fishing tradition, signed fishing agreements with the EU in the late seventies (1979). The depletion of halieutic resources in the northern area of the Atlantic ocean, combined with growing concerns about the sustainability of fishing activities and the tighter regulation mechanisms implemented by "green" countries such as Norway, Sweden and Germany and some environmental pressure groups, led EU countries to seek new ways of meeting the ever increasing needs of the consumer-citizen that was emerging during the post-war period. The EU signed numerous agreements with both "First World" countries (Norway and Sweden in 1981; United States in 1977 and 1984; Canada in 1982) and "Third World" countries (Guinea Bissau in 1980, Guinea Conakry in 1983), but as always it was fairly obvious that the rules and standards of conduct to which EU was held varied widely in actual practice, although the recolonisation of the sea was couched in the usual *legalese* and inflated

3 It is certainly possible to find a common denominator between these three levels, and the post-war neo-colonial arrangement put in place after 1945 may be such a point of convergence, but this involves a high level of generalisation that may erase the specificity of these young fishermen's case– in exactly the same way as *insistent* references to 'globalisation' are more obfuscating than elucidating, and this whether or not one uses the concept in a very loose sense.

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rhetoric of universalism (humankind, community of nations, protection of life, etc.). The series of roundtables on a common legal framework for the exploitation and management of the sea, which was started in 1973, came to an end in 1982 with the entry into full force of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Thus the fishing agreements came on the heels of or coincided with a shift in international maritime law of far-reaching consequences.[4] However, we do not need to go into the particulars of the convention here, at the risk of being carried too far afield. It is enough to put things in broad historical perspective by pointing out that during this initial period, called the 'first wave' of fishing agreements, EU was mainly concerned about *access* to the resources, and UNCLOS, with its provisions for an Exclusive Economic Zone,[5] gave the means to legitimate any enterprise aimed at satisfying that need.

In the early 1990s, during the so-called 'second wave' phase, the emphasis was no longer on access to resources but on their *management*– a process involving the West African coastal countries. It was during this second phase that the rhetoric of 'partnership' was deafeningly trumpeted all over the West African coast, and states like Senegal were provided 'technical support' so as to be 'competitive' on the international market. Peanut growing, which for a long time had been the country's main export activity, came to be replaced by fishing– and fishermen were exhorted to move, away from small-scale activities, toward a large scale and export-oriented production targeting Western consumers– this was premised on the spurious distinction between subsistence and market levels, and as usual the local market and customers did not count, or it was pretentiously dismissed as an informal market in need of more 'structuration.'[6] Fishermen communities on the coast politely declined to make this transition, and thus most

of the new labour force working in partnership with the fish boats and in the local fisheries came from the inner areas of the three main coastal cities (Dakar, Saint-Louis, and Casamance).

The new reality that these fishermen had to contend and live with was totally different from the well-meaning and *bona fide* statements entailed in these fishing agreements.[7] EU industrial fish boats, as would be expected, did not proceed by the book in the exclusive economic areas– and we shall later see how this heavily impinged upon the fishermen's social systems. In the first wave of agreements, the boats caught as much as they could to ship them to Europe through Las Palmas – of course, one of the main reasons behind Spain's admission into the EU, along with Portugal, in June 1985, was that it would have to play a key role in the Union's fishing policy and shipment schemes.[8] They took more than they were allowed to and destroyed some of the frail catching equipments of traditional fishermen. More often than not, the local government looked the other way– occasionally it would *pretend* to control the situation and perorate about the integrity of the national territory as secured under international law, but ultimately it turned a deaf ear to the long list of grievances persistently presented by fishermen, who little knew that their 'sovereign' state was renting certain areas of the sea and, within a neocolonial and neoliberal arrangement, came to be highly dependent upon this source of foreign currency– mostly to pay the foreign debt, as it would quickly turn out.

However, what we are keen to point out here is that it was during this period that these beleaguered fishermen soon found themselves compelled to enhance their skills, both navigational and with regard to fishing practices. As they had to spend more days at sea to maximise their catches and sustain the 'competition' against industrial fish boats, they were literally mapping out the ocean and learning to better

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4   The relevance of Foucault's reflections on "governmentality" and the emergence of "biopower" need not be demonstrated, especially with regard to the obvious structural homologies between the micro-level management of the human body and the macro-level management of nature– but as a body that is also subjected to entropy and may not regenerate itself for ever, as it had been held for so long and as it became clear that there may be a heavy price to pay for the 'unsustainable' exploitation of its resources. See, Michel Foucault, *Naissance de la biopolitique. Cours au Collège de France, 1978-1979*, Gallimard/Seuil, Paris, 2004.

   UNCLOS is precisely one concrete exponent of this paradigmatic shift– and of course, it would be disingenuous to claim that this holds true for Western history only: After centuries of expansionist policies and openings of markets, everything hangs together in the contemporary postcolonial world, *including* the Western one.

5   See Part V of the document, available online at http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/closindxAgree.htm.

6   For some basic facts and figures on agriculture in Senegal, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agriculture_in_Senegal.

7   The agreements are renewed every five years (every two years in the initial phase, from the late 1970s until the early 1990s). In 2006, the last agreement (from 1 July 2002 to 30 July 2006) came to an end and Senegal decided not to renew it for four more years.

8   Ironically, that blessing is now turning into a curse, as Spain has become the point of entry of most migrants from outside the old continent. Even migrant workers from Asia (mainly Pakistanis) are transiting in Senegal, a predominantly Muslim country, and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

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cope with the vagaries of life at high sea for many days– thus responding to the situation as best they could.[9] This knowledge will be crucial for the migration industry: Once it became harder for traffickers to smuggle their clients into Spain through the Ceuta and Melilla enclave in Morocco, they had only one option left, and it was to open a sea route,[10] thus pressing into service a nascent portion of disenchanted young fishermen to whom it was plain that the paternal trade was no longer a reliable means of providing for one's family. The fisherman as *pater familias* was gradually losing his social aura, a fact that was not lost to those wily 'investors' in the migration industry.[11]

Because like its designated clientele, i.e., illegal immigrants, the migration industry is a nebulous realm that is often consigned to the space reserved for footnotes in most analyses of migratory movements, it is difficult to gain any insight into its *modus operandi*. The criminal nature of smuggling networks is well-known, as well as the rationale behind their investment in potential migrants: It is of a strictly economic kind. The market of illegal immigration yields ten billion dollars per year for Sicily alone.[12] Providing cheap workers of all kinds, including sexual, is what drives this parallel industry and keeps it alive, but the young fisherman is an 'odd fish out of water' in this context, for unlike unemployed yet highly qualified workers like university degree holders or low-skilled manual workers like carpenters and mechanics, the sea, as the most reliable of *natural* purveyors of resources, has always been his sole source of income and living, and thus he is, in principle, relatively free from vocational insecurity and anxiety. The Mali cotton farmers who, following the lowering of the prices of their product on the market, flocked to Morocco and spent all their hard-earned savings to pay the shady *passeurs* were in a very different situation, one that we do not have to describe at length here, as it is another well-documented case of unfair and downright hypocritical competition on the part of European and North American countries who keep subsidising their cotton farmers to further lower prices on the international market.[13] The formation of a specific group of migrants can always be traced back to a disruptive event in the realm of economy, as was the case with Senegalese immigrants moving to Italy and France during the 1970s, the so-called *Modou-Modou* and *Baol-Baol*, who all came from the peanut basin– at the exact same time when peanut was no longer the staple export product, a coincidence that has nothing 'strange' in it, one event simply led to another.

The migration industry has a tendency of cashing in on these pivotal events, and as the dynamic of globalisation keeps generating, collaterally, 'human waste products,' it is obvious it partakes of the same *economy* and thus, of a necessity that is eminently dialectic, will never lack market opportunities. The toughening of migration policies has been very effective in keeping illegal immigrants, predominantly from Sub-Saharan Africa and with occasional small Asian contingents (Pakistan), from entering Spain through Morocco. In the summer of 2005, the surreal documentary images of migrants bidding their time in the Moroccan wilderness or jumping over the high barbed wire fence, at the risk of cutting their hands and sometimes bleeding to death, must have haunted many quiet living rooms in the West.[14] In 2006, the success was turned into another failed policy, as the *Western sea route* was opened and scores of migrants landed on the Canary Islands– more than 19,000 arriving between June and October,

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9   For a concise, albeit biased, overview of the forms this response took, see http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/ EXTERNAL/ACCUEILEXTN/PAYSEXTN/AFRICAINFRENCHEXT/SENEGALINFRENCHEXTN/ 0,,contentMDK:21097402~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:461478,00.html.

10 The current inner social and regional dynamics on the West African coast are clearly impelled by the migratory waves to Europe, a fact that was not lost to the OECD 2007 report, *International Migration Outlook* : "The West African region is one of high mobility, particularly, as exemplified by movements from Guinea to Senegal, from Ghana and Niger to Nigeria, and from Burkina Faso and Mali to Cote d'Ivoire…. Some countries such as Senegal or Mauritania are becoming transit regions for migration towards Europe or America." (http:// www.ingentaconnect.com/content/oecd/16080157/2007/00002007/8107121e). Mauritania, before Morocco, is EU's main fishing trade 'partner' in the region, as its Atlantic waters are replete with fish species that the predominantly meat-eating population living in the desertic interior has no need of– unlike the Senegalese population, and hence the fact that Mauritanians poses no problem with regard to 'illegal' immigration.

11 To the best of our knowledge, there is no study shedding some light on this correlation between fishing and the perception of individual members within family structures. The fascination with the West, which enjoys an argumentative privilege for ideological, not empirical reasons, has little relevance in the way this social reality is constantly evolving.

12 See Boubacar Boris Diop, "Les nouveaux damnés de la terre", published in the Senegalese newspaper *Le Quotidien*, and also, in a slightly revised version, in the review *Africultures* based in Paris. It is available online at: http://www.africultures.com/index.asp?menu=revue_affiche_article&no=4491&section=rebonds.

13 See Aminata Traoré, *L'Afrique humiliée*, preface by Cheikh Hamidou Kane, Fayard, Paris, 2008.

14 Not to mention the repatriation policies in which Morocco and Libya, because of their strategic position, have found another source of generating foreign currency– and a geopolitical argument for Gaddafi as well.

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according to the official 2007 OECD report on international migration.[15]

What is really wrong with the migration policies of the EU? It is the simple fact that they are meant to address management issues and treat migration like a biological, nay, scatological activity: *How* to control and regulate the flow (the intake mechanism); *how* to refine and improve repatriation procedures for the surplus (the flushing mechanism, food intoxication symptoms); and *how*, above all, to deal with the contradictions resulting from the complex inter-relations between sector-specific needs, international humanitarian law and social policies at the domestic level (the constipation symptoms). It is well-known that illegal migrants exploit these contradictions, compounded in Europe by a dazzling array of different national immigration laws, and the broad spectrum of legal measures specific to each country.[16] Likewise, with regard to the fishing agreements, although they have come under sharp criticism from all sides, researchers and policy makers alike are still riding the hobbyhorse of management, and it has so far not occurred to them– and probably never will, given the current economic circumstances– that the root of the problem is the very presence of industrial fishing boats on the territorial waters of countries that are already at a great disadvantage in the foul scheme of neoliberalism. There are other factors involved, but they are secondary in comparison with the issue of foreign maritime invasion under the protection of a UN convention tailored to suit specific needs. This all sounds familiar, and we do not need to rehearse the usual attacks against capitalist imperialism and its contemporary avatars. We should rather come to the main focus of our argument, which is the young fisherman's riddle. What has led him to *cast* aside his nets, refuse to tread upon his father's footprints and agree to participate in a supposedly criminal activity?

The anthropologist is usually brought on stage when the human drama of illegal immigration is well underway and nearly irreversible. In other words, his or her analysis also partake of the managerial process, especially with issues concerning the integration of migrants into a foreign culture:

> By conducting in-depth, extensive fieldwork and participant observation among migrant worker communities, anthropologists can provide firsthand and detailed personal accounts of the lived experiences of migrants in ways that scholars in other disciplines cannot. By presenting immigrants as human beings with emotions, desires, needs, and problems, anthropologists can help the general public understand and empathize with their reasons for migrating, their motivations and dreams, and the difficulties they encounter in everyday life.[17]

To be sure, social scientists are key to identifying inclusionary and exclusionary mechanisms and of bringing their correctives to bear on the sociocultural systems under scrutiny. However, if it were to be conducted in Senegal, this fieldwork would reveal that some of these 'human beings,' before fitting into any of the categories used to lump them together, are originally sons of fishermen living in a social environment where they are supposed to take on the paternal trade. Once this 'conservative' social mechanism of reproduction and preservation is put in crisis, once the activity associated with the role model figure has lost its appeal and shows worrying signs of decay and ineffectiveness, once the father can no longer support his family through his gainful activity, then this economic crisis inevitably reverberates through the whole social edifice. Three decades from now no one factored into the equation the fact that fishing is, before anything else, part of a social structure, let alone expressed concern about the potential risks for *sedentarised* coastal communities whose migration history came to an end once they had reached the sea. This migration history was resumed in the summer of 2006 when the migration industry took the traffic to the sea and easily pressed into service young fishermen who, along with their fathers, had become seasoned sea travelers due to external economic pressures.

In "Refugees, Forced Resettlers and other 'Forced Migrants': Towards a Unitary Study of Forced Migration," David Turton argues that "unlike most refugees, forced resettlers [in this case those wronged by infrastructural projects] have no choice about leaving their homes and cannot entertain the slightest hope of returning to them".[18] Turton is grappling with the aftermath of the SAP era, from the late 1980s on, and one cannot hold it against him for devising

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15 "Irregular migration of Africans by boats to the Canary Islands became a matter of key concern in 2006, with about 19,000 illegal migrants arriving between June and October 2006 alone. Although this was only a minor part of total migration movements to Spain, deaths during the ocean passage and the unique destination point attracted much attention to the issue. This lead [sic] to the most extensive operation ever of the joint European frontier agency FRONTEX. An action plan for security in the Canary Islands has been approved by the Spanish government in July 2006 to increase, among other measures, controls around these islands." (http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/oecd/16080157/2007/00002007/8107121e).

16 See, Franck Düvell (ed.), *Illegal Immigration in Europe. Beyond Control,* Palgrave MacMillan, London, 2006.

17 Takeyuki Tsuda, "International Migration: An Increasingly Pressing Global Issue", *American Anthropological Association,* 19, 1, 2007, p. 12.

18 David Turton, "'Refugees, forced resettlers and 'other forced migrants': towards a unitary study of forced migration", *New Issues in Refugee Research*, *Working Paper 94,* 2003, p. 2.

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such a historically reductive conceptual framework. Our young fishermen are surely forced resettlers, but in quite a different sense, for if they fit the description, one will have to go beyond the reference to 'undemocratic' decision-making processes in 'developing countries' and spell out, loud and clear, the causal factor: This specific migratory phenomenon results from the incremental economic disaster wrought by nearly three decades of fishing agreements. One will have, further, to be comprehensive and adopt a truly 'holistic' approach, instead of merely, as here, paying lip service to theoretical decorum:

> Forced migration is a product of wider processes of social and economic change, processes that are normally referred to as 'globalisation' and which appear to be creating an ever increasing North-South divide in living standards, human security, and access to justice and human rights protection.[19]

The gap theory is old hat, and the shibboleths of security, justice and human rights as well. What these young fishermen have come to realise is that there is a chain of causality linking the decline of vocational fishing to the presence of industrial fish boats; that the latter ship back their huge stocks through Las Palmas, in the Greater Canary Islands, and return for more catches, further weakening their own socio-economic situation, indeed endangering them as a social species *tout court*– it is at this juncture they risk becoming an occupational underclass, and no longer a vocational group.[20] To subsume all migrants under the umbrella category of "forced resettler," while still maintaining theoretical presuppositions consonant with a Eurocentric outlook (the so-called "North-South divide") is precisely what Turton, to his enormous credit, is trying to avoid in his reflections on forced migration, issuing the finger-raising caveat that "we have to emphasize [forced migrants'] embeddedness in a particular social, political and historical situation." In contrast to most UN experts, David Turton never loses sight of this social embeddedness, and although one may suspect him of deliberately entertaining a misty confusion as to what he means by "refugee

studies," conflating the latter with migration studies– or subordinating one to the other– his formulation of what remains absent in the field of social research is quite fitting:

> … we should be focusing on forced migrants as 'purposive actors' or 'ordinary people', and this for two reasons, one practical and one ethical. The practical reason is that this is how migratory processes actually work. And yet research and teaching in the field of refugee studies has tended to focus on policy issues on the one hand and on the needs– physical and psychological– of forced migrants on the other. As Jeff Crisp has pointed out, there has been a relative absence of research on the factors that individuals, families and groups take into account when they make their decisions to leave their homes.[21]

In the case of the young fishermen who are among the *paterras* reaching the Spanish shores in a state of exhaustion and distress, this glaring theoretical gap is still crying out for a cogent formulation that would take into account, in a truly *holistic* fashion, the causal factors that they have long integrated, in their own way, into their *purposive scheme*, as they experience firsthand, more than their fathers did, the devastating long-term effects of these fishing agreements. Has the seduction of the iridescent crystal ball of social theories such a hold on the observer's eyes that he or she, inspite of the persistent claim to adopt a more comprehensive and reflexive approach, still cannot devise a framework that would bring the analysis closer to home?[22] The range of complexities involved in a phenomenon of global resonance such as illegal immigration is simply overwhelming, but instead of carefully sorting them out and drawing the correlative implications, it is perhaps more appropriate to follow these young fishermen's lead, i.e., draw a conclusion, instead of doing whatever it takes to keep the epistemological merry-go-round going. What we have here is an exemplary case of the confusion between corelation and causality. There is certainly a corelation between practically anything in this world of liberal colonialism, but one must resist the seductions of the intellect and refrain from

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19 Castles, Quoted in Ibid., p. 16.

20 These fishermen may be thinking in terms of responsibilities, but they *act* according to an interactional system of *response* to *problems* they are faced with– and do not waste time waiting for whatever 'ideological enlightenment.'

21 Turton, "Refugees, forced resettlers and 'other forced migrants,' p. 9.

22 Again, Turton, who apparently has a knack for relapsing into technocratic jargon after soaring high into insightful critical pronouncements, is a good example of this intellectual inability to withstand the gravitational pull of this insipid rhetoric of economic development:

> It is clear from the harrowing accounts of the journeys made by asylum seekers and economic migrants into the rich industrialised countries that they are prepared to take tremendous risks (of suffocation, for example, in container lorries and of drowning in crowded and unseaworthy boats) in order to escape the discomforts described by Bauman. From this point of view, the consideration of forced migration leads us, ultimately, to consider the gap between rich and poor countries, and the question of how far rich countries are prepared to go to close that gap, by means of development aid, trade reform and, crucially, the liberalisation of migration policies. (Ibid., p. 7.)

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investing these corelations with any explanatory power. Links of causality are harder to make out because they are less conspicuous than cold, hard facts and imply a genuine mastery of the concept of historicity: To corelate Third World pauperisation or 'conflicts' with the fishermen's forced resettlement and locate the roots of the problem in this sociopolitical corelation is obviously a great mistake; to trace back the formation of the causative factors to the fishermen's social history and to the post-war economic context requires more than just descriptive accuracy and intellectual flair, it requires an "awareness of simultaneous dimensions," as Rushdie would have it– although he refers specifically to multiculturalism, which is irrelevant here.

One can always provide insight and attend to what may be termed the rusty sanitation system of management discourse, but as Turton again strongly makes it clear, this procedure reinforces the migrants' otherness by treating "[them] as an undifferentiated mass– as molecules in a liquid. It de-personalises, even de-humanises them and thus makes it easier for us to see them as a threat, or even as enemies".[23] Objectification and subjectification are not, *per se*, necessarily flawed epistemological strategies, but when specialised knowledge and technocratic discourse are slanted toward one side so as to better conceal *unsettling* realities, including the interrogation of one's own situatedness as an intellectual whose research focus is "migration studies," then there is something out of joint in this institutional arrangement.

To the best of our knowledge, the young fisherman is still part of the anonymous and teeming mass of illegal immigrants who are, so one hears incessantly, pressing at the gates of the 'affluent West.' Their transformation into "highly migratory species,"[24] illegal immigrants to boot, is cast within this self-congratulatory narrative of flight from poverty and search for a better life, when from their own standpoint they have been forced into resettling by a predatory trade arrangement implemented to satisfy Western consumers. It is no retrospective illusion to ascribe the source of this transformative energy to EU fishing policies– for good and ill.

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23 Ibid., p. 10.

24 There is a deep irony in the fact that in the UN document (UNCLOS), Part V, which is devoted to the Exclusive Economic Areas, entails an article on "highly migratory species," meaning of course fish species. Are not these young fishermen treated like the superfluous fishes caught in the net and that are thrown back into the sea or dumped into waste bags? In both cases, repatriation and lumpen-proletarianisation in the urban slums of Western cities, their situation gestures toward the subtext of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea, its ideological undercurrent.

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Health and Medical Care of Indian Indentured Labourers inTrinidad:
Imperialist Contradictions, 1870-1917

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Radica Mahase

Abstract

From 1845 until 1920, when the Indian indentureship system existed in the British colony of Trinidad, approximately 147,600 labourers were contracted to work mainly on the sugar cane plantations. This article analyses one aspect of this labour scheme; the medical care provided to the Indian labourers from the point of recruitment/embarkation until settlement in the colony. It presents a re-investigation of the topic through the use of empirical evidence and shows the extent to which the indentureship experience was affected by health issues. It discusses the contract stipulations regarding health and medical care and the manner in which these were administered by officials and planters.

Introduction

The Indian indentureship system existed in the British colony of Trinidad from 1845 to 1920. During this period, approximately 147,600 labourers were contracted to work mainly on the sugar cane plantations. The existing historiography on Indian migration and diaspora is a comprehensive one. Seminal work by Brinsley Samaroo, Hugh Tinker, K. O. Laurence and Kelvin Singh amongst others, have examined various aspects of the indentureship experience from recruitment to settlement in the colony.[1] This article analyses one aspect of indentureship; the medical care provided to the Indian labourers from the point of recruitment/embarkation until settlement in the colony.

While historians such as Hugh Tinker and K. O. Laurence have examined the health of the labourers, this article seeks to reintroduce the debates on health and indenture.[2] It presents a re-investigation of the topic through the use of empirical evidence and attempts to show the extent to which the indentureship experience was affected by health issues through the voice of the labourers. It discusses the contract stipulations regarding health and medical care and the manner in which these were administered by officials and planters. Specifically, it shows that the colonial authorities simply did not view the medical care or health of the immigrant population as important and the planters did not follow the stipulations of the contracts. As a result, the Indian labourers were deprived of medical care and their health conditions deteriorated over time.

An inexpensive and regular supply of labour was crucial to the profitability of the plantation economy. Thus, once the labour supply was obtained, it was vital that the labourers be kept in relatively good physical condition so that productivity/profitability of the plantation economy was not jeopardised. Consequently, medical care and general health of the indentured labourers was one aspect of the indentureship system to which the planters and colonial authorities paid some attention. It must be noted though, until the end of the 1860s, the colonial authorities were more concerned with justifying the introduction of the system in the West Indies and did not pay much attention to the actual working of the system. While the Indian Immigration Acts contained various stipulations regarding the medical care of the labourers, mechanisms were not put in place to ensure that these were enforced. However, by the 1870s, there were protests by Indians in various colonies and by the Lt. Governor of Bengal which resulted in a more concerted focus on health of the immigrants in a number of colonies.

The "Coolie" Depot

At the "coolie" depot there was a discernible difference between the stipulations of the Emigration Ordinance and the actually working of the depot with respects to medical care and health facilities available to the intending

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1 David Dabydeen and Brinsley Samaroo, *India in the Caribbean*, Hansib Publishing Ltd., London, 1987; John La Guerre (ed.), *Calcutta to Caroni– The East Indians of Trinidad*, second edition, U.W.I. Department of Extra Mural Studies, St. Augustine, 1985; K. O. Laurence, *A Question Of Labour: Indentured Immigration into Trinidad and British Guiana 1875-1917*, Ian Randle Publishers, Kingston, 1994; Kelvin Singh, *Bloodstained Tombs: The Muharram Massacre 1884*, Macmillan Caribbean, London, 1988; Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery*, Hansib Publishing Limited, London, 1993.

2 See Laurence*, A Question of Labour* and Tinker, *A New System of Slavery*.

3 Once an individual was registered he/she was taken to a waiting area located in the district (sub-depots) and kept there until sufficient labourers were recruited. Once there were enough labourers they were transported by train to the main depot in Calcutta.

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labourers.[3] At the sub-depots, no attention was given to the medical care of the labourers and health facilities were more or less non-existent. In fact, the sub-depots were small, one room structures where both male and female labourers were kept, sometimes separated by a thin partition. Often there was a latrine located at the back of this structure; but often these were not constructed. This is not surprising considering that the housing of labourers at the sub-depots was meant to be a solely temporary affair.

However, the situation was different at the main depot at Garden Reach in Calcutta. At Calcutta, theoretically, all mechanisms were in place to guarantee the safety and comfort of the registered emigrants. An Act of 1885 stipulated that the Provincial Governor appoint a Protector of Emigrants, a Medical Inspector, and other government officials to supervise the running of the depot and embarkation of the emigrants. The emigrant was to remain in quarantine for fourteen days and the labourers were supposed to be given regular medical treatment by the Resident Medical Officer.[4]

Every Magistrate and police officer (of the rank of Inspector and above) was vested with the same powers as that of the Protector of Emigrants with respect to the supervision and regulation of the depots. They had the authority to inspect emigrants, to examine the state of the premises and the manner in which the emigrants were lodged, fed, and otherwise provided for. The Act stipulated that there must be cleanliness (both of the premises and of the emigrants) and sufficient accommodation for the largest numbers of "coolies" likely to be located there at one time, along with an adequate supply of water within a reasonable distance, and latrine facilities. If there were cases of contagious diseases then the medical authorities were to be informed and proper steps taken to prevent the spread of the disease.[5]

Not surprisingly, the colonial authorities at Calcutta often painted glowing pictures of the Garden Reach depot. In 1898, the *Annual Report on Emigration from the Port of Calcutta* stated that the sanitary arrangements at the Trinidad depot were satisfactory, the Agent had been most attentive to the personal hygiene of the coolies inhabiting them and have been prompt in carrying out any suggestions as to sanitary improvements made by the Medical Inspector. It also stated that "coolies" in hospitals not only had the constant attention of the Resident

Medical Officer but also the attendance and advice of the European depot surgeon who visited the depot two or three times a week. The food issued was found to be uniformly good, well cooked, and sufficient in quality, and generally met all the requirements. The water supplied was directly from the Calcutta main water supply and there was good sanitation as all latrines were properly flushed and cleaned, and deodorants and disinfectants were freely used in cleaning them. In addition, the hospitals were sufficiently supplied with drugs and instruments, the buildings were roomy, and the proper amount of cubic space was allotted to each Indian. All emigrants were vaccinated or re-vaccinated after arrival at the depot.[6] This positive image is expected, given that Indian indentureship was introduced under the watchful eyes of the British Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Society and Indian nationalists in India were also monitoring the system.

The legal stipulations were in fact not always enforced and often reports on emigration were exaggerated. Officials reporting on the depot conditions were biased in their reports and judged the conditions by their own prejudices (what they considered appropriate or sufficient for the emigrants). In fact, the Calcutta colonials were often criticised by their colleagues in the West Indies. In 1901, the Office of the Protector of Immigrants in Trinidad noted, "…the Department in Calcutta has not been doing its duty, and has lately sent immigrants, the greater number of whom are of such poor physique that they are practically sent here to die."[7]

Accounts given by indentured labourers show that the working of the system at the depot did not live up to the stipulations of the Act. Khedan Algu stated that "a man met them as they arrived at the depot and asked their name, age, sex, etc. and if they wanted to go willingly to Trinidad– that they could come back anytime they wished. They were then taken to the doctor who poked him all over".[8] Jankey Tiwari Maharaj spent nearly two months at the Calcutta depot and underwent a medical examination while Maharajee stayed one month and was never examined by a doctor. Munnay was seen every day by the doctor but boarded the Ganges only after ten days of staying at the depot and Mohan was examined and boarded the Chenab ship the next day.[9] Thus, quarantine rules were not rigidly enforced. Interestingly, every single Emigrants' Register for all the ships

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4 *Proceedings of the Government of Bengal in the Emigration Department, Revenue and Agriculture Department, Government of India,* 1885, National Archive of India (NAI). (Hereafter referred to as *Proceedings*.)

5 *Proceedings*, 1885.

6 *Proceedings*, 1898.

7 *Proceedings*, 1901, p. 795.

8 Shamshu Deen*, Solving East Indian Roots in Trinidad*, H.E.M. Enterprises Limited, Freeport, 1994, p. 231.

9 Based on interviews with some survivors of the indentureship system given by Shamshu Deen in *Solving East Indian Roots in Trinidad,* and John La Guerre in *Calcutta to Caroni*.

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that left from the port of Calcutta, contained a certification, signed by the Depot Surgeon at Calcutta, which said, "Certified that the above mentioned persons who have been examined and pass by me, are free from all bodily disease, that they have either have small pox or have been vaccinated and that they are fit subjects for emigration."[10]

Thus, in practice, the prevailing situation often differed greatly from what the colonial government stipulated and cases of various types of sicknesses were recorded amongst the Indian emigrants at Garden Reach. In 1898, for example, there were 139 cases of sickness– the main ones were fever (68 cases), venereal diseases (43 cases) and dysentery (seven cases). In 1906, there were 81 cases of cerebro-spinal meningitis, 47 of them resulting in death. In 1907, there were only 49 cases of cerebro-spinal meningitis but 36 of these did not survive. Throughout the indentureship period, the potential migrants were plagued with cholera, dysentery, diarrhoea, fever, measles, small pox, venereal diseases, pneumonia, bronchitis and other affections of the respiratory system.[11] In 1900, one official noted in the weekly hospital report that the fever, diarrhoea, cholera, measles, small-pox, syphilis, opthalmia, anaemia, dysentery, hydrocele and jaundice were the most common diseases found amongst emigrants on arrival at the depot.[12] Consequently, there was a high mortality rate at the depots. In 1883 to 1884, thirteen Indians died while awaiting embarkation in Calcutta and in 1898 eleven labourers died at the sub-depots in the Bihar districts. At the Trinidad depot there was an average death rate of 11.1 per cent or 111 per 1000 Indians in the 1870s.[13]

The Transportation of Diseases

The stipulated length of time of the journey was twenty weeks for a sailing ship and thirteen weeks for a steamer. For the majority of the emigrants, unless they were re-registering themselves, it was their first time on a ship, their first time travelling abroad, and maybe even their first time out of their districts or province. By the mid 1880s, laws were passed to govern the provision of medical care on board immigrant vessels. All ships had to be outfitted with some kind of medical services, with a medical doctor on board. Ships were obligated to take sufficient supplies to cover the length of the journey and emigrants were supposed to be given constant medical care.

The authorities felt that the number of cases of sick individuals and the spread of diseases could be curtailed if the ships were not overcrowded and the Government of Bengal recommended that the number of emigrants to the West Indian colonies be restricted to 350 in any one vessel. However, government policies were often lax with respect to shipping as checks were not carried out prior to embarkation to ensure that ships left the port of Calcutta with the stipulated number and there were many occasions where the law was actually bent to accommodate ships that could not follow this regulation for whatever reasons.[14] Consequently, overcrowding became the norm and those who disregarded this rule went unnoticed or if they were noticed, they went unpunished so that diseases were allowed space to develop and spread. Additionally, as shipping was geared towards profit maximisation, there were cases where sick individuals were allowed on board. A good example of this was seen on the Salsette. Captain Swinton noted that "An old woman died of cholera; she was rejected on coming on board, but eighteen men would not come without her."[15]

The authorities also attempted to maintain a healthy immigrant population by regulating the food served to the Indians on board the "coolie" ships and stipulated that all immigrants were to be given three meals (of good quality), per day. In reality however, Indians were rather suspicious of what was served to them and many refused to eat or ate as little as possible which made them a group of rather malnourished labourers by the time they arrived at their destination. For example, in 1902, ships provided a type of meat flavouring made from beef. As the majority of the emigrants were Hindus, they refused to use these and became suspicious of the food in general. Also, often the quality of the food was poor. In fact, throughout 1902, there were cases where adulterated ghee was used and a notice was sent from the Protector of Emigrants to the ships' captains advising them to exercise greater precaution against the source of supply.[16]

Health and Medical Care in the Colony

From 1909 to 1910, seventeen per cent of all adult labourers who landed in Trinidad were kept at the Trinidad Immigration Depot (located on Nelson Island[17]) before they were healthy enough to begin work. In 1910, the Sanderson

10 Statement recorded and signed in all Emigrants' Registers.

11 Colonial Emigration Form No. 13– Form of Depot Sickness Report, *Proceedings of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal*, General Department, Emigration, Calcutta, 1900, p. 166.

12 Colonial Emigration Form No. 14– Form of Weekly Hospital Report, Ibid.

13 *Proceedings*, 1900, p. 525.

14 *Proceedings*, 1868, p. 145.

15 Captain and Mrs. Swinton, *Journal of a Voyage with Coolie Emigrants from Calcutta to Trinidad*, Alfred W. Bennett, London, 1859.

16 *Proceedings*, 1903.

17 A very small island, North-West of Port of Spain, in the Gulf of Paria.

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Committee noted that:

On the arrival of any immigrant ship, the Protector, with a Medical Officer, shall inspect such ship and report to the Governor. The sick, if any, are taken care of and every immigrant shall be fed and lodged until allotted to an employer, and on proof of any ill-treatment during the voyage or failure to supply sufficient food and water the master of the ship shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding 100*l*.[18]

Thus, the bundles and blankets of the *girmitiyas* were fumigated and they were quarantined so that they could regain strength and prevent the spread of diseases that might have been transported from India. They were examined by a medical doctor and then transported by small boats to Port of Spain. Those who were very sick were taken to the Colonial Hospital in Port of Spain, those who only needed rest were kept at the Depot and healthy ones were sent to estates.

As the plantation system was geared towards profitability and profit maximisation, a sick and ineffective labouring population would hinder the productivity of the labour force immensely. This was one of the primary motivations behind giving the Indians time to recuperate and re-orientate themselves at the Nelson Island depot. If diseases were transported from India these would affect the plantation economy so policies had to be implemented to curb this as far as possible. In addition, if the labour force needed medical treatment of any sort then the cost of running the plantation would be higher and profitability affected. With this in mind, the general physical health and medical care of the Indian indentured labourers gained the attention of the colonial authorities and planters in Trinidad.

Consequently, the Indian Immigration Ordinance contained comprehensive stipulations regarding the provision of medical facilities by the plantations and health in general. Indeed, once the immigrant was allotted to a plantation, that plantation was responsible for the provision of accommodation, rations and medical care. According to the Ordinance, "every employer must provide suitable dwellings for the indentured immigrants, to be kept in good order and repair, and well drained and cleared around for a sufficient space."[19] The Medical Officer of the District was supposed to inspect the sanitary conditions of the accommodation provided and report to the Surgeon-General and the Protector of Immigrants. If the employer failed to provide suitable accommodation then the Protector, with

the sanction of the colonial government, had the authority to remove all or any immigrants from the specific plantation and transfer them to other employers to complete their terms of indenture. The immigrant as well, was responsible for keeping his dwelling and a space of twenty feet on either side of it clean. If the labourer did not follow this regulation, s/he could be fined up to 1*l.*

The law stated that no immigrants were to be allotted to a plantation which did not have a hospital.[20] The Protector along with the Surgeon-General was required to inspect and direct the proper construction, ventilation and drainage of the hospital and grounds before he certified any hospital. The employer was required to employ at least one qualified dispenser or principal sick nurse and any other assistants that the Government medical officer may require for the proper care of patients. These individuals could be replaced upon the report of the medical officer anytime.

Added to this, there was a stipulation that the Government officer appointed to each district was to visit each plantation in his district which employed Indian indentured immigrants at least twice every week and on a more frequent basis in cases of emergency, or when he was called for special reasons. On every such visit, he was supposed to sign the Case and Hospital register. He was also required to visit the yards and dwellings on the plantation from time to time, he could order immigrants to be treated in or out of hospital and was required to report cases of neglect by the employer.[21] The Government Medical Officer was also responsible for the proper working of hospitals and the supply of bedding, clothing, medicines and appliances.

In reality, diseases and various cases of sickness were prevalent throughout the indentureship period on almost every estate in the colony. In 1908, 39 per cent of all the deaths in the Chaguanas Ward were those of Indians while 64 per cent of all deaths in the hospitals were those of Indians. During this time, the main diseases were malarial and typhoid fever, dysentery, bronchitis, pneumonia, ankylostomiasis and tuberculosis. In 1908, Indians accounted for 55 per cent of all malaria cases and hundred per cent all cases of ankylostomiasis.[22] In the Usine St. Madeline Sugar Company eleven per cent of labour time was lost through sickness. In the estate of the Colonial Company at Brothers and Williamsville, 33 per cent of the estate's total male adult immigrant population failed to earn the minimum wage of

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18 CD. 5192, *Report of the Committee on emigration from India to the Crown colonies and protectorates*, Great Britain. June 1910, p. 125. (Hereafter referred to as *Sanderson Report*.)

19 *Sanderson Report*, p. 125.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., p. 126.

22 Ibid., p. 135.

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$43.80 by the end of 1908, because of the large number of cases of sickness. The District Medical Officers for this estate noted that the chief diseases were malarial fever and ground itch which rendered 25 per cent of the male adult immigrants as either out-patients or confined to the hospitals and therefore unproductive.

Generally, the Indian indentured population was a rather unhealthy one and various factors combined to make it susceptible to diseases and to maintain its level of enfeeblement. First, the sanitary conditions on the plantations were not conducive to healthy living. The labourers were accommodated in barracks– wooden structures that had been used to house African slaves. The general perception amongst the colonial authorities was that the accommodation provided was more than comfortable and sufficient. Hence, Surgeon D. W. D. Comins noted in 1873 that "Some of the barracks and cottages for coolies on the Colonial Company's estates are the best in the West Indies, and may be taken as models of comforts and suitability. They consist of two rooms…, well raised above the ground… and are well ventilated and lighted."[23]

latrines, most of them were lacking any sort of facilities for personal hygiene. The estates in Palmiste and Phillipine, for example, were clean and airy, comfortable and dry but at the same time, they did not have any latrines and animals occupied the space underneath the barracks.[24]

Secondly, there was a serious inadequacy in the medical care provided to the indentured labourers. The number of doctors was always too low (in relation to the population) and the work of the Government Medical Officer was simply not sufficient to deal with the labourers' medical problems. Although the Indian Ordinance stipulated that the Government Medical Officer should visit each plantation in his district at least twice a week, there were very infrequent visits on some plantations. In 1901, two plantations– Verdant Vale in Arima and Rio Claro in Poole District, were given special permission for one visit per month as they were located a day's journey away from the District Medical Officer.

When the medical officers did visit the plantations, and the sick labourer was not at the hospital, it was hardly likely that the officer visited them in their barracks.
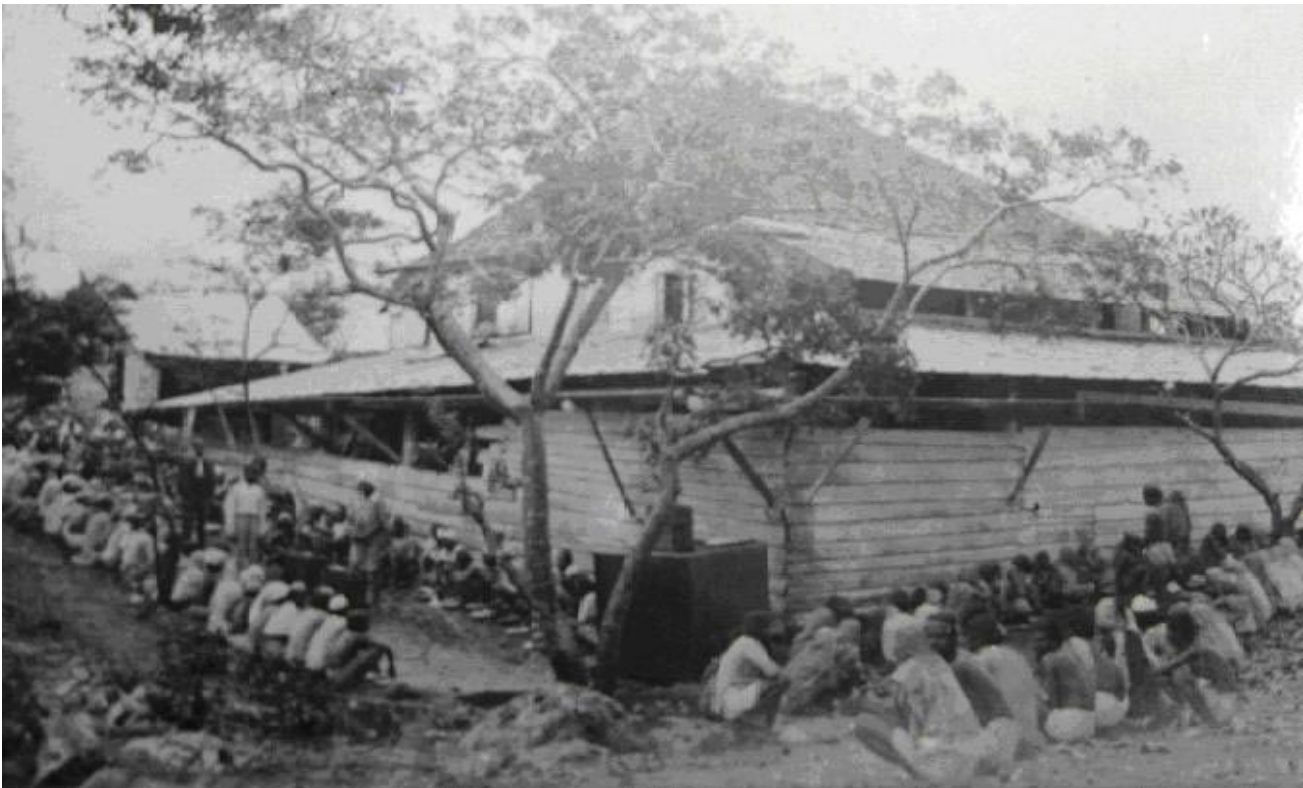

Photo 1: Newly Arrived Labourers at Nelson Island, National Archives, Port of Spain.

The barracks were in fact, cramped spaces inhabited by ridiculously large numbers of labourers. Although each barrack was supposed to accommodate a family or two to three single persons, normally this was the minimum rather than the maximum number. The labourers almost always kept livestock under the barracks and this made the entire living space a very foul, unsanitary one. While some of the barracks had

The hospitals were insufficient in number and unequipped to deal with cases of sickness and did not assist much in alleviating the problems associated with the health of the labourers to any significant extent. Regular checks were not carried out to enforce the law and to guarantee that hospitals were kept in excellent conditions. Consequently, some hospitals were totally filthy and/or dilapidated. For example, the hospital at

23 D. W. D. Comins, *Note on Emigration from India to Trinidad*, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1873.
24 Ibid., p. 36.

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Rivers Estate, Diego Martin was "a single roomed, leaky, wooden shack, with seven broken stretchers and two torn mattresses; the overseer, who knew nothing of pharmacy, dispensed the drugs".[25] Conditions were so filthy in some hospitals that sick Indians simply refused to stay in the hospitals. The situation got so terrible that a law was passed which imposed a jail sentence of three months on any immigrant who ran away from a hospital. Comins observed that, in Trinidad in 1873:

> On some estates sick coolies are allowed to remain in their huts and only appear at hospital on the day of the medical officer's visit…. On one estate I found that cases of that most easily communicable and terribly loathsome, if neglected, disease "yaws" (framboesia tropicum) were not kept in hospital and were allowed to mix freely with the rest of the resident population.[26]

Conclusion

This article shows that the reality of the situation with respect to the health and medical care of the Indian indentured labourers was indeed very different from what the law provided for from the time of registration at the sub-depots to the point of settlement on the plantations in Trinidad. Sanitary conditions were so poor that the immigrant population and those residing in their vicinity were usually exposed to diseases. The poor accommodation facilities, the lack of latrines and the sharing of space with various animals presented almost ideal conditions for the rise and spread of diseases. As Bridget Brereton noted, "there were few cases of the extreme neglect of the immigrants' health needs but generally, an unsuitable diet, poor sanitation, overcrowding, bad water, and endemic diseases made the Indians a sick group."[27]

Photo 2: Old Colonial Hospital at Nelson Island. Photo taken by Radica Mahase

25 La Guerre, *Calcutta to Caroni*, p. 25.

26 Comins, *Note on Emigration from India to Trinidad,* p. 48.

27 Bridget Brereton, *A History of Modern Trinidad 1783-1962*, Heinemann, London, 1981, p. 25.

Across the South

History of Sexualities and Modernities in the Global South:
SEPHIS Methodologies Training and Peer Review Workshops in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (19-29 September 2008) and Cairo, Egypt (1-8 May 2009)

Hardik is presently a Ph. D. fellow at the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University, Kolkata. He is also working on building an archive about the visual cultures of Bengali urban middle-class women in collaboration with the India Foundation for the Arts. A SEPHIS fellow under the History of Modernity and Sexualities in the Global South, he has published articles and translations on women's issues, gender and post-structuralist philosophy. Apart from these, he is into graphics and architectural photography.

Hardikbrata Biswas

When we were driven out of the Galeao International Airport in Rio (a few participants, trainers and SEPHIS members have already arrived the day before) towards our Hotel in the wee hours of 20 September 2008 a cold front had started to blow from the Copacabana and Ipanema coastline. Barely after a few hours of sleep, all of us had gathered in the conference room at the Mar Palace Copa Cabana Hotel at 9:30 in the morning.

Since April 2008, SEPHIS with funding support from the Ford foundation has started a programme on Sexualities and Modernities. Samina (Pakistan), Rajeev Kumaramkandath (India), Nitya Vasudevan (India), Maria de Fatima Valdivia del Rio (Peru), Musa Sadock (Tanzania), Huang Yingying (China), Dr. Iman Al-Ghafari (Syria), Diego Sempol (Uruguay), Hardik Brata Biswas (India) and Dr. Basile Ndjio (Cameroon) were selected as grantees under this programme. The ten day training workshop was a beginning where all the grantees were expected to present and discuss with fellow researchers and participate in a series of talks and lectures about research methodologies, all to encourage the formation of a South-South network on the history of sexualities.

The workshop was hosted by The Latin American Centre on Sexuality and Human Rights (CLAM) and Institute of Social Medicine, State University of Rio de Janeiro (IMS/UERJ). After a brief inaugural by Horacio F. Sivori (CLAM) and Shamil Jeppie and Michiel Baud (Co-Chairs, SEPHIS), work began with a sociogram by Saskia E. Wieringa, one of our trainers and the Director of the International Information Centre, an archive of the Women's Movement and professor at the university of Amsterdam. Sanjay Srivastava, the other trainer, is a social-anthropologist. He is currently Professor of Sociology at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University. Saikh Imtiaz, Coordinator of this programme and a member of the faculty at the Department of Gender and Women's Studies, Dhaka University, Bangladesh, closely followed the Workshop and specially chipped in about the importance of themes and policy dialogues as part of the grantee's research.

The working hours from 9.30 in the morning till 4.45, (a few days even beyond that) did not seem a heavy task mainly due to the three sections in which the workshop was divided. It was expected of the participants that they will enhance their understanding of the theoretical and methodological aspects of sexuality research by participating in lectures in the first section; in the second bloc their main task would be to fine tune the objectives and methodologies of their individual research projects through peer reviews and group work whereas the last block was designed to develop strategies for addressing policy issues while identifying possible major issues or themes out of their proposed research projects. A set of readings ranging from Jeffrey Weeks, Vinh-Kim Nguyen to Judith Farquhar was circulated to the participants well ahead of the Workshop to get the basics right. Each session in the workshop (mostly lectures) was backed up by a few articles/chapters from the set of readings. Before going into the trainer's lectures and special lectures, it will be helpful if we take note of the working titles of the proposals that were presented in the workshop. It uncovers the diverse nature of sexualities research happening in the global South.

Rio Session I

The following are the titles: Permissive and Prohibitive Sexual Practices for the Spread and Control Of Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Mbozi District, Tanzania, 1920-2005 (Sadock); Necessary Displacements: Understanding the Law's Engagement with 'Obscene' Text and Practice (Vasudevan); Constructing Tribal Female Sexuality: Role of Imperialism, State, and Pukhtunwali in the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), Pakistan (Samina); The Discursive

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Formation of Sexual Subjects: Sexual Morality and Homosexuality in 21st Century Keralam (Kumaramkandath); From the Obscene to the Pornographic: The Case of the Bangla Print Pornography (myself); Sexual Rights in Transition. Gay/Lesbian Movements and Democracy in the Southern Cone (Sempol); The Lesbian Existence in the Arab Cultures: Historical and Sociological Perspectives (Al-Ghafari); Al patriotismo de las más sensibles. Sensitive Sex, Patriotic Sex. Gendering the Peruvian Nation, Lima, 1820-1850 (del Rio). Each working day had two to three participants' proposal presentation followed by intense discussion and comments from peers and trainers.

Wieringa had five scheduled lectures including one public lecture. Topics on which she spoke were Essentialism and Biological Determinism; Sexuality and Identity Politics; Areas for Policy Intervention; Oral History and Methods of Data Collection in Sexuality Research; Constructivism and Cultural Determinism and Intersex in Asia: From Sacred Gender to Social Stigma. Srivatsav's topics included Methodological Aspects of Sexuality Research; Tupperware Sexuality: Consumption; Morality and the Search for a Controllable Modernity; Sexuality and Identity Politics: Foucault and Butler; Sexuality, Gender and Identity Politics: South Asian Perspectives. Saikh Imtiaz and Srivatsav did a presentation on Theoritical Framework Identification of Areas for Comparative Analysis and Selection of Issues for Policy Advocacy. Participants were divided into groups on the basis of the affinity of their research topics and they did short presentations. For instance, I was in the group 'Constructions of Hetero-normativity in a Post-colonial Context' with Kumaramkandath and we tried to single out a common thematic in our research and talk about it. It also helped in a way the SEPHIS goal of networking.

Special lectures were mostly public lectures held at CLAM. These were aimed at gaining comparative perspectives and showcasing the regions' researches in sexuality. Jane Russo, Associate Professor at the Institute of Social Medicine, State University of Rio de Janeiro, lectured on Psychiatry and the Medicalisation of Sexuality. The Symbolic Geopolitics of Syphilis was the topic for Sérgio Carrara's presentation. He is an Associate Professor at the Institute of Social Medicine, State University of Rio de Janeiro and General Coordinator at CLAM. Fabiola Rohden, Associate Professor at the same institute spoke on The Construction of Sexual Difference in Medicine. Horacio S. Sivori, Regional Coordinator at CLAM talked about Sexual Identity and Militant Identity: Models of Political Representation in the Origins of GLTTB Activism in Argentina. Participants interacted with the presenters and the students of the Rio State University who were also there at the day-long proceedings. While Jeppie, Baud and Wieringa

left half-way through the workshop, discussions and review of proposals including critical and technical suggestions to improve the final outcome of the research (the paper) went on.

Fabiola Rohden at the Rio State University

The fantastic city; a completely different Southern cityscape from the Indian Metropolis where I come from, meeting fellow grantees and learning from their experiences and scholarship, municipal election campaigns in the city, excellent Brazilian and continental cuisine, strolls up and down Copacabana beach, lesbian bars, Samba places, urban beaches, a trip to the Corcovado peak where the monumental Christo Redento looks down on Rio, a ship ride to the island of Ilha de Paqueta, bookshops, pubs, metro rides to downtown and scores of activities did not let us slow down after a long day's work. By the end of the Workshop we have at least tried to achieve most of the expected outcomes listed in the flyer:

- To tighten up accepted research proposals for ensuring comparative nature of the research projects if possible.

- To develop insights into the theoretical aspects of sexuality research.

- To enhance researchers' understandings on the methodological aspects of sexuality research.

- To make the participants familiar with the existing literature on sexualities from a critical perspective.

- To mature future planning for ensuring network activities among the researchers.

- To identify key themes/issues/problems to be addressed through policy advocacy locally/regionally/globally as outcomes of the research findings.

Other than these, a list of dates for submission of drafts and policy papers was drawn up by Imtiaz and was generally accepted by the participants with a few modifications as part of future planning. As scheduled, we were again to meet in 2009 somewhere in the Global south to attend a peer review of the papers that indi-

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vidual grantees are supposed to contribute to SEPHIS as part of the programme.

So when the invitation for the Cairo Workshop in collaboration with The Cynthia Nelson Institute for Women and Gender Studies at the American University in Cairo reached via e-mail, I was thinking more about the city than the Workshop itself. Just before leaving from Rio we had informally been discussing possible places where this Workshop can be organised. Names that popped up ranged from Casablanca to Bali! Seven months had elapsed since the Rio Training Workshop and things seemed to be more serious with supervisors being assigned to groups of grantees and approaching deadlines. Along with Jeppie, Sivori, Wieringa, Baud and Imtiaz we had with us Marina de Regt, Coordinator, SEPHIS. She had worked extensively on development issues in Middle East especially in Yemen and was instrumental in bringing the group to Cairo.

The Cairo Peer Review Workshop spanning from 1-9 May 2009 was divided into two phases. 2-4 May was for the peer review. 6-7 May was SEPHIS/IGWS Workshop at the same venue of Hotel Flamenco on the Nile, in the bureaucratic neighbourhood of Zamalek in Cairo while 5 May was dedicated to excursion. The workshop was inaugurated by Shamil Jeppie, who emphasised on more participation in SEPHIS activities from this part of the world and Martina Reiker, Director, IGWS, AUC. The format for the review was that papers were circulated earlier and there was a discussant for each paper albeit draft from the grantees. The schedule for per review went as following– Vasudevan, discussant: myself; Samina, discussant: Vasudevan; Al-Ghafari, discussant: Sempol; Kumaramkandath, discussant: del Rio; del Rio, discussant: Al-Ghafari; Sempol, discussant: Sadock; myself, discussant: Ndjio; Ndjio, discussant: Kumaramkandath; Sadock, discussant: Samina; and Abel Sierra Madeiro's (Cuba) proposal presentation as part of the short new grants under this programme. Other new grantees have met in a training workshop in Dhaka, Bangladesh in March 2009. Discussions and suggestions followed on thematic and on format of the papers where supervisors, coordinator and Reiker joined in with their expertise. Jeppie gave a special lecture on academic writing and on the techniques of publishing which benefited many of us.

Cairo Session in Progress

Apart from a quite intense round of peer review and presentations, the city of Cairo had many surprises for us from snailing traffic situa-

tion, to the old Kahn El-Khalili market, the Al-Azhar Mosque, the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, where many of us including me had to stay clear from the Royal Mummies Room because of extravagant admission charges (!), Sheesha (water-pipe) joints and fantastic koftas. On the day of the excursion on 5 May, the team went to visit three NGOs in and around Cairo city. They were El-Shebab, noted for its involvement with sexuality related projects, especially in Cairo's informal neighborhoods. The next organisation that we visited was El Karma, whose development division works with UNAIDS on HIV Aids community media education. The third one was the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights which is a rights and awareness based organisation with a focus on access to public and legal structures. The SEPHIS team discussed with them various possibilities of collaboration and also talked about their on-going projects and outcomes. On the same day, there was the night trip to the Giza Pyramids for the sound and light show. We got late and were in for the Italian version of the attractive presentation with the Sphinx in the foreground.

6 May started with a three hour round table with the topic Towards Sexuality Studies in the Middle East Region. The following session titled Sexuality Research in Contemporary Egypt: Young Scholars Showcase featured presentations by Yasmine Rifaat on Sexuality and the State in Egypt; Nadia Ilahi whose topic was Beyond Moustaches and Circumcision: Harassment as Gendered Performance and a Dislocation of a Hegemonic Masculinity; Yasmine Khalifa talked about Tube Conversations and Yaqeen Fouad presented on the topic In Quotation: Homosexuality and the State in Egypt. Later an open discussion was headed by Horacio titled Egypt in Conversation with Sexuality Studies in the Global South. The concluding day of the Workshop had presentations by Wieringa on Rethinking Sexuality and the Politics of Rights while Mulki Al Sharmany, Research Professor, AUC presented on Narratives of Marriage: Egyptian Personal Status Law and Ray Juredini, Director, Centre for Migration and Refugee Studies, AUC talked about Sexuality and the Servant. The last session of the Workshop was an open discussion on Sexuality Studies and its Features in the Global South. The discussion leader for this session was Imtiaz. As concluding notes to the peer review workshop, both de Regt and Imtiaz summed up various points and thanked the hosts. As I packed my bags and fellow grantees began to get on to taxis bound for the airport (a few had already decided to stay back for a longer holiday), amidst rounds of goodbyes and post-workshop blues setting in albeit strict professional instructions about final deadline of submitting the final paper for review on 1 October 2009, I found that we were talking more to each other, out of necessity...

Democracy: Some Southern Views

Jishnu Dasgupta

Junior Research Fellow, ICHR, working on the politics of development in Bihar. He observes Bihar but participates in West Bengal. Sometime back, agitating against the acquisition of farmland for industry, he has been charged with six cases, including obstruction of public servants, assault on cops and ministers. Currently out on bail, he awaits trial.

When not in the thick of political fray, he is an aesthete, lover of book and music, old things and this city of joy.

In between all these activities, he manages to hold down the job of Editorial Assistant in Global South.

Democracy has long been accorded a hallowed place in political discourses and journalism in this world. A lot of hair-splitting has gone on about the best form of democracy and rival state systems have called each others to count for failing to be adequately democratic. This debate raged almost throughout the second half of the last century. But with the collapse of the Socialist Bloc, 'Western'/Northern notions of democracy have gained a hegemonic status that is perhaps even stronger than the Washington Consensus. It is through this looking glass that the state-systems are looked at, often with derision, and, some would argue, with the desire to find them wanting. The following is an attempt to take a look at some of the events and personalities from the South that have fallen foul of this standard of democracy and through them seek to see the justifications of such a classification.

I

Perhaps the one 'democratically elected' leader who draws the ire of the Washington-based rulers of the world most is Hugo Chavez, the present President of Venezuela. Chavez has drawn either bitter and vehement criticism or raucous support, both domestically and internationally. A measure of this can be seen that in the same year (2006), the U.S. government called him a threat to democracy[1] and in a poll conducted by New Statesman, he was voted eleventh among "Heroes of our time".[2] The contradictions in this man are many. Chavez burst on the political scene as the leader of a failed coup de etat in 1992 when he attempted to set up a pro-poor government against Structural Adjustment Programmes and the Washington Consensus and against the pro-Washington and repressive government of Pres. Carlos Andres Perez. He, in turn, has been the target of several attempts to remove him from elected office, most notably the initially successful coup of 2002, but also a paralysing two-month strike starting later in the same year and a recall referendum in 2004. Chavez's attempts to get more power in Presidential hands, remove the limit of two terms in office and his policy towards hostile media has also drawn howls of protest, while others have shown more than sympathy.

Perhaps what makes Chavez even more difficult to map is the fact that he draws on multiple and varied inspirations, ranging from Karl Marx and Fidel Castro to Salvadore Allende, Simon Bolivar and even Jesus Christ. Fortified by his own distinctive readings of their lives, practices and teachings, Chavez has flown in the face of the Consensus, both in his ignoring of the unipolar world in foreign policy, in building regional alliances like the MERCOSUR and approaches of democratic socialism, coloured by what is called Bolivarianism/Chavismo. This has brought him increasingly into conflict with not only the U.S. government, but multinationals and even big corporate houses in his own country. His active pursuing of petroleum-politics has made Venezuela a major regional player and has been used to shore up alliances. But his (many) critics have also pointed to his intolerance towards opposition– particularly the media, where he has been accused of using state and extra-legal force. The climax in this conflict came in 2006 when he refused to renew the terrestrial licence of RCTV, Venezuela's second largest TV channel on grounds of allegedly participating in the 2002 coup. Chavez's opponents have taken this up as clear proof of the anti-democratic nature of the Bolivarian Movement and its leader. However others, such as the Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), pointed out that no country, including the US, would have allowed a channel to operate after it had actively fomented and participated in a coup.[3] FAIR raised the question of what bias prompts not only some governments, but sections of the media like CNN and the Washington Post, to dub such a television channel the voice of free speech and its banning for this sort of a crime proof of dictatorship.

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1   http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/6181785.stm, last accessed on 19 June 2009.

2   http://www.newstatesman.com/200605220016, last accessed on 19 June 2009.

3   http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=3107, last accessed on 19 June 2009.

Special Feature

Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales flanking the old war horse Fidel Castro

Only slightly less controversial is Evo Morales, the President of Bolivia and Chavez's closest ally in Latin America. He has earned the ire of many, not only as a fellow-traveller on many issues that Chavez takes up, but also as a protector of coca farming against U.S.-led efforts to eradicate it. Himself a coca farmer who gained his political spurs unionising them, Morales has defied all attempts towards their eradication, disputing that the coca is produced solely for cocaine. This has led to his famous policy of 'zero cocaine, but not zero coca leaf, nor zero coca farmers'. The U.S. has held this as a scarcely veiled defence of drug-trafficking, which in turn has drawn vehement protests from the Bolivian government and Morales' supporters.

Another key controversial element has been the apparently innocuous question of dressing style. Morales has consistently refused the use of western formalwear even on state occasions or when visiting foreign heads of state. Instead, he has continued to don gear displaying his ethnic origins, and has declared himself to be Bolivia's first Amerindian President, ignoring earlier claimants. This has drawn fire not only from defenders of others' claims, but also from politicians like Mario Vargas Llosa, who have accused him of fomenting racial tensions in an increasingly *mestizo* Latin America.[4] Morales' putting forward his ethnic origins was apparent even at his inauguration as he attended an indigenous spiritual ceremony just before the official inauguration, where he was crowned the *Apu Mallku* or Supreme Leader of his own indigenous group and received gifts from various such groups elsewhere in Latin America and the world. He has repeatedly held up his ethnic origins to show up its lack in his rivals, who seem to be condemned by that very lack to be stooges of imperialism.

II

A country where the issue of ethnicity and democratic governance has grabbed the headlines through this year of 2009 is Sri Lanka.

Here, government forces have smashed the decades old resistance of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam and the latter's struggle for a Tamil state. This has sparked not only accusations of genocide in the present,[5] but also that a process of Sinhalisation will be put into place to enforce ethnic cleansing, or at least a majoritarian dictatorship. It might be noted here that the LTTE's own record on minorities has formed one of its darkest chapters, as the LTTE threw out Muslims from the areas in their control between 1990 and 1992. Now, it is feared that Rajapakshe's government, buoyed by its military success would unleash a rule of majoritarian oppression, backed by the Sinhalese ethnic group that has been long under the spell of 'Tiger Terrorism'. That Rajapakshe enjoys majority support in a democratic system is undoubted, but whether that would be used as the justification for such measures remains to be seen. Prior to the emergence of the LTTE as a military force, there had been several instances of such majoritarianism, completely ignoring the 'constitutional' protests of the then leaders of Tamils. Efforts in the 1950s to make Sinhala the sole official language and then the designation of Buddhism as the official religion in 1972 were such measures and formed the background of Tamil separatism, which burst out in the wake of the burning down of the Tamil library in Jaffna (1981) and the anti-Tamil pogroms in Colombo (1983).[6] The world waits to see where the ethnic majority of the Sinhalese and the democratic majority of the Rajapakshe government will take Sri Lanka.

Pro Thaksin Protests

An earlier article in this emagazine[7] had discussed the oppressive ethnic policies of another democratically elected government, that of Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand. But this year saw demonstrations in Bangkok against the army-backed government that is trying him on several charges. Thaksin is the only Thai Prime

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4   http://www.hacer.org/report/2009/03/bolivia-country-of-mestizos-los-tiempos.html, last accessed on 19 June 2009.

5   http://www.tamilnet.com/, last accessed on 19 June 2009.

6   *The Telegraph*, 20 June 2009.

7   Pravit Rojanaphruk, "Thainess and its History: Reflection on the Problematic Nature of Nationalism with Emphasis on the Case of Recent Violence in Pattani and other Southern-most Provinces of Thailand", *Sephis E-Magazine*, 2, 1, September 2005, pp. 4-8.

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Minister in history to have served a full term and in fact, increased his majority after the term. This he did despite being already mired in many of the accusations for which he is being charged now– corruption, nepotism, illegal use of state force and conflict of interests. Shinawatra built his base through a mixture of pandering to Thai ethnic pride and populist pro-poor policies, particularly in health and education. Thus, his programmes helped increase access to healthcare from 76 per cent to 96 per cent of the population.[8] But, in health and education too, he was accused of using these expansion measures to benefit his own companies, through contracts to supply equipments etc. These, and increasing allegations of using illegal violence in the name of curbing insurgency and drug-trafficking led to agitations against him and opposition-led boycotts, finally providing the justification of a military-backed coup. Now, the tainted leader is portrayed as a hero of pro-democracy activists, particularly in this year's Sonkran agitation in Bangkok.

   The military stepping in to 'meet a crisis' of the democratic set-up has been quite a common feature in Pakistan. Last year saw the loss of power of the latest of such military rulers, Gen. Pervez Musharraf. Musharraf and his government had accused his chief rivals, Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto of also being guilty of many similar crimes on his take-over. Even with the restoration of a degree of democracy, these two leaders were forced to remain in exile and were debarred from contesting in elections. They were finally allowed to contest last year, and though Bhutto was assassinated in the run-up to the elections, her party and Sharif's managed to get a comfortable majority between them and came together to form the government. But soon the old rivalries rekindled and they bickered on everything from reinstatement of the judges deposed by Musharraf to the impeachment of Musharraf himself, till the coalition fell apart. This has given rise to grave concerns among the 'international community', or at least the powers-that-be, as for them, Pakistan is a frontline state in the 'War against Terror'. The General-President, untied by such necessities as respecting/fearing popular sentiments and buoyed by his alliance with the West could take measures, they think, that a democratically elected government cannot take, prompting an escalation of Taliban activities, particularly in North Western Pakistan.

Pakistan Lawyers Protest Against Musharraf

III

These snippets from some countries of the South bring to the fore the uneasiness of the claims of universality that the mandarins of democracy in the North would have us believe. The grand narrative of *one form* of democracy has been repeatedly punctured, if not ripped apart, by such issues as ethnicity and other identites, corruption, nepotism and violence that can only make the votaries of Western Democracy crinkle their noses. And yet, these countries, the Third World/the post-colony, the South, constitue, as Partha Chatterjee has pointed out, "Most of the World".[9] So, perhaps, the time has come to rethink democracy as a concept outside the gaze of the North, for otherwise, we will always be condemned to read Southern histories from the point of view of a lack. After all, the only unsullied leader from the South in these terms is Aung San Suu Kyi, who topped the same *New Statesman* poll of heroes, and was dubbed "a true hero of this or any other time."[10] But then, the Myanmar politician has never held power.

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8   http://bangkokpost.net/breaking_news/breakingnews.php?id=112327, last accessed on 19 June 2009.

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

10 http://www.newstatesman.com/200605220016 last accessed on 19 June 2009.

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Africa's Democratic Deficit: Beyond the Endogenous/Exogenous Debate

Moses, a student of the famed Makaryre University of Uganda, was recently an international participant in the Research Training Programme at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta. The main researcch interests include forms of the state in Africa, particularly the informalisation of the state.

He is known for his judicious mixture of a fun-loving nature and conscientousness in work, as evident from his strictness in maintaining schedules.

Moses Khisa

The 'democratic dilemma' remains a fundamental conundrum in much of Africa, both in the overemphasised Sub-Saharan Africa and the often less scrutinised Arab North Africa. In fact, strictly speaking, if one were to apply the benchmarks of western liberal democracy, North Africa can hardly produce a *functioning* democracy. By contrast, one can point to a number of Sub-Saharan African countries that have surged ahead on the democratic path. It is not my object here to engage in a caricature of comparisons, rather, I wish to argue that the tendency (by especially Western based Africanists and their Africa-based acolytes, the media and the clichéd international community) to draw a sharp line between Sub-Saharan African and North Africa is misleading, it is superfluous as far as thinking about democracy in Africa is concerned.

One much talked about failure of democracy in Africa is the absence of peaceful and orderly regime change: Change of leadership and/or transition from one ruling group to another. In recent years, as popular politics and electioneering gathered ground, and faced with the possibility of electoral ineligibility due to constitutional provisions that restrict terms of office to two; some African leaders resorted to what in political analyses parlance is now referred to as "life-presidency": Securing life-eligibility for presidency through constitutional engineering. The most recent case of constitutional manipulation to secure indefinite qualification to contest presidential elections took place in Algeria– a North-African country. In the same region, Libya does not hold elections, it has what some would call a monarch of sorts, in power since 1969 and is popularising a despicable ideology across Africa that 'revolutionaries' do not retire; Egypt's Hossan Mubarak has been in power since 1984 and "wins" elections at will; Omar El Bashir of Sudan, now wanted by the International Criminal Court in the Hague for war crimes and crimes against humanity, has ruled Africa's largest country since 1989 and shows no signs of stepping down. The situation is not any better across to the northwest in Tunisia and Morocco. What I am trying to underscore here is that the democratic deficit pervades Africa as much as some irreversible democratic gains can be dis-

cerned: Ghana, Mozambique, South Africa, Benin have recently surged ahead on the democratic path, joining the old frontrunners like Botswana, Mauritius, Seychelles, Tanzania. I found it worthwhile to make this clarification by citing examples from North Africa because this part of Africa is somehow exempted from democratic scrutiny in much of the literature on African politics for no apparent, let alone convincing reason. Some uncanny theorisations and commentaries on African politics divorce North Africa from the rest of Africa, assigning it instead to the Arab Middle East, if anything for ineluctable cultural linkages. Yet North African leaders like Libya's Muamar Gaddafi have been rallying Africa (and NOT the Middle East) to shun western liberal democracy anchored on, among other things, electoral politics.

In thinking about problems of democracy and development, another frivolous dichotomy has been a standard procedure: Those who look out for an essentialist Africanicity/African-ness on the one hand, and those who emphasise the external production of Africa under conditions of Western modernity. At a philosophical level, while the former searches for an internal unique feature in the African Self to account for social-political phenomena, the latter is bent on confronting "Othering" the African through slavery, colonialism, apartheid and the contemporary imperial hegemonic order; if the former looks out for the internally generated consciousness, the apropos of the latter is an externally produced African subjectivity. Then there is the third trend that trades across the dichotomy of internal uniqueness and external constructiveness of Africa. This treats Africa as a discipline but without historical legitimacy, such that approximations are searched through analogy seeking. Accordingly, there is a putative unified and unitary entity available– Africa– as an unmodulated object of inquiry by especially Area-Studies' specialists in the Euro-American academe.

The analogy seeking takes African studies as a speculative vocation indulged in by, to use Mahmood Mamdani's words, "many a stargazing academic perched in distant ivory towers." Clearly all these strands of thought present (and *ipso facto* misrepresent) Africa as a homoge-

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neous entity, treated with such fetish, as *sui generis*. Why? The Pope recently provided some insights worth listening to. On his first tour of Africa a few months ago, Pope Benedict XVI, speaking at a congregation in the Angolan capital Luanda, took occasion to comment on the situation in Africa: The "African problem": "This experience is all too familiar to Africa as a whole," the venerable pontiff remarked; he continued to delineate this familiar experience: "(T)he destructive power of civil strife, the descent into a maelstrom of hatred and revenge, the squandering of the efforts of generations of good people."[1] The Pope was addressing an audience of a country that is struggling to exorcise the pangs of years of brutal civil strife– Angola– but seemed to have encouraged his audience to take heart, as this was a problem not peculiar to them but pervades the continent. What the Pope seems to suggest is that it is Africa's intrinsic predestination to be caught up in vicious fratricidal wars and violent inter-ethnic hostilities. For the Pope, every part of Africa is familiar with, and has suffered at the hands of *destructive* power. But the good Pope may be interested to know that the Republic of Tanzania has not experienced "destructive power of civil strife" since gaining independence in 1961; Botswana has maintained a functional democratic tradition and attained impressive social transformation; the same can be said about Seychelles and Mauritius; Zambia and Malawi are some of the poorest countries in the world yet their recent democratic trajectories have been stable and promising.

The totalising conception of Africa has, for much of the post-independence period, not only spawned a plethora of literature but also informed the humanitarian activities of Western charities working with local ancillaries. Little wonder that the major International Financial Institutions, to wit, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) have most of their client countries in Africa, making provision of aid and loan-funds to Africa, perhaps, the single most ubiquitous international relations factor, weaving most sub-Saharan African countries into a bloc-spatial field of operation for the IMF and WB. Even when studies have been conducted on individual African states, the conclusions arrived at are taken by these "development-interventionists" to apply across sub-Saharan Africa whose expanse land-body is home to no less than fifty independent countries. Notwithstanding glaring socio-economic and demographic differentiations, variegated social-cultural trends, disparate ideological and political trajectories, it still sounds plausible– if not acceptable– to talk about "Africa", without regard to disaggregating it.

The strand of thinking that has for long accented external forces as responsible for African pathologies now lays the blame squarely on transitional financial power, to wit, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the G-8, whose policies especially– Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs)– foregrounded technocratic and managerial efficiency while sidestepping popular democratic accountability and public scrutiny. This has been a recurrent argument mostly by Africanists influenced by the Marxist tradition. But this does not tell us the whole story. Expecting transnational capital to engender genuine democracy would be the most naïve intellectual mindset. The IMF and WB's SAPs were never intended to deepen a sustainable democratic tradition. To make sense of the democratic deficit would require taking stock of the contours of local politics and the reconstitution of state power to serve a certain political agenda. In that regard the more convincing argument would be to say that a confluence of the neo-liberal thrust of rolling back the state through SAPs and the determination to hold state power by the ruling elite in many African countries ushered in a mutually beneficial domain of politics. For as along as a cosmetic semblance of participatory democracy could be maintained, and to the extent that repressive African regimes ensured a peaceful environment for neo-liberal reforms to flourish, transnational power players were content and unbothered by the torpedoing of democracy.

To argue, as some scholars have done, that African leaders hoodwinked donors to believe that they were indeed seriously implementing democratic reforms is to gloss over the pragmatism of transnational power situating at its helm the Bretton Woods institutions, the London and Paris Clubs, the G-8 and other players like the USAID. As long as African countries implemented market reforms, to wit: Assure a deregulated market system while ensuring macro-economic stability, overhaul the public service, expedite privatisation (however haphazard), and posit impressive economic growth while keeping inflation rates under check; the IMF, the World Bank, and other external financiers remained largely unbothered by the political developments. Part of their apolitical position rested on a disingenuous claim that their home charters and international law norms generally prohibited them from involvement in political matters of a foreign country and yet, needless to say, the process through which African government negotiated with the external financiers and adopted SAPs, among other things, was no less political.

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1 BBC News, "Pope Mass draws big Angola crowds", *http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/7957552.stm*, Published: 22/03/2009 14:36:36 GMT.

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Central to the democratic deficit is the abstract entity called the state, or to be specific the "African state". It is widely held that there is a problem with this "African state," and this concern has for decades led to much discussion as to what its proper role is or should be. Confronted with the unending state crises and the adjudged failure of various state-led developmentalist governance models, there have emerged calls to think beyond the state in an increasingly transnational world, a call famously trumpeted by Arjun Appadurai. This call, if heeded, would be oblivious to the marginal status of African states in the global power schema. Interestingly, that call is deemed necessary for economically peripheral countries of the third world while the rich Western countries maintain strong state capacities. The heightening of global capitalist networks has pushed much of Africa to the margins of global capital. Many African states are currently more socially fragile, politically unstable and economically attenuated than they were in the immediate post-independence decades. To lose track of this ramification of the shift in global power configurations is to miss the big picture of what many African countries have to grapple with.

I countenance the assertion by some Africanists that the African continent is condemned to democracy, in the sense that the development of Africa's full potentialities on the basis of the aspirations of the majority can only be possible within the framework of democratic politics.

To be sure, Africa has experimented with all sorts of governance systems: From immediate post-independence quasi parliamentary democracies and constitutional monarchies of the 1950s and 1960s to one-party states of the 1980s; from outright military dictatorships in the 1970s to pseudo multi-party pretensions in the 1990s, only one current has claimed the last laugh– democracy. I still cling onto the somewhat old-fashioned conviction– for which I offer no apologies– that a sustainable approach to most of the problems bedeviling the African continent must necessarily entail a process of popular politics, and that process can only be democratisation.

While some elements of African scholarship are tempered with moralistic prejudice, the practicalities of African politics are shaping new ways of pushing the frontiers of democracy on the continent. As the Afro-pessimists disingenuously divert the attention of demands for genuine democracy and freedom, African peoples are increasingly taking matters in their hands.

The recent events in Kenya (early 2008) and Zimbabwe (late 2008/early2009) are testimony to the power of collective action in forging a desirable democratic dispensation. The people of Kenya stood up against the Mwai Kibaki establishment, to reject the results of a rigged election. Zimbabweans surmounted all odds to vote against Robert Mugabe and his ruling ZANU/PF party. No amount of imported methods and practices shall hold together democracy in Africa; the copy and paste mentality has proved untenable, thus the African people have to chart their own course of democratic and social transformation. State systems and praxes must perforce be subject to internal public scrutiny if the democratic deficit is to be fixed. The embrace of popular politics through electioneering has come under virulent denigration by especially arrogant elites. But to dismiss popular politics, and even populist policies as necessarily democratically regressive is to wish away a whole dynamic domain of state-society engagement whose irreversibility is no small feat in the democratic strength of the country. Nobody can rule out for sure the eventuality of the same populist policies that hold together a seemingly undesirable system and sustain a certain regime of power producing the forces that unleash a rapturous passage to a desirable political system.

Reviews

Land and Politics in post-Independent Zimbabwe

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Percyslage Chigora

Jocelyn Alexander, *The Unsettled Land: State-Making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe 1893- 2003*, **James Currey, Oxford, 2006, pp, 230, ISBN 0 85255 892-9.**

Development in Africa's former settler colonies cannot be viewed as removed from trajectories of colonialism and the subsequent alienation of land and designation of policies and laws that favoured the colonialist and its subsequent beneficiaries. The post-independence state has not been able to fully assume sovereignty over the policies of land ownership and its distribution. Jocelyn Alexander in this book has sought to capture and provide an analysis into unsettled issues of land in Zimbabwe and how they have affected nation-building and politics from the early years of colonialism upto the first three years of the New Millennium. In essence the book is rich in historical account of the politics of land in Zimbabwe.

The introduction gives an outline of the condition in colonial states i.e. the policies of alienation and the politics of rural governance. At the very onset, she locates the centrality of land in colonial and postcolonial period.

Chapter one explores how colonialists established their authority over land. Before giving a background to her main areas of study (Insiza and Chimanimani) the author examines the legacy of the colonial conquest. Dwelling on the case study areas the author analyses factors that contributed to colonisation and the response to conquest by these communities. Here, she notes with reference to Chimanimani, "it was not land speculators and miners that flooded in, as in Insiza, but impoverished Afrikaner farmers seeking to flee agricultural depression in Orange Free State, and drawn by promises of vast land allocations… the risings of 1896/97, so influential in Insiza, left a very large legacy here. Chimanimani remained largely peaceful." (pp. 19-20) The making of company rule and the nature of the colonial state are analysed in detail with particular attention to the areas of case study. Of particular importance were the people's experiences with evictions.

Chapter two dwells on one of the notorious legislations Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) that was instituted with the support of the World Bank. The author gives an in-depth analysis of the origins of the legislations and its subsequent influence on African society. In essence the legislation,

> called for a significant ideological [position]: Africans were no longer to be thought as communal tribes people, but as rational individuals operating in an impersonal market in the idealized guise of the yeoman farmer and proletariat family…. Those excluded from land would provide a stable workforce for industry. In the reserves limiting the number of farmers and giving them secure tenure would promote individual responsibility, investment and the adoption of recommended agricultural methods. (p. 46)

In this chapter the author also analysed the response of the African populace, to which she attributed the growth of African nationalism. The author concludes that, "the effort to create full-time farmers and workers utterly failed. Nonetheless the Act had a lasting impact on authority and the land. It added to the repertoire of the means of claiming land; it created new ideas of community and settlement patterns that would shape debates in coming decades." (p. 59)

Chapter three analyses the restructuring that was instituted by the government in an attempt to deal with massive resistance that had emerged with the introduction of NLHA. Largely it was geared towards reducing prejudices that had come with administrative arrangement of the Act. The centrality of traditional leaders is analysed in this chapter and the subsequent conflicts explored.

Chapter four provides an analysis of the relationship between the nationalists, traditional chiefs and the struggle for land. The idea of the chiefs being considered as an alternative tool for political leadership with the coming of the nationalists and difficulties which traditional leaders faced are taken up here with relevant examples from case study areas.

In Chapter five the author explored the issue of land in post-independence Zimbabwe begining with how independence was negotiated, moving on to the politics in early years of independence. An analysis of land resettlement policy's major achievements, challenges and obstacles is

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included. The author also analyses the politics of communal farming and elucidates on the challenges faced. In essence the author points out that, "though land redistribution was ritually endorsed in all policy documents, it was not coordinated with interventions within communal areas." (p. 122)

Chapter six and seven dwell on case studies of Insiza and Chimanimani respectively. An in-depth analysis of these communities' experience with resettlement programmes and institutions that were established to stamp authority has been provided here. For Insiza, the author notes,
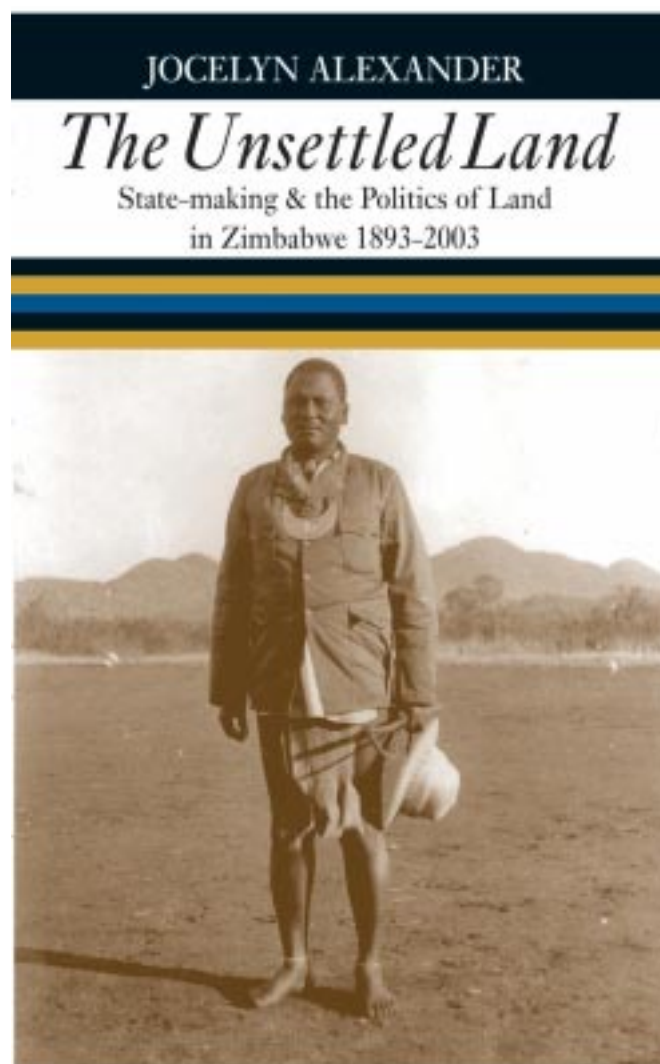
> Neither compromise nor repression gave the state the ability to intervene effectively. Instead, Agrarian and social change was dominated by locally initiated strategies. Courts were run by customary leaders. Land allocation was dominated by local debates over history and justice. (p. 147)

And for Chimanimani,

the relative power of local leaders and their

means of claiming authority shifted dramatically in the years after independence. Zanu (PF) committees were marginalised not through repression… but as a result of their inability to deliver on wartime promises, exclusion form decision-making and lack of financial support. (p. 173)

The last Chapter deals with the intensification of struggles over land at the turn of the New Millennium. The author gives a brief background of land issue in the 1990s and then zeroes in on the Third Chimurenga, the conception and subsequent implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform. She manages, in this section, to cite some of the shortcomings of her own research on this particular period and goes on to provide gray areas for future researchers to explore. Perhaps the best summing up of her central argument will also be a comment on the shortcomings and possibilities of the book– "Authority over the land remained in the making." (p. 194)

JOCELYN ALEXANDER

The Unsettled Land

State-making & the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe 1893–2003

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Breaking and Entering Myth: Anurag Kashyap's *Dev D* (2009)

Anindya Sengupta

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Paramita Brahmachari

Dev D, director Anurag Kashyap, producer Ronnie Screwvala, UTV Motion Pictures, India

How do we make sense of the persisting popularity of *Devdas*, a short novel by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, written in 1917, such that it still gets adapted in popular cinema[1] and is able to draw the same plethora of affect which Anurag Kashyap inverts?

For a speculative reading which is hasty and sweeping, *Devdas* has probably remained effective for a symptomatic portrayal of a (colonised) male psyche stranded in the crossroads of a never-complete journey towards modernity. Symptomatic, because the anguish the lead character suffers from is not issuing from an inability to settle a sexual conundrum, but from the inability to locate his masculinity in changing terrains. The character makes a deliberate choice towards an urban middle-class identity from being a rather plush pre-urban feudal landlord's son. Interestingly, having a docile wife and simultaneously keeping a mistress in the brothel was hardly a problem to an erstwhile male, the kind Devdas's father had been. But this split could only happen because of a choice of identity where monogamy and other Victorian sexual norms were becoming prevalent. Devdas's inability to marry his childhood love Parvati (a.k.a*.* Paro) resulted from a Kafkaesque subsumption to his father's dictum of not marrying out of his class and caste and also from an inability to assert himself sexually. One can easily discern a painstaking working out of this predicament: His split between Parvati and the

prostitute Chandramukhi (a.k.a. Chanda) is also a split between the plenitudinal rural and an uncertain urbanity, a regime of masculinity that one discarded and the regime where the coloniser is the yardstick one cannot keep up to. Devdas's anguish had elements of latent rebellion in the way he ranted against his father and family, also suffering an Oedipal guilt when the patriarch dies. His angst is of being severed from the mores which he understood as certainties once he stopped identifying with them. His state in a limbo, stranded in the middle of nowhere, is ultimately reworked as a kind of sublimation of his undying love for the unconsummated one, the trope which the popular adaptations stressed on so much. Additionally, if Calcutta in Barua's *Devdas* (1935) was "both the 'signified' and the 'signifier,' the idea of a city as well as Calcutta itself,"[2] the filmmaker's dilemma likewise in most all of its cinematic incarnations of *Devdas* was also to invent an appropriate idiom for encountering and representing the urban which will simultaneously defamiliarise earlier ones. This is precisely the space produced by Kashyap's depiction of Delhi which he deliberately chose to shoot not with its recognisable landmarks like the India Gate, Jama Masjid or Qutb Minar, but through Paharganj, a nocturnal neon lit acid hell of sorts (which most of his friends mistook for some anonymous seedy back alley in Hong Kong[3]).

Therefore, a sincere– if not intelligent– adap-

1   Some of the earlier adaptations of *Devdas* had been directed by Naresh Mitra 1928; P. C. Barua 1935 (Bengali), 1936 (Hindi) 1937 (Assamese); Vedantam Raghavaiah 1953 (a.k.a. Devadasu, in Tamil and in Telegu); Bimal Roy 1955 (Hindi); Dilip Roy 1979 (Bengali); Shakti Samanta 2002 (Bengali); Sanjay Leela Bhansali 2002 (Hindi).

2   Madhuja Mukherjee, *New Theatres Ltd.: The Emblem of Art, The Picture of Success*, National Film Archive of India, Pune, 2009, p. 134.

3   From Kashyap's interview in *The Making of Dev-D*. The defamiliarisation here is not premised on producing an India closer to reality, as an instantiation of which Kashyap's *Black Friday*, 2004, was lauded by international critics precisely for this objective documentation of everyday Bombay at the street level in crisis.

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tation of *Devdas* can never do away with the colonial context which buffers the affect generated by the romantic plot. Kashyap's take does exactly that. It contemporanises the story and the characters and makes us eager to probe into the reworkings of the myth. If colonial Bengal is transformed into contemporary northern India how does the context remain effective? One discerns, that the film reconfigures the tale into two kinds of 'cinematic space': The rural is transformed into a Yash-Choprasque pastoral and the urban into a hallucinatory postglobal nowhere and everywhere. As in the original novel, the journey between the reconfigured spaces turns the romantic plot into a kind of symptom of history.

Dev-D is significant because of its claimed location in the mainstream, not as another instantiation of a parallel idiom to the mainstream, which has already had a robust if limited presence, in both Hindi and regional cinemas, either confronting the mainstream or in utter denial of it. *Dev-D* becomes especially aberrant because it chooses to take issue with the mainstream by using the tropes and conventions of the mainstream *itself* to very different ends, and instantiating certain portents, possibilities of otherness within it (it is not merely the resistance of *Black Friday*, 2004, in not conforming; neither fully ripened transgression in terms of constructing a contrary idiom as in *No Smoking*, 2007). In fact, Kashyap possibly takes his textual politics far more seriously than the reconfigured sexual politics in *Dev-D*.

So, let's get it over with the libidinous overkill first of all. Especially in view of the fact that in all this time Mahi Gill playing the rusty belle, Paro, with a mattress roll hitched onto her bicycle, agentively and assertively making her way to a sexual rendezvous of her own design with Dev, will have predictably insinuated its way into the most iconic and possibly the most empowering of images to have surfaced on the Indian popular screen lately. And also as smut and slang as virtuoso Rabelaisian strategies of

subversion proliferate the official website of the film in the aggressively obscene rendition of the song 'Emosonal Atyachar' and Chanda's sex talk available in three language options.[4]

As far as the Hindi mainstream is concerned, in the period following the liberalisation of the Indian economy, the most crucial outcome was the gradual emergence and crystallisation of a set of ideological precepts. Sooraj R. Barjatya's *Hum Aapke Hai Kaun* released in 1994 has been pinpointed by several scholars as representative of this new popular cinema subsequently marked (in Karan Johar's work, for instance) by its technical gloss, foreign locales, a constant display of consumerables on screen, a distinct set of stars, and most importantly, as pointed out by Patricia Uberoi,[5] in its ideological work of producing the neo-traditional joint-family as the locus of a spectacle of unlimited consumption. Uberoi argues that HAHK becomes a film most noted for its "clean" wholesome valourisation of the family by a near erasure of inequities of Indian social and family life, and also by hiding a subtext of "a terrible excess of fecundity"[6] in its co-optation of North Indian women's rituals and a bawdy folk tradition, equated without slippages with Indian culture and tradition. Thus, *HAHK* managed to smooth over the shock of India's entry into the global by re-orienting ideal, feudal notions of kinship in the global context, where earlier notions of family business and landed property were rendered contiguous with newer forms of corporate-financial capital. *HAHK's* family values thus operated on a double register by– first, clearly avoiding "*masala* ingredients", "blood, gore, sex and sadism"[7] as well as by underplaying conjugal relations subsumed under an uncritical outlook towards an antecedent society while seeking sanction for globalising initiatives from the traditional hierarchies of familial authority.

In all probability, *Dev-D*, by bringing back to life the ribald subtext that Patricia Uberoi argues *Hum Apke Hai Kaun* had cannily managed to erase from its opulent and utopic familial, strategically uses sex not as the insipid unspoken telos that drives love stories, but as the departure point itself for addressing in the final count the larger problem of the possibilities and limits of representation.

Kashyap's arrogance in *Dev-D* lies more emphatically in the fact that he systematically carpet bombs the mainstream industry, with which he has had a tenuous and ambiguous relationship all along, by imploding the institu-

4   Dev-D official website at http://www.devdthefilm.com/ accessed 15.06.2009

5   Patricia Uberoi, "Imagining the Family: An Ethnography of Viewing *Hum Aapke Hai Kaun*", in Rachel Dwyer and Christopher Pinney (eds.), *Pleasure and the Nation: The History, Politics and Consumption of Public Culture in India*, Oxford Univesity Press, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 309-351.

6   Ibid., p. 336.

7   Ibid., p. 310.

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tions of (puppy) love, family, 'Indianness' as encapsulated in the incessant representations of a rural Punjab as its bucolic heartland predictably collated with the site of the Green Revolution[8] (*Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge,* 1995, Aditya Chopra; *Pardes, 1997,* Subhas Ghai), or the metropole as epitomised in the sanitised urban imaginaire (*Dil Chahta Hai*, 2001, Farhan Akhtar).

Dev-D is structurally divided into three segments, for each Kashyap claims to have a distinct pace and feel/look for the space. The first one titled 'Paro' is set in rural Punjab with very fleeting glimpses of Dev's sojourn in London; the second one– titled 'Chanda' provides a back story of Leni/Chanda's fall from grace and the final chapter is titled 'Dev' (though the character has already been introduced in the first one.) Kashyap's interventions into the institution of cinema at three distinguishable levels can be loosely plotted, mapped onto this triptych, though none is strictly confined to their respective segments.

But first let us make a short point about Dev's London. This curious departure from the original novel was actually made in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 2002 adaptation of the novel, where the prodigal son returns not from Calcutta but London after his education. This minor change upsets the original schema: It begs that Chandramukhi as the bearer of the urban be situated in London. This is a disequilibrium that Kashyap remedies by placing his own Leni/ Chanda, a polyglot prostitute, who is as capable of performing multiple personae gleaned from All American/French/Brit porn as she is with cooing in Tamil, English, Hindi and French.

Bhansali's adaptation is already infamous for its faceless homogenisation of spaces where the distance between Devdas's and Parvati's house is hardly discernible in their plush opulence. The squalor of Calcutta is utterly invisible (completely erasing the iconic image of a perpetually drunk Devdas wallowing in garbage); even the penultimate train journey of the consumptious hero across the country is suspended in no-where. This homogenisation irons out the historical splits which colonial modernity introduces between the rural and the urban rendering the colonial past itself as a moment of material plenitude seamlessly continuous with the film's present and its budget of fifty crores. The historical allegory is repressed and done away with reducing the plot to a triangular love-story without any context. In Bhansali, this homogenisation of space reaches its most sacrilegious when Paro and Chanda dance side by side at a Durgapuja at Parvati's conjugal home pushing to its absurd extreme a subtle possibility of a chance encounter in Bimal Roy's 1955 version where the two characters just cross

each other– one in a palanquin, the other on foot– a scene also referred to in Kashyap's version.

The Paro segment in Punjab, as Kashyap's first intervention, thus constantly urges you to recall and excavate familiar images from other mainstream blockbusters, recalling their affect but also at the same time putting them to very different uses forcing you to interrogate your complicity with their construction. The scene that immediately follows Paro's cycling trip (empowering because she defies norms of sexual conduct, assertive, agentive, and unabashed) is her rejection by Dev precisely for that defiance. The concluding visuals to this sequence however are a clear reference to the iconic publicity poster for *Maine Pyar Kiya,* that paean to innocent young love (1991, and a precursor to *HAHK* from Sooraj R. Barjatya) where a prostrate Paro clasps Dev's legs, he is bare bodied and clad in a pair of denims. Kashyap says he wanted a rustic girl with an earthy sexuality who can *labour*, drive a tractor or herd cattle. The capacity and *difference* of this labouring body from the acceptable demure heroines however also spills over in the way her reactions are articulated, in sites other than labour, in two significant outbursts, one as she violently pistons a hand-pump and storms out breaking a door, and the other where she attacks Sunil for having cast aspersions on her loyalty to Dev and burns down his house. Compare this with Nandini's's outburst in *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam* (1999, Sanjay Leela Bhansali), and the distinction becomes clearer. The sexual excess where Dev and Paro constantly grope each other against the willfully unacknowledging gaze of her father is also in contrast to Bhansali's *Devdas* where Devdas and Paro are mythified as Radha-Krishna in the imagination of Paro's mother enacting/performing their sexual drive on her behalf and legitimising it in the same move.

The second segment, Chanda's, is a particularly exemplary one because one cannot find its equivalent in the original novel– where Chanda was just a conduit to Dev's agony and a sexual counterpoint to Parvati. While Parvati is depicted as Dev's obscure object of desire and a trigger for Dev's crisis, Chanda– the golden-

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8   The first shot of the film showing Paro and Dev as children juxtaposes in the background resplendently yellow sweeping mustard fields alongside a giant dam.

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hearted whore– is delineated more as an accessible yet desired sexual object. In other words, Chanda has no autonomous existence in the novel. Kashyap's Chanda is not apprehended like in all the early *Devdas*es at an already fallen state but is fleshed out with what we might call a negative Bildungsroman, in compressed time, and at a frenetic pace of enforced mobilities as she begins to shuttle between spaces of exile, mirroring Dev's predicament.

Thus the Chanda episode, apart from giving her character its due– with its minimal but self-contained plot– serves as the *mise en abyme* of the entire plot of *Dev-D*. The chapter starts in a happy (but uneasily cosmopolitan) home. Leni is a schoolgirl with a father who works in the French consulate and a French mother. She goes to a posh upper class school and is introduced through a song that underlines her free-wheeling spirit. Her fall starts with an MMS scandal, which shows her performing oral sex. The locale immediately shifts to an entirely faceless, possibly Canadian, mountain resort, the yellow and amber palette of the Paro episode giving way to a blue and green one. It is here that Leni's exile starts, her father commits suicide and her distraught mother abandons her. She's exiled to her father's ancestral home in Punjab where one relative threatens an honour killing. Leni runs away and reaches Delhi, where she lands in a brothel in Paharganj and christens herself Chanda.[9] It is here that she ironically regains a warmer surrogate family, resumes an education and is initiated into prostitution. One night a tripped out Dev literally collapses into her bed.

Kashyap's interpretation reconfigures spatialities, and the simple binary between the urban and the rural is deliberately complicated. Leni's last punitive space in the series, her ancestral home, is also the space of Paro's sexual 'dalliance', suggesting that Paro luckily managed to escape the patriarchal backlash which her richer, more cosmopolitan sister encountered head on. Kashyap's missed encounter between Leni on her way to becoming Chanda

and Paro happen where Paro herself is travelling to the city to scan and send a naked picture of herself to Dev, the missed encounter is also a missed scandal that *Paro* escapes, unlike Leni.

This middle chapter when it ends also achieves something very subtle but overwhelmingly powerful for the film. The ribald subversive mood of the first chapter gives way to a controlled pathos, which will continue till the end of the film. It is evident that the film has a definite trajectory of affect, which is not anchored to any particular character unlike the earlier versions, which invariably focus on Devdas. Dev in the final episode is definitely a fallen character, wallowing in hell and realising that he must work out his own personal redemption. But the narrative of the 'fall' in the film actually belongs to Leni/Chanda in her segment. Chanda, who is not apologetic and accuses no one. Thus the central predicament of the original here constantly oscillates between Dev and Chanda.

Kashyap's second intervention is that his frame of reference, like some other filmmakers of his time, derives from a practice of watching international avant-garde cinema in pirated DVD circuits among peers (overlapping with but still distinct from the official canon of world cinema that gradually congealed at an earlier cinephiliacal moment with the Cine Society generation). Filmmaking for Kashyap's generation then becomes a dynamic archiving and curating of sorts analoguous to the way an individual would meticulously accumulate films on DVD. Filmmaking becomes rather like an inventorying of one's affinities where influences can co-exist with quotes, replications of images from one's personal canon and suchlike without *necessarily* creating contrary pulls within the text. When the text does pull at the seams with its excesses however (like for instance the shot of the factory in Chandigarh when Dev walks into it for the first time: Like a vast expanse of giant innards of a city in mottled verdigris reminiscent of the dystopic spaces in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis,* 1927), what is produced as a result is a dense viewerly text.[10]

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9   Kashyap inserts several clips from Bhansali's Devdas into his film, that Leni watches in her home, on the bus and in her brothel room, and chooses Chandramukhi's name from the film for herself, thus reiterating the performability of Bollywood and its extra textual reach, but without the comfort of ensconcing, containing it within the familial.

10 Admittedly, in the series of interviews on *The Making of Dev-D,* Kashyap says that the films that constituted the mindset for both him and his cinematographer before they went on to devise the look and feel of the film were *Paris, Texas* (1994) by Wim Wenders, Wong Kar Wai's films and *Om-Dar-Ba-Dar* (1988) by Swaroop Kamal which inspired the song 'Emosonal Atyachar' performed by a loud and gauche brass band with two Elvis impersonators in cheap rhinestone embellished white costumes. If recent work on Indian Cinema hinges on a certain 'reading competence' through which meanings of what we see on the screen is deciphered, the pleasure for Kashyap's audience lies at the first instance in recognising this other set of incessant references that infiltrate the body of the film. In objects strewn to populate the mise-en-scene, like for instance the paperbacks that Leni/Chanda reads in her boudoir *The Girl with the Long Green Heart* by Lawrence Block, on whose other book of the same name the film *My Blueberry Nights* (2007) by Wong Kar Wai is based, or for that matter *Contempt* by Alberto Moravia, the novel for Godard's *Le Mepris* (1963).

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Dev's is the third segment which, overlapping to some extent with Chanda's, is located in Delhi, or more particularly Paharganj, with its dead/ hallucinogenic time, contracted and distended at will. The space of denouement i.e. the acid hell that is Paharganj is finally the post-globalisation underbelly of the Indian metropolis which the characters are primarily unable to escape and finally decide not to escape after all. In numerous interviews Kashyap talks about the seedy hotels, drug culture, neon signs and the abundance of drugged out white-skinned prostitutes and nightcrawlers of Paharganj and how the place seemed fit as a contemporary equivalent to the red light districts of colonial Calcutta.

Kashyap's third intervention here is to take *Dev-D* an additional step from the point of view to which the popular and its excesses are always already camp, kitsch by re-reading the popular canon, as the historically unavoidable condition through which our viewing selves had been constituted.[11] The most telling evidence of this is its evocation of another cult classic, and one that doesn't have to try too hard to qualify as an early interpretation of *Devdas*, which is referred to tangentially in Dev-D. Guru Dutt's *Pyaasa* (1957) presented a disenchanted view of the nation during the dispersal of the initial euphoria over the five year plans following India's independence. *Pyaasa*'s depiction of the city as a heartless space beyond redemption (through progress and modernisation), his likening of the nation to a brothel in one song and his final denouncement of it all altogether in another, threw into relief a political subtext which was implicit though perhaps unintended in the novel. In Kashyap's rendition, the train journey across the nation is irreverently reduced to a journey that Dev, post disillusionment, approaching annihilation traces across a faceless, bleached out mountain pass in the Himalayan foothills where he systematically gets rid of all his money, deliberately reduces himself to a pauper and exposes himself to violence. A very short sequence at this point uncannily and ironically echoes the starting frame of *Pyaasa*, of the hero lying on his back on the grass under a tree, within nature.

This reading might not be an imposed one as the sequences at this point are steadily working towards the finale, where Kashyap's interpretation most radically and infamously departs from the novel. In the original, a consumptive Devdas dies in front of Paro's house. Dev denounces the legit 'civilised' world and evacuates its vestiges instead. It is implicit that he has disregarded the visits to the police station mandatory after he drunkenly runs over seven sleeping pavement dwellers.[12] Thus he has already been labeled a delinquent just as Vijay in *Pyaasa* was labeled a fraud after he refuses to be acknowledged as the famous poet that he once had been. Subsequently both the characters return to the 'fallen' women they have rather disregarded for so long. This finale undercuts the sentimentality which the previous adaptations of Devdas had epitomised, turning a dark narrative into an apparent 'happy ending'– but one where the closure refuses to resolve the anxieties already triggered and emphasises their unbelonging. In both *Pyaasa* and *Dev-D* the resolution sorting out the characters' crises has nothing to do with the 'trajectory of affect' we mentioned earlier. The wound remains open; something else is repaired and sealed off, but not with any sense of finality of forever-ness.

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11   Ashish Rajadhyaksha argues that "Bollywood [as a cultural form, came to be]associated with a series of generic shifts [developed] in the space of the last ten years, which bear signs of collateral changes in the industrial economics. The changes wrought in film form and content are often inextricably linked to the recognizability of Bollywood beyond the national borders of India as a product with the tremendous capacity for more successfully and self consciously exploiting the new marketing opportunities produced in the transaction of cultural commodities in the global context." The implications of having an increasingly visible identifiable commodity in terms of film form were that– One: This idiom of excess, hyperbole, song and dance and heightened melodrama could be accessible as a culture move to filmmakers who would facilitate its interpretation on a global arena like Gurinder Chadha, or enable Northern filmmakers to quote the idiom itself to destabilise the Hollywood mode of production (Baz Luhrman in *Moulin Rouge*, 2001). Two: Gradually it generates a popular cinema, that Madhava Prasad argues would become a 'reflexive commodity' incessantly reproducing its own features. It would also allow for the retroactive consolidation of a popular canon available for pastiche citations as in the case of Farah Khan's *Om Shanti Om*, 2008. Kashyap however resists any hermetic separation between his first and second interventions by allowing slippages between the two, most notably in the recurrent frontal presence of a London based retro band, The Twilight Players, who function as musical choric interludes in Dev's segment. See Rajadhyaksha, "The Bollywoodization of Indian Cinema" in Preben Kaarsholm (ed.), *City Flicks: Indian Cinema and the Urban Experience*, Seagull, Calcutta, 2004, pp. 113-139; and Prasad, "The Age of Imitation", in *The Book Review*, 2, February 2009, pp. 41-42.

12   Incidentally, Dev's lawyer in the film is named Bimal Barua, a reference to Bimal Roy and Pramathesh Barua, directors of the most iconic cinematic adaptations of the novel.

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