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Transcultural Turbulences

Towards a Multi-Sited Reading of Image Flows

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Part I
Introduction

Chapter 1
Introduction – Transcultural Turbulences: Towards a Multi-sited Reading of Image Flows

Christiane Brosius and Roland Wenzlhuemer

> "(T)ransculture – the violent collision of an extant culture with a new or different culture that reshapes both into a hybrid transculture that is itself then subject to transculturation – highlights those places where the carefully defined borders of identity become confused and overlapping, a task that requires new histories, new ideas and new means of representation" (Nicholas Mirzoeff 2002 (1998): 477)

Fig. 1.1 Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose with the INA flag and a Laughing Buddha surrounded by little children. The Osian's Archive & Library Collection, India. Lithographic cut-out pasted on handpainted paper backdrop. Year unknown, c. 1940s–50s

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What's in an Image?

This volume springs from the international conference on 'Flows of Images and Media' hosted by the Cluster of Excellence 'Asia and Europe in a Global Context: Shifting Asymmetries in Cultural Flows' in October 2009 at Heidelberg University.[1] The conference poster and flyer featured a remarkable print displaying an unusual assembly: a big, fat, laughing Buddha sits in the middle; six Chinese babies are climbing all over him, as if he were a mountain, and pinch, caress and tease him in a loving manner; a cat, as if escaped from a Victorian children's picture book, sits at the Buddha's feet; the Buddha is framed by three Indians, all of whom were prominent leaders of the independence struggle against British colonial rule; from left to right Mohandas K. Gandhi, then Jawaharlal Nehru, and standing alone on the right side is Subhas Chandra Bose, holding the Indian flag that reads, in Devanagari script, 'Jay Hind' (Hail to Hind/ustan). The composition of the ten figures (plus cat) is reminiscent of a group photograph: they seem to have posed for the camera, looking into the apparatus or talking to each other, posing in front of a studio backdrop that depicts a lake and triangular mountains. The tactile closeness of the Chinese figures derives from their voluptuous white, round bodies. They are scarcely clad, a matter that becomes even more evident when compared to the political leaders, all of whom are dressed in their 'typical' outfits: Gandhi in his famous, self-made loincloth; Nehru in his elegant frock coat and narrow trousers, and Bose in the olive-green uniform of the Indian National Army.[2]

Many of the conference participants thought that the print had been 'photoshopped' especially for the occasion. To us, this assumption was food for thought in terms of reflecting further on codes and ways of seeing and perceiving something as 'made up', 'authentic' and 'appropriate'. Why were beholders of the image wary of an intentionality that went beyond the temporal and spatial frame of the conference? For one, perhaps because we have a group of bodies which, ethnically speaking, are distinctly different (Indian and Chinese), and rarely seen assembled in such a transnational and transcultural combination. Secondly, the image's genre is the collage: the two ethnic 'entities' are cut and pasted together without considering aesthetic differences (hand-tinted photographs versus the sketch of a porcelain figure) or the compatibility of sizes.

We took this collage as an opportunity to trace the transcultural flows that can become visible in an image. If we apply Mirzoeff's above definition of transculturation and project it onto this condensed space of overlapping levels of visuality, we must address the new histories, ideas and means of representation that may have contributed to this print. Since very little is known about the image's provenance – not even the place of production is known – and considering the fact that it was created probably sometime in the 1940s, we can only draw attention to questions that concern our understanding of the transcultural flow,

[1] See http://www.asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de/en/news-events/news/detail/m/annual-conference-2009-flows-of-images-and-media.html, accessed on 12.6.2010.

[2] All three figures represent different shades of struggle against British colonial rule, ranging from non-violence to the formation of an unofficial army.

and the entanglements of images and media between and within Europe and Asia that inform this image. This is precisely what the authors in this volume attempt to do in their individual case studies.

The image of the Buddha, children, cat and Indian leaders was discovered by Patricia Uberoi, sociologist and scholar of gender and popular visual culture, in the Osian's Archive in Mumbai.[3] It is one of the many anonymous and marginalised products of Indian mass-produced print culture that, over the last decade, has enjoyed increasing popularity among collectors and scholars, thus telling of a growing trend to attribute 'genuine' and indigenous value as opposed to the status of 'low class' and 'cheap' kitsch to local and yet global imaginaries. Uberoi's specific find beckons questions about the entanglement of the print's 'Chinese' and 'Indian' elements, and confronts us with the concern that is central to our exploration of flows of images and media: how can we trace an image's 'social life' (Appadurai 1986)? Can we trace it back to an 'origin' in time and space, and if so: what surplus value would we have if we did, especially in the light of a growing tendency in the humanities to abandon the proclamation of, and desire for, 'one origin', 'authenticity' and 'teleological genealogy'?

Our entry image and the primary material of the articles assembled in this volume demand that we deliberate on a host of different flows and entanglements: The flows of ideas and concepts, in this case of national identity, sovereignty and citizenship, that are at play between Europe and Asia, as well as within Asia, and that cut across the (Eurocentric) divide between the religious and political domains. Moreover, we must consider images and media as part of and signifiers of flows of production and markets. Again, with our entry image at the back of our mind, it would be interesting to know more about the production background and potential audiences and publics intended to be created or/and reached by a certain medium. For example, when our image was made, i.e. in the first half of the twentieth century, Chinese printing presses dominated the market – much like today – and thus generated flows of media and images that circulated in and through hitherto little-known territories and publics.[4] Furthermore, there is not just one mediascape (Appadurai 1996), but there are flows of different media technologies and genres that contribute to speeding up, or complicating the movement of images across space, time and audiences. Sometimes, these scapes cross and spill into each other; sometimes they compete and exclude each other, generating different kinds of entanglements and separations. This multi-media landscape cannot not be

[3]Osian's is an institution founded in 2000, dedicated to collecting, studying and selling Indian art, both 'fine' art and 'popular' or 'folk' art, predominantly from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (see http://www.osians.com/, accessed on 6.6.2010). It is best known for its role as an auction house.

[4]The ecologies of technological exchange and use are sadly understudied in terms of the circulation of printing presses: prints were not only produced in China and India, but also in Germany (see Jain 2004), even though India had had its own printing presses since the arrival of the Jesuits in South India (see Babb and Wadley 1995).

understood without considering the concept of intermediality, which means forwarding the idea of intertextuality. There is a constant and dynamic cross-referencing within and between media domain/s and genres. Thus, if we look at one particular medium and how it enriches and thickens, or, conversely, decreases and slows down the 'meaning' and speed of an image in a particular time, space and circuit, we ought to be able to relate this to other media genres, such as painting, film or photo-studio iconography, or to the realm of material or digital culture. Intervisuality, too, as a concept and practice of cross-referencing and mutually citing images (so for example as to look familiar, or different to a referent), underlines the attempt to grasp transculturality from different angles, urges us to take up different positions as we look at an image and try to understand its itinerary. The concepts of intervisuality or interocularity[5] are relevant to explore the interdependence and different fabric of sites and modes of seeing within different media (Ramaswamy 2003: XVI). They are thus key to our understanding of transculturality as a zone and process of highly asymmetrical entanglements. Finally, flows of symbolic meaning, performativity and aesthetic experience require consideration. The symbolic meaning of this particular Buddha as pointing towards a prosperous and harmonious future shifts in combination with the Indian Independence leaders. Sandwiched between the stoic and skinny figures of the Freedom Movement, where no similar Buddhist iconography exists and Buddhism is not associated with national identity, the Chinese Buddha's return to his 'homeland' and his fusion with the narrative of national independence leaves much space for further exploration.[6] A corporeal quality emerges from the combination of different physical appearances in the image, based on the almost diametrically opposite physicality of the figures and genres that the image hinges on. There is, for instance, the symbol of spirituality versus the historical figures of Nehru, Gandhi and Bose; there is the ascetic aloofness of the latter versus the tangible one of the Buddha. The spiritual symbolism and voluptuous corporeality of the Buddha and the children – referring to wealth and prosperity – address the beholder with a different tactility than the ascetic corporeality of the Indian figures. The latter suggests rather a withdrawal of figure and beholder through the veil of political iconography.[7] All this points us to the recognition of multiple performative levels at work in an image like the one discussed here, connected or untied, encoded/decoded (Hall 1997) in the process of looking at or remembering an image. It further relates us to what Christopher Pinney and others have coined as the poetic work of 'performative

[5]Intervisuality stands for the cross-referencing of visual codes of representation, for multiple viewpoints, sometimes even embedded in one beholder (Mirzoeff 2000). Interocularity attributes relevance to the embraidedness of ways of seeing while gazing at an image or object. The latter concept underlines the agency of the beholder (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1992).

[6]In a political context, the Buddha is usually associated with the Dalit Movement against the dogma of 'Untouchability', and heralded mass conversion of low-caste members to Buddhism under the leadership of BR Ambedkar in the 1940s.

[7]Thanks to Rudolf Wagner for further stimulating this particular thought process.

productivity', both in the image and the beholder (Pinney 2001: 169). The meaning attributed to an image changes constantly, depending on its itinerary, locale, time and audience of consumption.

Our Buddha image forces us to consider questions of cultural translation and speaking in tongues. In our disciplines' desire for overlapping cultural and regional mappings, we seem illiterate when it comes to 'reading' its inner-Asian, entangled 'texts' and contexts. Despite the puzzles of production, circulation and 'intentionality' surrounding this image, it is a visual stepping stone to invite discussions around newly emerging and challenging concepts in the humanities: transculturality and the cultural flows and asymmetries connected with it. Our key image also throws light on another level of inquiry: the study of the making, unmaking, and fabric of public spheres. Examining the transcultural entanglements of images, sounds, media and concepts, as well as the actors involved in creating, perpetuating or obstructing them, helps us to better understand the qualitative shifts in public (and private) spheres at different moments of historical and regional significance. We argue that presupposing the existence of multiple public spheres helps us to promote the idea of 'entangled publics' that stimulate each other by generating contested or consensual concepts and meanings. One of the competencies required to trace – and understand – the itinerary of images and media – would be to adopt George Marcus' concept of multi-sited ethnography as a crucial method for understanding globalisation as practice (1995). This suggests an approach toward translation based on multi-perspectival and multi-sited ways of looking that also imbue the history of seeing, image-production and circulation.[8] We are grateful that many of our colleagues at the Karl Jaspers Centre for Transcultural Studies have helped us to embark on the process of a 'thick description' of an image, its routes and roots (Geertz 1973; Clifford 1997).[9] From the perspective of Monica Juneja, who holds the Cluster's Chair of Global Art History, the image stirs the beholder's curiosity because it addresses him/her with a codified repertoire that has not been seen in synergy before. It juxtaposes different kinds of visualities and ways of seeing. Inserting a laughing Buddha, who symbolizes wealth and fertility, into a space of political iconography – of national struggle for independence – seems strange, almost surreal, to those trained in western logic and gazing. The Cluster Professor of Buddhist Studies, Birgit Kellner, associated the figure of Maitreya, the coming Buddha who fosters tolerance, generosity and contentment, with the fact that fighting for freedom requires a utopian goal and particular desires such as abundance, fertility, health and energy. Yet, he is framed by a representative of non-violence and by a figure who does not object to the use of violence for the sake of national

[8]Sarat Maharaj (2004) used the term 'twittered gaze' to point to the highly decentralized and fragmented ways of looking across vast areas of image and media production and circulation, yet not in terms of a panoramic but a consciously incomplete, multi-sited and interrupted activity.

[9]Thick description is a term coined by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) who considered it to be a method by which a case could be explored from as many perspectives and contextual levels of meaning as possible, as in an archaeological excavation.

Independence. The Cluster Professor of Intellectual History, Joachim Kurtz, suggested that the Buddha's presence points to Maitreya's ambivalent role in the Chinese context, both as torchbearer and opponent of millennialist rebellion. But why, given that there are 'Indian' iconographies of Maitreya, was he depicted as a Chinese *Budai*? Was a particular audience imagined, competent to decode the difference? The Fat Buddha, surrounded by children is often referred to as the 'Buddha of Fulfilment'. Maybe, in a Benjaminian way, this image, as 'wish image', alerts us to the utopian space of overcoming social and class differences for a classless society of empowered national citizens? (Buck-Morss 1991).

In order to trace the transcultural quality of the image, a "multi-sited ethnography" (Marcus 1995) proves to be a useful tool. This new theoretical paradigm, which emerged with the growing interest in exploring cultural globalisation, enables the researcher to see his 'field' as consisting of different localities of which he should be a connoisseur. Marcus' motto to follow a person, a concept, a thing or, in our case, an image, also works well in the historical dimension: it will be worthwhile searching public and private archives for traces of these collaged elements' social life and exploring local perspectives that relate to the aspirations of producers and beholders of globalised images like our collage from 1940. Yet, as Sumathi Ramaswamy (Chap. 9, this volume) cautions: the researcher must be willing to leave the firm ground of clearly defined concepts. One such unusual path could well lead a researcher to colonial photo-studio set-ups of people portrayed – and classified – in front of theatrical backdrops such as landscapes (see Pinney 1997). As Jyotindra Jain has shown for the development of Indian popular prints in the first quarter of the twentieth century, the iconography of the emerging nation-state was a confluence of poetry, photography, film and theatrical elements. This repository of intermediality was further enriched – and complicated – by the fact that until the 1930s, some print production was outsourced to Chinese or German printing presses, which may have heightened the hybridity of a print, and might be one source for gaining a better understanding of the surreal assembly discussed here. Many of these entanglements have yet to be traced in order to get a better picture of global imaginaries (Gaonkar 2002).

In this multi-levelled constellation, localised versions of a global concept such as collage come to play an important role. Braiding European history painting with Indian mythological plays, 'classical', 'folk' and political narratives and styles, a "degree of ambivalence, illusion, duplicity, opposition and transgression ... [a] transgressive embrace" was generated (Jain 2004: 91). Jain highlights the challenges to our translation and transfer competencies when he says that,

> "[the c]ollage allowed shifts of locales and characters, facilitated their transfer from one time, place or genre to another. The landscape was thus turned into an ambivalent space between the sacred and the erotic, the celestial and the terrestrial, between the mythical and the colonial, here the corresponding spaces of each binary did not remain mutually exclusive but could be confused one with the other" (Jain 2004: 81).

To us, the collage of the Buddha, the babies, the cat and the Indian political figures offers itself as a stage of transculturality and urges us to think about

transculturality as both a product and a contact zone of flows and entanglements that underpin cultural dynamics. As a method, we are presented with the challenge of studying the contact zones of oscillation, conflict and entanglement, the topographies of multi-centred sites of meaning production, the discursive regimes of the fragmented and multi-perspectival nature of seeing. In today's multi-media and nomadic world, we must learn to develop a way of reading the snippets and fragments of images circulating globally, develop a competence to read images 'in time' and 'in place', across contexts and in depth, beyond sheer accumulation. Maybe then our challenge lies not only in learning how to grasp the speed and simultaneity at which images and media currently circumambulate the globe (see Thussu 2007), but also in that concepts such as 'origin', 'indigeneity' and 'authenticity' carry with them highly problematic elements of essentialisation and reduction, and have always done so. How do we, for instance, approach the question of visible – or invisible – 'Chineseness' in the art work of an artist born in China but living abroad (see Chap. 6, this volume); and further think along the lines of scholars such as W.J.T Mitchell (2005) or Clare Harris (2007) who have addressed this issue of image migration, the accumulation of different forms of capital, the multi-sitedness of art production (and contextualisation) in the course of migration, as well as the subject of diaspora aesthetics (Nuttall 2006).

Even though we cannot provide definite answers to many points posed by our collage, the print has pushed us to ask enough questions about different qualities of flows of media and images to shake up our notion of undisputable categories.

Entangled Transcultural Worlds

In arguing that European/Western development has never been detached from the 'rest' of the world, particularly not its colonies, scholars like Conrad and Randeria (2002), Subrahmanyan (2004) or Chakrabarty (2000) have helped us to understand the reciprocal condition of two geographical 'entities' such as 'Asia' and 'Europe'. Breaking with the fiction of independent national histories, and proposing the idea of histories as "entanglement" (Conrad and Randeria 2002: 17), Conrad and Randeria locate these entanglements not only between imperial centre and colonies, but also in pre-colonial contexts of 'connected histories' (Conrad and Randeria 2002: 10). Moreover, we must also recognise the inner-European and inner-Asian flows of images and media that can be triggered by cross-continental forces and agents. And, as Conrad and Randeria argue in their venture into transcultural history writing, any transcultural shift in the humanities also implies an even more focussed look at subaltern and marginalised groups (Conrad and Randeria 2002: 11). Thus studying, for instance, multi-layered and asymmetrical flows of exchange to and from, or inbetween these two continents may ultimately render scholarly Eurocentric views of nationally confined histories and development

impotent. As far as agency of social agents involved in transcultural entanglements is concerned, Conrad and Randeria point to both shared and divided histories (Conrad and Randeria 2002: 17–18) and their dynamics, generating different agents and different qualities of and perspectives on modernity. This underlines the idea of distributed or multi-centred modernities. The former questions the Eurocentric hierarchy of one centre and its peripheries; the latter heralds the co-existence of sites where at different moments in time (and sometimes in reference to one-another), modernities occur that do not 'copy' an 'original'. On the one hand, images and media may constitute shared experiences and ideas of modernity; on the other, they may produce the opposite: differentiation and alteration, local specificity rather than a global imaginary.

Image flows cannot be envisaged as peaceful rivers, running along evenly. Instead, they are interrupted, sometimes violently; marked by ruptures, disjunctures, and uneven landscapes, changing direction and velocity over time. How can we address the speed and quality, the nomadic life of migrating images over the course of histories and across geophysical and media-related territories; how can we explore the variety of social agents participating in image and media circulation; what can the different disciplines in the humanities contribute to a better understanding of the embraided histories of images and image-making in a networked world? Intermediality and interocularity, as they compel collage, are important concepts that allow us to get to grips with the processes of entanglement between 'Asia' and 'Europe', and of transculturality.

The 'right' and rationale to operate with concepts such as rupture or disjuncture (Appadurai 1996) has, of course, been claimed before by others. One need only to think of the paradigmatic changes triggered by the 'crisis of representation' (Clifford and Marcus 1986) and 'turns' of different kinds: literary, performative, visual or cultural. By acknowledging the importance of practice and agency, these intellectual and discursive shifts have unsettled disciplines like history, European art history, literature studies, and anthropology. The generated ruptures encouraged self-reflexivity and critical distance vis-à-vis any established academic theoretical tools, methods and data. The heuristic concept of transculturality is thought-provoking and challenging, without rendering individual disciplines and regional competences obsolete. Instead, transculturality opens them to new approaches, spurring fresh discussions of globalisation, colonisation or modernity. It utilises self-reflexivity for a sharpening of analytical tools and to re-conceptualise canonising and essentialising concepts such as 'authenticity' or 'origin'. Transculturality also highlights problematic categories of distinction, particularly dichotomies such as indigeneity and hybridity, high and low art, religious and secular domains. However, 'transcultural' does not necessarily equal 'transnational', as much as 'culture' is not identical with 'nation'. Transcultural is not automatically a global phenomenon. It also stands for the presence of different cultural practices in one physically confined space, such as colonial rule or the missionary presence in India. Despite large zones of overlap, both

concepts still require additional fine-tuning, always with reference to particular cases and data.

Transculturality as Translation

This volume proposes that by studying the flows of images and media, we sharpen our competence and 'literacy' to think, write and speak transculturally. "The concept of transculturality sketches a different picture of the relation between cultures. Not one of isolation and of conflict, but one of entanglement, intermixing and commonness. It promotes not separation, but exchange and interaction", writes philosopher Welsch (1999). The matter is even more complicated since we must reflect on the role of local notions of, for example, beauty, authenticity, or realism without essentialising them. Furthermore, we need to consider visual and media ecologies beyond single-sited instances and trace the multi-layered movements of images and media on the surface and underground, in diachronic and synchronic ways, in and between different public and private spheres. Obviously, the flow of images cannot be restricted to the contemporary age. Instead, there is a deep and varied past of transcultural exchanges, relations, entanglements and networks that may only be understood if we look at images and media in more detail, and from multiple perspectives (see Chaps. 7 and 8, this volume).

The concept of transculturality can be used to relate to a particular research topic as well as to an analytical method. It can render obsolete the notion of culture as ethnically bound and contained within a territorial frame, a common academic practice that is rooted in the nation-building of the late nineteenth century. Discussions on transculturation focus on forms that emerge in local contexts, within different kinds of circuits of exchange, employing different strategies of translation: "Coming to grips with the dialectical tension between alterity and assimilation that lies at the heart of transcultural encounters points to a close and useful connection between strategies and practices of translation and processes that follow in the wake of circulation and contact" (Juneja 2010). Transfer, transformation and translation certainly provide crucial, fine-tuned angles on transculturation processes – as do alteration and assimilation. However, in his essay on the nature of the elementary dictionary that helps translate other cultures into one's own language (following the alleged intention to 'better understand' and integrate the other), Sarat Maharaj also warns of the danger that translation produces difference (2004: 154). He proposes that in some cases, one must also acknowledge the 'untranslatability of the other' and the agency on behalf of 'the other/ed' to resist "being rendered in someone's else's terms" (Maharaj 2004: 155). It is therefore crucial to recognize disciplinary borders and the limits of 'dictionaries' as long as we are caught up in a 'Cartesian grid' of rendering the self – and the other – visible, palpable and translatable. As we know from Foucault: visibility, at times, can also be a trap! Or in the words of Maharaj: "Transparency comes with a price" (Maharaj 2004: 159). Thus in our

desire to trace and translate difference, often of 'the Other', we must be aware of the possible political and ethical implications.

Itineraries, Flows and Gazes

Much of the current research underlining the relevance of flows of images builds on the insights of scholars who have worked on the idea of image mobility before. One who contributed significantly to this venture is Aby Warburg (1866–1929), a German cultural historian who coined the term of the "image itinerary" (Bilderwanderung) in his Mnemosyne Image Atlas (Bilderatlas) in his study of image production and circulation across cultures, geophysical borders and times.[10] Walter Benjamin is certainly another scholar whose work on the transformation of subjectivity by means of new media technologies and spaces impacts on current discussions of visuality and mediality (see Benjamin 1973/1936). Yet, to them, regional and cultural identities still overlap to a great extent. To mention all the scholars and initiatives exploring the idea of image and media production, circulation and 'reception' across national borders would go beyond the scope of this introduction; an overview would have to include the works of Mitchell (2005), Belting (2008), Mirzoeff (2004), Guth (2000), Thomas (1991), and Mercer (2008) – to mention but a few. Initiatives such as 'Migrating Images', which was held at Berlin's House of World Cultures in 2002 (see Stegmann and Seel 2004), allow scholars from different disciplines to engage in questions of the translation, transfer and transformation of images, particularly from non-European perspectives.

The study of diasporic communities and contexts diachronic and synchronic certainly serves as fertile ground for the examination of transcultural flows of images and media, along with notions such as cosmopolitanism, in-between space or creolisation. Mitchell asks: "To what extent . . . are images like migrants: homeless, stateless, displaced persons, exiles, or hopeful aspirants to a 'new location' where they may find a home?" (Mitchell 2004: 15). The contact zones between 'Asia' and 'Europe' are definitely indicative of this discussion and require further exploration. How can we address the speed and quality, the nomadic life of images over the course of histories and across geophysical and media-related territories? How can we differentiate levels of image and media movement, as well as efficacy when it comes to, for instance, distinguishing between a 'global icon' and a 'national' or 'regional' icon (see Chaps. 7–9, this volume)?

[10]Aby Warburg was a child of his times, and one of his pioneering approaches was certainly to look at the changing media and iconographies, across media genres and societies (e.g. the Pueblo Indians and their snake ritual, prints, paraphernalia of popular culture). In his desire to understand creative production as an ongoing contestation of identities and emotions, and as mimetic, Warburg sought 'essential' markers of human emotions that were generated in images across the world (see Rappl 2006).

Mediascapes and Transcultural Flows

Flows do not necessarily happen between two ('firm') poles, and unidirectionally. There are various agents and factors that circulate images and use media spaces on multiple horizontal and vertical levels, of various depth and width, some of them connected by nodal points of entanglement, re-localising centres and peripheries which may previously have been taken for granted. The movement of images and media across borders – only some of which are of a geographical or political nature – offers itself as particularly fruitful when venturing into such new fields of scholarly contemplation.

This volume not only considers images to be relevant for an understanding of transculturality, or vice versa. Media and mediality are equally crucial in this process. For example, the fact that our aforementioned Buddha image is a print underlines the ubiquity of an image through its wide circulation and, probably, reasonable price around 1940. But on the other hand, today's image and media illiteracy in terms of decoding the print speaks volumes about its restricted access, circulation and audiences. New media technologies help to circulate new images to new – or old – audiences but their 'message' is never identical. This has a major influence on the encoding/decoding process, especially if it evolves, for instance, in a transcultural contact zone. Mediality indicates that "cultural artifacts and communicative processes are fundamentally organized by media", and media are "infrastructural systems that form cultures and their perceptual, epistemological and communicative systems" (Jäger et al. 2010: 11–12).

In the light of this, it makes sense to pose working questions that were relevant to many authors in this volume and point towards new fields of research. They concern the relation between media and images with respect to the nature of image flows. To some extent, media technologies can be regarded as having a kind of agency, a particular rationale, of their own, with which they influence the directions, speed, intensity or ruptures of flows. Moreover, there is the question of how media are perceived in different (trans)cultural contexts, by whom and under what circumstances. Some authors have investigated how such perceptions and perspectives change when media migrate or change, or, when the social agents migrate (see Chaps. 2 and 9, this volume). Such transformations impact on the speed of circulation and audience reached, as well as notions of authenticity and social agents' participation in the making of media narratives (see Chap. 4, this volume). Others inquired into how different media let us think about the production and transfer of knowledge and media literacy across fields of cultural production; whether it makes sense to consider 'indigenous' media and media practices; whether we think differently and more precisely about the notion of public spheres when considering transcultural media and intermediality?

Besides transculturality, two other concepts seem suited to exploring the flows of images and media: that of the rhizome and that of the archipelago. The rhizome responds to Aby Warburg's notion of image journeys, which was touched on earlier in reference to Arjun Appadurai's 'social life of things' (1987), as well as

Mitchell's idea of images as migrants. Ramaswamy (Chap. 9, this volume) has likewise addressed the problematic of tracing images along seemingly linear and logical axes. Particularly Deleuze and Guattari's (2004/1980) configuration of the rhizome as a model for culture and knowledge seems to bring us to a better understanding of the principles of heterogeneity and connectivity, of multiplicity and cartography, conjunction and alliance (2004: 27). Glissant's concept of Antillanité in his work *Poetics of Relation* (2006/1997) associates with that of the archipelago. It emerges in the context of creolisation and métissage as relational multiplicity and diversity – and where, in his case, language is not fixed to a particular place but in relation (though locality is important) across language barriers. The archipelago is also part of a metaphor of the slave ship and its journey between the territories of utopia, imagination and memory. The flow of images and media, we argue, can be better analysed with concepts such as the rhizome and archipelago because they underline nomadic topographies, and force us to move along, reading –'in between-spaces', or speaking 'in tongues'.[11]

Cultural Mobility

Ulf Hannerz has turned our attention to the role of cultural flows as the basis of global cultural interconnectedness and cultural complexity (1992): "Only by being constantly in motion, forever being recreated, can meanings and meaningful forms become durable" (Hannerz 1997: 4–5). Transcultural flows – just like any other form of flow or transfer – need a carrier. Such carriers come in a variety of different forms. In many cases, humans themselves act as carriers when they move between – or along the borders of – different cultures and societies. At other times, cultural content travels with, and is simultaneously shaped by media – for instance by an image. Yet, media is not a passive supportive element, part of an overcome diffusion theory, but an "organised complexity" (Balke and Scholz 2010: 38). Media and image mobility are never devoid of power. They take different forms of visibility, caused by and causing a range of notions and intentions. Even more so, we may argue, they never move solely in one direction. Instead, we propose, they are distributed across, and move via various agents, scapes and fields of discourse. While Hannerz differentiates between multicentricity of flows, crisscrossing flows and counterflows (Hannerz 1996, 1997: 6), Daya Kishan Thussu, for instance, calls for a typology of media flows between Asia and Europe and suggests the classification 'contra', 'dominant' and 'subaltern' (2007: 5). And the contributions in this volume attempt to expand on the groundwork laid by these two scholars because each of the 'types' of flow allows a different perspective and approach. The contributions in this volume all share the common assumption that flows of images are part of different ecologies of circulation and communication. In some cases, they mark

[11]Thanks to Andrea Hacker for the very useful hint about Glissant's work. See also Budick/Iser 1996.

forms of exchange that are reminiscent of Marcel Mauss' essay on the gift (1990/1923) (see Chap. 2 on Valentine's Day greeting cards, this volume). Yet, accompanying the concept of flow, or circulation, we also have to consider other concepts, such as borders and asymmetrical relationships that determine the quality and speed of flows.

Our interwoven world is shaped by asymmetries. This implies, to follow Madeleine Herren (2010), a theoretical model of transculturality that incorporates asymmetrical relations and a certain 'materiality' with various costs and gains. In our various disciplines, concepts have to be developed or reconfigured so that we can replace the idea of 'poles' with asymmetries 'flowing' between them. One such concept could be Etiènne Balibar's concept of the 'polysemic nature of borders', or that of contact zones (Clifford 1997; Pratt 1992).[12] Flows refer to dynamic processes, to objects, people, meanings – and images – across time and space, sometimes oscillating, unnoticed, sometimes sinking and emerging unannounced and unexpected. An exploration of the flows of images in the context of transcultural asymmetries has to question how local the global is, and in return, how global the local is; it has to probe whether the concept of the cosmopolitan is always 'automatically' transcultural in terms of generating a 'third space' (Bhabha 1994), and how the notion of 'home' is as monolithic as transculturality is complex, particularly when we consider diasporic movements. Moreover, we may ask what happens to a concept such as ethnicity when it travels along transnational pathways and networks across time and space.

We can argue that visual media do not only enable us to explore multiple histories, but that they make and shape history in a networked, entangled world. It is, however, important to steer clear of the popular misconception that images speak some sort of global language and are, therefore, universally accessible across cultural borders. Several of the contributions to this volume show in different temporal and spatial contexts that images do (or rather must) change their meanings and their cultural significance when travelling through different cultural circumstances (e.g. Chap. 6, this volume). But, of course, images and other visual media can be looked at and perceived immediately across different cultures. Even if images are not universally comprehensible, the spectator can get an impression of instant understanding. While the incomprehensibility of the spoken and written language of the 'Other' is immediately obvious to the recipient and can, therefore, hardly be filled with a new and original meaning, visual content from a different cultural background carries the misleading aura of easy accessibility and tempts the

[12]However, we must also be cautious not to exaggerate the role of asymmetries because, as Joachim Kurtz underlines, "the obsession with power imbalances and their consequences has tended to obstruct efforts to produce sufficiently nuanced accounts of the complexity of interactions in and between cultures" (Kurtz 2010). Pointing to a similar risk of over-emphasizing difference, Maharaj proposes that the creolising mode should guard "against attributing to it a totally positivist charge, against valorizing it as the generative font pitted against multicultural [and transcultural, CB] glory", underlining that the creolising mode is double-jointed in being both generator and replicator of difference (Maharaj 2004: 153).

spectator into incorporating the travelling image into his or her cultural context. In short: while visual content carries vastly different meanings across cultural borders, it always offers the universal characteristic of instant visual accessibility. In the image, different cultural signifiers can be merged to form one seamless whole; one blends into the other and borders become blurred or completely invisible.

In addition to the concepts of flow, asymmetry and transculturality, which all help us to both tighten and expand our toolkit to understand the emergence of global imaginaries or translocal image itineraries, we want to propose the terms "archipelago" and "turbulence" as useful. Through them, the idea of multi-centred entanglements and uneven, fragmented flows of images and media can be better grasped. Archipelagos are enclaves, part of new geopolitical imaginations and fragmented space. They challenge any notion of a harmonious and boundless flow, and focus our attention on the topographies of transculturation; the spaces through and against which flows move; the different types of what a 'third space' could actually stand for, and on scapes and sites of different kinds: islands, extra-territorial spaces, special economic zones, enclaves and ghettos. This is so because flows are generated by social, military, financial, or bureaucratic networks, many of which are highly decentralized and widely distributed, which obstructs defining the force of flows. Finally, if we study contact zones and translations, is border-crossing still relevant, does it imply "exciting" something and "entering" something else, or do we not rather stay within the system of circulation? Turbulences point us to the speed and simultaneity with which images may move, rendering our desire for stable topographies impotent for a moment, and allowing us to consider distorting, revealing, elevating, and even destructive forces of cultural production.

One of the key challenges addressed in this volume is examining the different routes that images and visual media take in the space between, in our case, Asia and Europe, even though particularly the terms archipelago and turbulence question our attempt to 'trace' a clear-cut itinerary across one map. The asymmetries that inform many of the relations and connections between the two continents pose a special challenge – particularly considering today's shifting global balances, which are marked, for instance, by economic liberalisation in some Asian countries, or the financial and economic crisis in others as well as in the West. In this light we need to reconsider what Nicholas Mirzoeff calls "the imbricated histories of visual colonialism and transculture" (2002) to fully understand the shaping, dissemination, institutionalisation and legitimisation of, for instance, colonial and imperial power (and the backflows that gain momentum in the postcolonial era), or, in a more general sense, of intercultural power relations as a context for transcultural exchange.

About the Chapters

The contributions to this volume have been arranged in two distinct sections concerned with different aspects of the transcultural travels of images. The first section deals with different forms of cosmopolitanism (or internationalism) and its

visual representations. "Love in the Age of Valentine and Pink Underwear: Media and Politics of Intimacy in South Asia" by Christiane Brosius explores the flows of images that circulate in the context of a previously Anglo-American holiday, Valentine's Day, and examines how Valentine's Day greeting cards have been shaping notions of romantic love among India's growing urbanised youth culture after the country's economic liberalisation in 1990. The author argues that with the images and the medium of the card, a 'new' vocabulary and performative practice fell on fertile ground in a radically changing society, where new relations and lifestyles can be aspired to, with new sites of leisure and consumption such as restaurants, bars, cafes, and parks. Moreover, the images and media stand for a new 'public intimacy' and visibility of youth in public that does not always find support. Instead, conservative groups of different origin and motivation contest and try to restrict the new emotions and their 'display' because they undermine what is presented as the 'traditional' way of life: Indian culture and marital relationships arranged by caste and religious background. The seemingly free mobility of images thus competes with attempts to regulate new models of flexibility and mobility in the context of romantic love and leisure lifestyle.

In "Shifting Identities and Cosmopolitan Machineries: a New World Imagined at the 1919 Peace Conference in Paris", Madeleine Herren delineates a similarly strong connection between the construction of a cosmopolitan community and the need for visual representations with their accompanying signifiers. The article looks at the cosmopolitan imagination as an intermediary, a third level between the Self and cultural Otherness; it explores this idea in the context of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. This post-war conference took place in a peculiar imaginary that was accordingly "filled with the employment of new forms of communication, with the political importance of visual sources, the increasing value of performative actions" (p. 68, this volume). Moreover, the negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference show that works of visual art and other media concerning, for instance, the heritage discourse can easily get saddled with a variety of different meanings. "In Paris of 1919 debates on art works gave the losses and gains of war cultural visibility and mobilised experts, who then, although members of a transnational expert community, drafted national claims as expert members of national peace delegations" (p. 80, this volume). Claims and contestations depended, as Herren argues, on the "availability" and circulation of "cosmopolitan knowledge". The latter shifted over time, as did the symbolic referents (e.g. Lawrence of Arabia's headdress, the conscious display of and reference to communications technologies or other devices of modernity). Herren defines different fabrics and stages of cosmopolitanism over a period of time by exploring the metaphor of machinery as well as the circulation of objects such as war booties, and argues that they "represent competitive forms of shifting identities, one denying, one claiming territoriality; one based on the imaginary of crossing borders in creating new, mechanical forms, the other drawing upon existing traditions" (pp. 81–82, this volume) In considering material culture and media technologies, Herren thus provides us with a methodological toolkit that allows us to understand that the imaginary of the

world's connectedness, very much part of the machinery metaphor, is broken into pieces when it comes to property claims.

In her contribution "'The 99': Islamic Superheroes – A New Species?", Susanne Enderwitz illustrates the internationalisation and universalisation of an Islamic story and the Islamic values presented in an Iranian comic strip by investigating both content and visual representation. While, at first glance, a comic strip dealing with cultural and religious issues appearing from the Muslim world seems to contradict Islam's iconoclastic tradition, it is, argues Enderwitz, the consequence of the Muslim world's integration into the network of global media flows as well as its emancipation from strictly consuming to also producing images. The agents behind "The 99" have adapted a Western visual concept (the super hero comic strip), charged it with different cultural meanings, distributed the final product in a global market and, in doing so, internationalised the visual carrier medium. The Teshkeel Media Group, KSC markets the comic series on a global scale in joint ventures with local comic presses. For one, this underlines the fact that a media genre, like a comic, gains stunning popularity worldwide whilst, secondly, specific audiences have to be considered and are accessed. Moreover, "The 99" shows interesting parallels to similar initiatives such as Amar Chitra Katha, an Indian comic series founded in 1967 that intended to inform Indian middle class and overseas children on Indian (largely Hindu) history and culture (see McLain 2009; Chandra 2008). These media shape a new topography of iconography and narratives that address a transnational ecumene; they also make us reconsider the concept of the public sphere as developed by Jürgen Habermas (1989), which focused on the European bourgeoisie. Instead, to quote Dale Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson, "a new sense of public is emerging throughout Muslim-majority states and Muslim communities elsewhere" (Eickelman and Anderson 2003: 1). Enderwitz's paper underpins the importance of the concept of asymmetry by showing how the maker of 'The 99' is trying to shift an asymmetry in comics that mostly moves in one direction by reversing this direction and thus shifting the asymmetry.

In "Guides to a Global Paradise: Shanghai Entertainment Park Newspapers and the Invention of Chinese Urban Leisure", Catherine Yeh traces how the image of the world – and all that it had to offer in terms of "novelty, curiosity and exotic splendor" – became the central symbol of leisure in the burgeoning Shanghai of the early twentieth century. By exploring The Eden, a Shanghai entertainment park newspaper published by the Xianshi department store, Yeh examines the fabric of early twentieth century urban imaginaries that The Eden heralded. The projection diverted from Shanghai's quotidian reality, thus creating an asymmetrical relationship between everyday urban life and the aspirations invoked by (and attached to) the image of the big, wide world as access to cosmopolitanism while retaining 'Chineseness'. The growing leisure industry and topography (e.g. amusement parks) and the emergence of national tourism generated a glocalised imaginary that shaped 'social facts' and gave rise to a cosmopolitan but still 'authentic' Chinese culture. Yeh also highlights the ways in which western models of dailies and entertainment parks in Shanghai became part of a global city competition, in

which the city's more rural 'hinterland' moved to the communicational periphery, while other metropolitan cities moved 'closer' in terms of the perceived alikeness to Shanghai. This field of transcultural production identified in Yeh's paper points us towards a particular third space of transculturation.

In the concluding essay of the section on 'Visual Cosmopolitanism' entitled "The Art of Cosmopolitanism: Visual Potentialities in Ma Jun, Tomokazu Matsuyama, David Diao, and Patty Chang", Alexandra Chang looks at the art work of these four contemporary artists as visual representations of cosmopolitan spaces. Chang argues that the flows of images between Asia, the United States and Europe have influenced these artists' work and that powerful images in their spatial contexts can become cultural signifiers which, once they are connected and transformed, open up a cosmopolitan space with its own visual signifiers.

The second section of this volume looks at the movements and circulations of images. Alexander Henn's "Pictorial Encounter: Iconoclasm and Syncretism on India's Western Coast" focuses on the drastic religious iconoclasm directed at Hindu culture in and around Portuguese Goa in the sixteenth century (Mitter 1997). Henn asks what turned the religious image into both agent and object of different political powers. He inquires into how pictorial practice (including idolatry) could simultaneously embrace syncretism and iconoclasm (see Gruzinski 2001) and how one practice could be declared as 'illegitimate worship' (i.e., Hindu), whilst the other was considered 'legitimate veneration' (Christian). To scholars concerned with transculturality as entanglements, Henn's discussion of syncretism points towards the need to further differentiate the terminologies. Moreover, the idea of flows and asymmetries is fruitfully employed in his elaborations on the changing meaning of icons during and after iconoclastic periods.

The author emphasizes the strong and yet changing potential for identification in visual symbols and representations, particularly in a religious setting. When in the nineteenth and twentieth century the Portuguese-Christian attitude towards sites of Hindu worship gradually relaxed, many of the destroyed Hindu shrines were rebuilt – often in close proximity to their original sites which now housed Christian imagery. This practice facilitated the syncretism between the returning Hindu representations and their prevailing Christian replacements, and created a particular form of transcultural visuality and contestation over religious piety. Similarly, "Kannon – Guanyin – Virgin Mary: Early Modern Discourses on Alterity, Religion and Images" by Eva Zhang also addresses the strong associations of identity and belonging to visual symbols. The author highlights the iconographic similarities between Chinese and Japanese depictions of the Buddhist bodhisattva of compassion, on the one hand, and those of the Christian Virgin Mary on the other. Early Jesuit missionaries active in China and Japan did not fail to recognize these similarities and instrumentalized them in their efforts at proselytisation. In doing so, they produced a transcultural imagery associated with certain values and qualities rather than with a particular religion. Sharing the 'same' images does not necessarily mean that the ideas and meanings they convey are based on consensus. Again, as has also become apparent in Henn's contribution, many European attempts to regulate the flow of images and their meanings relate to the concept of idolatry. While

syncretic practices could be accommodated in China, this was as Zhang argues not possible in the European discourse. In examining this rich visual data, the paper raises questions of interocularity or intervisuality, questions of asymmetries in power relations and questions of the nature and itineraries of image flows.

"The Work of Goddesses in the Age of Mass Reproduction" by Sumathi Ramaswamy chases the remarkable flow of a particular image from Egypt via France to the United States of America, and from there through various (sometimes unlikely) stopovers to the Uprising of Chinese Students in 1989 on Tiananmen Square – thus back to the "East" – and India's 'lowest' caste, the Dalit. The author vividly shows how the image in question – in this case the depiction of Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi's sculpture *Liberty Enlightening the World* – has been charged with very different and at times contesting meanings on its way through various cultures, regions and spaces. Ramaswamy also argues that Liberty's mass reproduction and the circulation of her depictions popularised her image, made it almost universally recognizable and thus imbued it with additional meanings and associations in different interpretational contexts, all with the urge to embody and materialise, to mimic and appropriate images (Taussig 1993). Her paper suggests that in tracing a chain of images, different routes need to be taken to source and contextualise the visual data, multi-sited excavation must be practiced, and multi-perspectival dynamics researched and groomed. Ramaswamy thus demonstrates mastery in what we earlier called a 'thick description' of images, underlining the importance of transculturality both as method and content. She further stipulates that while following the itineraries of an image on the move, the desire to prioritise the 'original' over the 'copy', or vice versa, is doomed to fail. Instead, every copy must be approached as an original.

In his contribution "Pushpamala N. and the 'Art' of Cinephilia in India", Ajay Sinha argues that in the works of artist Pushpamala N., neo-Kantian aesthetics are "provincialised", that is, reconfigured and pushed to the margins. The author suggests that Pushpamala in her work transgresses transcultural borders. "Her 'being inside the image, not just outside, looking' claims to step over the limits of art and generate an illicit flow with kitsch, which postcolonial iconophilia has overlooked." (p. 226, this volume) In this essay, the asymmetrical flows between the British Raj and their Indian 'objects' emerge in the ambivalent and hierarchical relationship between 'fine art' and popular 'kitsch'. In Pushpamala's contemporary work, geographical and conceptual boundaries dilute and subvert each other, exposing the colonial and postcolonial archives of 'modernity' to revision, whether as regards gender, or ethnic notions, or the power to represent and shape the 'Other'. Fascinatingly, the artist's work renders no-one 'innocent'; even the aspirations of today's educated middle classes have fallen prey to neo-Orientalisms. In revisiting Walter Benjamin's work on photography and cinema, Sinha challenges us to explore cinephilia, as well as other concepts of corpothetic knowledge (Pinney), as a self-reflexive mode of considering and 'emplacing' India's highly entangled history of photography. The paper's focus on the public and secret circuits and dis/appearances of images avails itself of their rhizomatic structure to help further elaborate the notions of transcultural visuality and intermediality. Throughout the

tricky indexicality of Pushpamala's works, questions of authenticity and copy come centre stage. In the longing for and play with origin and original, this chapter ties up with Ramaswamy's argument about taking every image as an original, as well as the dynamics of indexicality that feature centrally in the discussion on transculturality.

In "The Changing Image of Sinhalese Healing Rituals: Performing Identity in the Context of Transculturality", Eva Ambos explicates what also informs most other texts in this volume, namely that images should not be treated as stable entities depicting some objectifiable reality. Rather, the author argues with Hans Belting, images happen and Ambos emphasizes their constant interaction with both their interior and their exterior. In this way, images become focal points of interaction between their human producers, distributors, consumers or performers. In short, images act as vehicles of human agency that is embedded in "power relations and in the performance of identity." (p. 250, this volume) Using the example of Sinhalese healing rituals and their emergence through intertwined mediatisation and heritagization (see Brosius and Polit 2011) in the context of varying purposes and audiences, Ambos shows how images, in their role as vehicles of human agency, can transform that which is depicted and represented itself, just as they can transform the associated perceptions and meanings. One key contribution of this chapter to the exploration of transcultural flows of images is the role played by asymmetries in the appropriation of canonized imagery.

Closing both the section on Circulating Icons as well the whole volume, Sun Liying shows in "An Exotic Self? Tracing Cultural Flows of Western Nudes in Pei-yang Pictorial News (1926–1933)" how certain images can travel along the most unlikely paths to the most unlikely places and how they can completely change both their material form as well as their meaning on the way. Looking at the placements of nude images in Chinese newspapers, Liying likewise illustrates the power that the image's context and the associations it triggers can hold over the image's interpretation. Again, multi-perspectivity and intervisuality play an important role in the analysis of the rich material as it seems to open up a glocalised imaginary of modern subjectivity and public space in China. Thus, the flow of images and media also alerts us to the need to differentiate the different publics and public spheres constituted by image productions and circulations, the asymmetrical relationship of global and local, none of which are by any means fixed in time and space.

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Part II
Visual Cosmopolitanism

Chapter 2
Love in the Age of Valentine and Pink Underwear: Media and Politics of Intimacy in South Asia

Christiane Brosius

The flow of transcultural images and media in times of contemporary globalisation does not mean that we must anticipate symmetrical and identical diffusion and reception. The case study I have chosen to present here underlines this in two ways: it examines how a globalised – and seemingly universal – notion, that of romantic love, circulates, with the help of images and media, and how it changes speed, quality, and routes over time. Moreover, it enables us to take a close look at moments and sites at which certain entanglements take place so that we gain a better understanding of the fabric of public spheres. By and large, romantic love is associated in Western contexts with modernisation, the rise of individualism and gender equality, as well as compatibility. As and when it does appear in non-Western states, so the widely shared view among scholars, it could only be cultivated by local élites equipped with the competence to appreciate this subjective emotion of intimacy between two people both aesthetically and rationally (Jankowiak and Fischer 1992: 1; Giddens 1992). In other sources, romantic love is largely associated with a leisure-oriented consumer society, the commodification of emotions, and irreversible changes from socio-centred communities to ego-centred nuclear alliances (Illouz 1997).

My focus on urban South Asia in the new millennium shows that the patterns are more complex and seemingly contradictory. There are several notions of romantic love, with different regional and historical trajectories which, at times, harmoniously exist next to one another, and at other times collide and open up a space in which concepts of self and the desire to live a 'good life' are challenged. Moreover, there are different social agents contesting the notion, at different sites, by different means. In this context, the images and the media technologies themselves are crucial markers and makers of public spheres, and of the new concepts, practices, networks and social relationships that unfold therein. So what I wish to do is examine the circulation and localisation of the transcultural concept of romance. This will be done by examining the multi-sited and complex appropriations and entanglements of the media and images involved in circulating this concept (see Hepp 2006). This happens through a network of connected and possibly even new localities that allow different experiences and agents mesh. Here, I also consider

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images and media as generating new localities, localities to be included in the analysis. The concepts of intervisuality[1] (Mirzoeff 2001) and the 'vernacular gaze' (Mirzoeff 2005) or the 'twittered gaze'[2] are helpful to this end. One of the interesting aspects of transculturality for both the concept of romantic love and the images and media I have examined is that they challenge and further complicate previous notions of public and private as distinct and separate spheres, something that should be understood in the light of the drastic social and economic changes taking place in current urbanised India and Nepal, which allows for new ways of connecting local to global imaginaries and practices.

By employing the concept of transculturality as a heuristic device in order to gain a better understanding of romantic love and public sphere in South Asia, our attention shifts to those multi-centred modernities: the entanglements – which is to say, the reciprocal relationships and movements between cultures as they move across time and space, challenging the idea of cultures as homogeneously-bound regional and social entities with a particular 'essence' or universality. This is not to say that essentialisation does not play a prime role in all this: indeed, globalisation is accompanied by what Jean and John Comaroff call 'Ethnicity Inc.' (2009), a new branding and currency of 'authentic' cultural and ethnic identities in global flux. The advantage of transculturality appears to be that of zooming in and out, focussing on a dense moment of encounters, a contact zone marked by traces of contestation and entanglement that, despite the already important work done on cultural exchange by authors such as James Clifford (1997) and Ulf Hannerz (1996, 2004), still calls for further ethnographic inquiry and fine tuning.

From Your Valentine, with Love: Saying It 'The Indian Way'

Undoubtedly, Indian society is changing drastically with neo-liberalisation. With around 50% of the Indian population less than 30 years of age, in particular India's rapidly growing and increasingly visible youth mirrors a host of changes, and through this perceived change turns into the torchbearers – and scapegoats – of a 'developed', cosmopolitan, 'better life' that has become possible for members of the aspiring middle class (Brosius 2010) ever since India became a 'global superpower' in the 1990s (Zore 2010). One of the most passionately and violently contested battles fought – besides access to higher education and work in the service sectors – is that of intimate love relationships, unravelling modernity's ambivalence in terms of its qualities and the whereabouts of empowerment and restriction. At

[1]Intervisuality relates to the concept of intertextuality and stands for the referential strategies of different visual regimes (e.g. appropriation, differentiation) in a web of connections (see Chap. 1).

[2]The 'twittered' gaze is a term coined by Sarat Maharaj at the keynote lecture to the annual conference of the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context" in October 2009, where he referred to a distributed way of looking as a new challenge to today's consumption of images and media. See Chap. 1 in this volume.

first sight, it is as simple as sending a greeting card, an act taking place between two people, allegedly undisturbed by family members, caste or religious restrictions. The choreography of sending a card is intertwined with a new topography of 'romantic spots' and displays of romantic gestures, and seems to spread at equal speed and with similar intensity, ease and 'success' as the images and media they accompany. But since the 'simple' idea of falling in love with a person of one's own choice, and the celebration of romantic love between two people implies a relatively drastic reconfiguration of other social models, such as arranged marriage, our entanglements are manifold and at times stormy. Greeting cards, the images, texts and practices attached to them, are thus a particularly good means of looking at the knot of emotions from an anthropological perspective since they generate and reinforce romantic codes (Illouz 1997: 170).

Valentine's Tokens of Love

Valentine's Day, celebrated on 14 February of every year, was introduced to urban India in the late 1990s, at the same time when high capitalism started to flourish and shine with a rapidly growing middle class, an expanding digital media infrastructure, a plethora of objects, sites and practices of conspicuous consumption and new, dreamlike career opportunities, seemingly available to all those aspiring to jump on the bandwagon of what soon came to be heralded as 'India Shining'.[3] Setting out as products of mass reproduction in mid-nineteenth century Victorian England, then expanding to the USA in the second half of the same century, Valentine's Day greeting cards celebrate the manifestation and declaration of romantic feelings of two people towards each other by means of creating and spending 'special' time at 'special sites' with and/or presenting other gifts to each other. Valentine's Day has become a ritual of self-display and self-creation for young Indian couples, married and unmarried, between approximately the age of 16 to the late 30s. With the celebration of 'being in love', the festival also underlines the pleasure of dating and dining, of consumption and public declarations of emotions as 'pleasure'. Renowned the world over by making visible – and legitimising – romantic sentiments between two people, Valentine's Day in India is a highly contested and politicised occasion for many, both critics and supporters.

Of interest for this article is that Valentine's Day – even though the exact number of people who celebrate it may not be that high (see Footnote 13) – brought with it a whole set of new emotions, emotional codes, spaces and dramatisations. It is some of these that I shall examine here, and do so by examining romantic love as a cultural practice, as a utopia and ritual of transgression and distinction, as part and parcel of an economy and social organization of late capitalism as it 'touches

[3]The slogan was coined for an electoral campaign of the Hindu nationalist party BJP a few years later, in 2004, signifying India's rise to the status of a global/ised superpower (see Brosius 2010).

ground' and seeks to root itself in the Global South by means of creating new social divisions. I focus mainly on the expanding gift culture, ritual performances and events linked to Valentine's Day in urban India in the New Millennium, and the temporal and spatial boundaries between private and public realms, drawn anew and contested, at times violently, in the course of this. Romantic love, as 'emotion work' following *feeling rules*,[4] navigates between economic and political spheres as well as the immediate experience of the body (Illouz 1997: 3). Interestingly, Janice Irvine relates Arlie Hochschild's concept of emotion work to the effort involved in creating feelings 'suitable' to a particular situation, or generating "a desired feeling which is initially absent" (2007: 25).

With the introduction of Valentine's Day, an emotional ecology has been created that dwells on the anticipation of love in the making, of love as emotion work, for which time and energy need to be invested, to make 'special' time and 'special' emotions. Identifying the pursuit of love with that of happiness, it is best conspicuously displayed and experienced, with Valentine's Day as a performative pinnacle of 'special' time and emotions. Valentine's Day can be understood as a stage through which certain moral discourses on public and private spheres move centre-stage and shape current debates on modern subjectivities. In this proliferation of new subjectivities that has emerged with economic liberalisation, and with the paradigmatic shift from the duty to save for the nation's well-being to the duty to spend and enjoy a pleasurable life (Mazzarella 2003), Valentine's Day cards are crucial in disseminating diverse emotions related to romantic love, and require the aspiration (and competence) of their addressees – both buyers and receivers – to read meaning into the rhetoric of humorous, sentimental or erotic lyrics and pictures. In India, Valentine's Day is the first festival based on the celebration of love between two individuals, ideally with no space for other forms of participation and membership – and thus social control. Here, the temple or the private home is replaced by the park, movie-hall or the café/restaurant. The cards are one way of making this exclusive bond – the appreciation of a particular person and his/her attitudes – visible. But the act of giving and receiving cards is only one layer of several other 'texts' and performances.

This is why Valentine's Day celebrations and Valentine's Day cards should be taken seriously: more than being 'just' cards, they mark new pathways; hitherto unspoken languages and emotional topographies of public life, predominantly in urban settings, enable globalised imaginaries of an unbound life, unrestricted by caste and class, religion and region: "Commodities have now penetrated the romantic bond so deeply that they have become the invisible and unacknowledged spirit reigning over romantic encounters" (Illouz 1997: 11). They are part of a glocalised and highly contested cultural vocabulary of sentiments that has become more visible and publicly accessible than others, thus communicating and shaping 'romantic feelings'. Valentine's Day stands not only for the monadic universe of

[4]Hochschild (1979) refers to the ways in which people can produce, manage and control emotions with reference to what is perceived as socially suitable or politically appropriate.

a couple in love, but for the mobilisation of intense affect in the service of moral politics and panics, for what Irvine calls "discrete episodic uprisings within a generalized climate of social regulation" (2007: 4), internally fragmented and yet capable of generating a chilling atmosphere of fear and restriction. This leads me to explore the emergence of different publics entangled in the negotiation of 'romantic love' via images and media, and the notion of fragmented public spaces, loosely connecting the state, political interest groups, social movements, media agents and individual citizens. I propose that the 'localisation' of globalised romantic love in urban India, through a ritualised event like Valentine's Day, enables us to show the complex and conflict-ridden ways in which sites and performances of emotions, and the relations they are tied to, shape, and are shaped. This includes notions of love as a language and performance, of lovers as 'torchbearers' of a global lifestyle or 'illiterates', and the moral distinctions drawn through concepts such as freedom of choice and loss of values and tradition.

This article takes the tension even further for it argues that in the light of the transcultural meanderings of a globalised concept such as romantic love, and spearheaded by things like Valentine's greeting cards, we must not assume that the notion of 'authentic' love has been prioritised and recognised as a universal value. Instead, it is both 'the authentic' sentiment of an individual and the forces of commodity and gift cultures that are contested in a context such as urbanised India, contested with other and conflicting notions of person and public space. Moreover, the idea of gender equality in a companionate love relationship is an additional innovation accompanying romantic love (despite its enforcement of highly gendered stereotypes of 'men' and 'women'). In order to explore this transcultural contact zone of contestation, I shall first look at the marketing of romantic desire and expression in the case of Valentine's Day in India. Here, the iconography and performativity of greeting cards is given pride of place. In a second step, I shall explore the tensions arising when the images and media 'go public' in such a way that they present themselves as catalysts for moral panics and regulation of the public sphere.

In both cases, it is the concepts of transculturality and flows that help us to analyse social change, using images and media as method and data, revealing otherwise hidden or marginalised ethnographic facts.

Card-Makers, Card-Givers and Card-Takers

Let me take you to the case study, images, media and practices related to Valentine's Day in India. The following two quotes come from Archies, South Asia's largest producer of greeting cards, which holds the largest monopoly on Valentine's Day cards, and one of my key fields of inquiry since I began this project in February 2009. The Annual Report addresses the shareholders with these notes:

> We at Archies have a special day for every special moment or relationship. Those innumerable moments that have given rise to relationships. We have created ideas to help people to nurture and take those relationships to the next level. We just know the

> perfect way to give to your relationship a head start. Be it Birthdays, . . . Raksha Bandhan[5] . . . Valentine's Day or now Daughter's Day.[6]
>
> Life is a celebration. Emotions can flow anytime. At Archies, we don't wait for occasions to express our feelings, we create moments of celebration. Whatever may be the feeling, we have something to convey it. . . . We have created opportunities to express feelings to our loved ones. . . . When words fail to convey the right feelings, people turn to Archies. There is no better way.[7]

What is interesting in these comments is the emphasis on the idea that events frame emotions, and on the efficient management of emotions by means of structuring time and relationships. Moreover, the focus on "life as celebration", on the nurturing and cultivation of intimate love, and the notion of showing a 'way out' of the troublesome embarrassment of speechlessness when it comes to communicating love is central. It almost seems like applied speech act theory, for Archies lyrics and media seem automatically to create the desired emotions and relationship between card-giver and card-taker. Archies is the help required to release one from clumsy speechlessness, a guiding light out of what becomes a kind of illiteracy in the new jungle of emotions and lifestyles that have been introduced, and idealised, with economic liberalisation. Yet, seemingly paradoxically, Archies is also the motor behind the creation of romantic love as a 'social fact': as a signifier of a prosperous and happy life, the cards may also generate the desire to be in love!

Emotion Work at Archies' Dream Factory

I had never thought that I would become interested in Valentine's Day, having been suspicious about its celebration in Germany as a student, because it seemed too straightforward, too commercial and conservative, too 'kitschy' and thus tacky. I forgot about it. Through my interest in popular visual and mass-reproduced material culture, I came across a very dynamic and visually strong production and circulation of greeting cards from Hindu nationalist organisations, first while still working on my doctoral thesis between 1998 and 1999. I noticed a wide variety of New Year cards were available at several stores that stocked Hindu nationalist propaganda material, and, because of my focus on political iconography, began collecting them (Brosius 2007). Around 2000, these cards were frequently used to circulate suitable iconographies and legitimise Hindutva and to generate an 'imagined community' of nationalist card-takers and –givers (Anderson 1983). But while I do not consider the cards of the first case as central factors in the Hindu Right's success (or failure),

[5] The festival of love and affection from a sister vis-à-vis her brother, manifested in the sister tying a band around her brother's wrist, popular mainly in North India (see http://www.raksha-bandhan.com/).

[6] Archies Annual Report 2007–2008: 11 (http://www.archiesonline.com/gateway/Annual-Report-2008-09.php, accessed on May 13, 2010).

[7] Archies, Annual Report 2008–2009 (ibid.).

I would argue that Valentine's Day greeting cards have substantially come to shape relations and practices, enabled people to conceive of and experience new emotions. Valentine's Day and its ritualised paraphernalia have contributed to the aesthetic dimension of in urban life styles. Most of all, they have helped creating the idea that one has to 'work' to make love work, to be – and stay – in love. Behind this lies the concept that a good relationship between man and woman is identified with happiness and that one must learn certain rules and competences to gain that happiness, and turn it into a sustainable, nurturing state of being. The cards speak a language of ongoing pleasure, excitement and thrill, a fascination for the other partner by 'finding' oneself in him or her, a longing to make that person utterly happy, because s/he returns that happiness. This notion of romantic love differs from 'classical' notions of marriage, where the decision for unification is made by the parents of the couple-to-be, on the basis of caste, religion, horoscope, as well as educational and economic status. Arranged marriage allows for love to unfold after, never before, marriage, and not because two individuals feel the desire to live together but because their compatibility has been checked by the parents, and in some cases by the ritual specialist. Romantic love is not a must. On the contrary, being in love might even disturb the emotional ecology of the groom's joint family into which the bride 'traditionally' moves after marriage. At the end of the day, it is not only the husband, but the whole family, and in particular the mother-in-law, who must approve of the girl and live with her. Romantic love is about two people finding each other and eloping in one another's arms and souls, thus running the danger of forgetting about their social duties and responsibilities, about caste and religious borders.

"Remember: the nice thing about a date is it's just a date", reads *The Art of Dating*, a small handbook published by Archies (no date) before the chapters on 'predate warmups' and 'the confidence game' start. The concept of dating, also crucial to Valentine's Day, has brought a sea of change in that this culture of meeting and getting to know a potential partner-for-life before marriage has opened up horizons of choice for youth themselves.[8] 'Traditional' ritual specialists face a wind of competition by event managers like Archies, Asian (speed) dating websites like *AsianD8,* and online matrimonial services like *shaadi.com*.[9] And the card is one such 'subversive' element that undermines the authority of the previous monopoly holders: it underlines the idea that two people to send each other cards without consulting external authorities, and is a major element of a culture of flirting and 'tuning'.[10] The greeting card was introduced to India in the early 1980s, in the context of large religious festivals like Diwali (Hindu New Year) or Christmas. With it emerged a new emotional ecology, new social networks, new geo-physical

[8]I am referring to a segment of youth that belongs to a more affluent and aspiring middle class, predominantly with access to higher education and living in metropolitan centres and big towns.

[9]See www.asiand8online.com/ and www.shaadi.com, both accessed on 15.5.2010.

[10]In their ethnographic study of youth culture in India, Osella & Osella coin 'tuning' as "a tentative exchange" and "semi-formalized speech act" between two (heterosexual) youngsters (2000).

'contact-zones' and sites of encounter, new notions of subjectivity and selfhood in a modern world: "What is it about receiving a greeting card that makes it a keepsake, elicits an immediate response, or brings people to tears? The answer lies in what greeting cards most often communicate – sentiments. Sentiments are *socially* significant feelings – each sentiment signifying a pattern of sensations, emotions, actions, and cultural beliefs appropriate to a social relationship "(Michner et al. 1991; Ekman and Davidson 1994). What Erving Goffman (1967) calls "ceremonial tokens" when referring to greeting cards is instantly related to leisure and consumption (Mooney and Brabant 1998). The tokens even make up a big part of Valentine's Day as they spur ritual performances and events (a holiday) that require certain 'suitable' sites of transfer between two people and thus allow new social networks to be shaped and stabilised. In the USA, this is also known as a 'Hallmark event'.[11]

Archies seems to be for South Asia what Hallmark is for the Anglo-American world. The company holds the largest share of the greeting cards market in India, with hundreds of Archie's outlets and franchises, offering cards and gifts dotted all over the urban Indian landscape. Archie's is intertwined with the arrival of shopping malls, birthday parties, a pub and café culture and a rising, educated and affluent middle class in India. The company started in 1979, much before economic liberalisation, when its chairman, Anil Moolchandani, introduced songbooks containing lyrics by music bands Abba and Boney M. Subsequently, he marketed colour reproductions of posters, predominantly depicting European sites. In the early 1980s, Moolchandani turned the posters of flowers and landscapes into seasonal greeting cards, and they are still sold today, as part of the 'P-series' (poster). As I was told by Kalpana M., senior marketing manager of Archies: "Then came birthday (cards), the mother's day, father's day, all the relations. Then only came Diwali[12] and Christmas... much later we got into all the Western days... I remember, for Valentine's Day we had five cards" – compared to around 150 cards today and with a wide range of prices and sizes! Today, Archies predominantly deals with cards related to Western holidays, with Valentine's Day being the biggest annual occasion. According to Kalpana, the card market is increasingly shifting now from metros to cities.[13] Only in 2000 did the first Archies

[11]Hallmark event refers to something invented for commercial purposes and at the same time creating an emotional culture with validity for many people, e.g. more than 'just' commodified and thus 'inauthentic' emotions.

[12]Diwali is known as the Hindu New Year and is celebrated as a national holiday in India.

[13]Archies India hold licenses from Archies UK and USA, with international licensing coming from Archies UK: 117 company-owned stores in India by 2008, and the aim at that time was to take this count to 230 by 2010; in addition to 350+ franchisees across India and 5 countries (Annual Report 2008) and a 17.5% turnover in 2008, it also sponsors MTV programmes such as *Splitsvilla*, a very popular reality TV shows. Greeting cards lead the product variety in numbers (followed by gift items) but not in sales value. In 2008, almost 50 million cards (500 lakh) were produced, 40 million sold. The gift sector was more profitable, with an increase of more than 10% in sales and income (Annual Report 2008–2009: 46). The highest sales are in North India, followed by West, South and then East India (ibid., 48). The latest sales report by Archies gives the following numbers: sale of

shop open, in prosperous neighbourhoods and malls in India's megacities, the majority of shops being franchises. The clientele seems fairly broad, with people from different generations, but the most important aim seems to be to keep "a vigilant eye on the pulse of the youth brigade" (Annual Report 2008–2009: 6), albeit one that is willing, and able, to spend a few hundred rupees, if not more, for a 'special occasion': "Archies caters to a very demanding segment of the consumer base. The customers are aware of latest trends" (Annual Report 2008–2009: 7). Broadly speaking, the consumers are predominantly members of the urbanised aspiring and expanding middle classes in post-liberalisation India (Fernandes 2006; Brosius 2010) (Fig. 2.1).

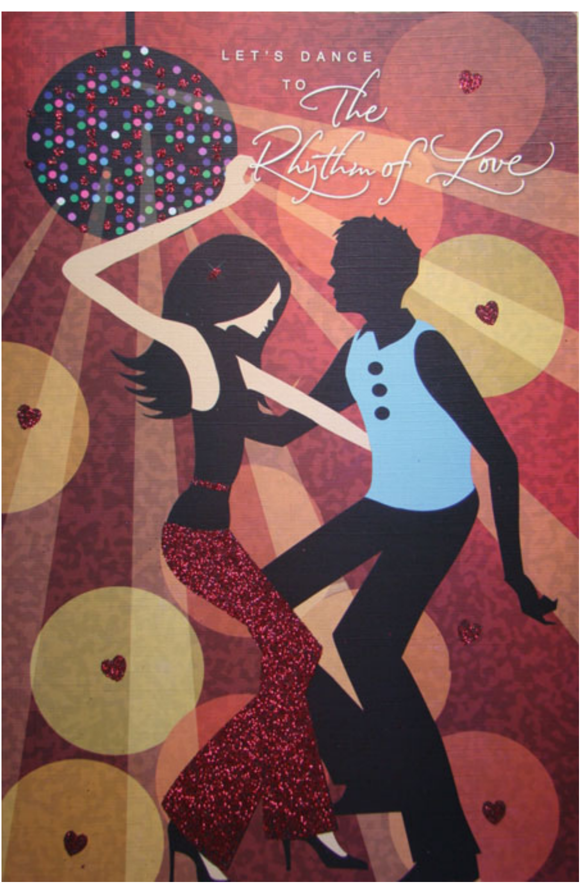

Fig. 2.1 Disco dancers, Archies Valentine's Day greeting card, c. 2008

greeting cards in 2010: almost 21 million cards, with a profit of 999.07 lakh INR (€1,665,000); compared to c. 33 million cards and 1353.72 lakh INR (€2,256,000) in 2009, which points to a decline in card sales. These numbers concern sales for different festivals, albeit, the best sales still take place for Valentine's Day (Annual Report 2009–2010, p. 50, for the detailed report, see http://www.archiesonline.com/gateway/Annual-Report-2009-10.php, accessed on 2.1.2011).

Since around 2000, Valentine's Day is a festival that provokes the most intense and controversial feelings, due to its association with radical social shifts in Indian society, mainly in North and West India.[14] This is also why the cards, as I will discuss shortly, are often held responsible for having a 'direct impact' on people's morals, values and norms. Likewise, in the above citation, we learn that Archies aims at branding emotions in line with their own invention, or at least massive support of, new festivals, thus creating what could be called an 'Archies event' culture:

> Over the years we have provided people an expression to their wonderful emotions. So whenever the journey of love begins, we get going. As retailers of emotions we have always made sure that every special moment in your life is a celebration. (Annual Report 2007–08)

Archies cards create another cycle of festivals – outside the realm of the sacred, in the sphere of the 'public', private, personal, secular: thus on entering an Archies shop, one finds cards classified according to categories such as teacher's day, friendship day, father's day, mother's day, daughter's day – and most recently, also a series of cards celebrating gay relationships (see below) (Fig. 2.2).

Fig. 2.2 Greeting card shelves in an Archies shop in South Delhi, January 2010, Photo: Christiane Brosius

[14]It seems to be an interesting, yet still under-researched phenomenon that resistance against Valentine's Day appears to form in states that witnessed communalist tensions in the late 1980s and 1990s.

It is not that ‘Archies moments’, and what they represent, are approved or even appreciated instantly. While I will examine further critical voices as regards Valentine’s Day below, one example of a particular critique should suffice for the time being: This post on a website related to an attack on the festival of romantic love in 2009, and calls for an indigenisation and thus pacification of the ‘foreign’ and thus purportedly threatening festival. Valentine’s Day is translated, using Urdu and Hindi words, as ‘Day of Love’ (*Prem Divas*, Pyar Mohabbat ka Din). This claim follows a whole chain of ‘translatory conversions’ of sites into the ‘indigenous’ and/or original name, as demanded by many critics of Westernisation and colonisation.[15] The request for translation suggests that one could almost magically ‘tame’ alleged feared Westernisation by converting it into a ‘genuinely Indian’ thing and thus also tame the anger of such radical groups as the Shiv Sena and their leader Bala Saheb Thackeray. The latter often spearhead violence against Valentine’s Day, arguing that it hurts the Hindu sentiment, spreads vulgarity and enforces the dilution of ‘Indian culture’.

Valentine’s Day is particularly interesting to look at as a globalised event (quite like Mother’s Day or Halloween). It helps us to examine – in both diachronic and synchronic ways – the asymmetrical flow of concepts such as ‘romantic love’ in the context of other notions such as ‘individual freedom’, ‘intimacy’, ‘decency’, ‘shame’ or ‘vulgarity’. It also enables us to gain a better understanding of the fabric of one of the key domains of this cluster: emergent or declining publics and public spheres, that is, in the first case, the agents, and in the second, the larger contexts, including media, physical space, institutions, etc. And, last but not least, it challenges us to consider the complex relationship between imagination and global imaginaries, and local contexts and discourses as well as the emergence of modern subjectivities.

This case study underlines the ‘hurdles’ and ‘bumps’ of uneven flows of concepts within globalised landscapes. While in many European and American countries, the public declaration and expression of love seems to be an accepted, if not ‘normal’ thing today (and it has not ‘always’ been like this), its spread is rather controversial in the case of India (see Orsini 2006a). Since romantic love is not simply an individual but also a public concern, and as a globalised concept increasingly connected with media flows, with ideals of individual mobility, freedom of choice and lifestyle as pleasure, it invites research on how, seemingly paradoxically, “in contemporary culture the liminal inversion of the social order and the opposition to utilitarian values affirmed by romantic love are shaped by the market”, especially since “romantic practices draw from the pervasive but conflicting cultural idioms of hedonism and work discipline” (Illouz 1997: 10), with the promise of the pursuit of individual happiness and suitable lifestyle.

[15]The renaming policy applies in particular to places, streets, and cities across India.

Ritualised Expenditure The Cards

Valentine's Day greeting cards do not come unaccompanied. They are embedded in a dramaturgy of anticipation that starts each year, since the 1990s, after Christmas, when English (and some vernacular) newspapers publish festival-related articles and ads, TV channels announce special 'V-Day' programmes, and restaurants advertise candlelight dinners. By now, Valentine's Day marks the emergence of a new, 'legitimate' emotional culture and social landscape, and by shifting several boundaries comes in for a lot of criticism (Fig. 2.3). Nevertheless, the 'festival of love' has become a firm part of the ritual cycle of national festivals and middle class consumption. In recent years, it can even be found in some of the traditional religious Hindu calendars.

There are a few nodal points of entanglement that deserve further mention. In India, Valentine's Day has facilitated and pushed into public visibility a striving youth culture, together with its desires and aspirations. This has been accompanied by what is supposed to be private and hidden, if even legitimate: the shaping and declaration of intimate, romantic love in public, 'public display of affection' (hereafter also 'PDA'). As a cornerstone of a predominantly neoliberal utopia it throws open "the possibility of an alternative social order" (Illouz 1997: 9) and new gender roles based on the (theoretical) principle of equality.[16] Thus, if we want

Fig. 2.3 From a blog on the 'indigenisation' of Valentine's Day, 2009 see http://echarcha.com/forum/showthread.php?p=8104, accessed on 5.7.2011

[16]Here, Illouz refers to the work of Paul Ricoeur who distinguishes utopia from ideology in that the first refers to the fantasy of an alternative, even subversive social order/relationship, while the latter only reproduces power and interest (1997: 145). Whether the two are easily distinguishable

to explore modern subjectivities and emotions, we must do this in the light of the ways in which the market has impacted on them in complicated and highly performative ways – at the same time as "romance was liberated from certain social controls" (Illouz 1997: 71). One example is the dependence of Valentine's Day on a 'Western' culture of dating as the motor – and evidence – of the emotional arousal by which the romantic encounter is pushed from courtship in the parents' home into the public sphere of consumption and new urban leisure topographies. This marks "the symbolic and practical penetration of romance by the market" (Illouz 1997: 14), creating "islands of privacy" (Illouz 1997: 56) that nevertheless demand other skills that are part and parcel of other forms of social control. Another point of entanglement is that of a shift in priorities: Giddens has turned our attention to the fact that one must invest in a relationship to make it work. The motivation behind this is reciprocal recognition, trust and friendship, all elements that have also been highlighted by my student informants in Delhi. But the emphasis on the flow of emotions between two people as a foundation stone of happiness and a fulfilled life, disregarding and even consciously excluding others in romantic entanglements, and the idea that one must nurture a relationship and that in a partnership intimate feelings are crucial but can not be taken for granted, has raised critical voices about purported shifts, and declines, in affection for and respect towards other family members and values.

New Sites and New Habits

The relatively young card culture in India opened up new ways of expressing emotions and socialising for a generation of youth and younger adults for whom the transformation from planned economy to open market economy was accompanied by a shift away from the pressure to serve the nation to pleasure and consumption as progress. With the addressees of the cards, the focus of social networking shifted from the joint family to the nuclear family, to individual relationships such as friendships or work relationships, and with that celebrated a range of events from religious festivals to friendship day to mother's day, birthdays, Boss Day or the newly created 'daughter's day'. As of late, we also find cards celebrating (male) beer drinking and (female) coffee culture, as well as disco dancing and golf playing (Figs. 2.1 and 2.4). This clearly demarcates new practices and sites of lifestyle consumption that have become increasingly relevant for the burgeoning, more confident urban middle class and for youth aspirations that seek recognition by making themselves visible in public space. Moreover Valentine's Day, and maybe more than other secular festivals, delineates how certain 'emotional zones' have been inserted into the urban and leisure culture of

can be debated. The idea of equality is predominantly based on heterosexual relationships. Homosexual relationships are still stigmatised in India (see Bose and Bhattacharya 2007).

neoliberal India. In this, the card industry plays a significant role because it allows us to trace the signature and language of new romantic love in public. It plays such an important role because it moves into a vacuum that was created by social change, by the desire of youth for less social restriction, where the market becomes the handbook of a new habitus.

Archies' cards thus spell out a range of interesting categories: lifestyle habits (drinking wine, beer or coffee in a Western cup; eating out at a restaurant, dancing at a party or disco), places associated with romance and leisure though rarely identifiable (e.g., a beach, hotel, the Eiffel Tower, a bench, harbour, sunset), gestures (kissing, hugging, looking at each other, holding hands...), and items from the material culture of gifts (e.g. underwear, dress, hearts, flowers...). The large majority of cards show pictures of roses, teddy bears and hearts. In my search through the Archies archives of the last 6 years, I have not come across a card where a person wore a distinctly Indian dress, such as a *sari* or a *salwaar kameez*: all of the depicted persons, whether in the genre of photograph or drawing, men or women, wear Western dress, and are associated with Western consumer goods. The majority of cards use English lyrics and slogans. In terms of design, we never find plain postcards but always foldable A6-A1 formats.

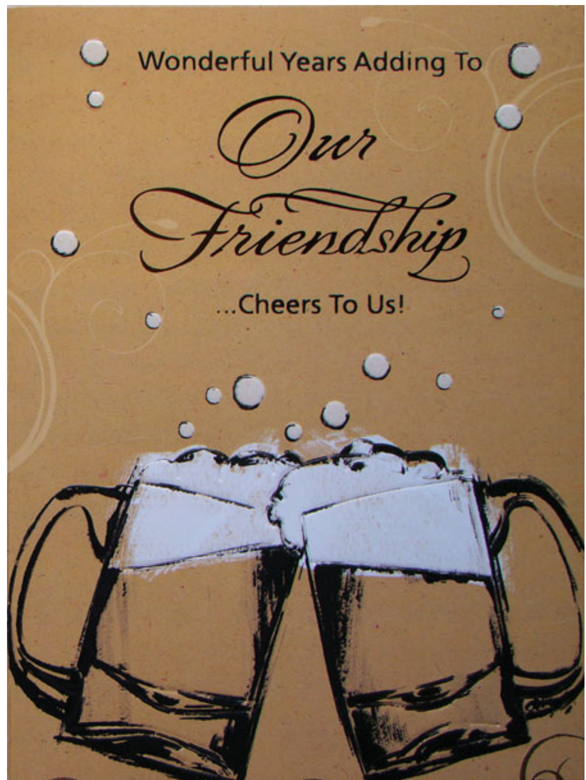

Fig. 2.4 Beer mugs chosen for "Friendship Day", greeting card by Archies, c. 2007

The Language of Desire

The rear side of many Archies greeting cards read: “Cards spread love. Make someone feel loved today” or “Greeting cards are more thoughtful than most other communication options”. This already underlines their producer’s intention to promote them as vehicles of an emotion, as bearers of a new language of, and thus competence for, love.

I wish to focus here on four different cards with their lyrics. On and inside one card, for instance, you could read romantic prose such as “you’ve made my world a paradise of love, we are bonded in love, forever, you bring peace to my soul” or “when our eyes meet and quickly shy away from each other... I think I am in love”. The fact that love ‘falls upon’, or ‘befalls’ a person is clearly a new experience, that someone is ‘special’ because of his/her personality (and not status by birth) is a crucial marker of this new love. Infatuation, blindness, ‘being foolishly in love’ (Illouz 197: 166) are associated with these declarations of intense and immediate emotion as illusions that can not be relied upon – a notion that begins to haunt hearts and minds by the end of the eighteenth century in Europe, mainly in popular romantic literature.

> Only in the 17th century did a more definite and clearly articulated interrogation of the relationship between reality, fiction and sentiment appear. The 17th century French moralist La Rouchefoucauld expressed this in his well-known maxime that ‘many people would not have fallen in love had they not heard of it. ... As the theme of love took over popular and literary fiction and as fiction material, thanks to the print media, was distributed on a wider social and geographical scale, the cultural malaise about the presumed power of fiction to induce a (false) sentiment of love deepened. (Illouz 1998: 161–162)

The next card (Fig. 2.5) shows several (female) red lips on a white ground, with red writing. Short slogans associate these lips with the pleasure of kissing and longing to kiss. Opening the card – and indeed, the moment of opening a greeting card is highly performative and dramatised – the following lyrics can be read: “*Your lips... are lickable, likeable, soft and biteable. Your lips love to tease, love to nibble, play and love to be loved*”. To me, this also underlines the gendered language of this new love for these are bound to be the words of a man. Thus the buyers of these cards would predominantly be men.[17] Another card displaying shoes, a dress and a handbag (Fig. 2.6) seems to support this thesis of gendered cards. It reads: *“Life becomes: magic, meaningful, peaceful, tender, no one means so much to me as you, you are a blessing, god-sent, new perspective, growing by every day, we are inseparable, bonded in love forever; you’re so beautiful that I can’t stop loving you; soulmate, happiness, at home in your arms...”*. What is interesting here is the emphasis on the thrills and pleasures of a companionate relationship, on the fact that an ideal partner would imbue erotic love, divine

[17] Unfortunately, it is not possible to ‘measure’ the gender of customers in statistics. Shop owners and sellers would not want, or be able, to comment on this either.

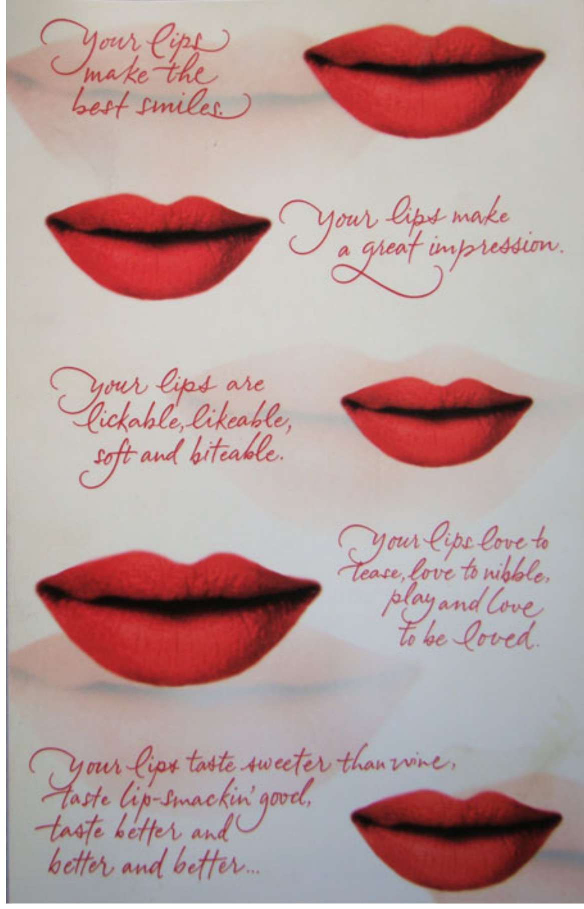

Fig. 2.5 Lips, Archies Valentine's Day greeting card, c. 2008

purpose and intimate friendship. The last card, to be discussed further below, shows the drawing of a woman seated on sofa, holding a glass of wine, wearing a Western evening dress, and a very low neckline. The text reads: *"sweetheart: our love is like wine, growing better with time"* (Fig. 2.7).

Look at these cards for a moment: probably you would not have guessed that they are made and sold in India. When compared with Western greeting cards, there seems to be perfect symmetry on the visual and even the language level. Nothing particularly 'Indian' pops into our eyes. Instead, the 'actors' engaged in romantic gestures, usually photographed, seem Caucasian (usually marked by blonde or red hair), if at all recognisable as ethnic (Fig. 2.8). The asymmetrical flow of Valentine's Day emerges less on the iconographic level and more on the level of the ethnographic data. The emotion of erotic desire and pleasure linked to some of the Valentine's Day greeting cards seems to be more at ease in the context of foreign/ised, Caucasian bodies and settings. It must still be 'outsourced', taking place in the 'gated compounds' of the globalised imaginary.

Fig. 2.6 Material goods and gifts on an Archies Valentine's Day greeting card, 2010

Strategies of Boundary Drawing and Transgression

Interestingly, Kalpana, employed in Archies' PR section in Delhi, tells me that the reasons for choosing de-ethnicised or non-Indian models for the romantic scenes has nothing to do with ethnic 'Othering', and ignores my references to stigmata of the West as morally loose. In a surprising twist, she idealises cosmopolitan

Fig. 2.7 Lady raising a toast to love, Archies Valentine's Day greeting card, 2010

distinction and renders it as ethnically indifferent: "a couple kissing would appeal only to an urban market"; an urban audience won't really see this (Fig. 2.8) as a foreign couple. "We do everything in the Western style anyway", not even noticing that it is Western because it comes so 'natural'.

In our conversation and while commenting on Valentine's Day greeting cards of previous years, Kalpana adds: "Do you know what? You can't say 'miss you' in an Indian way." This is a central assumption: the lack of certain means of expression in an allegedly cultural specific context that requires the appropriation of other codes, and codes of the Other. I shall explore the role of the other woman, the foreign woman, in a short while, but first let me elaborate on other categories of 'the Other' that relate to the entanglements I mentioned at the beginning of this article. Language and media technologies are closely interwoven. With the mobile phone culture, especially messaging, and with e-cards available at much less cost, the

Fig. 2.8 Western couple, Archies Valentine's Day greeting card, c. 2009

greeting card sector has experienced a 30% drop[18]: "sales (of ordinary cards) have crashed . . . people try to be more customised, they want to buy expensive. The seasonal cards that were cheap were suddenly washed away. . . . And now we can only sell expensive cards. . . . You just get a few, for the close ones, and these must be expensive." Yet, many argue that paper cards have a more 'personal touch' and will survive the online revolution. This is not hard to believe if we read one text message love poem published in 2002: "*Lst nite dnces b4 my eys. Whn cn we tango agn? I wnt 2 awkn desirs tht u dnt knw exst*" (Shahin 2002, no changes made by author). The question of digital erotics and sensuality must be posed differently. While some may feel that letters are outdated and boring, and argue that a text message is a perfect means for sexually inhibited Indians, in 2002 LOVE (Lovers'

[18]A Valentine's Day Card may cost around 100–300 INR (1.30–5€), ten-twenty times more than a 'normal' Diwali greeting card. Cards worth about US-$ 62 million are bought in India each year.

Organisation for Voluntary Exhibition) attempted to counter the growing trend of lovers communicating by short text messages over mobile phones and revive the dying practice of writing and sending love letters.[19]

It is important to consider the flow of images and media in a historical context. In the case of greeting cards, one should note that cards were used to shape relationships and thereby also draw boundaries between social groups and notions of belonging or membership. Apparently, the Chinese were the first ones to send goodwill messages on New Year, and in the fifteenth century, New Year's greeting cards are said to have been made by means of woodcut in Germany.[20] Valentine's Day and the market of visually and verbally appealing greeting cards are rooted in the 1850s–1960s, first in the Victorian Britain, then shifting to puritan America. The first Valentines were made in England, and in 1850 they were introduced to the USA, where to this day they have constituted the most popular greeting cards, only matched by Christmas cards.[21] The cards seem to express what is difficult to communicate otherwise: they open a projective space of unburdened intimacy and affection in romantic settings, like nostalgic French *cartes postales* from around 1900, where couples kissing and hugging each other can be seen in romantic settings. They conjure up an innocent and 'close elsewhere', a liminal space where what is often defined as inappropriate and obscene by conservative forces, bears a utopian lightness and glamour. Images and media are not disconnected from the social worlds of the daily life through which they circulate. While in the USA and Great Britain, boundaries of class and race were transgressed, Indian society seems to have been most challenged in terms of religion and caste: "Romantic love emerged under colonial modernity as a site for a complex reworking of tradition and modernity, one that pitted traditional marriages arranged according to caste and community rules against companionate ones in which the idea of the modern couple becomes central. . . . A modern marriage was reconfigured to meet the requirements of a new social contract based on individual rights, love within marriage emerged as a key site of individual subjectivity" (Lukose 2009: 101, see also Mody 2008; Osella and Osella 2000: 202). In Japan, Valentine's Day has been celebrated since 1936, when it was introduced by a chocolate company, addressing foreigners living in Japan. Increasingly, it became a woman's task to give an appropriate amount of chocolates to a man, not necessarily her spouse or lover, often her father, brother or a company superior (see Rupp 2003). But Valentine's Day is not appreciated worldwide: it was banned in several countries since its recent arrival: Saudi Arabia

[19]BBC World Service: "Indian Romantics to Revive Love Letters", 1.2.2002, online version http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/south_asia/1795906.stm.

[20]See www.tokenz.com/birthday-card-history.html accessed on 4.7.2011.

[21]In 2004, the greeting card industry sold 7 billion cards. According to the British Retail Consortium, £75 million were spent on cards, with an estimated 25 million cards being sent in the UK in 2007 (http://www.brc.org.uk/details04.asp?id=1091&kCat=&kData=1, accessed on 25.5.2009).

put a ban on Valentine's day in 2008,[22] Islamic priests demanded its ban in Kuwait,[23] as did Sudanese Islamic clerics in their country in 2009,[24] mostly identifying it with Westernisation or Christianisation and their accompanying temptations. The regional Hindu chauvinist party Shiv Sena in Mumbai identified Valentine's day with 'prostitution day', vulgar, shameless and opposed to Indian culture: "Valentine's day is turning the youth away from our true culture and traditions. Growing commercialisation by certain vested interests is further leading them up the wrong path," said Delhi Shiv Sena chief Jai Bhagwan Goel.[25]

The notion of movement and change is certainly not far-fetched and must be related to paradigmatic social and media shifts, as Francesca Orsini explains in her edited volume *Love in South Asia*. Orsini emphasises that romantic love has always been related to the danger of social and religious transgression, threatening group solidarity (2006a: 11), and not necessarily leading to marriage. Moreover, in terms of sexuality it has been connected to members of other religions, adivasi (tribal population) or villagers, with lust, in particular female lust, which is attributed with being dangerous. In her article on love letters, Francesca Orsini observes a shift, similar to what might have happened with Valentine's cards: with the advent of print media and theatre around 1900, when old repertoires of love poetry "became available to wider social groups outside the courts" and shaped new stories about "ordinary men and women", sparking debates about a new concept of love (Orsini 2006b: 251). Yet, it is precisely her argument about the de-ideologisation and secularisation of love, the fact that women could now take the initiative in writing love letters and desiring erotic love (Orsini 2006b: 236), that seems to point in a direction that is also relevant for today's discussion on Valentine's Day cards: people do not passively consume a medium but incorporate it 'suitably' in their everyday lives and imagined utopias. Love letters, Orsini proposes, are an ideal medium to create and convey intimacy in a protected, "secret space" (Orsini 2006b: 239), where certain emotions can be developed that "cannot be spoken face to face", even to the extent that social norms can be challenged and "deemed 'unfair'" (Orsini 2006b: 241). She also observes that the language of love in today's 'footpath manuals of love letters' is English, indicating people's "willingness to participate in the game of romantic love and/or of individual advancement, independence and career orientation" (Orsini 2006b: 242). In her ethnography *Invitation to Love* (2001) about love letter writing in contemporary Nepal, Laura Ahearn

[22] http://theweek.com/article/index/106347/Saudi_Arabias_war_on_Valentines_Day.

[23] B. Izzak. 2008. "MPs seek to ban Valentine's Day". *Kuwait Times*, 14.2. http://www.kuwaittimes.net/read_news.php?newsid=Nzc2NzAzNjA2.

[24] Reuters. 2009. Boycott Valentine's Day, Asiaone, Singapore, 13.2.2009. http://news.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne%2BNews/World/Story/A1Story20090213-121633.html.

[25] By Cooldude, 14.2.2005, on eCharcha.com – loud and proud desi opinion (NRI participate in this!), (http://www.echarcha.com/forum/showthread.php?t=19207).

makes a case that a new medium, and even images, can better express and have more impact on the way people think and behave, affecting local perceptions of love and how they help constitute modern selves within the context of existing notions of intimacy and companionate conjugality/marriage. To me, this comes close to what Valentine's Day cards are: they occupy a strange, slippery space – marked by the language of English – both in terms of their status and their distance to what is visualised and verbalised as a private island in the public realm (Illouz 1997).[26]

Knowledge, Empowerment and Mobility

An interesting similarity in terms of romantic love as a ritual of 'emotion work' surfaces between the manuals for love-letter-writing and the sending of Valentine's Day cards: looking at the spread of letter writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Orsini notes a "widespread and explicit" fear about educating girls, sending them to colleges and being drawn into the circles of writing love, with actual love-making as only a next step (Orsini 2006b: 241). Transgressing caste and religious boundaries and diluting associated authorities and monopolies of power may turn into an issue of key importance in the love between two people, who wish to sideline social dogmas in preference to personal affinities. This border-crossing is manifest in an ecology of rumours of – mainly students – 'stealing' innocent/naive women from the 'other' community, both in caste and, worse even, religious terms. Read this comment by 'Ramesh' (name changed):

> Pub culture is welcome in India. We are all for it. But but but.... Non-Muslim girls should mingle only with non-Muslim boys. Muslims should not come into pubs. If they want to come, they should bring their women with them and dance only with them – whether burqa clad or not. (11.2.2009)[27]

This underlines that, as Jankowiak and Fischer allege, "cultural traditions bind the individual emotionally into a web of dependency with others, thereby rechanneling or defusing the intensity of an individual's emotional experience. The web of dependency, in return, undermines the individual's proclivity to fantasize about a lover or the erotic" (Jankowiak and Fischer 1992: 1) – in this example, the regulations imposed on fantasising about unrestricted affection between lovers from two religions. Moreover, what slips into Ramesh's comment is the notion of honour and shame and the accusation of intentional humiliation.

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[26]In my ongoing research on the mediatisation of love, I plan to explore the impact of Bombay cinema lyrics on the texts of Archie's Valentine's Day cards.

[27]To Muthalik, with love!-K Sreedevi, http://sify.com/valentine/valentine_fullstory.php?id=14854542.

Gendered Spaces and Habits

This brings us yet another step further into the web of entanglements of ethnic, religious, gender-specific associations woven into the purportedly liberal notion of romantic love: the relevance of public space as highly contested and ambiguous, with hardly any space for what Illouz has called ‘private islands’ (see Fig. 2.7). It also shows how we must consider ethnographic data that helps us to uncover who has what kind of access to what sort of ‘public sphere’, and whose right of access is restricted, even questioned. Illouz explores how, in the first half of the twentieth century, the concept of romantic love was linked to new places and habits: dance-halls and movie halls, but also automobiles represented independence and freedom for the youth of those days. In India, romantic encounters in a car and other sites in public are extremely risky, for one could be exposed to the public and reported to the police. Such sites are accessible only to the upper echelons of Indian society.

Let us return to Archies, and to new habits and new sites. A few themes only seem to find their way to customers in megacities. My informant Kalpana defines Archies as pioneering in sexual and social revolution, and does so by pointing towards the three gay cards introduced in 2010 and the introduction of daughter’s day: “Daughters have always been the pride of every parent and this is why we at Archies were inspired to dedicate a day for these angels.”[28] Particularly when we consider that daughters are still less wanted in India than sons, this is indeed a courageous step. Archie’s latest card design for Valentine’s Day 2010 was only for

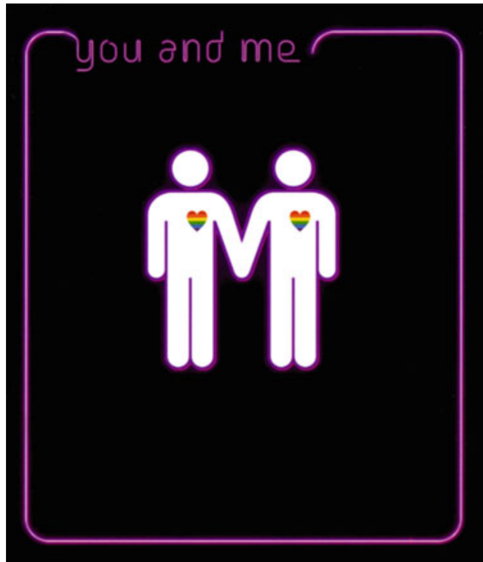

Fig. 2.9 Valentine’s Day greeting card with homosexual couple holding hands, Archies 2010

[28] Archies annual report 2007–2008: 11.

sale in megacities, and even here I found only a few shops displaying ‘cards for gays’ (Fig. 2.9). Kalpana admits that they are very nervous about new attacks and even heavier criticism in terms of this ‘new visibility’ of something regarded as ‘sick’ and ‘abnormal’ by some, and which only this year was legalised by the Supreme Court. In Kalpana’s view, Archies is actually spearheading sexual liberation in India.[29] It remains to be seen whether people object to the ‘popularisation’ of homosexual relationships on Valentine’s Day. It is more or less seen as a ‘gimmick’ – like the wine-drinking woman: “Two years ago, I could not have introduced this kind of a card. Maybe everybody drinks, but this does not mean that it is accepted as a greeting card motif. Now I can do it. I can not do hundreds, but I can do it. . . This is more of an urban card, you can sell it once in a while, you can’t sell it in a B-town.” She showed me another Valentine’s Day Greeting card, with beer mugs and one with a coffee cup and explained:

> A new coffee culture is discovered here now, coming from Vienna. This was not there before – where would you find cafes, where would you find pubs? Where would you have found women of good families in a pub and drinking in public? That wasn’t heard of! My parents still can’t comprehend that I do it. (New Delhi, September 2009)

Interestingly, there is a very elaborate culture of coffee consumption and plantation in South India, and with it comes the institution of the Indian Coffee House, founded in 1957, with around 400 coffee houses all run by co-operative societies, mainly under communist governments. But since it has never been ‘marketed’ to a middle class audience, it has been marginalised and ignored. What seems relevant in the above quote is the ‘Vienna’ connection, where nostalgia for something foreign unfolds that aspires to address a borderless, transnational elite. Moreover, the idea of lifestyle, linked to particular class of people and places, features centrally.

The Sexualised Western Body

What matters for conservative forces is that the trendier sites of alcohol consumption become, such as lounge bars or pubs and even restaurants, the easier women participate in this previously male-dominated public space and habit. Middle class women who consume alcohol are growing in numbers and challenging petty bourgeois views of the woman as a nurturer of Indian tradition, restricted to the walls of her home. Particularly in commercial films, women have pioneered an ‘emancipated’ image which includes dancing in bars, drinking, and having fun with men. But these women have usually been associated with the ‘vamp’ and thus stigmatised *a priori* as ‘uncontrolled’ and unattached. But while

[29] In July 2009, the Delhi High Court deleted section 377 of the Indian Penal Code of 1860. This law labelled gay sex to be an “unnatural offense”, punishable with up to 10 years in prison.

a star like Helen (a.k.a. Helen Jairag Richardson) could be both a vamp and a loveable figure without losing her dignity, this seems to be increasingly difficult in today's times.

Sexuality as Pleasure is the Domain of the Gendered Other

Western women have since long been associated with low sexual morals, and with having unruly affinities to drinking alcohol and smoking. Film stars like Helen could only be glamorous in the 1960s–1970s, performing daunting cabaret scenes, seducing the 'good' Indian man – but always remaining lonely. Bridal and other lifestyle magazines address sexuality and sexual pleasure in marital relationships. But to this day, the images used to illustrate this are predominantly cut and paste from Western magazines. I cannot go into any details about the complexity surrounding the trajectories of presenting explicit gestures and acts of sexuality in India's commercial film industry (such as rape and wet saris, see Dwyer 2000; Ghosh 1999) and the iconography of romance in other media. But romantic love is certainly not a novelty that has been introduced by greeting cards. It goes back hundreds of years, thus challenging the idea that it is the 'property' of Western modernity and a universal emotional experience. There is erotic poetry in film songs and in devotional poetry (be it *bhakti* or *sufi*), and Francesca Orsini has convincingly argued that love in South Asia must be examined as a cultural and highly entangled practice within conceptual clusters, performances, images and narratives that have grown into repertoires (Orsini 2006b:). There are ancient love stories featuring kings and queens (e.g. Jehangir and Mumtaz, manifest in the construction of the Taj Mahal), Hindu deities (such as Rama and Sita, who had an arranged love; Krishna and Radha who had a pre-marital relationship), and with Layla and Majnun we have 'Indianised' versions of Romeo and Julia (see Kakar and Ross 1986). There are chains of love songs in Bombay Cinema, as lovers dance on Swiss or Himalayan mountains or in front of the Egyptian pyramids**.** In sum, romance is rendered marginalised outside the realms of the imagined kingdom of cloud seven of deities, film stars and elitist socialites, or to the dramatic albeit heroic death of lovers who could not overcome their social boundaries. What seems to happen in the case of Valentine's Day Greeting cards is that, on the turf of the everyday, fairly different notions, or qualities, of romantic love collide. We may argue that with Valentine's Day, older ideas of gender hierarchies are challenged by notions of gender equality or companionate intimacy based on recognition and reflection in capitalist societies (Giddens 1992, see also Lindholm 2006: 10). The problem occurring in the Indian context is that romance threatens – but does not substitute! – the moral legitimacy of the joint family, of caste and kin, and even religion. Thus, in order to 'succeed' and be 'indigenised', a festival like Valentine's Day must undergo certain shifts. To avoid being derided as 'tacky' and 'cheap', romance must be successfully linked to the 'utopian fantasy of capitalism' and 'perpetual leisure' (Illouz 1997: 45).

Battles of Love: Censorship or Hurt Sentiment?

A senior employee of Archies seemed almost appalled when I asked if the Caucasian bodies were chosen consciously. However, no Indian models had been used, and in fact, all the photographed images were bought from Archies' European or US-American partners, albeit incorporated in a new context with house-made lyrics.[30] I also learnt that it was only a few years ago that Archies began to publish people cards. Before that, at international fairs, said my informant, "we were associated with roses and hearts only, how silly we seemed in their eyes!" (field notes, conversation in New Delhi, August 2009). Finally, according to my informant, Archies has 'grown up' and lost its naïve-conservative ignorance. But in its turn towards people motifs and concrete sites and practices, it seems that the dominant 'Western touch' – light skin, Western dress, erotic gestures and new sites – was more suitable for what it still widely understood as a Western concept of 'falling in love'. Thus, different emotional qualities must be considered for different customers and different love narratives. I propose that these kinds of 'Occidentalised' bodies could serve as a means of distancing and simultaneously exoticising, rendering the sender and receiver of a card less vulnerable. An interesting tension is involved in referring to Caucasian bodies as metaphors of an 'elsewhere' and the use of English lyrics in the cards to express one's love, and demonstrate social capital by connecting the domain of romance with that of conspicuous consumption. We must also remember that the public display of affection ("PDA") still fires moral panics. As Patricia Uberoi has observed, bridal and other lifestyle magazines may address explicit topics related to sex practices (and problems) – but in general only within the domain of marital relationships (Uberoi 2006). Predominantly, the images used to illustrate this are cut and pasted from Western magazines. The association of 'the West' with vulgar and immoral, and even obscene behaviour is complex and requires more attention (see Mody 2008), but to illustrate my point about 'PDA', let me mention the case of Richard Gere when he was in India for a televised AIDS/HIV charity event. Gere unwittingly embraced and kissed his stage partner, film star and *Big Brother* celebrity Shilpa Shetty in front of running cameras – on her cheek in 2007. Despite his apologies for this 'public kiss', a judge from Jaipur issued an arrest warrant for the two stars, ruling that they had violated obscenity laws in India. Religious fundamentalists and Hindu nationalists too, opposed the kiss, not least as they said because both stars were unmarried. Obviously, Richard Gere and Shilpa Shetty were consciously chosen for media publicity reasons, sending signals to the Westernised Indian middle class and élite as well as Western audiences. However, both stars were probably not seriously worried about their integrity and safety,

[30]See Mazzarella on the erotic glamour magazine *Debonair* that, as he argues, introduced "aesthetic parameters derived from the visual repertoire of Western fashion shoots and sex magazines" in the 1990s (2003: 61).

quite unlike other cases of 'normal' couples caught and accused in public, where elopement, separation or even suicide may be the consequences of 'PDA' (see Mody 2008). What becomes noticeable here is the that the media play a crucial role in all this, repeatedly playing 'vulgar' scenes, thus further intensifying and circulating emotions related to morality rather than critically engaging with and challenging 'moral police'. This may be one explanation for the lack of 'Indianness' in the people-greeting cards.

There is resistance to the images and lyrics circulated by Archies cards, not only to be seen when radical groups burn them in public a few days before or on Valentine's Day. Kalpana told me about a gift and card shop owner who sells Archies greeting cards in Jaipur, Rajasthan. He called the head-office and asked for help, making the call while surrounded by TV cameras, policemen and angry crowds. The reason, according to him, was a 'certificate' card that confirms how remarkable a particular person, father, mother, brother, sister or friend is. The card in question used the word 'sexy' and the person objecting wanted it to be removed from the shop. He was, said Kalpana, not a Hindu nationalist, as is sometimes the case, though on Valentine's Day it is mostly members of radicalised religio-political organisations who attempt to storm the shops. Valentine's Day provokes reactions from the fields of both (often educated) conservative religio-orthodox and nationalist forces. But it also fires the aspirations and the agitation of India's young, urban, middle class youth with regard to their version of a pleasure-oriented lifestyle vis-à-vis moralistic visions of life conduct. Reasons for conflict in the past were manifold: there was the accusation that romantic love and, in particular, its public 'declaration' in spaces such as parks, cafes or mass media was genuinely 'un-Indian' and immoral. The term 'public declaration of affection', often referred to as 'PDA', gives a name to what has only recently moved into the public sphere and been coded as 'nuisance', predominantly to the middle class. Generally it refers to the alleged 'injuring' of the sentiments and morals of 'good', upright families who, for instance, have to witness kissing couples when they walk through a park, or while watching TV. With the concept of 'PDA', diverse agents try to draw boundaries between 'good' and 'bad' emotions, and also to shape the notion of 'the public' in this context. It is mainly college students and young professionals who buy 'sexy' cards and are willing to express themselves more openly by this means, signifying a new lifestyle and bonding patterns. These socio-demographics largely explain why greetings cards are still predominantly in English. More specifically with regards to Valentine's cards, as Kalpana pointed out, expressing love in English is perceived as 'easier' and more sophisticated.

Can Valentine's day greeting cards be a part of a 'PDA'? The 'innocence' of Indian Valentine's day cards made me wonder why, since the late 1990s, Hindu right wing groups decided to storm gift and cards shops, threaten buyers and burn the cards in public, referring to 'nude cards' that were apparently showing explicitly indecent, 'vulgar' sexual postures and gestures. The few cards I found depicting couples in "explicitly sexual positions" show couples caressing and kissing, but they didn't constitute more than 20% of the cards on sale for Lover's Day between 2000 and 2009. So why do Valentine's day greeting cards 'hurt feelings' if they are

about the sentiment of love? Are we turned into silent witnesses, voyeurs of an intimate world that is not ours? Is that why so many demand censorship? What is shaped here is an imagined community of equals: "As lovers exchange Valentine's Day cards and whisper endearments to each other, they understand that many others at that very moment on that very day are expressing their love in much the same manner" (Schmidt 1995). Moreover, watching ourselves engaging in romantic language might have embarrassing effects:

> Some may actually express their sentiments without a self-conscious feeling of appropriating the cultural script governing romance. It is our belief that most do and feel at least vaguely and continually inauthentic as a result. For most, the words and gestures of romance seem ludicrous, even mildly embarrassing; even the physical act of love is made more self-conscious as our experience has become more densely saturated with images of the now-standard open-mouthed kiss, frontal female nudity, dorsal male nudity, and even vigorous, simulated, sexual intercourse. (Dowd & Palotta 2000: 570)

But what seems most relevant is the demand for restriction of affection, and this shall occupy the rest of this article.

Solitude, Public Nuisance and Fear

Using another medium, be it a card, a phone or a text message may be erotic, and may even be the only free, physically charged domains for sexual aspirations and desires. A recent study in the weekly *India Today* has found out that some mobile users spend a good part of the night making text message love, a finding that seems to negate what some sociologists have termed shy if not still prudish Indian (middle class) society. But this distance also bridges the highly restricted access to other spaces and forms of behaviour in public. Using mass media for romantic encounters is safer than meeting in public (Fig. 2.10), particularly if the couple is eloping and the two belong to different castes or religions, as in the case of *Sujata*, a Hindi film (1959) in which a Brahmin man falls for a low-caste woman and confesses his feelings to her – over the phone, the only safe means of communication, so it seems.[31] Sites of encountering a stranger or a potential lover are highly restricted and rare in India: Illouz' slogan of "romance as an island of privacy in the public world" does not count – or, if at all, is just in the making, in urban neighbourhoods, as mentioned above, in cafes, bars, malls, cinemas and dance halls. Solitude and privacy for the sake of intimacy is a new concept that is being aspired to. In conservative, traditional circles, it is seen as an unnecessary boon that disrupts the 'intimacy' and solidarity of the kin or clan. It is only with economic liberalisation that the concept of solitude as a momentum of rejuvenation, rehabilitation and romantic encounter becomes popular, albeit remaining a luxury good (see Brosius 2010).

[31] Thanks to Sanjay Srivastava for this reference.

फुर्सद अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट शनिबारे परिशिष्टांक

प्रणयदिवस विशेष/आवरण

आज संसारका अरू चीज जस्तै
सुरु भएको छ। मायाका भाका
छन्। यसको अनुभव

Fig. 2.10 Article featuring a discussion on public display of affection as immoral, Nepali Newspaper, special weekend edition, February 2009

"I feel sorry about those desperate people you find under almost every tree when you walk through particular parks", says Aneeta, one of my key informants (19 years old, private school, New Delhi). "They have nowhere to go. I am really privileged – I can always go home". But even at home, and this is like a running gag in many conversations I had, you are never alone: "There will always be someone, either someone sweeping, washing, cooking, one of the servants. Or my mom who does not want me to be alone with the servants. Or whoever", adds Aneeta. This comment also refers to the existence of gendered spaces and control over movement that has as much impact on adolescent girls as on married women.

There are two levels of space appropriation and class distinction at play here: one is the growing confidence and surplus money of a young, educated urban elite to consume conspicuously, accompanied by a growing number of places such as lounge bars, cafés, malls and pubs in urban centres. These young Indians strongly advocate free access to, and mobility within the new public domains that have also come to shape their stage for self-display. The spaces, however, in which they move, can be seen as parts of a privatised public realm, such as posh nightclubs, café bars, shopping malls. The second level concerns young couples from lower middle classes and their shortage of protected and accessible public space, something they need as a place to 'be alone' and intimate with each other. Moreover, they may belong to different castes or even religions (though the latter rarely seems to happen), and thus destined to fail in the face of their parents and the idea of arranged marriage (see Mody 2008).

In February 2009, I encountered Valentine's Day in Nepal while starting some new research on wedding videos (having worked beforehand on wedding designers

and events in neoliberal urban India). Vernacular newspapers from Kathmandu brought special features on V-Day, with photographs of lovers in public parks on the one hand, and ads showing romantic couples 'rubbing bodies', on the other hand. Valentine's Day arrived in Nepal around 2–3 years ago, and as in neighbouring India, it is a window on the modern world and Western lifestyles for many young people who feel that traditional life (and even more so in Nepal, civil war) has excluded them from the experience of a 'good life'. Looking at the newspaper supplements with a Nepali friend, I could sense his discomfort when he argued that he felt bad both about the ways in which youth engaged with each other and the ways in which they were exposed to the anonymous eye of the cameraman, and the national public. "I am really worried about these people", he said, "what will their family and friends say if they see those pictures". For a moment I thought that this was a conservative comment, but then I realised that it made a lot of sense: social control and respect are still followed along the lines of allegedly traditional, caste- and kin-based networks and norms.

New social and physical spaces have emerged with the arrival of economic liberalisation, enabling urban youth to meet (and elope!), in principle, in less regulated ways, whether in colleges, clubs, or cafes. But individual decision-making in the context of match-making is still highly problematic. Sanctions are the consequence, and newspapers in Nepal and India are full of news of people being punished, even killed, after being caught eloping with each other.

Across the border, in India, lovers have been increasingly attacked around Valentine's day in public parks and other spots in metropolitan cities (which does not mean that attacks were not carried out elsewhere and at other times of the year). The attackers were mostly young men, not just members of the Hindu Right but also representatives of other conservative-orthodox groups, or policemen. This adds to the general feeling that the public sphere is threatening and provides no protection, and that with PAD one is engaging in something morally wrong and abnormal. This was even heightened when this year, Hindu right activists in New Delhi announced their plan to film the 'obscene' and 'vulgar' acts of young couples on Valentine's Day and upload the clips on the video sharing website YouTube, rather than employing physical violence and protest actions such as attacks on Archies shops and card burnings (Fig. 2.11). The intention was to expose the people involved as threatening the national culture and (Hindu) sentiment (for a similar debate on allegedly vulgar iconography, albeit, on one particular Indian artist, see Ramaswamy 2010).

Moral Panics and Sentiments in the Age of Globalised Valentine's Day

It is crucial to understand that the access to and circulation of objects like cards and concepts such as romantic love belong to the imaginary – or utopian – realm of 'unbound mobility', and individual freedom (of expression), beyond social and

Fig. 2.11 Burning cards in public. See BBC News Online, Saturday, 14 February 2009

religious restrictions of class and caste. The ability to relate to Valentine's Day, its rhetoric and performative spaces, has become part of the cosmopolitan lifestyle of the aspiring middle classes. However, it is connected to discourses on 'Indianness' and the question as "to what extent we want to allow consumption to rule over our emotional life", as Ravi, a student from Delhi University, revealed in conversation (February 2010). This position became evident in many interviews I conducted with students and young urban professionals in 2009–2010. Many informants stressed that for them, Valentine's Day was rather unspectacular, if not irrelevant, and even annoying in all its celebration of 'one day for love' and consumption. Yet, no one would deny that it had contributed quite vitally to the circulation and spread of romantic love as a legitimate feeling, a code of conduct and element of a globalised lifestyle. And it was associated with new spaces of leisure, social interaction and fun and fashion culture. However, in this section I propose that a culture of fear, disgust and stigma as well as a moral claim for restriction of mobility in public has become the flip side of the 'festival of unbound love'. We now move away from the role of Valentine's Day cards as a means to introduce and facilitate new feelings and relationships, as well as modes of consumption, to the mobilization of intense affect in the service of moral politics, calling for strict surveillance and regulation

of those social agents who have, in theory, just been set free by the circulation of cards and concepts. The interesting side of moral panics is that they must be staged and that they help to shape ideas of 'good' (=natural) and 'bad' (=abnormal) emotions (Brosius 2007). And that even though they may only be triggered by a small splinter group that knows how to instrumentalise the media at the 'right' time, these moral panics make a weak public seem dominant and righteous, and can silence the 'majority' by emotional blackmail, instilling fear, restricting access to and within the public sphere and possibly even lead to the 'offenders' exclusion from it.

By steadily occupying (and thus reshaping) a public sphere by creating 'islands of privacy' (Illouz 1997: 56) – in an act consolidated by the outpourings of new media technologies for leisure and communication, such as greeting cards, and the urban infrastructure that accompanies them – social norms are challenged (such as those demanding no PDA) and social controls exerted parents and kin over the whereabouts of their children are sidelined. Polarised with courtship, marriage may even get a shallow taste of 'unnecessary' boredom, thus risking its 'legitimacy' as a key element in a 'good life' for the 'Generation Fun'. Nevertheless, my student informants, even though critical of arranged marriage, would hesitate to make decisions against their parents' will.

Individual emotions are said to encroach upon public space and thus hurt sentiments of an imagined moral community, e.g. 'the' middle class, or 'the' Hindus. In the course of this interpretation, pleasure becomes lust and obscenity; lovers in public become public nuisances, if not threats. It is the fabric of just such a moral sex panic that I wish to explore on the next pages, looking at the digital media of film, the internet, and You Tube as highly ambivalent sites of exposure and moral accusation. This latter point is interesting: these sites shape notions of being challenged, on the one hand, and of having to control, discipline and even attack certain social 'objects' on the other. I argue that with the growing visibility and confidence of urbanized youth culture, and with a Westernised and highly commercialised 'culture of love', public domains and sites become panoptic and, as Michel Foucault has it, 'visibility becomes a trap'.[32] Even the business of taking pictures or making films of each other with a mobile phone camera has developed dangerous connotations, because these pictures can be discovered by parents or other people who may use them to ridicule, humiliate, blackmail and expose the depicted online. Finally, it is important to mention that the idea of a public nuisance is employed by and for the aspiring and affluent middle classes and elites of urbanized India.

Let me illustrate this. In recent years, lovers in public parks have been increasingly exposed by the mass media, be it print media or television media or YouTube. The 'exposers' of such 'vulgar' deeds, or 'PDA', may have been television teams, nationalist/religio-chauvinist splinter groups, and may have been acting in

[32]Foucault 1995: 200.

collaboration with the local police, priests, or other agitated groups.[33] Couples would be hit, shouted at, taken to the police, photographed, etc. And they would be referred to as 'obscene', as 'destroying Indian culture', and as 'hurting Hindu/ Muslim sentiments'.

There is a correlation between the increasing visibility of couples in public (and this includes their presence in print and television media), and the conspicuous consumption of new modern topics and notions of lifestyle (see also Srivastava 2007). Economic liberalisation has led to new social and physical spaces emerging in metropolitan centres, enabling urban youth to meet, in principle, in less socially regulated ways. Yet, these new spaces and the practices connected to them, increasingly come under moral scrutiny, often involving public harassment and physical violence. In particular with the advent of Valentine's Day, an imaginary space has formed that allows a moral panic about the display of erotic love in public and love relationships transgressing and thus questioning social borders, e.g. across caste or religion. They appear as "paradoxical events, unpredictable outbreaks that are highly scripted. Seemingly timeless, they both rupture and reinforce ordinary political life" (Irvine 2007: 4). This is interesting insofar as it alerts us to the 'structured structuring' of emotive action, and to the relevance of seeing an interperformative, intermedial connectedness in the attacks on young couples and greeting card shops over recent years in India, both in the media and the actual spaces. The staged agitation and excitement linked to moral panics add to the feeling that the public sphere is at once vulnerable, threatening, and unprotected. As a consequence, displaying erotic affection in public amounts to engaging in something that is morally wrong, socially destabilising and 'abnormal', and that calls for trouble. Thus, public parks turn into a stage for pedagogical dramas – involving the media as an extended public eye – and judgement by which 'low (or no) morals' are exposed and utilised for what seems to be the role of society-as-judge, or *volonté générale*. The backdrop of threatening people to expose their 'immoral' behaviour online seems to be a voyeuristic space shared by members of both the 'moral police' and of the 'cosmopolitan' yet conservative educated middle classes. Both engage in looking at and consuming narratives of exposure and violence, intimacy and threat. Thus, rather paradoxically, more than just a 'traditionalist' or even anti-social segment of society supports the growing control of public space for the sake of creating a 'moral community'. Even though their social status might differ, the 'odour' of vulgarity and obscenity (versus 'family life' and 'heritage') seems surprisingly similar. And the effects may be chilling: most of my informants consider the public sphere as a highly risky place and restrict their PDA accordingly. This is another side of 'emotion work', bending emotions to suit specific

[33]This also becomes evident in the documentary film *Morality TV. The Loving Jehad. A Thrilling Tale* (2007) by Paromita Vohra, where she underlines the 'hand-in-glove' policy of the media and the (moral) police in the attacks on lovers in a park in Meerut, 2005, where cameramen were called by the local police – which staged itself as a custodian of civil order while hunting couples and verbally and physically abusing the women.

situations, even though they might be largely imagined, in other words: feared. The following example should be a good example, one where the 'chilling' effects were counterposed with a particular kind of humour, at least for a short period. Here, new media technologies served both as restricting and empowering, constituting a public that might well not have come about without these technologies.

De-romanticising Valentine's Day in a Liminal Space

On January 24, 2009, 40 members of the Hindu nationalist Sri Ram Sena (Army of Lord Ram) barged into the lounge bar Amnesia in Mangalore, a city in the Southern State of Karnataka ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). They beat up a group of young women and men, claiming the women were violating traditional Indian culture and values. Two of the women were hospitalised. As if they had happened to be there by chance, a camera-team documented the incident. The footage, repeatedly and widely shown on regional and national television channels, has also become a popular clip on YouTube.[34] It shocked the Indian middle classes and sparked a passionate debate about moral policing, Indian culture, and gender-specific liberties. (Mostly women were accused of leaving their 'traditional' spaces and moving into a male-dominated and Westernised domain 'genuinely' not 'theirs'.) Several protest campaigns were launched, expressing the anger of social activists and less political urban youth. Even though many people condemned the violence of the attacks, many contended that the women's' habit of going out with (male) friends and drinking was against the 'traditional' and 'authentic' female role model. A common argument brought forward then was that women consuming alcohol provoked male lust and had to be 'reasoned with', for otherwise they can neither be controlled nor protected. Moreover, a lot of criticism was raised saying that love was being made a commodity. Once again, we see a blurring of different discourses linking gendered mobility to sexuality; values and the pleasures of consumption – perhaps also so as to succeed in addressing different audiences.

This example also indicates the entangled relationship of romantic love, new spaces of consumption, and freedom of expression. Social activists, objecting to this restriction of the public sphere staged protests such as 'pub bharo' (go to the pub!) to 'hug karo' (let's hug!) in order to claim back a free public sphere. Interestingly, a lot of initiatives were led, or at least generated within the space of the digital media, such as blogs or Facebook. A group of Bangalore bloggers sought to challenge the demands to restrict female mobility and leisure consumption by offering 'free hugs' to people in their city. Another online group asked to send Pramod Muthalik a Valentine's Day card. By doing so, they used the concept of *gandhigiri* (truthfulness and non-violent protest), proclaimed in the block-buster *Lage Raho Munna Bhai* (2006) with its promotion of Gandhi's teachings.

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[34]See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lEbD2aXs-XU, accessed on 5.2.2010.

After he was briefly arrested for inciting violence, leader of the Sri Ram Sena Pramod Muthalik continued his provocation, once again efficiently spread by the mainstream media, and threatened to marry and take other action against any young couples found together on Valentine's Day. At a press conference, he announced that his men would walk around Bangalore with a video camera. If they found young couples dating, they would force them to wed on the spot.[35] The use of media as a threatening tool of exposure in an increasingly media-savvy and 'reality-TV'-oriented urban society must be taken seriously. Muthalik referred to Valentine's Day as a 'Christian' festival and demanded for it to be celebrated in churches rather than 'in public' (whilst 'Hindu' culture does not fall into this category). In a larger context, however, his definition of Valentine's Day as an offence would square with the widespread consensus that this was part of an alleged 'Westernisation' of Indian culture. Religion-as-cultural-and-national-resource, gender and sexuality thus become closely intertwined explosives, reaching out to touch as many emotive strings in the largest possible audience as strategies of othering.

The media hype surrounding Muthalik's anti-Valentine's Day-agitation caused waves of critique and anger. One of the most widely visible and discussed reactions became the so-called *Pink Chaddi* (underwear) Campaign, launched on 5 February 2009 (Fig. 2.12). This "consortium of pub going, loose and forward women" was an online, self-declared non-violent protest movement started on Facebook.[36] The initiative managed to recruit as many as almost 40,000 members – mainly from India – but also gained worldwide support. But Valentine's Day was simply the spring-board and not the key focus of agitation; the intention was to clear public spaces, including bars, of moral policing and its power to manipulate public discourses, and to point to the danger of self-censorship in many citizens' heads in order to avoid moral panic. Despite its short life span – the Pink Chaddi Campaign only existed for a few months–the agitation had some effect in that it showed that moral policing can be challenged without using the same weapons.

The young women (and a few men) heading the Pink Chaddi campaign used Facebook to stage a peaceful protest (described as *gandhigiri*) by sending (preferably *used*) pink underwear to Muthalik's office for Valentine's Day. Hundreds of pink panties, symbols of intimacy and popular gifts on Valentine's Day, were collected and sent. One newspaper published a photograph of some of the Ram Sena members holding up some of their 'gifts', looking both puzzled and amused

[35]"Ram Sene to marry off dating couples" 5 Feb 2009 (see http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Ram_Sene_to_marry_off_dating_couples/articleshow/4078475.cms, accessed on 11.10.2009). In Uttar Pradesh, the Shiv Sena plans to 'catch young couples and inform their ignorant parents' on Valentine's Day this Saturday, the Sena's state unit head said on Friday. Such 'hunts' can be traced back in time: 'On February 14, our activists will catch unmarried couples from hotels, eating joints, malls, cinema halls and other places and later inform their ignorant parents,' Shiv Sena president Udai Pandey said.

[36]See http://thepinkchaddicampaign.blogspot.com/, accessed on 6.2.2010.

Fig. 2.12 Key Poster of the Pink Chaddi campaign, from the Pink Chaddi Facebook site (accessed 14.5.2010)

Fig. 2.13 Mail Today, 14.2.2009, p. 18. The caption reads: "Ram Sene members show underwear they received in Hubli"

(Fig. 2.13).[37] Interestingly, the panty on the campaign's logo (Fig. 2.12) is not a sexy image, quite the opposite: it looks like an innocent 'pleasure killer', more like an old-fashioned undergarment than that of a young, fashion-conscious girl. And that might be why the logo gained such attention and sympathy: it became quite clear that it played with the idea of lust and vulgarity, its opposite, while directly relating to obscenity through an imaginary plot and chains of associations. In return, Muthalik announced he would send pink saris for every pair of pink pants, along with

[37]Sowmya Ali and Neha Tara Mehta. "It's raining pink on this year's V-day". Mail Today, 14.2.2009: 18.

bangles, to the senders – again making a gesture towards 'good', 'traditional', married Hindu women. However, this was just a media-effective announcement: according to Nisha Susan, key organiser of the chaddi campaign, scarcely a handful of saris were sent. Yet in the media, this looked like a true potlatch, involving all kinds of media cross-overs and agents in excessive gift-giving, excessively wasting and taking with rapid changes in value production as presents shifted from 'good' gift to indecent gift, from non-violent humorous protest to forward humiliation, playing with the idea of intimacy and privacy exposed and transformed in the public realm.

Conclusions

In post-liberalisation India, Valentine's Day has helped circulate the concept of romantic love widely, and contributed to visualising and shaping a youth culture that privileges 'emotion work' (including flirting and dating) over instant marriage as part of their lifestyle, albeit without rendering the concept of heteronormative arranged marriage obsolete. The festival and greeting cards are tied to a proliferation of new (urban) spaces and habits that have emerged since the new millennium: a geography of leisure manifest in cafes, bars, restaurants, and parks. They reflect and contribute to the making of new social relationships that come to the fore in the context of economic liberalisation, and to a rethinking of older, familial ties. The flow of images and media can only be properly understood if looked at through an ethnographic lens, tracing the agents, aspirations and performances tied to the cards and media. They demand a 'vernacular', multi-sited gaze upon the complexity of the simultaneously-existing public spheres through which romantic love is contested. Valentine's Day may even produce a 'third space' in which a new emotional quality and social relationship may manifest itself – even if only temporarily. The 'Third Space' ibid is connected to media technologies and 'inbetween-places', that is, places that do not seem to belong to a particular community but a larger 'public'. Thus Valentine's Day highlights the ways in which images and new media technologies play a vital role in creating the public sphere and certain discourses that are contested in it. Moreover, certain social players – and topics – gain visibility and currency they would otherwise not necessarily be able to attain.

In a literal sense, this constitutes an aesthetics of circulation, both in the sense of the viewer's position and that of the cards as circulating commodities. It is crucial to understand that the access to and circulation of these displayed goods are part of a larger realm of imagining oneself being able to achieve social status and wealth, to be mobile and able to choose beyond the restrictions of caste and community endogamy. The ability to participate in the circulation of Valentine's Day rhetoric and commodities seems part of the generation of modern, urban and cosmopolitan subjectivities, of a new ecology of sentimental emotions. And yet Valentine's Day has also been criticised for forcing people into participating and engaging in the performance of romance, wasting money 'for nothing' and generating 'fake' desires. But even this stance, in my view, is a way of positioning one's critical, or at least agentive, voice within a discourse on the experience of modernity.

This case study has shown just how far romantic love is a contestation of social hierarchies, of caste and religion, and maybe most of all of class membership. Romantic love is very much about access to, participation and visibility in India's emerging leisure and consumer cultures. The example of Muthalik's Ram Sena in Karnataka has shown that romantic love may also just provide an excuse to enter the public debate, involving media's desire to report about and create spectacular news. Images and new media are part and parcel of emergent publics competing for recognition and seeking to position themselves in public spheres. I have argued that one of the reasons why Valentine's Day has landed in, and engendered, a minefield of vulnerability is because the notion of a libertarian public sphere and citizenship in 'India' are highly ambivalent, fragile and, some would argue, even non-existent – at least if we compare it with Western European or North American public spheres. The emergent publics of today's youth culture (including lovers) battle with different forces in a volatile and aggressive environment, constantly shifting and colliding with spatial control and moral policing within the public realm. While we might be critical of the effects of economic liberalisation in Western countries, in many ways they have also opened up new possibilities, sites and lifestyle options in countries like India, in particular for youth and women, and most recently, also for an emerging gay movement. Moreover, it might even be suggested that semi-private spaces such as gated communities, or the internet (blogs and social networking sites) will serve as future public domains of liberal citizenship in rather restrictive and prudish countries like India.

The asymmetries of flows of images and media enable us to think differently about Valentine's Day, and in particular the idea of the romantic couple as an association of equals, legitimised by erotic desire and lifestyle pleasures instead of reproductivity and caste status. They point to the transcultural turbulences – not just entanglements – that ensue from the kinds of flows of images, media, and concepts described in this paper. On the positive side, these manifest in qualitative changes in the emotional repertoire, and in the possibilities of expressing it in private and public. On the negative side, they result in the increasing prescriptions on these emotions, and even in violence against those who display them. The space in between, as far as the social agents are concerned, ranges from elopement to suicide to self-censorship.

Considering Valentine's greeting cards as quasi-performative speech acts and gifts, as ambivalent social gestures and facts, we can trace status distinction, shifts in value and meaning as romantic love meanders between the sacred and the mundane, as either empowering and humiliating or restricting, vulgar and obscene. Thus, the study of image and media flows can help us to further elaborate the economy of asymmetric exchange: sites, symbols and agency. Globalisation thus finds its limitations, *particularly* in urban, middle-class and neo-liberal spaces, and does so through the most globalised aspect of its 'material culture': images and media! But it goes without saying that the agents and agency that lie behind their flows of circulation must be part of such a study on media and images. Only by considering these can we 'read' the different qualities of publics and public spheres when it comes to accessibility or restriction, empowerment or surveillance.

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Chapter 3
Shifting Identities and Cosmopolitan Machineries: A New World Imagined at the 1919 Peace Conference in Paris

Madeleine Herren

Introduction

Well known as a historian of nation-building and for his metaphor of the imagined community, Benedict Anderson introduced his latest book by taking a look at a tropical night sky. In his previously published works, he says that he had been a nightly observer of clearly distinguishable stars, but now he uses a telescope and has discovered fast-moving stars that blur the borderlines. In his new book, *Under Three Flags*,[1] nation-building is likened to this experience of blurring entanglement, and, focussing on the Philippines instead of on the familiar European examples, has enlisted anarchists as additional actors. *Under Three Flags* is a prominent example in a growing list of works interested in transcultural entanglements, new cosmopolitanism, border-crossing communities, and transboundary concepts. In this transdisciplinary melting pot, historians, among other twenty-first century social scientists, expect to find the right analytical tools for a global history beyond Eurocentrism and other forms of geopolitical essentialism. Following such a rationale, this contribution takes an approach astutely suggested by Gerard Delanty. He argues that local/national traditions that constitute the Self interact with cultural Otherness through the intermediary of a third level, called the cosmopolitan imagination.[2] At least for a global history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the distinction between global and cosmopolitan agencies seems convincing, because then the main focus lies on the question of who, when and under what structural circumstances cultural entanglements influence actors of historical significance. Aware as I am of how important the location of transcultural source material is, I nevertheless suggest stepping back from a purely descriptive approach. Instead,

[1]B. Anderson, *Under Three Flags: anarchism and the anti-colonial imagination*, London: Verso, 2005.

[2]G. Delanty, *The Cosmopolitan Imagination: the renewal of critical social theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

C. Brosius and R. Wenzlhuemer (eds.), *Transcultural Turbulences*,
Transcultural Research – Heidelberg Studies on Asia and Europe in a Global Context,
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this contribution presumes that there is an added benefit in specifying historical moments when the encounter of the Self and Other, the local and the global, takes on political relevance of a third kind. The Paris Peace Conference was just such an almost magical moment, when after the end of World War I a reordering process started that went beyond all expectations. The deliberations in Paris of 1919 indeed 'changed the World'[3] and belong to the class of rare events that are mentioned in almost every history textbook, because the decisions made there have lasted to this day.[4] However comprehensive the existing research literature may be, and however much national histories explain the respective state's position towards the Paris Peace Conference, there is a blank space surrounding the question of how national decision-making in a global context came to find a cosmopolitan intermediary. The imaginary of Paris in 1919 is filled with the employment of new forms of communication, with the political importance of visual sources, the increasing value of performative actions, and with decision-making shaped by people from backgrounds that differ from those provided by Western-rooted traditions of diplomacy.

The choice of this example has an additional perspective that relates to the particular discipline involved. The so-called war guilt issue turned historians into experts on, with the result that the Paris Peace Conference deeply influenced the discipline of history: rarely a postwar period granted access to so much source material.[5] After the First World War, foreign policy-making left the secrecy of diplomatic deliberations. Influenced by governmental propaganda strategies, the publication of secret files by the Soviet government, and by the political trajectory of the war guilt question, governments started to publish selected files on foreign policy. These book series had academic pretensions, and absorbed the interest of academia's community of historians. The Paris Peace Conference thus describes a decisive moment in historiography and the history of the discipline. But there is another part of the story to tell: with diplomacy going public, the mediality of international politics increased and the question is whether historiography gave adequate attention to the developing global imaginary. As a script-based discipline with methods established in the nineteenth century, history is deeply rooted in the

[3]M. MacMillan, *Paris 1919: six months that changed the world*, New York: Random House, 2002.

[4]From the moment of the Paris Conference, deliberations on historiography concentrated on the so-called war guilt question and the consequences of the Versailles treaty for European international history. See Zara Steiner, *The Lights that Failed. European International History 1919–1933*, Oxford, 2005. In studies on international systems, politics, and international law, the Paris Peace conferences are presented in a line with the decisive peace deliberations at Münster and Osnabrück in 1648, and the Congress of Vienna 1814/1815. In recent studies, the deliberations in Paris have gained a more global profile in the context of decolonisation. Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment. Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*, Oxford, 2009.

[5]The war guilt question launched a controversy fought with the archival declassification of diplomatic documents and official national publications on foreign policy. See S. Zala, *Geschichte unter der Schere politischer Zensur: amtliche Aktensammlungen im internationalen Vergleich*, Munich: Oldenbourg, 2001.

history of the nation state, especially in the field of international and diplomatic history. Do we need new sources, and/or new methods to analyse the obvious importance of mediality in the border-crossing flow of information? In this contribution, global imaginaries throw light on the past in the specific moment of reordering processes after a global war. Instead of analysing the creation of new entities, areas and states, this contribution focuses on the development of border-crossing imaginaries.

Interestingly, the rather dry deliberations in the cabinets and in diplomatic circles corresponded very closely to this new level of a third, cosmopolitan culture described by Delanty. It is therefore helpful to specify the key cosmopolitan topics by considering well known source material: the diplomatic documents published in the FRUS series (Foreign Relations of the United States), and British Cabinet minutes. This source material will be combined with others written in the global context of international organisations, within border-crossing networks of experts, and material published in the news by members of an international civil society. Besides the suggestion that well-known source material should be read from a different angle, the following discussion concentrates on two controversial aspects; namely, on the reordering of culture in the debate about the restitution of art works, and on the metaphor of the newly-created international order. While, from the history of restitution, the global imaginary shaped Europe along the lines of a medieval model, the newly created order with the League of Nations unfolded according to the metaphor of a machine. The current research approach thus rejects the idea of cosmopolitanism as a political realisation of a Kantian peace concept in the twentieth century.

Following Delanty, the local/national, the global, and the cosmopolitan interfere with one another in way that spark a lot of controversy. To begin with, the local situation in Paris in 1919, the abstract idea of universally applicable rules mentioned in the American peace conditions, Wilson's famous 14 points, all confronted in the most ironic possible way the realities of a war-torn city, which shortly before armistice had been under fire and was only an hour's drive from soldiers' still unburied corpses.[6] Even after the armistice, those who came to Paris too early faced the threat of infection with Spanish flu, another frightening example of how porous borders had become.

But the aim here is to gain a more precise picture of how Delanty's idea of a third culture was involved in the political decision-making, and not to recall the bitter taste of failure associated with the Paris Peace Conference in view of how quickly the next world war followed. The following section discusses analytical tools for gaining a global picture. It suggests a methodological approach which confronts the narrative of cultural *differences* with the specification of *similarities* on a global level. Looking at the situation in Paris in 1919, the research design gives a clear insight into the difference between a cosmopolitan and a global imaginary, the one

[6]E.J. Dillon, *The Inside Story of the Peace Conference*, New York: Harper,1920, p. 25.

focussing on the metaphor of transboundary networks as 'machinery', the other introducing territorial claims by pointing to cultural authenticity in a global debate on the restitution of works of art.

Cosmopolitan Places – Methods and Theories

Historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have highlighted the impact of globalisation in different fields: they have pointed to the dense networks of experts and researchers, the establishment of a common prime meridian, the belief in the same table of chemical elements.[7] But recently, research has been going in a different direction, complementing the necessary documentation of international cooperation and transnational networks with cosmopolitanism beyond the institutional history of well known forms of Western-shaped associations. While the socialist and the communist *Internationale* still fit into the picture of increasingly common transnational institutions, Anderson raises the black flag of anarchism. Indeed, in the late nineteenth century, anarchists spread round the globe, partly in search of like-minded people, partly pursued by draconian national laws, or simply on the run after one of their numerous assassinations. In the most recent literature, there is an ongoing search for agencies that act as a cosmopolitan connection between national and global interests. Approaches of this kind choose their empirical evidence either beyond the traditional agencies of international politics, or follow the discourse of cultural differentiation by multiplication.[8] This choice has dramatic consequences for the historical narrative, the source material, and for the way in which lives beyond borders are related. For one thing, this approach insists on locating the complex transformation of global and local interests outside of established and acknowledged structures. In the research on the so-called Black Atlantic,[9] a 'motley crew' on a pirate ship are those who act truly globally. From

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[7] As a recent contribution in this field see C.N. Murphy and J. Yates, *The International Organization for Standardization (ISO): global governance through voluntary consensus*, London: Routledge 2009.

[8] Introduced by Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, the multiple modernities approach deeply influenced social history, and has been augmented by research on international organisations. See T. G. Weiss and R. Jolly, 'The "Third" United Nations', *UN Intellectual History Project Briefing Note* 3, 2009, pp. 1–3. Online. Available HTTP: <http://www.unhistory.org/briefing/3ThirdUN.pdf> (accessed 7 April 2010). T. G. Weiss, T. Carayannis, and R. Jolly, 'The "Third" United Nations', *Global Governance* 15/1, 2009, pp. 123–46.

[9] P. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: modernity and double consciousness*, London: Verso, 2002. P. Linebaugh and M. Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: sailors, slaves, commoners, and the hidden history of the revolutionary Atlantic*, Boston: Beacon Press 2000. For this approach, slavery is the key element in the historical rationale. In addition, the metaphor of the ship and the introduction of new media, especially music, as a neglected form of communication brings in a methodologically innovative aspect. Transculturality, however, also presumes the motley crew exists within well-established societies, and not exclusively outside.

this perspective, the citizen of the world is black, a slave, and/or probably a pirate. The global citizen's habitat is not a multicultural urban area but the seven seas, and globalisation emerged from the so-called 'Black Atlantic' and not from the philosopher's desk.

Another approach starts with a spatial focus and investigates so-called port societies. Making ports examples of cosmopolitan cohabitation, research following this approach actually amplifies the understanding of what is considered a port or a port city. In a lively debate about a new understanding of diaspora, some have advocated the concept of 'port Jews' living in places described as seaport cities – even in cases in which no sea is involved.[10] Although there is a debate still focussed on the characteristics of Jewish history, the concept discusses the specific cultural environment of such places, citing rather the porosity of culture than the idea of cultural delimitation and authenticity. The question therefore is whether the cosmopolitan setting specifies certain groups (e.g. Jewish communities), or perhaps certain places (port cities), or just specific time periods.

Going back to Delanty's third culture concept, I suggest we should comprehend cosmopolitan entanglements rather as manifestations of constant negotiation and bargaining between the local and the global, between the Self and Other. Cosmopolitan settings are therefore volatile, and of varying intensity, depending on the interests involved and available information.

In the Paris of 1919, even before debates about new national borders and the foundation of new states commenced, the place became a hub of information. From the United States, the USS George Washington brought the *Inquiry* to Paris, a group of 150 experts who had to prepare the information needed for the American delegation. Even if on a more modest scale, almost all of the delegations contributed to this immense information market, where decisions now had to be taken on a global dimension. These experts added substantially, and partly from an autobiographical perspective, to a vast quantity of source material.[11] From a methodological point of view, the quantity and worldwide availability of sources seems less remarkable than the new form of argumentation in a global context. The Paris Peace Conference gave global knowledge a new, cosmopolitan quality by introducing a specific form of comparativism: by comparing Fiume with Kiaotschou, or Danzig with Shanghai, East-West differences gained a quality of entanglement which blurred rather than highlighted the differences.[12] The question is whether the

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[10]As one example, Goldstein discusses the Harbin Jews as 'Inlanders with seaport characteristics' (J. Goldstein, 'The Sorkin and Golab Theses and their applicability to South, Southeast, and East Asian port Jewry', in D. Cesarani (ed.), *Port Jews: Jewish communities in cosmopolitan maritime trading centres, 1550–1950*, London: Cass, 2002, pp. 179–96). C.S. Monaco, 'Port Jews or a people of the diaspora? a critique of the port Jew concept', *Jewish Social Studies* n. s. 15/2, 2009, pp. 137–66.

[11]See e.g. J.T. Shotwell, *At the Paris Peace Conference*, New York: Macmillan 1937. Aga Khan, *The Memoirs of Aga Khan: world enough and time*, New York: Simon and Schuster 1954.

[12]To take two examples, political decisions over Fiume influenced the debates about the former German possession in China, Kiaotschou (Far Eastern Political Science Review*, China at the*

presence of this form of cosmopolitan knowledge ended with the closing of the Paris Peace Conference, or whether comparativism shifted from comparing cultural *differences* – e.g. according to the East-West rationale – to an accepted method of specifying *similarities* worldwide. For historiography, the answer is crucial. It is the starting point for reflections about the quality of any source material we may consider and distinguishes between a description of cosmopolitan topics and an analysis of their contemporary use in a political, social, or cultural argumentation.

What can we say about the contemporary cosmopolitan interests in terms of the broader public? In the 1920s, at least for an English-speaking Western public, the label 'cosmopolitanism', or cosmopolitan knowledge was a seller, not only in popular literature but above all in fashion. In contemporary newspapers, there was a conceptual shift in cosmopolitanism from meaning an amalgamation of different cultural components, as for instance in *cosmopolitan* cities, to a specific expression of modernity. In addition to collecting and celebrating oriental or exotic objects – a habit well known from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – cosmopolitan fashion after World War I found its expression in the gleaming chrome used for modernist architecture and cars. To put it differently, cosmopolitanism turned into a visual and media-related concept. Fashion articles and magazines explained the far-reaching consequences of Le Corbusier's idea of understanding the house as a machine.[13] A cosmopolitan lifestyle extended to the right choice of furniture, clothes, accessories – and even pets. Instead of dogs and cats, exotic fish fitted best – with a chrome-edged aquarium for aesthetic reasons.[14] The ultimate metaphor of the machine, the car, even influenced the choice of pets, since the aquarium with its exotic fish allowed the now usual days away at weekends. It is no problem to find evidence for the presence of cosmopolitan knowledge in different areas, the question of language included. Linguistic research on the spread of Pidgin English confirms the extension of the linguistic landscape.[15] The question is whether this new understanding of cosmopolitanism had an explanatory force that went beyond fancy consumer goods. How successfully did the gleaming machines compete with traditional forms of identity-building? Combining traditional diplomatic with public sources, merging textual and visual material, the following discussion looks critically at the Peace Conference in Paris as a cosmopolitan space by taking a look at the restitution of art that was performed and the common metaphor of the machine.

Peace Conference, August 1919, Canton: Diplomatic Association 1919, p. 66 ff.). On the other hand, solutions for Danzig as an international city referred to international settlements in Asia.

[13]W. Rendell Storey,'Decorative Art a Blend of Many Ideas', in: *The New York Times*, 16.6.1929, p. SM9.

[14]V.H. Bernstein,'Pet Fashions Change as fancy Changes', in: *The New York Times*, 20.5.1934, p. SM10.

[15]See for example J.J. Si, 'The Circulation of English in China 1840–1940: historical texts, personal activities, and a new linguistic landscape', Ph.D. Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2006. The book presents visual material, e.g. advertisements, and photographs of shops using Western names in Chinese cities.

The Paris Peace Conference

With the Peace Conference and the treaties signed in the Parisian suburbs between 1919 and 1920, a new and public diplomacy entered the stage of international politics. Historians have often compared the Paris Peace Conference with the Congress of Vienna in 1814/1815. Indeed, 100 years before the meetings in Paris, the prices of hotel rooms in Vienna had likewise soared, supplicants had also lined up, and overworked experts had similarly participated in glamorous society events. This time, however, the negotiations had to cope with a public not limited to Europeans. The Treaty of Versailles, a burden for European politics, turned out to be a document of sovereignty for the Dominions and India, whose authorization to sign made the Paris treaties, strangely enough, the founding documents of decolonisation.[16] The peace treaties were discussed in Shanghai and Bombay, by civil associations worldwide. More than this, the Peace Conference gained a visibility which went well beyond the usual portraits produced on these occasions when the governments admitted photographers and artists.[17] Journalists gained direct access to crucial moments, e.g. the famous handing-over of the peace conditions to the German delegation. As explained above, the current article is concerned less with interpretations of the conference's appearance as filtered by the media, and more with the question of whether and how new visual forms supported a global or cosmopolitan approach. The photographs present delegations from all over the world with a rather uniform appearance. Even those not wearing military uniforms wore modern Western suits. While national and cultural authenticity in clothing seemed interchangeable and the famous Lawrence of Arabia, as a member of the Arab delegation, wore an Arabian headdress with his British uniform, the visual representation of the Paris Peace Conference seemed closely connected to the newly introduced buzzword in international relations: standardised 'machinery'. As can be verified from diplomatic documents, peace-making was described as 'machinery', more as rather technical wheelwork than as an expression of personal genius or cultural authenticity.

The Cosmopolitan Metaphor of 'Machinery' in International Politics

Even after the end of the Paris deliberations, the metaphor enjoyed lengthy usage. In the late 1920s, Allen W. Dulles, Director of the American Council of Foreign

[16] E. Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: self-determination and the international origins of anticolonial nationalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

[17] Well noted by the press, the American president came to Paris with a crew of cameramen. See Anonymous, 'Columbia's unique war photography school', *The New York Times*, 16 February 1919, p. 70.

Relations, explained the background of the machinery metaphor in a discussion launched by the American Academy of Political Science on 'New uses for the machinery for the settlement of international disputes'. According to his explanation, machinery, as a former martial metaphor, had been transformed into a laboratory-associated peace mechanism that closely related conciliations and conferences, both based on communication technologies: 'The radio, and even the airplane, may serve to overcome distance as an obstacle to conference among statesmen.'[18]

In its contemporary usage, the 'machinery' did indeed oscillate between the idea of a scientifically-endorsed form of foreign policy and the presence of real machines, first of all those which are used to overcome distances. Giving the abstract idea of peace-making, the imaginary of typewriters, cars, telephones, radios and airplanes introduced a substantial difference into a debate on cosmopolitanism that had previously been linked almost exclusively with Immanuel Kant. The long-lasting fascination of an impersonal, globally-active mechanism later gave League of Nations' official Egon Ranshofen-Wertheimer the impression of being 'caught in a machine'.[19]

In contemporary pictures and descriptions, the automobile became a cosmopolitan metaphor.[20] On first sight a cliché of Western modernisation, the car truly had a symbolic value with, at this time, strong transcultural coverage. Lawrence of Arabia, later shown in opulent Hollywood films using horses and camels, impressed his colleagues during the 1919 Peace Conference in Paris by his extensive use of aeroplanes and cars. Shotwell, in his diary, frequently mentions the art of 'automobiling' and celebrated the mobility of Lawrence of Arabia:

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[18]Anonymous, '[New uses for the machinery for the settlement of international disputes:] Discussion [by Allen W. Dulles, Frederick Kelsey, Henry L. Shepherd, Jr., R.R. Bowker and Robert Badenhop]' *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 13/2, 1929, p. 101 f.

[19]The Austrian Ranshofen-Wertheimer described his first business day as League of Nations' official with this metaphor of the machine: 'Hardly had I set foot in the office on the third floor of the old Palais des Nations on an unforgettable May day in 1930 when a flood of files and mimeographed papers arrived, as if by magic, on a tray reserved for "incoming mail and documents." The reflection of the early afternoon sun in Lake Geneva in front of my office filled my room with a light that was painful in its intensity. I sat down at the supersized desk which indicated that I had been appointed to an important post. Before I had time to recover my breath the telephone began to ring. I was caught in a machine which did not release me until I left the Secretariat exactly 10 years later.' E. F. Ranshofen-Wertheimer, *The International Secretariat: a great experiment in international administration*, Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1945, p. ix.

[20]Research on a (Western) cultural history of automobiles is still in its infancy – a global dimension is missing. See C.M. Merki, *Der holprige Siegeszug des Automobils 1885–1930: zur Motorisierung des Straßenverkehrs in Frankreich, Deutschland und der Schweiz*, Vienna: Böhlau, 2002. C.M. Merki, *Verkehrsgeschichte und Mobilität*, Stuttgart: Ulmer, 2008. R. Koshar, 'Cars and nations: Anglo – German perspectives on automobility between the World Wars', *Theory, Culture, and Society* 21/4-5, 2004, pp. 121–44.

> He got in his airplane out east of the Jordan one morning, crossed over to Jerusalem to see General Allenby, flew down to Cairo to lunch with the Sirdar of Egypt, then on to Alexandria for a call and back to Jerusalem for afternoon tea (it once took forty years to make the Egypt-Jerusalem trip), and had time before dark to write out his dispatches and plan the next day's campaign, having flown a thousand miles in one day in addition to the day's work.[21]

Most of the fancy new machines he mentioned were not British but belonged to Faisal, later king of Saudi Arabia. At the moment of the Paris Peace Conference, cars had already popped the idea of underdeveloped Asia. Sun Yat-sen underlined the necessity of introducing cars to China and proposed the construction of roads as a first step, followed by the manufacture of cheap automobiles.[22] Paul S. Reinsch, the American minister to China, confirmed as a well-meaning observer the fascination that cars already exercised during the very last moments of the Chinese Empire,[23] and visitors also mentioned the presence of automobiles in 1919/1920: 'Hundreds are already used in Peking, the great majority of them owned by Chinese.'[24] The American Good Roads Association carefully surveyed the Asian market and confirmed in 1920 that 9,000 motor cars were being driven in Tokyo.[25]

The new paradigm offered an imaginary in which East-West differences developed from what was in fact a similar use of cars and various communications technologies. To some extent, this approach challenged national comparison, since the quality of roads in urban areas of Shanghai exceeded that of the Western hinterland. However, the new metaphor did not eliminate East-West tensions. Rather, use of the machinery as a political concept shifted biases slightly without avoiding racism. New media, legitimised by the Paris Peace Conference, introduced new visual and aural clichés and confirmed old prejudices. Newsreel man Charles Peden said in his autobiography that the language with the best microphone compatibility was – of course – English, while Chinese appeared soundless, and Japanese too fast.[26] Once invited to cover high politics, the new media produced their own stars, and sometimes media-induced relevance challenged diplomatic hierarchies. The Paris Peace Conference, again, provided a crucial moment for this development, since rarely before had an official governmental meeting included this incredibly large number of semiofficially appointed experts of all kinds. For the newsreel man, the new star in international politics was Nicolas Murray Butler, the

[21]Shotwell, *Paris Peace Conference*, p. 132.

[22]Sun Yat-sen, *The International Development of China*, Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1920, p. 151 f.

[23]Reinsch characterised a Chinese street with 'rapidly flying automobiles' (P.S. Reinsch, *An American Diplomat in China*, New York: Doubleday, Page, and Co., 1922, p. 21) and mentioned the car collection the empress Dowager had acquired before her death (ibid., p. 108).

[24]J. Bredon, *Peking: a historical and intimate description of its chief places of interest*, Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1922, p. 51. Chairman of the Pan Pacific Union's Good Roads Committee was C.T. Wang, one of the delegates in Paris. Good Roads, 16 March 1921, p. 162.

[25]Good Roads, 3 November 1920, p. 220.

[26]C. Peden, *Newsreel Man*, New York: Doubleday, Doran, and Co. 1932, p. 59.

photogenic president of Columbia University and the president of the Carnegie endowment for international peace from 1925 to 1945. Butler was the prototype of this new generation of cosmopolitans – open-minded although close to the Republican party, a League supporter, and one who invested in closer connections with Asia, inviting the Japanese ambassador Viscount Ishii to attend the Columbia degree ceremony in 1919.

Pointing to elements of a cosmopolitan discourse which started in the highly politicised context of the Paris Peace Conference, the concept of machinery seems to overtake that of cultural differentiation. Not the alleged higher standard of civilisation, but rather an industrial form of progress shaped the master narrative of cosmopolitan exchange after World War I. How strong and convincing the metaphor of machinery was is underlined by the relevance of an existing countertext. The following section will look at the loss of a European cultural entity during the deliberations about the restitution of art works. While leaving aside the interesting and difficult legal distinction between restitution and repatriation discussed in international law,[27] the question that will be explored is whether, and with which already-existing border-crossing imaginaries was the machinery metaphor competing.

The Global Metaphor of War Spoils and Restitution Claims: Nationalised Cultural Identities on World Tour

As expressions of cultural heritage, works of art have a long history of being misused as prey and booty.[28] From this point of view, World War I and the subsequent deliberations in Paris merely added an additional chapter, even though works of art were protected by the Hague Conventions. However, the question in Paris of shifting cultural heritage acquired three additional accents that were unusual for peace treaties up to that time: on the one hand, destroyed cultural heritage had to be replaced by other objects. On the other, although still a predominantly European question, a few claims from Asia, the Near East, and Africa made restitution a global phenomenon. As a third characteristic, return as either restitution or repatriation could affect almost every objects ever transferred over the last 2,000 years.

Starting with the few objects from Africa, the Near East, and China, the publicity that these debates attracted should not be underestimated. All of these objects had

[27]For the complexity of this debate see B.T. Hoffmann (ed.), *Art and Cultural Heritage. Law, Policy, and Practice*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. In addition see the UNESCO debate on cultural property.

[28]P.J. Boylan, 'The concept of cultural protection in times of armed conflict: from the crusades to the new millennium', in N. Brodie and K. Walker Tubb (eds), *Illicit Antiquities: the theft of culture and the extinction of archaeology*, London: Routledge, 2002, pp. 43–87.

gained in both symbolic value *and* price, and the question of whether or not restitution seemed applicable needed much more than diplomatic competence and expertise in international law. So here a public, political debate merged with academic discourse and mobilised experts, including legal experts, art historians, anthropologists, Arabists, Indologists, collectors and museum officials.

According to Article 246 of the Versailles Treaty, the German government had to deliver the skull of Sultan Mkwawa. The key figure of colonial opposition against German rule in East Africa, he had committed suicide to escape imprisonment in 1898. In 1919, the British government, the ruling power in former German East Africa and now transformed to a League of Nations mandate, demanded the skull to underline the definitive end of German sovereignty.[29] After World War I an ongoing debate started about authenticity, because the German delegation kept presenting different skulls. The skull, now exhibited in the Mkwawa Memorial Museum in Kalenga, Tanzania, belonged to one of the numerous German colonial museum collections and was returned to Africa in 1954. Today, the skull has been transformed from a museum piece to a metaphor of this African nation.

In the same Article 246 of the Versailles Treaty, the newly founded Kingdom of the Hedjaz was supposed to receive the famous Uthmanic codex, the oldest Koran manuscript in existence. Presumed to have been presented by the allied Ottoman Sultan as a gift to the German emperor, the manuscript, as the German side vehemently insisted, had never actually been transferred to Germany.[30] Although this is not the place to go into the complex history of these manuscripts, with one copy today in the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul and another in Tashkent, the appearance of this claim at the Paris Peace Conference rather underlined the multilayered history of shifting cultural heritage on a global, and for once not exclusively European scale. The manuscript served as a cornerstone for establishing a long-lasting tradition for the Hedjaz, an Islamic Arabian state, which was supposed, under close British observation, to balance the complex and controversial political and religious tensions in the Near East. The Hedjaz, for a few years a member state of the League of Nations, had trouble establishing sovereignty and was transformed several times after World War I. Finally, the territory became part of Saudi Arabia. For the Hedjaz, one important source of power was its sovereignty over the holy places of Islam, and the manuscript originally came from Medina. And even though the manuscript was not physically in Germany, the request was an example of a well staged political action confirmed by the bizarre and still unexplored history of the Tashkent copy. This manuscript came into the hands of the

[29]The skull absorbed the British Colonial Office for a long time. See M. Baer and O. Schröter, *Eine Kopfjagd: Deutsche in Ostafrika: Spuren kolonialer Herrschaft*, Berlin: Links 2001.

[30]See 'Note to [article] VIII, 246 [of the Versailles peace treaty]', in 'The Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany, signed at Versailles, June 28, 1919', in United States Department of State (ed.), *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: The Paris Peace Conference, 1919*, vol. XIII, Washington: Government Printing Office 1947, p. 523.

Russian Imperial family in 1868, as a result of nineteenth century Russian-Eurasian politics. It is still a mystery how and when the manuscript came to be in the St. Petersburg Imperial library, but the manuscript is a good example of how looted cultural heritage remained the object of claims for a very long time. After the Soviet regime handed over the manuscript, different Islamic communities claimed the right to its possession. With the end of the Cold War, the manuscript again gained political importance as a founding document of a new state. In 1997 Uzbekistan applied successfully to include the manuscript in the Memory of the World Register.[31]

In the case of China, a number of astronomical instruments were returned to the capital. The instruments were part of the German booty taken from Peking during the so-called Boxer Rebellion in 1900. The many Chinese objects looted by other parts of the international military force remained in the West, as some authors critically mentioned.[32] Of course, the restitution of the instruments had only minor significance compared to the dropping of the Boxer indemnities. Indeed, the restitution of a few instruments may be interpreted as an embarrassingly small response to the Chinese demands in Paris. While the effective transfer of works of art based on the treaties remained fairly small, the debate on restitution profoundly shattered the purported cultural identity of Europe.

Until now, the main focus of research on art restitution has concentrated on National Socialist lootings in World War II.[33] Admittedly, the subject of the debates in Paris in 1919 cannot be compared with the systematic looting of art in German-occupied territories during World War II, and the preceding plunder and expropriation of Jewish art in the 1930s. And indeed, the Paris Peace Conference was not discussing restitution of new and old spoils of war for the first time: furniture, paintings and other objects of art had also crossed borders throughout Europe during and after the Napoleonic wars, not to mention by means of the many armies who were on the prowl in earlier times. However, in 1919, the restitution question has an important significance in the debate on the third culture concept. In contrast to earlier debates, the discussion developed in a global arena, and destroyed the earlier narrative of a common, dominant European culture.

To get to the point, at the Paris conference a key element of European identity came under pressure, namely the belief in a common medieval past. Although there

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[31]UNESCO, *Memory of the World Register – Nomination Form: Uzbekistan – Holy Koran Mushaf of Othman*, 1999. Online. Available HTTP: <http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/file_download.php/cfc4d97246b30e2c65aaa2f961659058holy_koran_mushaf_othman_en.pdf > (accessed 8 April 2010). The site also shows the poor bibliographical record in Western languages.

[32]A precious Chinese globe, bought by the Austrian-Hungarian minister in Peking after the Boxer rebellion was not part of Chinese restitution claims, although its provenance from the Chinese imperial court seemed highly probable. E. Oberhummer, 'The history of globes: a review', *Geographical Review* 14/1, 1924, p. 111.

[33]E. Tisa Francini, A. Heuss, and G. Kreis, *Fluchtgut – Raubgut: der Transfer von Kulturgütern in und über die Schweiz 1933–1945 und die Frage der Restitution*, Zürich: Chronos, 2001.

is a gap between the effective restitution and the numerous claims discussed, the idea of understanding previously universal and explicitly *European* objects as national heritage shifted the understanding of difference and similarity deeply. When the Golden Fleece was no longer a transboundary symbol of Christian-based ruling elites but reinterpreted as national property, when the assumed national citizenship of Charlemagne became more important than his significance as a European Christian ruler, the idea of Europe paled beside the cosmopolitan metaphor of the machinery mentioned above.

The suggestion here is that these debates about the restitution of artworks in the context of differences and similarities, should be read as a discourse on border-crossing imaginaries. Although the topic found its expression in national claims, its epistemological potential lies in the public awareness of reordering, and not in the termination of national politics that are rather unimportant compared to other claims. In the following section, we shall see that debates on restitution follow not the national but the European narrative.

For the Belgian restitution claims, the burning of the Belgian city of Louvain with its old and precious library by the German invaders in 1914 was a strong argument. Article 247 of the Versailles Treaty confirmed paintings, manuscripts, books, and objects corresponding in number and value to those destroyed as valid Belgian reparation claims. Outside Germany, the destruction of Louvain was incontestably a matter of war guilt. Not the transfer itself, but the visible transformation of former symbols of European coherence to national claims unmasked the arbitrariness of European cultural dominance. The Belgian case meant understanding *The Mystic Lamb* of the van Eyk brothers and Dierick Bouts' *Last Supper* as part of Belgium's national cultural heritage, although Belgium did not exist when the painters worked in Ghent and Leuven in the fifteenth century. Indeed, although rarely mentioned, these debates began the questioning of one of the most powerful narratives of European unity, namely the apparent dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire of German Nation. From the Vatican to Italy and France, from Belgium to the newly founded states in Eastern Europe,[34] claims for the restitution of art objects replaced the idea of a common European heritage: Italy claimed the edifice of the Austro-Hungarian embassy in Constantinople, pointing to the Venetian coat-of-arms,[35] while the estimate of Austrian spoils of war as calculated by the

[34]For a survey see Archibald Coolidge, who was a member of the American peace delegation. He reported the problem of liquidation in February 1919, from Vienna, and mentioned the aim of splitting the art collections and museums among the newly created states in the former Austro-Hungarian territory. See 'Field missions of the American commission to negotiate peace', in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations: Paris Peace Conference*, vol. XII, 1947, pp. 254–6.

[35]'The Council of Four: minutes of meetings May 24 to June 28, 1919', in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations: Paris Peace Conference*, vol. VI, 1946, p. 513. The Italian strategy aimed at a secret treaty with Austria in regard to objects of art, a plan which failed.

Conference included the insignia of the Crown of the Holy Roman Empire.[36] Poland wanted the restitution of archival documents and objects up to the first partition of Poland in 1772.[37] Widely reported by the press, the city of Palermo looked back to the twelfth century and requested the Norman coronation coat, which had been made by an Arab craftsman,[38] while Belgium asked for the transfer of the treasure of the Golden Fleece from Vienna to Brussels.[39]

In Paris in 1919, debates on artworks gave the losses and gains of war a new cultural visibility and mobilised experts, who then, although members of a transnational expert community, drafted national claims as expert members of national peace delegations. One side was eager to explain that the works of art should stay where they were, because of their transnational European significance, with the other side arguing that the precious objects had a national character strong enough for their characterisation as spoils of war. Both sides however confirmed the identity-building character of the objects involved. The complex debate became even more important due to the nationalisation of the immense imperial collections in Austria, which then no longer belonged to the Habsburg family, but to the Austrian state.

Correspondence preserved on this topic in the Lloyd George Collection of the Parliamentary Archives in London serves to give an impression of the semi-official networks and the public place in which the question was bound. The exchange of two letters with material attached on one day (May 29) in 1919, reveals a certain urgency in this matter. Participating in the conversation were Eric Maclagan, a British art historian specialised in Renaissance art, and Philip Kerr, Lloyd George's private secretary. Maclagan worked in the British Victoria and Albert Museum, but had served during the War in the Ministry of Information and participated in the Paris Peace Conference as head of the British information section in Paris.[40] His letters to Philip Kerr went from Hotel Astoria, one of the seats of the British Peace delegation, to 23, rue Nitot, where the British premier Lloyd George had his quarters. The information the art historian Maclagan wanted to be heard by the

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[36]'The Council of Heads of Delegations: minutes of meetings November 6, 1919, to January 10, 1920', in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations: Paris Peace Conference*, vol. IX, 1946, pp. 269–70.

[37]'Restoration and surrender to Poland by German Austria of Archives, Works of Art, and Scientific Objects', in 'The Council of Foreign Ministers: minutes of meetings (1919)', in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations: Paris Peace Conference*, vol. IV, 1943, pp. 725–7.

[38]G.S. Adam, 'Demand royal booty: treaties with Central Empires call for stolen art treasures', *The Washington Post*, 30 May 1919, p. 1.

[39]'The Council of Foreign Ministers: minutes of meetings (1919)', in United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations: Paris Peace Conference*, vol. IV, 1943, pp. 774 f.

[40]Eric Maclagan was one of the internationally best connected art historians and museum directors. After his presence at the Paris Peace Conference he was a member of the governing body of the International Museums' Office, a suborganisation of the League of Nations' Institut de Coopération Internationale. League of Nations, *Handbook of International Organisations*, Geneva 1938, p. 143.

head of the British delegation came from the director of the former Imperial Picture Gallery – a pre-war connection between art experts. The Vienna art experts used these transnational channels to spread the official Italian claims and the response of Gustav Glück, the new head of the nationalised, former imperial art collections in Vienna. Glück argued that the Italian claims would 'lead to the break-up of most of the great collections in the world',[41] and presented to the museum experts the new territorial understanding of cultural heritage: according to the Italian claims, being connected with the history of Italian territories or made by Italian artists or found in Italy was sufficient grounds for restitution claims. The conversion of the claims into specific demands ended in a long list of art works, from the coronation insignia of the Holy Roman Empire to the most famous and well-known examples of renaissance culture, including precious objects of Roman antiquity.[42]

The question is: under what circumstances did the debate stop, and whether what started in the Paris peace deliberations had any further consequences. Indeed sheer lack of money had always raised the question of whether the Austrian state could lend money on the security of the state's art property. The request was denied on an official level, but private offers continued. In 1928, Maclagan told the Board of Education that the Austrian art dealer, Max Glückselig, had offered the treasure of the Guelphs, who had some complex family connections to the Windsors and therefore implicitly followed a similar rationale. However, the estimated value – a fantastic 527,000 lb – made this information 'only of academic interest'.[43]

In the end, the treasure of the Guelphs was too expensive, the insignia of the Holy Roman Empire remained in Vienna, and the order of the Golden Fleece did not become a national institution. Even though the objects mentioned moved globally, albeit to a lesser extent than expected, they prompted a discussion on the meaning of Europe at a crucial moment of reordering. The coincidence of national claims together with the recognition of a symbolic, border-crossing value to *objets d'art* fanned a debate on the European heritage and the meaning of Europe after 1919. Given the presence of a new cosmopolitanism on the one side, and the controversial debate on the heritage of medieval Europe on the other, this contribution presumes that this was more than pure coincidence. Chrome aquariums and medieval Christianity appear to have nothing in common. But they represent competitive forms of shifting identities, one denying, one claiming territoriality;

[41]'Eric Maclagan to Mr Kerr regarding Vienna collections and treasures and claims upon them including Palermo vestments, 29 May 1919, Headed Astoria, British Del, Paris'. Also 'Austrian works of art and Italian claims to them, signed, 29 May 1919'. 'Enclosure: details of works of art in Austria being claimed by Italy'. Dr Glück of Vienna Museum is said to have forwarded a protest to Museum Authorities in London, LG/F/197/6/2, Lloyd George Collection, *Parliamentary Archives, London*.

[42]Mentioned in this list was among others the famous *Gemma Augustea*. Ibid.

[43]'Board of Education, E.P. [Lord Eustache Percy] to Cabinet, The Treasure of the Guelphs, secret, 29.6.1928' included a 'letter of Eric Maclagan, 26.6.1928, and Valuation of the Welfenschatz', *British National Archives*, Cabinet Memorandum, CAB/24/196. The Cabinet decided as proposed. See 'Meeting of the Cabinet 11.7.1928', CAB 23/58.

one based on the imaginary of crossing borders in creating new, mechanical forms, the other drawing upon existing traditions.

Conclusions

After World War I, the concept of cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan knowledge gained a new profile in the public debate. Leaving its ideological Kantian foundation, the concept's new qualities revealed themselves through its visual manifestation in public. At first glance, shiny cars, modernist decorative arts and opalescent fish had nothing in common with reordering the world after the war. However, different and competing concepts of worldwide imaginaries gained importance in the highly decisive political moment of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. During the Peace Conference, the new cosmopolitanism met with an astonishing resonance. Transboundary networks appeared as 'machinery' and international politics transformed into a mechanism instead of being organised by individualised national powers.

This contribution argues that cosmopolitanism became a political agenda and paved the way for new forms of public and media-related diplomacy and international politics. Leaving aside the Kantian discourse on universalism and pointing to the global as a hard-fought field of competitive imaginaries, this approach rests on the difference between cosmopolitan and global, which Gerard Delanty has proposed as a key element in the renewal of critical social theory. As a methodological consequence, the current contribution goes beyond the concept of institutional histories, and follows his suggestions about thinking in terms of 'port societies' instead of presuming nations and international organisations to be the most important global agencies. Epistemological added value accrues when we presume that there were competing global imaginaries. One relied on visualising international politics as gleaming machines working across borders. The other followed a territorial approach and reinterpreted the medieval European empire. Both obtained persuasive power, inventing imaginaries beyond textual sources and written disputes. With its variety of governmental, social and cultural source material, the Paris Peace Conference provides evidence for the line of confrontation mentioned. Cars, radio, telegraph, and film did not just shorten distances and give ephemeral moments material continuity, they also introduced the machine as the paradigm for a cosmopolitan third culture. The debates on the restitution of art followed another path, one which relied on a territorial understanding: the place where the art work originated laid claim to the symbolic value the latter held across the borders. This rationale led to a national dissolution of a former medieval European empire – but since this was only incompletely performed, the very same Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation re-emerged as an ideological binding agent for much of Europe from 1919 until the end of World War II, with an all-too familiar end: Adolf Hitler brought the insignia of medieval Europe to Nuremberg, and the huge parking lots in front of the newly opened Palais des Nations remained empty.

Chapter 4
"The 99": Islamic Superheroes – A New Species?

Susanne Enderwitz

> *Two things hit me right away after 9/11. Nine multiplied by 11 is 99. Beyond that if you read the number 911 (the emergency phone number in the United States) the other way it says Allah. The design that went into that day was so bizarre. And usually, when there is something bizarre, it is a job for a superman; but there was no superman.*
>
> Naif al-Mutawa[1]

This article deals with an "Islamic" comic strip which started in May 2006 as the flagship series of "Teshkeel Media Group, KSC" under the Arabic title "The 99" (tis'a wa-tis'ūn).[2] An Islamic comic strip seems at first sight to be an outright contradiction in itself, given the dominating features of comics on the one hand and Islam on the other, i.e. the ostentatious presentation of muscle-bound heroes in comic strips and the Islamic iconoclasm which tends to disapprove of physical representation altogether.

Without going too much into detail, some remarks on this iconoclasm might not be out of place, as we are dealing here with "images", "flows" and "transculturality". Islamic iconoclasm, in my view, was a transcultural phenomenon from its very start in the seventh century AD. In the same sense, this iconoclasm used to change its face throughout Islam's own history, according to the regional and local traditions in which it took hold. Islam, like Christianty, inherited and adopted the condemnation of the "Golden Calf" which was created by Aaron and adored by the

[1] Cited in Rahul Sharma, Khaleej Times, Feb. 7th (2010) www.khaleejtimes.com/biz/inside.asp?xfile=/data/business/2010/February/business_February189.xml§ion=business.

[2] Tashkeel lists a whole range distributors in many countries from the Near to the Middle East and South East Asia. At the beginning of 2008, an (independent) internet article stated that the Tashkeel group sells 10,000 copies of each issue. See Sonja Zekri, Menassat, Jan. 7th (2008), www.menassat.com/?q=en/news-articles/2585-muslim-superman. An electronic version of "The 99" is available in Arabic and English. See under http://www.the99.org/. The current issue (Feb. 2010) is number 23, not including four special issues.

C. Brosius and R. Wenzlhuemer (eds.), *Transcultural Turbulences*,
Transcultural Research – Heidelberg Studies on Asia and Europe in a Global Context,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-642-18393-5_4, © Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg 2011

Israelites in the absence of Moses who, after his return from Mount Sinai, restored the monotheistic belief in God alone. Five passages of the Quran (in Suras 2 and 7) allude to this story, though it should be noted that the Quran, similar to Exodus 38, refers only to a decorated "calf" ('ijl). However, the Quranic version also differs from the version of the Old Testament, in particular when it comes to the responsibility for the idolatry, which is ascribed not to Aaron but to a certain "Samaritan".[3]

Islam, witnessing the fierce battles between the friends and the enemies of physical representation in Byzantium, somehow positioned itself between acceptance and rejection. As long as an idolatrous adoration of an object was excluded, painting was allowed.[4] This is all the more true if we move from the West to the East. Whereas in the Near East painting was mostly restricted to book illustrations, the amount and variety of miniatures increases when we come to Persia, Transoxania and India.[5] As a transcultural phenomenon, the Islamic view of painting was also continually subject to the impact of historical processes. Starting with the political, diplomatic and commercial contacts between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, Gentile Bellini's visit to Istanbul at the end of the fifteenth century left its mark on the courtly arts.[6] This process of Eastern adaptations of Western ways of representation accelerated in the second half of the nineteenth century, after the Napoelonic "expedition" to Egypt had opened the way for Western capital, goods and culture. Today, thanks to the public circulation of film, advertising and television as well as private access to cassettes, video/DVD and internet, the Arab world is a consumer and producer of international as well as national and regional communications. But a comic strip, such as "The 99", with which the Arab world is not the receiving, but the giving part, which defines itself not only by its Arabic but also by its "Islamic" background, and which aims at an international, not a locally, regionally or religiously restricted distribution, such an endeavour is something entirely new. In their attempt to redirect certain flows in the distribution of young adult literature, the publishers of the comic are also trying to cope with existing asymmetries in the production of meaning.

However, what is "Islamic" about "The 99"? First and foremost there is the title of the comic strip. Every Muslim child identifies "The 99" with the "99 most beautiful names of God". In the Quran, the Sunna and in other places, God is described by his "most beautiful names" (al-asmā' al-ḥusnā) to which is added as

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[3]Gerald R. Hawting: "Calf of God". In: Jane Dammen Mac Auliffe (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*. Leiden, 2001, vol. I, p. 273.

[4]See Ibrić Almir: *Das Bilderverbot im Islam. Eine Einführung*. Marburg 2004; Silvia Naef: *Bilder und Bilderverbot im Islam*. Munich, 2007; Hans Belting: *Florenz und Bagdad. Eine westöstliche Geschichte des Blicks*. Munich, 2008.

[5]See Michael Barry: *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam and the Riddle of Bihzâd of Herât (1465–1535)*. Paris, 2004.

[6]See Caroline Campbell/Alan Chong (eds.): *Bellini and the East*. New Haven/London, 2005; *Venice and the Islamic World*. New York ,2007; Stefano Carboni: *Venice and the Islamic World*. New York, 2007.

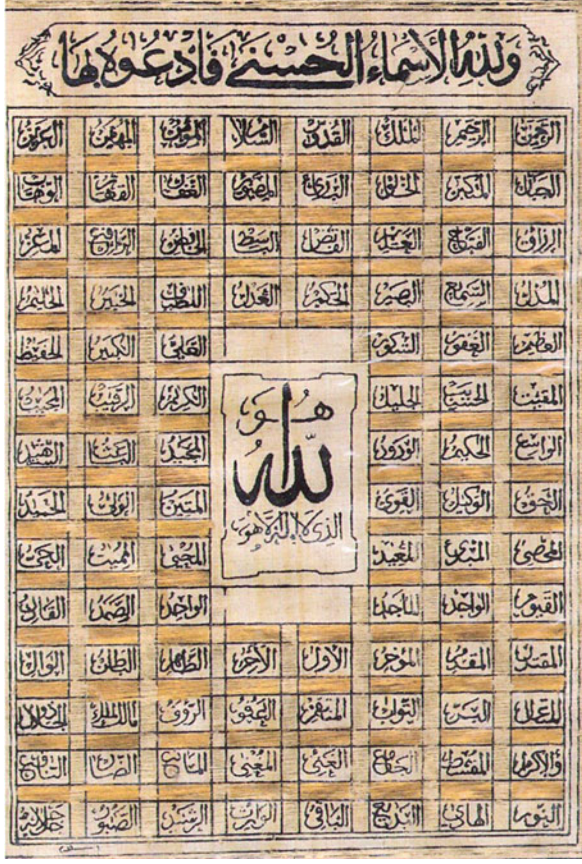

Fig. 4.1 The 99 "most beautiful names of God", calligraphy

the highest name (al-ism al-aʻẓam) the supreme name of God, Allāh. The *locus classicus* for listing the divine names in the literature of Quranic exegesis is Sura 17/110: "Call upon God, or call upon the merciful; whichsoever you call upon, to him belong the most beautiful names". The names of God are traditionally enumerated as 99 epithets, on which Islamic theology based its systematic expositions about the divine essence and its attributes (Fig. 4.1).

Sura 59/22, for example, includes a cluster of more than a dozen of the divine names (adjectives, word constructs, or otherwise), but in general, the divine names can be found all over the Holy Book. In line with the strictly monotheistic understanding of Allah, God is called "the One" (al-wāḥid). He is God, the living (al-ḥayy), the self-subsisting (al-qayyūm), the self-sufficient (al-ghanī), the comprehensive (al-wāsiʻ), the powerful (al-jabbār), the glorious (al-majīd), the strong (al-qawī), the opener (al-fattāḥ), the exalter (al-rāfiʻ), the watchful (al-raqīb), the bringer of death (al-mumīt), the light (al-nūr), the guide (al-hādī), the patient (al-ṣabbūr), the immutable (al-bāqī) and so forth. Although the exact list was never agreed upon and in fact exceeds the number of 99, over time it became

Fig. 4.2 The 99, no. 1 (2006), frontcover

customary to recite 99 names of God in their entirety. Due to popular imagination, the list then served either as a ritual, like the Catholic Litany of the Saints, or as an enumeration of the attributes that the names suggest. In this last sense of a characteristic or outstanding trait of a person, the most beautiful names of God were adopted for the comic strip "The 99" (Fig. 4.2).[7]

"I am not naive" said Naif (Nā'if) al-Mutawa (al-Muṭawwa'), a Kuwaiti psychologist and businessman, when he launched "The 99" on the Arabic speaking book market of the Middle East and North Africa. He continued: "If it were the 98 superheroes, or the 101, no one would be interested in the stories. 99 is a trademark."[8] With these remarks, he seemed to target a purely Arabic-speaking Muslim audience, as many other Muslims don't read Arabic and only a few Westerners are

[7]Gerhard Böwering: "God and his Attributes". In: Jane Dammen Mac Auliffe (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*. Leiden 2002, vol. II, p. 316; Daniel Gimaret: "ifa" (2. In Theology). In: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Vol. IX, Leiden 1997, pp. 551b–552a; Harry A. Wolfson: *The Philosophy of the Kalam*. Cambridge/Mass./London 1976, pp. 112–234.

[8]Sonja Zekri, Menassat, Jan. 7th (2008), www.menassat.com/?q=en/news-articles/2585-muslim-superman.

familiar with the Islamic belief system. But al-Mutawa had – and still has – a bigger audience in mind, as already later in the year 2006 the comic made its American print debut with an English version. In 2007, the online publisher Qmags started to release digital editions of the Arabic and English versions over the internet. Uclick, a leader in digital entertainment for mobile phones in North America, UK, Australia and South Africa followed suit. In the same year, publisher Femina Group partnered with al-Mutawa’s company Tashkeel in order to distribute printed versions in Indonesia and Malaysia. In 2008, Paris Arabesques became the new licensing representative for France and French-speaking Belgium and Switzerland. The Indian publisher Chandamama followed with a license for India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. At that point, Forbes Magazine identified “The 99” as one of the “Top 20 Trends Sweeping the Globe”. From its start, the distribution of the comic is accompanied by an offensive market campaign. There are wallpapers and other merchandising objects, a theme-park has opened in Kuwait in March 2009, and Endemol U.K. is said to be producing an animated series of the comics.[9]

The targeted public is international, and so is the team of “The 99”. Teshkeel, which has offices in Cairo and New York in addition to its Kuwaiti headquarters, is run by truly professional specialists. al-Mutawa hired the Argentinian Fabian Nicieza as co-author, who is an experienced writer of American comic-strips (X-Men, X-Force, New Warriors etc.). “The 99” are illustrated by the British John McCrea (Hitman, Spider Man, The Incredible Hulk) and James Hodgkins (Jenny Sparks, Star Wars, Batman). Character designs are provided by the American Dan Panosian (X-Men, Batman, Spiderman), and the Armenian-Iranian colourist Monica Kubina rounds off the team. Meanwhile, the team has been enlarged, but the above-mentioned “pioneers” still form the nucleus in the creative department.

The team of “The 99” is international, and so are its protagonists. Although, strikingly, there are no blonde beauties among the female heroes, “The 99” are as multi-coloured, -cultured and -religious as their creators and audiences are. Their list is not yet complete, but from the present group its international composition is already discernable. The very first characters, Nawaf al-Bilali (later to be named Jabbar, the Powerful) and Dana Ibrahim (later Noora, the Light) come from Saudi-Arabia and the Emirates, respectively. But from the second issue of “The 99” onward, the horizon widens: Amira Khan is Pakistani-British, Catarina Barbarossa Portugese, Haroun Ahrens South-African, Blair Davis Canadian, John Wheeler American, Miklos Szekelyhidi Hungarian and Nizar Babikr Sudanese-French. Only a few of the heroes are Muslims, only a few of the Muslim women wear a veil, only one of the Muslim women wears a Burka (Fig. 4.3), and there is no mention of religion in general or Islam in particular, of ritual, prayer, or the like. Neither mosques nor churches, synagogues, temples or shrines show up in the

[9]It is not easy to keep pace with the rapid developments in media politics, as things have changed considerably between the first draft of this article and its completion date. However, the success story of “The 99” seems to be going on. And Naif al-Mutawa gives lectures all over the planet, particularly in the Arabic- and English-speaking world.

Fig. 4.3 Batina, "the Hidden", The 99 official page (www.the99.org)

Fig. 4.4 Dr. Ramzi, The 99 official page (www.the99.org/article-1-33-Articles-18,ckl)

landscapes.[10] Because of these features, only some commentators speak of a "Muslim superhero comic book", whereas others compare "The 99" rather with a "United Nations Christmas party". And the creator of "The 99" declares: "I think our market will be global, not just Muslim. There is nothing religious about these books. Just as Superman is not only for a Judeo-Christian audience, 'The 99' is not for only an Islamic one."[11] Al-Mutawa stresses the fact that for him, as a child, comics brought much needed relief from the real world and taught him that "truth, justice and friendship were all qualities to be admired."[12] However, while propagating universal values in settings all around the world, "The 99" nevertheless insist on a certain Arabic and Islamic presence: the main character, Dr. Ramzi, is an *alter ego* of Naif al-Mutawa himself (Fig. 4.4), Arab heroes, normally conspicuous

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[10]In a "Guest article: Why I based superheroes on Islam", al-Mutawa writes: "Only when Jewish kids think that The 99 are Jewish, and Christian kids think they're Christian, and Muslim kids think they're Muslim, and Hindu kids think they're Hindu. . . I will consider my vision as having been fully executed." N. a-Mutawa, *Animation Xpress* The Asia Pacific Edition, Dec. 4th (2009), www.animationxpress.com/asiapacific//anxapac-kr8if01.htm.

[11]Philip Schweier, *Comic Book Bin*, Aug. 14th (2008),www.comicbookbin.com/bubble096.html.

[12]Ibid.

by their absence in American or European comics, play a considerable role, and there are neither miniskirts nor exaggerated curves on the part of the heroines.

Naif al-Mutawa's most serious aim is to fill a significant void in positive, high-quality children's content in the Arab region. At the same time he is determined to become a player on the global comic-market. The compatibility of the familiar and the universal, the self and the other, the regional and the global is a dynamic process and not a matter of course, as a quotation from co-author Fabian Nicieza illustrates: "When Naif... started speaking to me about a project, I was initially attracted by the message of tolerance they were interested in spreading... But when Naif and I actually started to talk about script ideas... I was really hooked. For Western comic book readers, it's going to be a chance to explore a whole new fictional world, one whose inspirations and origins will be largely unfamiliar to them. For Islamic readers, it's a chance to see their culture presented in a whole new way. This time the heroes and settings are from their own backyard rather than Metropolis or New York. It's going to be a fun ride for everyone!"[13]

"But ultimately", John McCrea adds, pointing to already existing global values, "they're superheroes, trying to do right and save the world."[14] And this is exactly what the 99 heroes, in a relatively simple and familiar plot, are about to do. Motivated by a background story which leads us back to medieval Islamic society and to which I will later return, the plot is as follows: Dr. Ramzi Razem, like his creator a Kuwaiti psychologist, but also a historian, UNESCO official and lecturer on a wide range of topics between ancient civilizations and alternative medicine, is in search of 99 gemstones which are scattered around the world and owned by obviously very different persons. As the stones are said to contain the wisdom of the world, he sets out to find one gem-owner after the other and convince him or her to help him change the course of human civilization. As things turn out, most of these people are mere teenagers but all of them have already passed through a traumatic experience. Dana Ibrahim, for example, was kidnapped by a gang of criminals and remained their hostage for months, as her rich father refused to pay the ransom money. In the end she freed herself by digging a tunnel, and there in the earth she found one of the gems. From then on, she was able to see the amount of darkness and light in other people, and when she joined Ramzi's group she was given her new name "Noora" (the light). Just like Dana Ibrahim *alias* Noora, all the other members of the group bear one of God's most beautiful names according to their special talent, which is a gift from their gemstone. Thus, the Saudi-Arabian Nawaf al-Bilali becomes the muscle-man "Jabbar" (the powerful) (Fig. 4.5), John Wheeler from America with his ability to create pain in every human being turns into "Darr" (the afflictor), and the Portugese Catarina Barbarossa with her incredible fighting technique becomes "Mumita" (the destroyer). When these young people set out to accomplish one of their missions, they usually form a group of three (Fig. 4.6) or

[13] www.the99.org/index.php, see under Press releases, Feb. 6 (2006).

[14] Ibid.

Fig. 4.5 Jabbar, "the Powerful", The 99 official page (www.the99.org/article-1-33-Articles-18,ckl)

more, combining their talents into a synergetic effect. This call to combining forces is the first message of al-Mutawa, the psychologist, but it is anything but his last and only message.

Although the message of "The 99" is not predominantly Islamic, the favoured readers are Muslims. Therefore, al-Mutawa and his team are anxious not to violate Muslim sentiments. For example, the Arabic version of the aliases of each of the 99 is written without the definite article "al-", because use of this precise form is exclusive to Allah. Thus, the names do not read al-Jabbar, al-Noora, or al-Raqib, but just Jabbar, Noora, Raqib. This serves as a reminder to the fact that the 99 are only mortals, and defines them as human role models, with their qualities and weaknesses. al-Mutawa adds: "None of our heroes has more than a single attribute and no power can be personified to the degree that can only be possessed by Allah."[15]

Nevertheless, it is an extremely discreet Islam which al-Mutawa plays out, and the most important message which he tries to bring home to Muslims and non-Muslims alike is his conviction of a true congruence between Islamic and Western values. In a region where the media are not always above suspicion of presenting

[15]The 99, Origins, Editorial. For religious criticism, particularly on the side of Saudi Arabia which is a highly interesting market for Tashkeel, see Sonja Zekri, Menassat, Jan. 7th (2008), www.menassat.com/?q=en/news-articles/2585-muslim-superman.

Fig. 4.6 Triad, Mumita/Noora/Jabbar, The 99 official page (www.the99.org/)

young suicide bombers as superheroes, his comics provide unusually bloodless conflict resolutions. This is explained time and again not only in the unfolding of the plot, but also via conspicuously diverse layers of “paratext” (in Gérard Genette’s term). The paratext, which is by definition a conveyer of messages, abounds at the beginning and the end of the individual issues of “The 99”. Paratext comes along in the form of an editorial, introduction, notes, advertisement, synopsis, diary or epilogue (Naif’s notes). Particularly in the epilogue, where the author speaks about his didactic intentions, the psychologist al-Mutawa – and not only the moralist – comes to the fore.

Some of the problems which “The 99” faces, are: (1) What turns weakness into strength and vice versa (2) Does cooperation create chaos or synergy? (3) Can a good intention produce something bad? And so forth. In order to illustrate this didactic impetus, I shall give an example from the epilogue of issue no. 6, in which al-Mutawa delves into one of the motives behind his writing: “It is very important to see ‘The 99’ as having 99 ways to solve problems, with no one character able to do anything on their own. Teamwork is important and simple problems sometimes need complex solutions. Sometimes force is a small part of self-defense in ‘fighting

for peace' in the world of 'The 99', but is only effective when used as part of a multifaceted response to a situation."[16] And, I would add, force is acceptable only when it helps to bring about an advance in the overall mission of "The 99".

The message of universal values, which is predominantly directed towards his Arab and Muslim readers, is only one half of al-Mutawa's mission, the other half being sent to the rest of the world, firstly to the Westerners, but comprising the Africans, South and East Asians as well. This other part of the mission is the message that humanism is not an exclusively Western invention, but is rooted in Islamic history, too. According to the story behind the story of "The 99", the universal values are historically grounded in the Islamic civilization at its height between the ninth and the twelfth centuries, which is conceived of as the legitimate heir of all earlier world civilizations.

The background story which unfolds in the first special issue, "Origins", starts like a myth: "They were a great people in a great city that was overrun by a greater greed." The great people are the Arabs, the great city is Baghdad, and the greater greed is represented by the Mongols. We find ourselves in Baghdad in the year 1258, shortly before the Mongol invasion, and the story goes on: "The forces of Hulagu Khan surrounded Baghdad. The grandson of the Conqueror, Genghis Khan, prepared to besiege the city of millions, the city of life. He planned not only to conquer the greatest Empire the world had ever known, but to eradicate its hope – its potential – thereby destroying its future... That would require destroying the Empire's true base of power. The Abbasid caliphs had constructed it to turn Baghdad into the focus of education and knowledge in the civilized world..." Then, with a cut, we find ourselves in the Dar al-hikma (The house of wisdom),[17] a huge library which was created by the caliph al-Ma'mun in the first third of the ninth century in order to incorporate the intellectual achievements of all times and peoples. The librarians of the Dar al-hikma have to find a solution for how to rescue their enormous treasure from the Mongol destruction. By certain alchemistic procedures, they transfer the knowledge and wisdom from the books into 99 gemstones which they carry with them on their flight from Baghdad to Granada (Fig. 4.7). There, they build a dome for the stones which radiates its light upon the keepers of the dome until Isabella and Ferdinand of Spain conquer the city in the final Reconquista of 1492, and in a huge explosion all trace of the gems is lost until the twenty-first century.

This hybrid mixture of fact and fiction is of the utmost significance for the whole project of "The 99". Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid Empire, is presented in "The 99" as the first global centre of the world whose outlook was more moral and scientific than political, religious or economic. Baghdad is the city in which the knowledge and wisdom of East and West comes together and which, in turn, is able

[16]The 99, no. 6, Naif's notes.

[17]This "dār al-hikma" is modelled after the historical "bait al-ḥikma" which was founded by the caliph al-Ma'mūn (786–833) and became the most important institution for the translation movement in the Golden Age of the Abbasid Empire.

Fig. 4.7 Dar al-hikma, "the House of Wisdom", Special Issue "Origins (2006)"

to synthesize it into a comprehensive whole. In this respect, the Baghdadian culture foreshadows the peculiarity of "The 99", which al-Mutawa explains in the paratext to "Origins" as follows: "Our superheroes are built neither on the Western style of

individual heroes like Superman, Batman and the like, nor in the Eastern mould of Pokemon where teamwork and shared values can overcome all. They are an amalgam of East-meets-West, an appropriate compromise given the foundation of Islam and the geography of the Middle East."

Following my portrayal of "The 99" above, I would like to come to my conclusion. The underlying question of my paper was predominantly one that was raised in the "Concept Notes" for our conference on "Flows of Images and Media", i.e.: What happens with our focus and terminologies when we deal with countries where the distinction between secular and religious sphere and practice is not as clear as we may expect from a laicist perspective? From my example I would say that it depends on your point of view whether you say that "not much" or "very much" happens. "The 99" are not "Islamic" superheroes, but superheroes in a decisively "humanist" tradition. However, the definition of "humanism" shatters all Western notions of "Humanism" as an exclusively European movement with its source in the Roman and Greek cultures. This humanism does not stem from the fourteenth century Italian Renaissance but from the tenth century Islamic universalism.

al-Mutawa is right in pointing to Western ignorance of tenth century Muslim "humanism". The idea of Baghdad before the Mongol invasion as the synthesis of world-culture under the umbrella of Islam is also "classical" in Islamic terms and was already developed in the ninth/tenth century. It is very much in line with what Arab-Muslim medieaval geographers, historians and other prose-writers had in mind. al-Jahiz (al-Jāḥiẓ), for example, the polymath in the ninth century, thought of Baghdad as being a place where all the knowledge from the ancient nations came together and was united under the umbrella of Islam.[18] The Arab geographers, for their part, located Baghdad according to the Ptolemaic world order in the fourth and therefore most moderate of all the seven climatic zones, which rendered it the natural centre of the world.[19] Bagdhdad's society was thus considered to be an entity which united the best of all human knowledge and skills, accomplishing this task by collecting all knowledge and wisdom in the books of Islam and employing all kinds of people in the service of the caliphate.[20]

For "The 99", al-Mutawa tries to adapt this very old idea to modern global needs. He is not an Islamic fundamentalist when he chooses medieval Baghdad as the initial starting-point for a world culture. His Baghdad does not stand for a static ideal Islamic society that has to be copied in order to fulfil God's command

[18]See Susanne Enderwitz: *Gesellschaftlicher Rang und ethnische Legitimation. Der arabische Schriftsteller Abū 'Uṯmān al-Ǧāḥiẓ (gest. 868) über die Afrikaner, Perser und Araber in der islamischen Gesellschaft*. (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, vol. 53) Klaus Schwarz Verlag, Freiburg, 1979.

[19]Ibid.; André Miquel: "Iḳlīm". In: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Vol. III, Leiden, 1979, pp. 1076b–1078a.

[20]Ibid; for Baghdad as "the navel of the world" see Charles Wendell: "Baghdad: Imago Mundi, and Other Foundation-Lore". In *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2 (1971), pp 99–128.

on earth. Baghdad is rather a symbol for a dynamic world society which opens itself towards the future. So are "The 99" of our days, who *via* the 99 gems have inherited the treasures of Baghdad's past. They are mortals endowed with a special talent which they are free to use in one way or another, for good or bad, for themselves or others, successfully or unsuccessfully. As the power of the gems works only with a certain character disposition, the gem-bearers are the good guys by definition, but they are not always exempt from selfishness, despair or failure. The message is brought home to Muslim youths that also Muslims are able to take part (or even a leading part) in the concert of good-willing, strong and determined young people from all over the word to work for a brighter future in ecological, empowering and scientific terms. Again in Naif Mutawa's words: "I would go back to the very sources from which others took violent and hateful messages and offer messages of tolerance and peace in their place. I would give my heroes a Trojan horse in the form of 'The 99'. Islam was my Helen and I wanted her back."[21]

[21]Cited in Rahul Sharma, Khaleej Times, Feb. 7th (2010) www.khaleejtimes.com/biz/inside.asp?xfile=/data/business/2010/February/business_February189.xml§ion=business.

Chapter 5
Guides to a Global Paradise: Shanghai Entertainment Park Newspapers and the Invention of Chinese Urban Leisure

Catherine Yeh

With the first descriptions of foreign countries and world geographies since the 1830s, the notion of the "world" rapidly emerged on the Chinese information market. World geographies with maps, histories of the 10,000 states, periodical publications with "world" news, and, since the 1870s, newspapers with the word "world" in their programmatic name soon found real-life manifestations: new Treaty Ports such as Shanghai; a growing number of Westerners with rising status; and fledgling diplomatic exchanges. The world here appeared in its "serious" form: commerce, institutions, military and industrial technology.

In the standard narrative both at that time and later in history, this arrival of the world was met with antagonism, reluctant acceptance, and, most of all, anxiety.[1] However, at the very moment of this development together with its scenario of threat, the world "arrived" in a different guise: as entertainment. Western-language illustrated papers such as *Frank Leslie's Illustrated*, the *Illustrated London News* or *The Graphic* started to include their Shanghai subscription rates in the masthead, and came to be known to Chinese residents through their contacts with Westerners. The first Chinese-language literary journal to open the door to the world as entertainment was the *Yinghuan suoji* 瀛寰瑣記 (Sept. 1872), "Global Miscellany." It was published by the Shenbaoguan in Shanghai, which had just started what was to become the fountainhead of the Chinese-language press, the *Shenbao* newspaper. It was run by a foreigner, Ernest Major (1841–1908).[2] Its title suggests that it was to offer tidbits, *suoji*, from different places all over the globe, *yinghuan*. These came in many genres and registers, from the amusing anecdote and the antiquarian miscellaneum to interesting information, personal memoirs and serious essays. Its subject matter included literature, history, and some science. With its serialization of the translation of Edward Bulwer Lytton's (1803–1873) *Night and Morning* (orig. 1841) as *Xinxi xiantan* 昕夕閒談, it not only made a Western novel available

[1]Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China*. New York: Norton, 2001, pp. 8–10.

[2]For a sketch of his life, see Rudolf G. Wagner, "Ernest Major", in David Pong ed., *Encyclopedia of Modern China*, Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2009, vol. 4, pp. 543–545.

C. Brosius and R. Wenzlhuemer (eds.), *Transcultural Turbulences*,
Transcultural Research – Heidelberg Studies on Asia and Europe in a Global Context,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-642-18393-5_5, © Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg 2011

to Chinese readers for the first time, but also opened a window that allowed Chinese readers to follow shocking events in a British family and become emotionally engaged with these far-away human beings. Ernest Major was well acquainted with literary magazines in the West and modeled this journal after their pattern.[3] Inspired by the popular Western illustrated papers, in 1877 he created one of China's earliest pictorial magazines, the *Huanying huabao* 寰瀛畫報 (Globe Illustrated), where the theme of the world was fully explored and made accessible visually through copper engravings. The advertisement for this magazine announced that Major had "recently bought from abroad paintings by famous English painters of a variety of Chinese and foreign scenes such as the Great Sacrifice at the Altar of Heaven (Tiantan daji 天壇大祭) in Peking; the comings and goings of merchants at the southern port [Canton]; the eternal ice on the northern seas; newly-made armored warships; and battles between the English, French and Russians [on the Crimea]."[4] All of these would be published in the new journal that made "the world" its subject for the purpose both of illustrated entertainment and information. In the first issue a separate print was inserted that could be taken out. It showed the Great Wall and inserted China into the "globe."[5] One of the central features of these two magazines and their conceptual framework is the suspension of the hierarchies that were governing the real world. Within the pages of the magazine, the world's cultures, peoples, and literatures are presented as sites of wonder for enjoyment.

This world as entertainment was not, however, in blind denial of the existence of real powers in the world with their institutional as well as technological manifestations. Rather, it was an indirect response to these manifestations. In a variety of entertainment venues from Copenhagen to Shanghai they are reframed – sometimes even with a touch of subliminal irony – to fit a context of civilized amusement. You think America is powerful? There you have "two black American tap dancers" performing for a Shanghai Chinese audience and bowing to their applause. You think China is weak? Here you have "the Chinese giant" showing his amazing powers to guffawing Scots in Edinburgh. The most powerful and accessible form through which the world beyond the horizon reached the common people and fascinated them enough to call for more was not, however, the Tivoli or world fair, but the printed image. The pictorial magazine thus is very much at the forefront of this articulation of the world as a site of civilized entertainment rather

[3]The *Huanying suoji* is not very far removed from English-language journals of the time. A glance at British and Scottish journals such as *Blackwoods* or the *Edinburgh Journal* shows a similar preference for a very broad range of topics and of genres that would include poetry, travelogue, essay, and letter, with many of the texts written with a slight ironical distance.

[4]See Rudolf Wagner, "Joining the Global Imaginaire: The Shanghai Illustrated Newspaper *Dianshizhai huabao*," in Rudolf G. Wagner ed., *Joining the Global Public: Word, Image, and City in Early Chinese Newspapers*, 1870–1910. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 105–174.

[5]The image has not been located. However, no Chinese tradition of depicting the Great Wall is known, while it had become a regular feature in Western illustrated world geographies since Athanasius Kirchner. See R. Wagner, "Joining", p. 160, notes 26 and 27.

than a place to wield the club of power. The *Globe Illustrated* as a new member in the genre of the pictorial magazine together with images of the world – that included foreign codes of representation – was itself a materialization of the arrival of this world. The format as well as the implied 'soft' agenda spread well beyond secular and commercial venues. The important *Penny Illustrated Paper* (1861–1913) was published by the "Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge" in London, and in China the *Child's Illustrated Monthly* or *Xiaohai yuebao* 小孩月報 (1876–1881), also known as *Tuhua yuakan* (圖畫月刊), edited by the [then] American Presbyterian missionary John Marshall Willoughby (1830–1917) spelled out a similar agenda. While pursuing its high purpose of offering the Chinese reader a channel to receive the message of God (漸悟天道), it tried to "enlarge their knowledge" (推廣見聞), "open their capacity for inspiration" (闢其靈機), and "enhance their cultural knowledge" (長其文學).[6] The magazine attempted to reach the young and uneducated through entertaining forms such as stories, fables, historical anecdotes, novels, poetry, travelogues, biographies, news and natural science, and, most importantly, through high-quality lithographic illustrations that present the world as an interesting and even thrilling sight (Figs. 5.1 and 5.2).

This presentation of the world takes on the "hard" world highlighted in print by showing its potential to be a place full of interesting and non-threatening difference. A cannon in Edinburgh that could signal overpowering aggressiveness is defused by its garden setting, and a tourist couple looks at it in a stance to be emulated by the reader. As there was at the time no public debate in China on "Western imperialism" or "aggression," it would be ahistorical to read this as a soothing pill. The world, albeit with the West as a dominant component, becomes a site of novelty, curiosity and exotic splendor.

Chinese-run pictorials emerged in the early twentieth century as part of the global spread of images through the introduction of the pictorial magazine from the West. At their center was the theme of the world made visible through images. The representation of foreign lands and peoples is consistently positive in nature. Guiding the selection for these early Chinese pictorials was an agenda to show the "civilized" aspect of the world, and they did so by framing the foreign in both subject matter and representation in the traditional Chinese cultural category of *qi* 奇, the fascinating and wonderful. One of the earlier examples of these pictorials is the *The Ten-Day Illustrated*, Tuhua xunbao 圖畫旬報, (1908–1909). The images represented in this pictorial are grand sights of man-made wonder in the world – including China – rather than the famous sites of nature's beauty appreciated by traditional men-of-letters.

The image of the Eiffel Tower (Fig. 5.3) as well as the Shanghai scene (Fig. 5.5) glorify a peaceful modernity as the promise of the time (Fig. 5.4). Figure 5.5 emphasizes the modern urban amenities offered by the city, such as electricity, streetcars, steamships, and Western-style carriages. The city is presented as a

[6] *Xiaohai yuebao* 小孩月報 1(1876) 1, preface.

Fig. 5.1 Images from a series that depicts the capital cities of the world published in the magazine, and a series that introduces the people of the world. Here the images include Istanbul, London, Berne, and Turkish men dressed in their national consume. From the *Child's Illustrated Monthly* (Xiaohai yuebao 小孩月報, also known as *Tuhua yuakan* 圖畫月刊) 1875. Copper engravings

miniature edition of this world, with French and Japanese flags flying on the merchant ships, and Chinese and foreigners peacefully going about their business. These images are part of a pool of such images shared and freely copied among illustrated journals worldwide.[7]

This flow of images and media in the form of the pictorial magazine was made possible through a primordial transcultural contact zone, the International Settlement of the treaty-port of Shanghai; the city backed up its standing and lure with the global flair of its amenities. All of the Chinese publications hitherto mentioned came out of the Shanghai International Settlement. Established after the first Opium War of 1840 in the commercial and cultural centre of China on the lower reaches of the Yang-tse, this settlement quickly became the first city with modern amenities in

[7]For example, the image of the Eiffel Town can be found as a photograph published in the journal *Shijie* 世界 or *The World* founded by Li Shizeng 李石曾 in Paris in 1906. On this circulation of images, for Europe, see Jean-Pierre Bacot, in *La presse illustrée au XIXe siècle : une histoire oubliée*. Limoges: Presses universitaires de Limoges, p. 163 ff. For the role of Chinese illustrated papers in this trade, see Julia Henningsmeier, "The foreign sources of Dianshizhai huabao, a nineteenth century Shanghai illustrated magazine," *Ming Qing yanjiu*, 3, 1998, pp. 59–91.

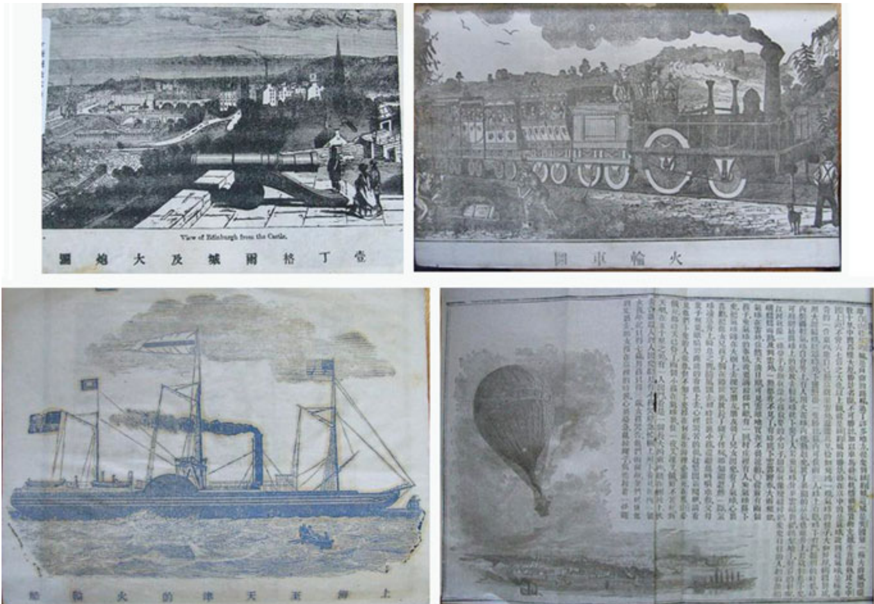


Fig. 5.2 *Top left*: “View of Edinburgh from the Castle” (Chinese caption: Edinburgh and the Fort Barbette). *Top right*: The train. *Lower left*: “Steamship liner between Shanghai and Tianjin”. *Lower right*: Hot-air balloon. From the *Child's Illustrated Monthly* (Xiaohai yuebao 小孩月報, also known as *Tuhua yuekan* 圖畫月刊) 1875. Copper engravings

China, and the only one where Chinese and foreigners lived in mixed quarters. Shanghai’s growing wealth prompted the development of a highly diverse entertainment sector. The city made full use of the freedoms of its quasi-extraterritorial status to develop a publishing industry that made it for all practical purposes coterminous with the Chinese public sphere, but also spread the fame of its entertainment and sights throughout the country. These features made the city into a huge attraction for Chinese tourists.

The international make-up of the city itself was perceived by Chinese visitors as a wondrous attraction. Visitors to the city since the 1880s registered their impressions in a light poetic genre – the so-called bamboo-twig ballads, *zhuzhici* 竹枝詞. Time and again the descriptions in these ballads of the city’s foreign splendor, cleanness, wealth and civic order, the protection from war and other troubles it offered to all who settled there, as well as its glorious courtesans and theaters prompted comparisons with Penglai 蓬萊, the mythical paradise island of the immortals.[8] Shanghai condensed the world at its most attractive and provided easy access to Chinese eyes. With its unique Western-style architecture, wide and

[8]*Shenjiang zhuzhici* (Shanghai bamboo twig ballads). 1880s. Lithograph, p. 8.

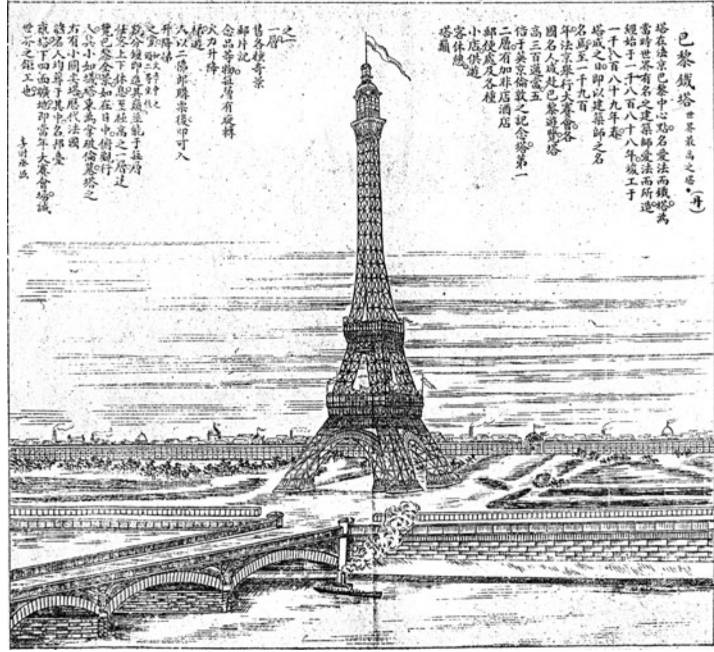


Fig. 5.3 The Paris Steel Tower – the highest pagoda in the world, *Tuhua xunbao* 图画旬报 1, 1908, p. 3, lithography

clean streets, its numerous and fully legal entertainment venues, its tea houses, theaters and Western-style restaurants, the city itself was considered as entertainment.[9] Already during the 1880s and 1890s, some of this globalized form and content of entertainment found a concentrated place in the new Zhang Gardens and Yu Gardens.[10] The Zhang Gardens, which had opened in the 1870s, signaled this by giving their entertainment center – with its theater, Chinese and Western restaurants, and pool billiard – not a Chinese name but the name of Arcadia (with the intrinsically meaningless phonetic transcription Ankaidi in Chinese), the blissful Greek region with mild climes where shepherds and shepherdesses spent their days in play and love talk, which had recently received a new lease of life in the Paris shopping arcades described by Walter Benjamin. In the 1890s Shanghai built

[9]See Catherine Yeh, *Shanghai Love: Courtesans, Intellectuals and Entertainment Culture, 1850–1910*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006, pp. 306–309.

[10]Shanghaitong she 上海同社, ed. *Shanghai yanjiu ziliao* 上海研究资料 (Shanghai research materials), orig. 1935. Repr. Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1985, pp. 305–307.

Fig. 5.4 The Great Wall, *Tuhua xunbao* 图画旬报 No. 1, 1908, p. 1, lithography

its first European-style rollercoaster theme park on the outskirts of the city named "Flying dragon island" (Fei long dao 飛龍島).[11]

The commercial exploration of the theme of the world as entertainment was highlighted and made concrete by the creation of amusement parks that took the world as their central theme. With European, American and Japanese amusement parks as model, the business-savvy of Shanghai entrepreneurs – some of them overseas Chinese – sensed a mass market behind the idea of the world as entertainment. In December 1916, the first Shanghai entertainment park, *youxichang* 遊戲場, was set up. It was appropriately called *The New World* 新世界. Shortly thereafter, *The Great World* 大世界 (July 1917), *The Bazaar* 勸業場 (October 1917), and *The Eden* 先施樂園 (August 1918) opened their gates. More was to come in the early 1920s. The most famous among these were the *Heaven* 天韻 (1922) and the *Latest Novelty* 新新. Together with *The New World* and *The Eden*, these latter two belonged to Shanghai's four earliest and most famous department stores, the New

[11]Mao Fei 毛飞, "Bainian qian de Shanghai leyuan 百年前的上海樂園 (Shanghai amusement parks a hundred years ago)," in Shanghai shi zhengxie wenshi ziliao weiyuan hui 上海市政歷文史资料委员会 eds., *Shanghai wenshi ziliao cungao huibian* 上海文史资料存稿汇编 (Collection of manuscript materials on Shanghai literature and history). Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 2001, pp. 85–86.

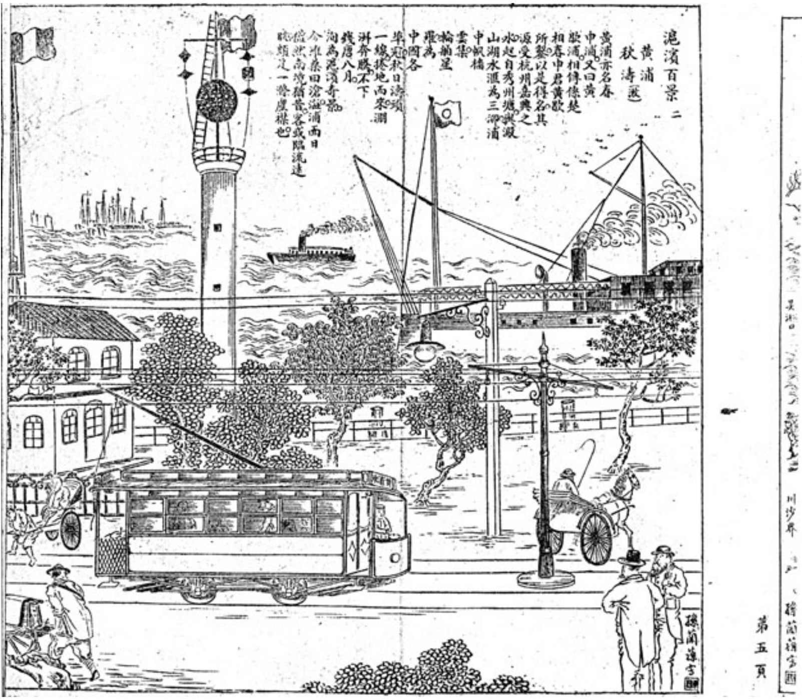


Fig. 5.5 Shanghai street scene, from "One Hundred Scenes of Shanghai," *Tuhua xunbao* 图画旬报 No. 1, 1908, p. 5, lithography

World Company 新世界公司, the Xianshi Company 先施公司, the Yongan Company 永安公司, and the Xinxin Company 新新公司.

This idea of an amusement garden on the top floor of the department store was seemingly inspired by the Japanese department stores that featured theater performances on the top floor of their building.[12] They in turn had been inspired by and modeled themselves after the "Jardin de Tivoli" in Paris (1766–1842), the "Tivoli Gardens" in Copenhagen, and similar establishments in wealthy urban centers in the West.[13] They all represented the world as a string of sites of exotic

[12]The private Japanese railway companies who were behind the creation of the late nineteenth century Japanese amusement parks also owned and invested in the Japanese department stores that featured entertainment venues on their top floors. See Isao Ogawa, "History of Amusement Park Construction by Private Railway Companies in Japan." *Japanese Railway & Transport Review*, March 1998, pp. 28–34.

[13]The name Tivoli originally indicates the town of Tivoli in the Lazio region of central Italy, founded a few centuries before Rome. During my visit to Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen in 2009, it included a Chinese-style theater, a Japanese pagoda, and an Islamic architectural ensemble with tower together with simulations of space-craft travel, a ride through a hell of monsters, and many variants of exotic food. See Ellen Dahl and Mikkel Grønlund eds., *Tivoli: the story of the fairytale garden*. Maribo: Grønlund; [Kbh.]: in association with Tivoli, 2005.

wonder together with hair-raising technologies and great varieties of food, and framed it as a peaceful place civilized enough for women and children.[14]

Strictly speaking, these parks were not constructed as gardens. The earlier Zhang Gardens and Yu Gardens had been in enclosures outside the city's center with the idea of offering an escape from the daily concerns of city life. The new Shanghai amusement parks were right in the center of the city as part of large building complexes that towered over the city. These complexes were meant to impress the visitor with their magnificent interior decoration and architectural wonders. In these amusement "parks," the entertainment venues were distributed over different floors, and, if they were part of a department store, the different venues were all spread out on the top floor. They featured different kinds of theaters (Peking opera, new style opera 新劇), Western and Chinese acrobatic shows, and motion pictures 影戲 (silent films) mostly from the US. At the time, all-female local opera troupes were the rage so they are very prominently presented in the theater programs. On another level there were storytelling halls featuring southern and northern style *pingtan* 評彈 and *dagu xi* 大鼓戲, comic cross-talk 相聲, and ventriloquism 口技. On yet a different level were restaurants offering Chinese and Western cuisine, a tea house, and an ice-cream parlor. Cabinets of Western technological curiosities as well as greenhouses with rare plants and flowers from all over the world were also standard offerings (Fig. 5.6).[15]

With its physical setting as a stand-alone island within the city and its multilayered offerings of the latest fashions, attractions and virtuoso presentations from all around the globe, the amusement park was meant to evoke within its confines a sense of fantasy-land. This is its selling point. It was designed to help the visitors forget their daily routines and concerns by entering a land of fun where no responsibility or duty awaits them. Here, they could spend a whole day or simply come for one show. In tune with the Western mode of time management, which was widely accepted in Shanghai, beginning times for each performance were well publicized. These would be found on the first page of what were later known as the amusement park papers or tabloids (youxichang xiaobao 遊戲場小報). They were on sale at the entrance and inside the park for a mere two copper coins, or even less if one subscribed. Each one of the amusement parks featured such a paper.

The entertainment newspaper as a genre first appeared in Shanghai during the late 1890s in an emulation of what had just come in vogue in France during the Second Empire.[16] Known later as *Yule xiaobao* 娛樂小報 or entertainment tabloids, they quickly became the rage in Shanghai. The relaxing of press

[14]Ellen Dahl and Mikkel Grønlund eds., *Tivoli: the story of the fairytale garden*. Maribo: Grønlund; [Kbh.]: in association with Tivoli, 2005; Judith A. Adams, *The American Amusement Park Industry: A History of Technology and Thrills*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991.

[15]Fu Xiangyuan 傅祥遠, *Da shijie shihua* 大世界史話 (A Chronicle of *The Great World*), Shanghai: Shanghai daxue chubanshe, 1999.

[16]Catherine V. Yeh, "Shanghai Leisure, Print Entertainment, and the Tabloids, xiaobao," in Rudolf G. Wagner ed, *Joining the Global Public: Word, Image, and City in Early Chinese Newspapers*, 1870–1910. Albany: SUNY Press, 2007, pp. 201–233.

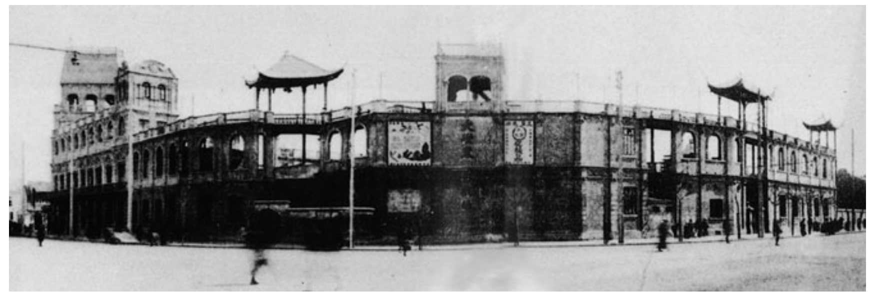


Fig. 5.6 The Great World Amusement Park (Da Shijie 大世界). 1917. Photograph. The architectural structure of the Great World is exotic and unique. Its origin is clearly foreign with the admixture of Chinese architectural style through the pavilions with their up-turning rooftops on top of the main structure. The open windows around the top of the wall offer the outside world an enticing glimpse of this separate inside sphere. On the walls of the main entrance in the front of the photo there are Western-style advertisements. Together the ensemble is meant to evoke a sense of exotic wonder and suggests a space marked off for an otherworldly experience. From: Deng Ming 鄧明ed., *Shanghai bainian lüeying* (1840s–1940s) 上海百年掠影 (Survey of Shanghai: 1840s–1940s). Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin chubanshe, 1994, p. 202

censorship after the founding of the Republic in 1912 helped spread them to some other cities. These papers were instrumental in defining and publicizing the "world" as the central attraction of these amusement parks, and in presenting the city of Shanghai as the aggregate of the best this world had to offer. Shanghai was dubbed "China's biggest playground" 中國絕大遊戲場.[17]

The Shanghai entertainment newspaper in general, and the amusement park tabloid in particular, mirrored in their conception and even in their page-layout the amusement park itself, which in turn was inspired by the unique feature of this city as a global entity, while in their subject matter, tone, and take on the world, they followed in the tracks of the earlier leisure and entertainment papers. This included resetting hierarchies of importance by moving seemingly marginal groups such as courtesans and actors, marginal genres such as novels or gossipy anecdotes, and above all, a marginal activity, namely entertainment, onto center stage. This particular feature of the entertainment newspapers as well as the entertainment parks offered a platform for living out values, priorities and social routines that were quite manifestly at variance with those of the outside world. In the playful and unthreatening suspension of the real power structure that ruled society and the world, and by re-crafting the world as entertainment, these papers offered a new kind of paradise on earth to anyone paying his two coppers. This new world was invariably introduced and perceived through the repertoire of associations connected with the island of Penglai 蓬萊 and the garden of Eden. The Shanghai International Settlement, the entertainment parks, and the entertainment papers

[17]"Benguan qian Simalu shuo" 本館遷四馬路說 (On the removal of our company to Si malu), *Youxi bao*, Oct 2, 1897.

shared with Penglai and Eden the feature of being set apart from the larger world. Again, this playful counterpoint to the real-world power dynamics did not operate by way of denial, but rather by confronting it, in a playful and altogether non-ideological manner – and within a limited place, time and medium – with the utopian potential of this world. The routines acquired by all classes, by residents and visitors alike, to engage with this environment of urban order, egalitarian access, and technical modernity were instrumental in softening and eventually breaking down the mental walls that otherwise were still standing high.

In this rather long introduction, I have tried to outline the historical trajectory of the coming of the world in the form of entertainment as a counterpoise to the dominant and largely accepted discourse of the world framed by the power of the nation-state and, by extension, imperialism. The study of the transcultural flow of images, media, and sites brings out an alternative historical trajectory, namely, the steeply rising levels of global communication and entertainment as soft-power forms of constituting a different vision of a modern and "civilized" world within a temporal, spatial and media enclave as well as in a key cultural contact zone.

While all three, images, media and sites, would yield fruitful results, this study will focus on the least-known of them, the entertainment park tabloids. It will present a case study of the way in which *The Eden* or Leyuan 樂園, an entertainment tabloid put out by the Xianshi department store, constructed and presented the world as a modern form of Paradise and of the impact the invention of urban or modern leisure in papers of this type might have had on twentieth century urban social and cultural change in China.

The New Paradise Island: *The Eden* 先施樂園日報 and Its Layout

With the Xianshi department store, the Australian overseas Chinese business tycoon Ma Yingbiao 馬應彪 created Shanghai's first department store. Opened in 1918, it covered more than 10,000m^2 of surface, housed over 40 departments, and sold more than 10,000 kinds of goods from all over the globe. On the top floor an amusement park was installed. This probably followed a practice first established in Shanghai in the big buildings set up by foreign-owned companies such as the Shenbaoguan publishing house, which had a social club with a restaurant and coffee house on the top floor of its office building. While access to the Shenbaoguan outfit was restricted to the company's employees and guests, the Xianshi amusement park was open to the public.

The Eden, Xianshi leyuan ribao 先施樂園日報, was a daily that was started at the same time as the entertainment park.[18] As the earlier amusement parks had been

[18]When the paper was first published it was called *Xianshi gongsi ribao: Leyuan* 先施公司日報: 樂園; 2 months later this was changed to *Xianshi leyuan ribao*: 先施樂園日報.

先施公司日報
樂園
"THE EDEN"
大減價二十天
嘉泰洋行
ELEPHANT HEAD WINES & SPIRITS
愛
INTERWOVEN HOSIERY
(Made in America)
THE BEST HOSE MADE IN THE WORLD
龍東公司

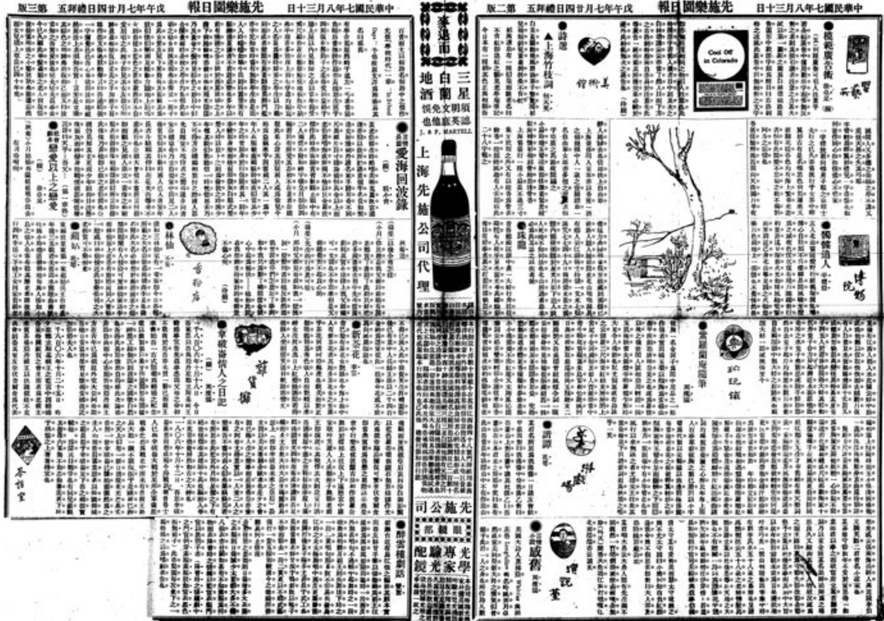
Fig. 5.7 *The Eden* front side: page 1 (*left*) and page 4 (*right*); August 30, 1918

independent business entities, this link to a department store was new. The purpose was no doubt to enhance the department store's attraction and reputation. In many ways, *The Eden* modeled itself on the example of the earlier amusement park entertainment newspapers such as the *New World*, *The Great World Daily News* and *The Bazaar*.

The Eden's editors and writers were not little scribblers, but high-profile men of letters. The same was true of all the other papers of this kind. To edit *The Eden*, the owner secured the services of Zhou Shoujian 周瘦鵑, one of the most famous and popular fiction writers and journal editors of the period. As had been hoped, Zhou mobilized all his connections for the literary pages of the *The Eden*. He managed to fill its literary columns with works by high-profile and popular writers of the day and contracted some of the best-known cartoonists at the time for daily inserts (Figs. 5.7 and 5.8).

The Eden came in one single broadsheet printed on both sides. It was meant to be folded vertically to form four pages, the first and the fourth page were printed recto, the second and third verso. Page one was exclusively dedicated to the amusement park, listing all the programs of that day with their times and locations. Page four was reserved for advertisements of goods sold in the department store.

The formal structure and layout of the paper mirrors that of the department store itself. One example might be the *Eden* issue of October 12, 1918. Reading the paper's front page, the visitor/reader is invited to visually descend or ascend to the Xianshi's "Paradise-cape." Following the graphic layout of this page, the visitor


中華民國七年八月三十日 先施樂園日報 戊午年七月廿四日禮拜五 第三版

中華民國七年八月三十日 先施樂園日報 戊午年七月廿四日禮拜五 第二版

三星白蘭地酒

J. & F. MARTELL

上海先施公司代理

先施公司

眼鏡部

光學專家驗光配鏡

Cool Off in Colorado

Fig. 5.8 *The Eden* back side: page 2 (*right*) and page 3 (*left*); August 30, 1918

will start from the bottom of the page and move upward as he or she mentally moves up from the ground floor to the higher floors. The paper provides detailed information about the particular luxury goods from all over the world at the different levels under the slogan “Xianshi company with goods from all corners of the globe” (先施公司環球貨品). The Xianshi department store did not simply specialize in selling exclusive luxury foreign goods, it was the showcase for global trends in high fashion and consumer goods. These included fashion clothing from Paris, electrical instruments from England and Germany, furs from China and Russia, but also Chinese luxury goods, which were displayed side by side with the Western goods. They were all good in this “world”. The term “Zhong Xi” 中西 or “Chinese and Western” often appears when marking the categories of goods. There is also a notice about the company’s own hotel and restaurants (Fig. 5.9).

On the second floor (American counting) is the cinema. The paper announces the program of the day, together with a detailed synopsis of the films. All the films are foreign silent films with intertitles in Chinese.[19] On this level there is also a tearoom for which the prices are listed. Between this and the next level is a list of the local and Cantonese courtesan performers, who will be performing on the next level in the storytelling halls on the north side.

[19] It is very hard to figure out which films these might have been since the Chinese titles are completely different from the originals.

中華民國七年十月十二日 先施樂園日報 戊午年九月初八日 第一版

中華郵政特准掛號認為新聞紙類

先施 樂園 日報

鈍根題

上海英大馬路浙江路口 "THE EDEN" 吳門周瘦鵑編輯

定報價目

第五十五號

今日一張售銅元二枚

刊例 廣告

影戲場 南書場 北書場

影戲說明書

猛回頭

先施環球貨品公司

諸君萬歲

Fig. 5.9 Front page of *The Eden*, October 12, 1918

Entering the next level we find three performing theaters. The second cinema hall features Chinese and Western magic shows and moving image shows (offered by Pathé, Baidai gongsi 百代公司, the French recording company). The northern

and southern Storytelling Halls feature performances by individuals or troupes; their programs include different regional styles and schools of storytelling, drum-accompanied singing, and comedy performances.

The next level features information about entertainment facilities located on different floors, such as the billiard room, the distorting mirrors, and Chinese cuisine at the East Asia restaurant, all on the second floor; the American gambling machines, and the second layer of the East Asia restaurant on the third floor; a restaurant with Western cuisine on the fourth, and the Delicacies of Eden (樂園珍味) on the sixth.

Finally on the top level, a temporary stage features three exotic offerings: the muscle women (女力士), the "great Black American artist couple [tap dancing?],"[20] (Fig. 5.10) and "the great English artists, the Cottrell Brothers," Kedelai 科得萊.[21] (Fig. 5.11) This is a world where the British do not come as gun-toting marines on warships but as trapeze artists eager to please their Chinese audience, and the mighty Napoleon is present through the diary his mistress kept on their private affairs. Juxtaposed with the exotic foreign entertainments we find traditionally sounding Chinese cultural offerings. After enjoying the feats of the foreign entertainers, the visitor can amuse himself on the miniature mountain or the "Poetic-Wind Pavilion" in the "Hall of the Four Directions"; or wander over to the "Moon-Gazing Pavilion" and the "Hundred-Flower Terrace" in the "Pavilion of the One Hundred Illusions". If one prefers, one may visit the "Star-Touching Pagoda" or the "Cloud-Ladder Bridge". Finally, on top of the newspaper page, one finds a stylized frame that opens, like a gate, to the sign "Leyuan 樂園"or *The Eden*.

The Eden paper emulates the building's layout in a different medium, replacing the easy wandering with the feet with the even easier wandering with the eyes and mind across the paper. There is no suggestion of a center or a hierarchical order. The different features comprised in this world as entertainment are there for the choosing, whether foreign or Chinese. Geographic locales of goods and entertainers are marked to signal the pleasant diversity on display. Human feats compete with the technical lure of the human voice coming from a rotating black plate, the moving image of a human being on a screen, or the strange thrills of German *wurst* with beer. This self-contained enclave of a different world shows all the residents of the world out there, but in a different incarnation, and it does so to an audience/readership that is elevated to become the customer for whom things are laid out, and who is expected in turn to abide by the civilized rules prevailing in this enclave.

Illustrated advertisements on the opposite page for luxury goods of Chinese and Western origin cast the reader as a person of prosperous and cosmopolitan ease. They include Western-style wines and spirits paraded with the company's elephant logo, American "interwoven hosiery", and the assurance by Chinese Nanyang

[20]Illustrated advertisement from *The Eden*, Oct. 6, 1918, p. 2.

[21]Illustrated advertisement from *The Eden*, Oct. 7, 1918, p. 2.

樂園新聘美國大藝術家
黑美人夫婦

Fig. 5.10 Afro-American dancers. Photograph, early twentieth century. Published in: *The Eden*, October 6, 1918, p. 2

Brothers Tobacco Company 南洋兄弟公司 that the most important meaning of "LOVE" is to love one's country. So, rather than smoking foreign brands, one should buy their Chinese cigarettes (Fig. 5.7, right side). With these announcements and advertisements, the "easy wandering of the heart" has only just begun (Fig. 5.12). The back page (containing pages 2 and 3) offers yet another dimension to this paradise.

The two pages (to the left and the right of the sheet, separated by a middle column featuring advertisements) are divided into different literary columns, each with its particular modern and novel column heading. During the first months the names of these columns were still fluid, but soon the composition stabilized.

Fig. 5.11 Brothers Cottrell. Great Potpurie Act. Photograph. Early twentieth century. Published in: *The Eden*, October 7, 1918, p. 2

These columns include the "Art Gallery," Meishuguan 美術館, with traditional poetry and ballads; the "Museum," or rather "Curiosity Cabinet," Bowuguan 博物館, with its strange and wondrous exhibits such as a man being chased by a skeleton, or a man-eating monster beetle that reduced a visitor of a temple to a mere pile of bones; the "Curio Shop," Zhenwan pu 珍玩鋪, (changed soon after to "The Private Library," Cangshu lou 藏書樓) with literary essays; the column

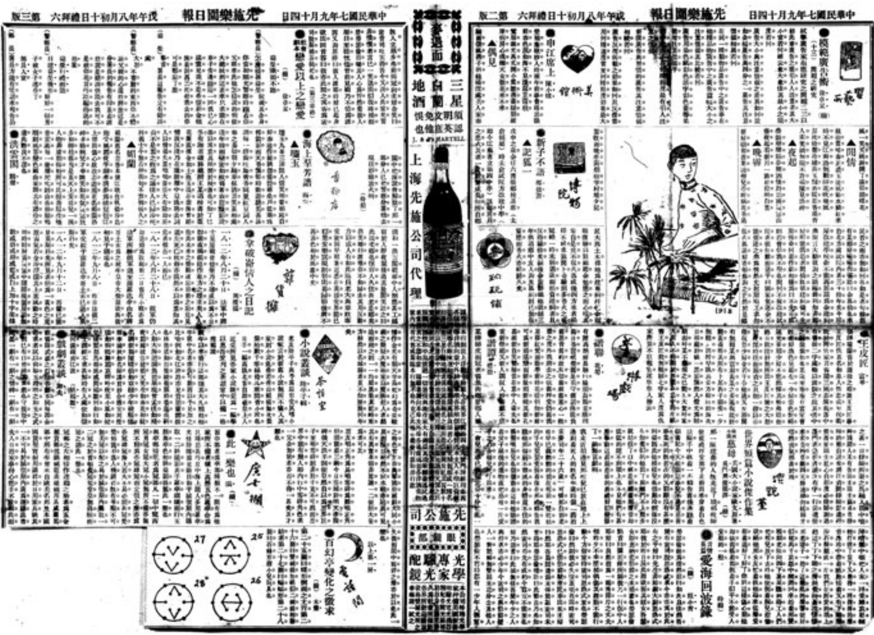

先施樂園日報
三星白蘭地酒
上海先施公司代理

Fig. 5.12 *The Eden,* pages 2 and 3, October 12, 1918

"Learn a skill," Xi yi suo 習藝所, where one might pick up practical knowledge for example on how to design an advertisement; the "Entertainment park," Youxichang 遊戲場, with humorous chitchat and later also serialized literature of the *biji* (brush jottings) type; "The Podium," Yanshuo tai 演説臺, where translations of Western novels and short stories including works by Dickens and Maupassant were serialized next to works by some of the most famous Chinese fiction writers of the time. The "Powder Shop," Xiangfen dian 香粉店, is devoted to the world of courtesans, offering biographies, news, gossip, and historical reminiscences. The "Grocery Shop," Zahuo dian 雜貨店, runs exotic tales and stories from the West and China. The "Tea-Talk Parlor," Cha hua shi 茶話室, offers readers' comments on opera performances, actors and theater history. The "Advertising Column," Guanggao lan 廣告欄, is mostly devoted to new events or new technical wonders installed in the Xianshi amusement park, such as the gramophone (which happily enough is also on sale at the lower level department store). The "Newspaper Reading Spot," Yuebao chu 閱報処 features news in and around the city, and "The Phone Booth," Dianhua jian 電話間, focuses on introducing new journals and books. One of the new columns added soon after the founding of the paper was "Lecture Meeting," Xuanjiang hui 宣講會, which presented serious discussions on topics relating to living in the modern, "civilized" world. As in the other entertainment park newspapers, there was a cartoon each day on this second page, largely featuring the "Shanghai girl" or Chinese theater scenes intermingled with images of other parts of the world (Figs. 5.13–5.15).

中華民國七年十月十五日 先施樂園日報 戊午年九月十一日禮拜二 第二版

宣講會

墮落

模範廣告術

習藝所

美術館

無愁果有愁曲

美人梳頭歌

懊憹曲

博物院

淘籮三娘子

廚下怪聲

藏書樓

思婦

遊戲場

改良家庭常識

譚說

世界短篇小說傑作集

前塵

Fig. 5.13 Untitled cartoon (in the Shanghai girl series) by [Zhang] Guangyu 張光宇. *The Eden*, October 15, 1918, p. 2

茶話室

卓別靈自述 張梧碧

卓別靈為英國影戲中第一名伶。滑稽劇蜚聲世界。每一登場。四座鬨堂。能令憂者忘憂。樂者益樂。誠世界衆生唯一之良友也。比者卓君影片。盛行海上。一般婦孺。無不知之者。予近從英國某雜誌中得卓君自述。特倩吾友碧梧譯之。諸君讀是篇。如與

救國不欲向敵人謀升斗也居恒不喜拿破崙疾之次骨書中警告吾曰拿破崙者歐羅巴洲之禍星也凡吾歐洲之人皆當盡其天職協力以撲滅之此說也吾深韙之

校約半里許四圍悉張重幕予襲製片時外間決無所見且予衆有蘇格蘭猛犬專司守門之責當亦無人敢冒險闖入也（待續）

閱報處

盲人太不自量 張級秋

記者昨行經滬甯北站。見途人麕集作一巨圜。圜中有二人。呼聲甚厲。并鬨有竹鐵相擊之聲。予大怪之。亟欲知其究竟。以人多擁擠。雅不欲摩肩而入。因竚立道左。引首遙望。後叩之他人。方知鬨者為一盲人。與其導路之童子。不知因何事故。盲人遽以明杖亂擊童子。而童子亦不之讓。以所持鐵板還擊其手。盲人痛極。怒愈烈。苦不能見一物。因舉杖狂舞。兩不相下。逾十分鐘方息。盲人手臂間畧受微傷。而子一無所損。卒以盲

Fig. 5.14 Cartoon image of Charlie Chaplin. It accompanies the article by Zhang Wubi 張梧碧 on "Zhuobielin zizhuan" 卓別林自傳 (The Autobiography of Charlie Chaplin) in the "Tea-talk parlor" 茶室話 column. *The Eden*, August 31, 1918, p. 3

Each of these columns comes with the idea of modern and civilized cultural institutions, but they do so in a light and bantering way. No stress from high works of art in the "Art Gallery," and no overly didactic displays in the "Museum." All bases are covered, eye, ear, palate and mind all find their pleasure, and they do so in an orderly way. Within his four-page enclave, the reader is to find a daily-renewed serving of tidbits of great interest and variety. The presentations and translations are easy to read. The columns with names such as "The Phone Booth," "Lecture Meeting," "The Podium," and "Newspaper Reading Spot," treat the reader as a respected member of the public in the newly opening public sphere, who is aware of a citizen's responsibility for decorum and behavior. Without the heavy hand of authority, the paper playfully prefigures and guides the reader to a "modern" urban behavior, taste, and value judgment in this secure enclave. By becoming routine, these features of a largely Western-style modernity might end up becoming part of the normality of daily life.

The design and the name of *The Eden* are far from arbitrary. The principal name of this Chinese-language paper is *The Eden* in English. While drawing on elements

中華民國七年九月廿八日 先施樂園日報 戊午年八月廿四日禮拜六 第三版

言情長篇 愛海回波錄

Fig. 5.15 Cartoon image of Napoleon. It accompanies Liu Bannong's 劉半農 translation of the German writer Philipp Palm's (1766–1806) 1806 appeal against Napoleon and the humiliation of Germany. The Chinese translation entitled *Jingshi xiaoshuo: Huiyin* 警世小説:回音 (A Novel that Warns the World: Echo) was serialized in the newspaper and was accompanied by the comments of Zhou Shoujuan 周瘦鵑. *The Eden* Sept. 28, 1918, p. 3

from the traditional iconography of Penglai, this is a modern, an international paradise, not a return to a Chinese paradise of tradition. I suspect that *Eden* had by then become a name routinely used for entertainment places in large urban centers. In the paper at hand, it is a shorthand for an enclave of abundance, harmony, exotic beauty, and innocent pleasure in the middle of a contentious urban bustle with only the faintest and purely metaphorical shadow of its biblical origin. The same is true for the Penglai associations, which were often evoked in Chinese texts. Penglai had long lost its religious connotations.

Inherited from the past was the notion that the Isle of the Immortals (Penglai) was set apart from the world of society and politics with its tense relationships and the fragile permanence of wealth, status, and life itself. It is inhabited by "immortal" humans who have purified themselves of attachments to "the world out there," and have refined for themselves magic potions as well as collected for themselves rare and exotic plants to sustain their existence. This paradise is marked by an absence of the rigid social hierarchies of the world of normal humans, by the absence of the laborious pursuits humans engage in – from planting rice to digging copper to running a government office – and as a consequence by the absence of all the regular goods needed to sustain human existence, together with an abundance of the most rarefied dainties. It enjoys, as a consequence, a harmony of the cosmic forces undisturbed by human interference. From what I have outlined above, it is not hard to see that many features of this Penglai paradise have been emulated by the modern Eden.

Fig. 5.16 Boshan Incense Burner. Bronze incense burner inlaid with gold, height 26.1 cm; Western Han dynasty (BC 202–AD 9). From: Wen Feng ed., *The Great Bronze Age of China: An Exhibition from the P.R.C.* New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980, p. 298

This may even be seen in the layout of the paper when compared to earlier representations of Penglai paradise, as in the Boshan incense burner 博山香爐.[22]

As Fig. 5.16 demonstrates, the landscape of the Penglai paradise comprises different sites in a pristine mountain-and-water ensemble that very consciously excludes all markers of agriculture and urban agglomerations, as well as human hierarchies. The landscape is not organized, hierarchized, or urbanized by humans; it allows for easy wandering from one beautiful, exotic feature to the next in a lovely setting that emulates nature, albeit in an amusement park with its many attractions and culinary delicacies.

The structure of the newspaper's literary pages 2 and 3 emulates that of private literati gardens of the Ming period (see Figs. 5.17 and 5.18). Such gardens were organized around different sites, which were each linked to a particular motif and vista that was to evoke a corresponding emotion. While without a formal center, such gardens were always designed around an overall theme.

In an echo of such private leisure gardens, the new column-headings of the paper offer thematic vistas without the stiff hierarchies of relevance that dominate sites of cultural transmission such as schools and universities. They facilitate the playful engagement with the new in eye, ear, palate, fashion, value, and interaction.

The emphasis within these literary pages is again on peaceful exchange and equality among people of different nations. The descriptions may be read as

[22]Bronze incense burner inlaid with gold, height 26.I CM; source of illustration: Lothar Ledderose, "The Earthly Paradise: Religious Elements in Chinese Landscape Art." In: *Theories of the Arts in China*. Edited by Susan Bush and Christian F. Murck. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983, p. 176 [pp. 165–183]. The allusions to an island-mountain in the sea refers to the three Isles of the Blessed: Penglai 蓬萊, Fangzhang 方丈and Yingzhou 瀛洲. The incense burner has the function of releasing the soul of the deceased from this world to the other; see Rolf Stein, *The World in Miniature*: *Container Gardens and Dwellings in Far Eastern Religious Thought*. Stanford, Calif. Stanford University Press, 1990, p. 43.

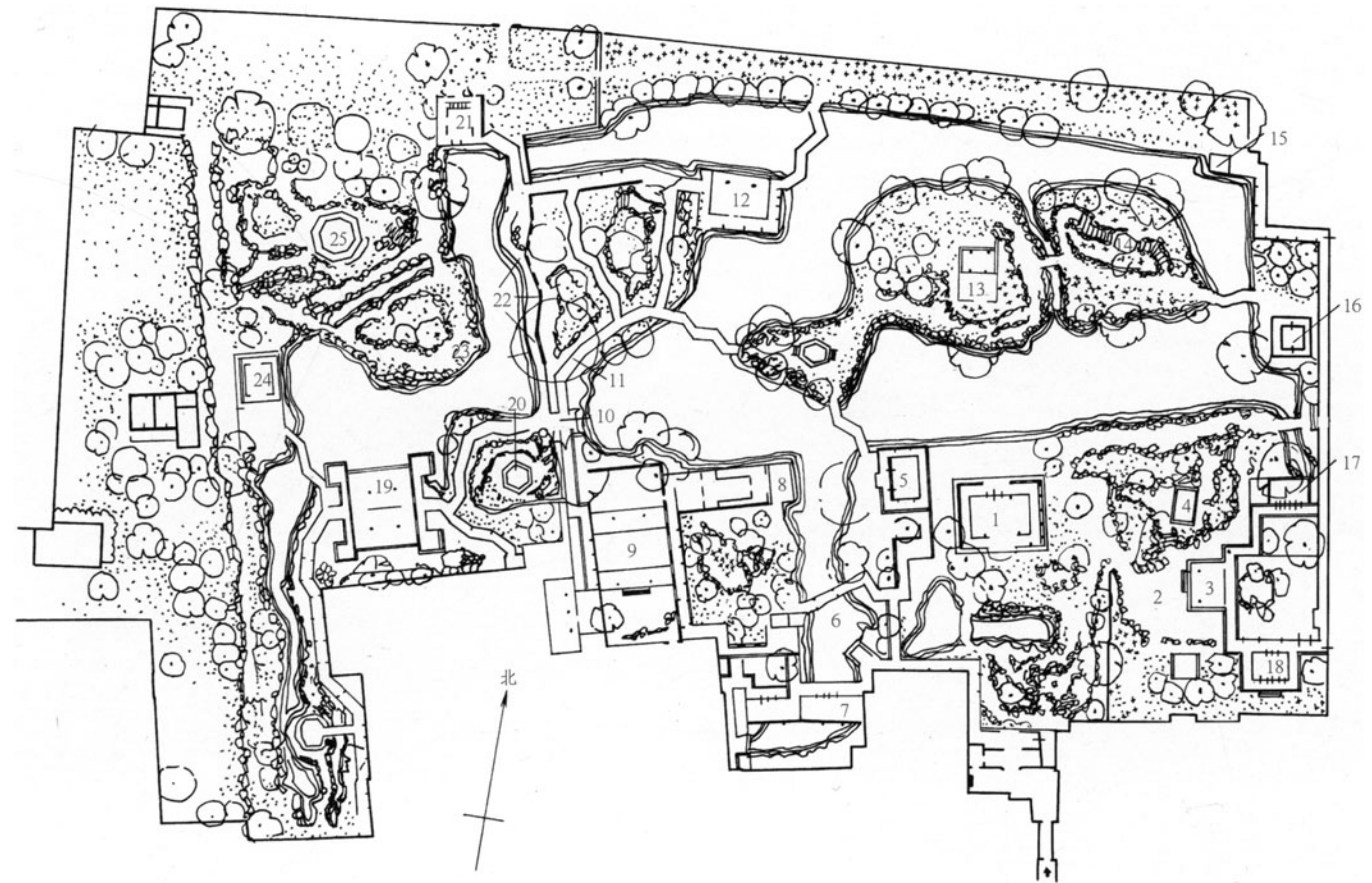


Fig. 5.17 The layout of a Ming period Suzhou private garden. From: Luo Zhewen 儸哲文, *Zhongguo gu yuanlin* 中國古園林 (Chinese gardens from the past). Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 2002, p. 102

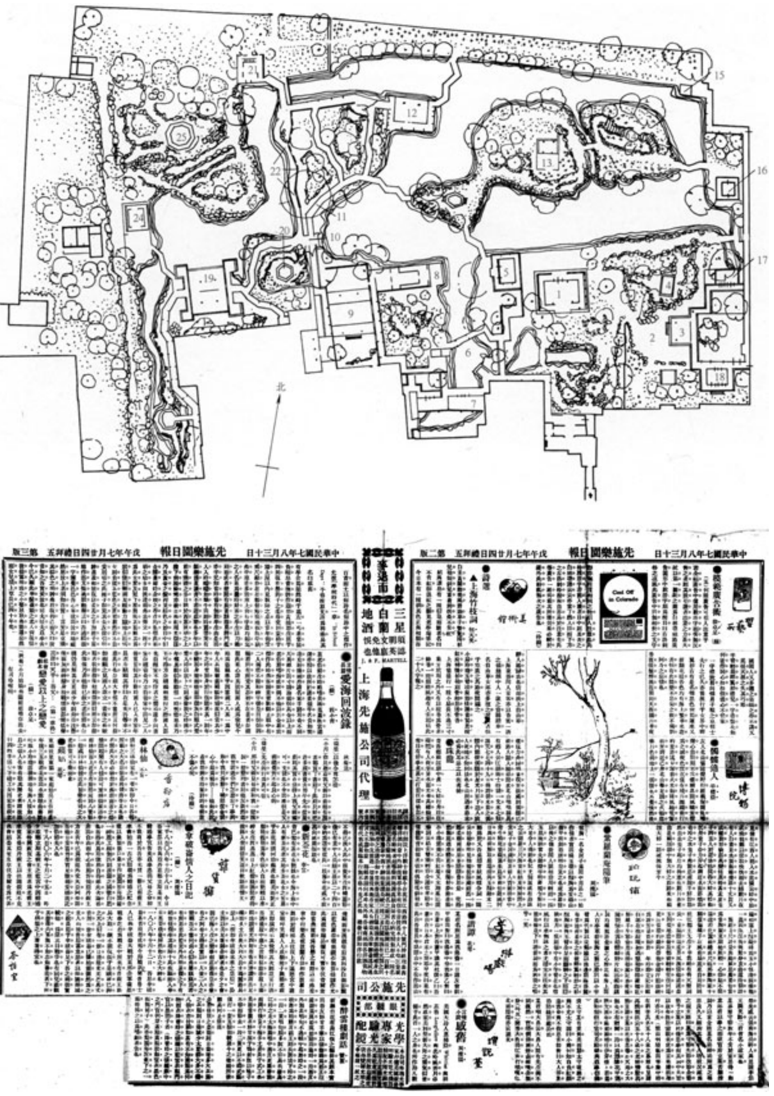


Fig. 5.18 Layout of pages 2 and 3 of *The Eden*

illustrations of people keeping to what was called at the time the "standard of civilization". The Chinese-language columns lustily sprout with works from Chinese hands in brand-new international genres such as the detective story 偵探小說, or the family novel 家庭小說; translations of foreign works routinely introduce surprisingly comprehensible characters and life-dramas of people who have neither Chinese mother nor father. The light and friendly air of a paradise of the civilized

Fig. 5.19 Painting by Tang Yin 唐寅 (1470–1523) "Lady Ban's Round Fan" 畫班姬團扇. From Li Feng-ju 劉芳如, *Ming zhongye renwuhua sijia tezhang – Du Jin, Zhou Chen, Tang Yin, and Chou Ying* 明中葉人物畫四家特展: 杜堇, 周臣, 唐寅, 仇英 (Figure Painting of the Middle Ming Dynasty: Catalogue to the Special Exhibition of Works by Tu Chin, Chou Ch'en, T'ang Yin, and Ch'iu Ying). Taipei: National Palace Museum, 2000, p. 66

decorum aspired to by the new urban middle classes pervades all this, nowhere is the heavy hand of the domestic or foreign religious or political propagandist felt.

Other activities described in the paper's columns also drew on the *imaginaire* of traditional Chinese leisure, in particular the role of courtesans as entertainers.

In traditional literati painting, the beauty was a prominent subject. Examples are Tang Yin's 唐寅 (1470–1523) two paintings "Lady Ban's Round Fan" 畫班姬團扇 (Fig. 5.19) and 陶穀贈詞圖"Tao Gu Presenting a Lyric to Qin Ruolan 秦蒻蘭" (Fig. 5.20). Figure 5.19 depicts a female figure in a garden. Her figure suggests exclusivity and her surroundings connote seclusion. In Fig. 5.20, a courtesan performs for the pleasure of a patron in the setting of a literati garden. Through the *Eden* cartoons and other print media, this motif became part of the iconography of entertainment papers. It served to frame entertainment activities such as listening to music performances by courtesans in *The Eden,* or appreciating drawings of beauties, reading courtesan news, poetry, as well as literary banter among the men of letters about their passions for *dan* actors playing female roles.

Depicted in Figs. 5.21–5.23 are images of Shanghai beauties. The female image in Fig. 5.21 shows the modern transformation of the traditional beauty motif. This is expressed not only through her urban and open attitude as well as her modern style of clothing, but more importantly by the fact of the image being published in

Fig. 5.20 Painting by Tang Yin 唐寅 (1470–1523) "Tao Gu Presenting a Poem [to Qin Ruolan]" 陶穀贈詞圖. From Liu Fangru 劉芳如, Ming zhongye renwuhua sijia tezhan – *Du Jin, Zhou Chen, Tang Yin, and Qiu Ying* 明中葉人物畫四家特展: 杜堇, 周臣, 唐寅, 仇英 (Figure Painting of the Middle Mind Dynasty: Catalogue to the Special Exhibition of Works by Du Jin, Zhou Chen, Tang Yin, and Qiu Ying). Taipei: National Palace Museum, 2000, p. 68

a newspaper, a form mass consumption accessible to all who buy and read *The Eden*. Figure 5.22 represents a more modestly dressed female figure with a rather fashionable hairstyle. She is shown engrossed in a newspaper. With this image, the artist effectively transformed the garden motif into a symbol of urban modernity: leisurely pursuits in a literati garden are transposed to reading the newspaper in the privacy of the urban home. As the newspaper comes from the West, the cartoon in effect establishes a transcultural variant of the motif of the beauty. Figure 5.23 shows a couple in a close embrace. As suggested by the text, the female figure might be a courtesan and the young man her client. In contrast to Fig. 5.20, where the client and courtesan are depicted in an exclusive setting, they are seen here from behind by an onlooker, which makes it very much a public setting.

The transfer of the image of the beauty from the private into a public domain and from the exclusivity of a single painting to a mass-produced newspaper suggests a new set of social values that is at variance with much of the social reality outside of this enclave, and indirectly points to a different way of organizing society.

Fig. 5.21 "Urban Beauty" by Chen Sen. *The Eden*, November 8, 1919. Cartoon

Fig. 5.22 "Urban Beauty" by Zhiguang. *The Eden*, December 6, 1919. Cartoon

Fig. 5.23 "The Couple" by [Dan] Duyu. *The Eden*, December 23, 1919. Cartoon

True to their original design, both the Chinese entertainment parks and the entertainment papers retained the notion of a secluded space where the world could be experienced as a place of innocent, civilized, interesting, and entertaining modernity. With their daily appearance and easy style, their illustrations and their link to the amusement park and even department store, the papers broadened their appeal beyond that enjoyed by the earlier literary journals to reach the newly-forming urban middle classes.

A Globalized Enclave of Leisure

The setup of these new public venues – the amusement parks and their papers – implies new social relationships that are very consciously not spelled out. China is situated within this "world" as an equal participant with its own language and cultural offerings, while at the same time many of the most "progressive" youngsters were cursing their countrymen for complacency in the face of what they saw as a threat to the very survival of their nation.

In this world of equal access for a modest fee, Western culture and technological know-how are presented as unthreatening items of fun and amusement alongside Chinese storytellers. This necessitated the suspension within the paper's pages of the hierarchies that governed the world outside, and the construction of a new entertainment paradise that treated each visitor/reader as an utopian "modern" equal while simultaneously creating and informing an urban market of a size sufficiently large to

maintain these large and costly enterprises. The regular "big" papers claim to mirror the 'objective' hierarchy of importance in their organization and their ranking of politics, business and international relations at the top and some concessions to the reader's entertainment needs (cultural, sports and health) at the end.

The entertainment papers, by contrast, operate on the principle of open and easy access without a tunnel trajectory, as prescribed by the plot of a novel or the hierarchy of the big dailies (Figs. 5.24 and 5.25).

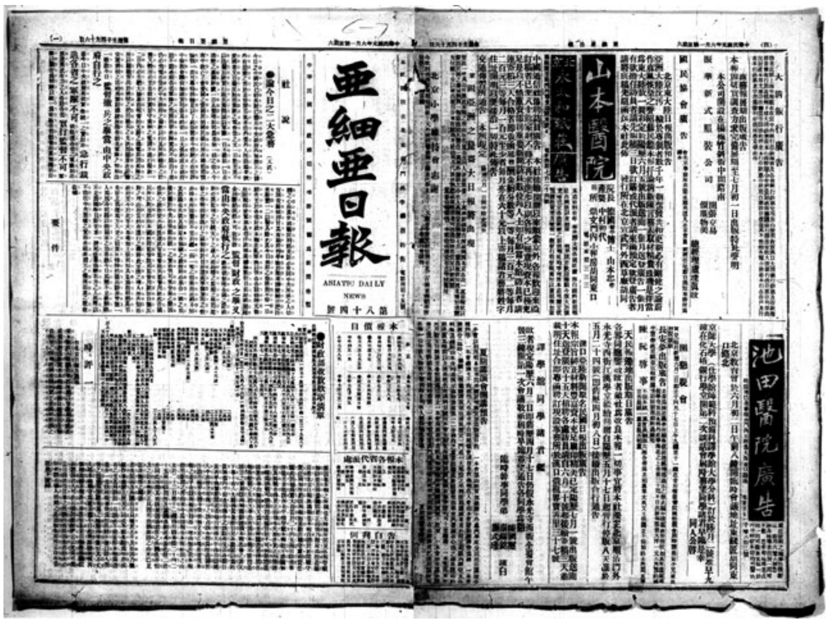
In this world as entertainment, the reader is given the right to a free "stroll" through the paper to look out for things that might catch his or her fancy. The internal organization of these papers does not change randomly with each issue. While not based on some "objective" hierarchy of importance, they are well-structured so as to provide easy orientation. The principle guiding this structure is the readers' anticipated interest. The legitimacy of these interests is not questioned. There is no visible educational purpose in the different literary contributions, as they are for fun and light reading. However, in some subtle way the choice of certain topics still shows an educational tendency, a legacy from the earlier literary journals, but without their didactic undertone. Finally, this world eschews national borders, which dominate so much of the thinking of the political class at the time; it presents the world as a whole in its most advanced, thrilling and varied aspects, including the latest technological and human feats. All this and more is brought to the readers for the price of a mere two coppers.

As a new medium in the public arena and for open communication, the newspaper to a large extent transcended class boundaries. Unlike the big papers, it asked the reader to suspend disbelief about the fit with reality while reading the paper, and go along to have a look at, and a mental stroll through, this alternative world. The construction of the entertainment newspaper thus is predicated on its ability to transport its readers out of his daily concerns into a globalized enclave of utopian ease where these concerns are also suspended.

True to its transcultural origin, *The Eden* maintains the medium's original stance as a public forum. Situated in the 'marginal' space of leisure, it enjoyed the freedom to suggest to the public new ways of thinking, of behaving, and even of seeing the world. Within the pages of *The Eden* the logic that governs the outside world loses its power and control. No competition here, no winners or losers. But the easy-going atmosphere which the paper exuded with its modest price was in itself a challenge to the social conventions that marked high leisure, including travel to foreign lands, as the exclusive privilege of a select few.

The Margin Takes Center Stage: *The Eden* and the *dan* Actor

The world as entertainment in the form of the imaginary paradise on earth can be read as a subtle threat to the earthly social and political order. While situating itself in the enclave of leisure, *The Eden* is not an island. Unlike some studies, which reduce mass entertainment to a cheap palliative designed to placate a potentially


亞細亞日報

ASIATIC DAILY NEWS

第八十四號

山本醫院

池田醫院廣告

Fig. 5.24 First (left) and last (right) page of *Yaxiya ribao* (Asian Daily News), June 1, 1912

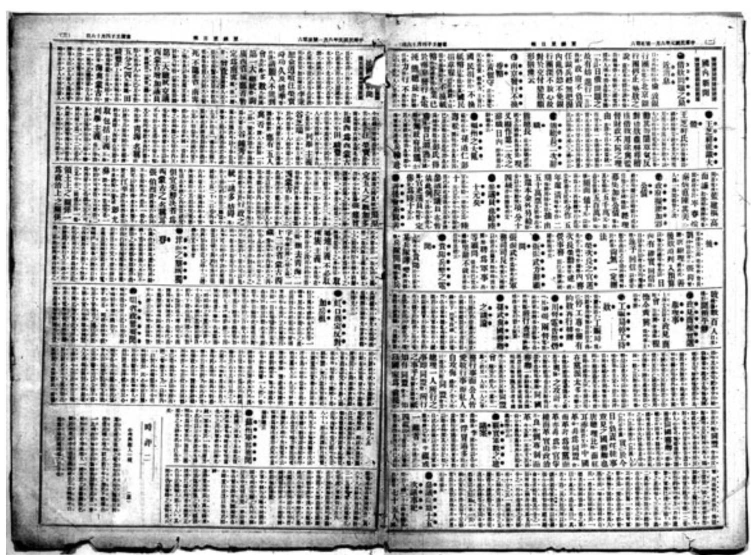


Fig. 5.25 Pages 2 and 3 of *Yaxiya ribao* (Asiatic Daily News), June 1, 1912

restive populace, I contend that the entertainment newspaper as a public form of communication in the Chinese public sphere suggests and to a degree gives a trial run to the possibility of an alternative order of the world and of Chinese society. This is not simply a Bakhtinian temporary and carnivalistic inversion of the order of things. The game plan inherent in the new entertainment papers operates on the principle of suspending hierarchies altogether. As an example of the cross-cultural migration of form, built into this medium is the link to this "world" and to a set of values that contains a critical take on the world out there. This applies equally to the selection of news, of literary genres, and of public figures. This selection stands as a silent challenge and comes with the claim that it matches the actual interests of decent, bona-fide urbanites. The paradise of print entertainment and its readers talk back – if lightly and not in the heavy diction of political orthodoxy – to the managers of the grand public discourse.

The potential effectiveness of this marginal voice in the enclave of leisure becomes evident if we consider the rise to prominence, during the 1910s and 1920s of actors impersonating women in Peking opera, the *dan*, and the pioneering development of theater criticism in the entertainment papers. *Dan* actors were once at the bottom of the social ranks, even below the prostitute, and within the general actors' hierarchy, the *dan* were again positioned at the bottom. In a stellar rise, these same *dan* actors became the focus of attention of the entertainment newspapers and their readers, with the result that a broadly-based star culture formed in China. This adulation of beautiful and graceful young boys playing women to perfection coincided with the concurrent decline of interest in laosheng actors who would play generals, emperors and the like, and it occurred at the same time when the political elites tried to instill male and patriotic martial values into the populace. What role did the entertainment papers play in this real world development?

The entertainment newspaper was the cultural platform on which a Chinese star culture established itself, and looking at the unlikely candidature of the *dan*, these papers paved the way for the unthinkable to become accepted. In *The Eden,* the theater news in the column "Tea-Talk Parlor" Cha hua shi 茶話室 is the only subject with no precedent in traditional literary genres, despite their being a regular part of Western entertainment papers, including those published in Shanghai. It was also one of the very few columns where otherwise unknown writers were published, unknown because this was the beginning of Chinese theater criticism. Since the seventeenth century, a genre of love poetry for these *dan* actors had been popular in literary circles that used the diction familiar from poems dedicated to courtesans. An important shift had come in the first decade of the twentieth century when political reformers heard of opinions in the West that theater might have the potential to educate the people. Seen in this context, exclusive and intimate love poems for boy actors would not do. In journals and pictorials pushing for reform, modern theater criticism was created in an effort to reform the theater and do away with the long practice of judgments that were based on personal obsession and suspected of being a part of private patronage. Zheng Zhengqiu 鄭正秋, who later became the editor of the first entertainment park newspaper *The New World*, was one of the pioneers who created a public newspaper language for theater criticism.

From the very start, the column on theater thus held a special interest for the public. In the same way as courtesan news, which was read in part out of a voyeuristic impulse to share the secrets of the high and mighty, news about *dan* actors had sensation value. Against this background, the paper's editors and the contributors struggled to define and set standards for their theater criticism column. Private adorational prose and poetry for *dan*, which for a short time had dominated the theater columns in the newspaper, had disappeared by the time when *The Eden* was founded. Yet the tension between the language of personal adoration and 'objective' assessment persisted as long as the field of theater criticism was just evolving. When translated into newspaper terms, this tension had the potential to provoke 'high temperature' events – a selling point for any newspaper.

A case in point was the eruption of a nasty and highly personalized struggle between three regular contributors to *The Eden*'s "Tea-Talk Parlor" on the subject of theater. With the writer [Yu] Xingmin [于]醒民 on the one side and two writers on the other, namely Chen Shewo 陳舍我 who used the pen name "Addison" 阿士森 to claim ancestry from Joseph Addison (the creator of the English-language essay and founder of *The Spectator*, the first literary journal in England), and Tiaomei 調梅 (?), the exchange lasted over a month from November to October 1919. I will only sum up here the main points of contention. What was the proper approach in a critical evaluation of a *dan*'s performance? In particular, could one's emotional reaction to a performance be a legitimate part of the critique; should physical appearance, namely the *dan*'s looks, enter into the judgment; and what place should the sexual charm of a *dan* have in a critique of his art. In short, it was a debate about the relative importance of *se* 色 (looks, charm and sex appeal) and *yi* 藝 (performing art) when evaluating the art of a *dan*. The argument was inconclusive, with "Addison" and Tiaomei arguing that different criteria has to be applied to a *dan* playing the role of a morally upright female, *qingyi* 青衣, and a *dan* playing the sexy young female, *huadan* 花旦, since they required different kinds of performances. If the *huadan* was not pretty and sexy and was unable to evoke a sensual reaction from the audience, he had simply failed in his art. On the other hand, if the *qingyi* was not good at singing and was unable to interpret his character psychologically, he had likewise failed. Thus the critic had necessarily to bring his own emotional reaction into his judgment. Xingmin disagreed. He believed that in the art of the *dan* as practiced today, there was a mixture of each of these elements in both types of *dan* roles. (In fact he is unintentionally documenting the birth of the modern *dan*, namely the *huashan* 花衫, which had begun to merge the two roles mentioned above and that of the "martial *dan*", *wudan* 武旦). To his mind, theater criticism had to be based on objective criteria, the personal reaction would simply get in the way.

Such debates about *dan* actors and their acting were not infrequent in the entertainment papers.[23] Their impact was to raise the public profile both of the

[23]For studies on the subject, Catherine Yeh, "A Public Love Affair or a Nasty Game? The Chinese Tabloid Newspaper and the Rise of the Opera Singer as Star," *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 2(2003)1, pp. 13–51.

paper and the actors. Through such public debates, readers could get a glance at the sensational display of emotional attachments between patrons and actors. More importantly, however, the upshot of these debates was a heightened focus on the art of the *dan* and with it, a better artistic appreciation of their role. Although the reform of theater as a venue to educate the people had started during the late nineteenth century, modern theater criticism came only with the art of the *dan*. This in turn affected the relationship between the public and the *dan* as the actors became household names.

From the periphery, the *dan* were elevated by an entertainment newspaper to become public personality, a phenomenon that quickly translated into their social standing. Out of the enclosure of the entertainment paradise, an impeccably civilized and modern figure emerged here with new plays, a new public persona, and a steeply rising national and international standing in the arts. In the wake of its rise, the entertainment papers were crucial in providing a venue for the emerging professional theater criticism. The *dan,* with Mei Lanfang as the prime figure, quickly caught the nation's attention with a performance of a man playing a woman that could only arouse a deep unease among politicians and public intellectuals, because it was an utterly inappropriate symbol for a China they were pushing so hard and with so little effect in the opposite direction. At the same time, these elite members shared the public's taste, and many of them had even been instrumental in fostering the *dan*'s rise through their patronage. It is part of their ambivalence that they both admired and resented these men who were in fact stealing their place in the limelight, a place they felt they themselves deserved and needed so urgently to instill in the public an utterly different set of values.

Conclusions

The invention of modern leisure in China took place in Shanghai. Foreign presence and administrative powers in the Foreign Settlement were crucial for this development, for they allowed the global flow of concepts, institutions, and practices to arrive in China through the city. Leisure and entertainment, however, became the main place of encounter, the "contact zone", to use Mary Louise Pratt's term, between these global forms and the common people. Entertainment acted as the most non-confrontational mediator which translated these global flows for society into the forms of amusement, and secured high acceptance among the public. The central position of the "world" is the key marker of this flow and it showed up as an integral part in both the form and content of Shanghai entertainment. The world as entertainment with its flat hierarchies and the pleasure of the consumer dominating the scene can be seen as an attempt to readdress the power dynamics in the real world between China and the West and no less so within China itself. The particular form this took was a combination of commercial market and media. The link

between a market, which explored the new trends in leisurely pursuits as forms of business, and the rise of mass media provided a basic structure as shown in the case of the amusement parks.

With the coming of the "world" into the public lives of Chinese urbanites in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the emergence of the entertainment newspaper in Shanghai – and in particular its interpretation of the world as entertainment – offered an alternative point of view to that of the big dailies. Instead of situating China in a power relationship vis-a-vis the West, it presented the relationship as a compatible and even a playful one. During a time when Chinese intellectual elites were busily engaged in the construction of a national consciousness, and a national state in an effort at political Westernization, the entertainment newspapers brought the global into the lives of the new urban middle classes through the backdoor. As a force in the Chinese public sphere, the entertainment newspapers thus offered their readers an alternative perspective on the world. This alternative was by no means passive. In presenting and interpreting the world as a new earthly paradise, it became a force in myth-making from which a new set of imaginations were generated. In so doing, it made the world imaginable and desirable for the common people. Within this new and playfully globalized environment, an alternative scenario of a world order and a social order was played out. As I have tried to show from the example of the *dan*, such playful scenarios can have real social consequences.

The entertainment newspapers in general and the entertainment park newspapers in particular were by no means uniform. Although they resembled one and another in essential ways, they represented competing paradises. As the entertainment papers became increasingly more specialized – an example are the entertainment park papers – they each tried to create a particular profile that would mark their specialty. All these papers, however, shared and bolstered a collective identity that separated them from the big dailies. This identity was their leeway and their freedom. They could present the world as entertainment without open confrontation and without objections either from Chinese officials or foreign embassies. They could suspend the hierarchy of the normative social order without giving offence. They gained the license for an alternative and potentially subversive reading of the world by collectively insisting on not adopting the position of representing the "actual." In the collective identity of the *xiaobao* tabloids, the world as entertainment formed the core. It represented both the special characteristic of the genre as it was introduced to China from the West, and still showed its roots in the earlier literary journals and pictorials. Where they competed is in their specializations.

Stimulated by the culture and political environment of the Shanghai Foreign Settlements, the Shanghai entertainment newspapers set out to explore the market of print entertainment. In the process, they helped invent, define and structure a new kind of urban leisure. For the price of a mere two cents for a copy of *The Eden,* the reader was able to enter a variety of simulated worlds and was given the chance to go beyond the narrow confines of his or her life – without even leaving home. The public world was brought into this private realm, where it created a space for

a different order of things to be grasped, where the mighty bends low to entertain the commoner and the lowly might rise to become a star.

In the eyes of the modernizing elites of all hues, the amusement parks and their papers were part of the problem, not of the solution. While the writers for the papers studied here had certainly a readership many times that of the progressives with their tiny print runs, these entertainment writers were unable to provide the pursuit of innocent urban leisure with the intellectual and ideological clout necessary to justify it as one way to China's developing a "civilized" modernity. While their emphasis on "civilized" leisure is strong, it remained defensive. In the long run, the political progressives and their parties alone dominated the national agenda and delegitimized urban entertainment as bourgeois or unpatriotic decadence.

Chapter 6
The Art of Cosmopolitanism: Visual Potentialities in Ma Jun, Tomokazu Matsuyama, David Diao, and Patty Chang

Alexandra Chang

Since the creation of chinoiserie for export, or as developed in Europe for the European mass market as early as in the sixteenth century, an idea of blending and mixing within an overlapping cosmopolitan space has mingled with elements of power asymmetries connected with the notions of the popular imagination, the art object, and the everyday. The contemporary artists Ma Jun, Tomokazu Matsuyama, David Diao, and Patty Chang each in their own way have harnessed this concept of chinoiserie and switched the power function into a consciously appropriated scaffolding for their work.

In the recent past, artists have increasingly traveled between Asia and Europe, following examples of early and mid-twentieth century artists who moved between Asia, U.S. and Europe as international elites, such as often-cited artists Yun Gee and Isamu Noguchi. However, with the increasing ease of international travel and bi-continental lives, contemporary artists are able to sustain active communities with constantly renewed flows between Asia and Europe, such as Tomokazu Matsuyama, who travels between Tokyo and New York several times a year, or Patty Chang, who is able to travel on a fellowship for her projects or by individual choice.

Recently semi-virtual artist groups have formed that come together to the same locale to participate in their collaborative arts projects, but whose members live in separate countries. For example, the artist collectives Barnstormers and the New Grand Tour artists each have established communities in New York and Tokyo; and New York, Hong Kong, and Australia respectively. The New Grand Tour artists emphasize that now low fares allow more artists to travel, redefining the Grand Tour, which used to be common to European aristocrats in the seventeenth century as a part of their education. The Hong Kong-New York artist collective Tomato Grey utilizes Skype conferences to meet. The collective also interestingly emphasises localism as central to its mission and its diasporic collectivity, with its artists citing the former British territory's collective post-colonial histories that set it apart from the wider Chinese diasporic network.

However, unlike Matsuyama, Chang and these international artist collectives, many diasporic artists were unwitting participants in forced migrations, such as

C. Brosius and R. Wenzlhuemer (eds.), *Transcultural Turbulences*,
Transcultural Research – Heidelberg Studies on Asia and Europe in a Global Context,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-642-18393-5_6, © Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg 2011

David Diao, whose family was torn apart by the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Others remained in one place, such as China-based Ma Jun, while the asymmetries of the flow of images invaded and became a part of his everyday life. In a double play of the flows of imagery, each of these artists' works are once again shown around and seen throughout the world as reconfigured art objects by their art dealers in the international art market.

For each of the four artists, the flows of imagery between Asia, the U.S. and Europe serve as a marker of difference and the marker of connection. It is the collective recognition of the cultural signifier in different contexts that draws power to their works. While diasporic space is nebulous, constantly in flux and creating cultural overlaps and collisions—allowing for the movement of people and images—it is not a nomadic internationalism, but one in which place becomes central to the readings of the artist's intention and viewer reception. Cultural signifiers become enhanced through the context in which they are found. The imagery, when shown in one space takes on a significance when in another setting, the significance is read in another light. The artists in this essay consciously utilize instances of wandering cultural signifiers and historical contexts in their works.

In keeping with Wolfgang Welsch's concept of transculturality, it is the individual on the micro-level that has become the locus for multiple networks of cultural connections.[1] As artists, their works and selves inhabit the transcultural cosmopolitan space between urban sites in Asia, the U.S. and Europe: Ma Jun, Tomokazu Matsuyama, David Diao and Patty Chang each utilize an amalgam of Western and Asian icons and images, from consumer design and art historical icons to medium, in their work. Their artwork provides a space to explore the overlaps and cultural collisions of Asian and Western aesthetics and iconographies through medium and potential visualities. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, this paper draws on both a formal analysis of the artists' works, the individual details of the artists' lives, as well as the broader historical context and cultural discourse and visual cultures in which these four artists found themselves creating, shown and critiqued.

Ma Jun—Twenty-First Century Chinoiserie

Whether in *famille verte*, blue and white, or a Qing-style technicolor red, green and gold porcelain, in the world of Chinese sculptor Ma Jun's *New China Series* (2005–2007), Qing dynasty-style chinaware is handcrafted, mass-produced, and takes the form of 1980s era TVs, boom boxes, radios, sports cars, Coca-Cola cans and Chanel perfume bottles. His sculptures were presented in the U.S. and in an international setting for the first time at the Scope art fair in New York City in 2007.

[1]Welsch, Wolfgang. "Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today." In *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*. Eds. Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash. London: Sage. 1999. 194–213.

He has since been shown at Scope Miami, Art Basel, and the Asian Contemporary Art Fair in New York in 2008, and is represented at Krampf Gallery and Lothar Albrecht galleries in New York and Frankfurt.

His work *Television* (2005) is created in a traditional blue and white, and tinged with a cracklature effect in the glaze, 'antiquing' the china. On the screens of this box-y, 1980s-style TV-screen, Ma paints scenes of traditional mythologies and classical stories of what the artist calls 'peace, happiness or beautiful wishes', or the 'social ideals of ancient Chinese people'. In this case, the image portrays a monk atop a mountain surrounded by whirling clouds and a mountainous landscape. On his *Coca-Cola bottles I* (2006), Ma also utilizes blue and white and cracklature (Fig. 6.1).

Each of Ma's sculptures is covered in a replication of traditional Qing flower patterns, birds, dragons, phoenixes, clouds and scenes. Instead of referencing modern brand signage, the artist instead imprints the pieces with maker's marks that denote their imagined 'official' ancestral origins during the height of Qing dynasty rule under such emperors as Qian Long and Kang Xi. For Ma, his allusions to the dynastic past call attention to a rich cultural and historical tradition. The shapes of the sculptures are instantly recognizable from popular brands and items that have become visually branded into the country's subconscious—the new objects or narratives of the country's foundational mythology. By using the

Fig. 6.1 Ma Jun. *New China Series, TV*, 2007. Porcelain, 38 × 27 × 25 cm. (©) Ma JUN and courtesy L.A. Galerie Lothar Albrecht, Frankfurt, Germany

everyday objects of his childhood and combining them with this decorative style, he retains the notion of a pop-cultural reference to the quotidian sublime, yet suggests an imagined bridge between the nation's and a personal cultural past and their intersecting futures.

Ma's reconfiguration of the order of things, this clash of time and the resulting amalgam of polarities of pop and traditional culture, stems from the artist's own nostalgic longing for China 'once upon a time.' Although cheerfully colorful, even humorous at times, and highly decorative in their painted detail, Ma's works vigorously confront the viewer. They are lavish sculptural displays showing the artist's sense of a progressive dissipation and displacement in the country's cultural history. The sculptures are informed by this sense of Chinese everyday life thrown into constant motion by the seemingly chaotic whirl of internationalism and consumerism that has been flowing in and out of the country since the Chinese Economic Reform of the 1980s.

With the Coca-Cola brand so much a marker of the West, other Chinese artists, such as Zhang Hongtu and Ai Weiwei, have also used this symbol in combination with Chinese traditional ceramics. Ai's *Han Dynasty Urn with Coca-Cola Logo* (1994) is a well-known example. However, Ai's concept differs in that the urn and the logo are not fused together as one seamless object, but can be seen two ways: with the logo as an act of violent defacement on the urn, or with the logo as artistic Westernized graffiti on the urn of mainstream tradition. The hand of the artist is very much present and emphasized. For Ma, however, his work also combines design and concept with a preciousness rather than violence about the work, and a conscious attempt to avoid direct commentary.

Zhang Hongtu, on the other hand, references his Asian-American diasporic experience within his piece *Kekou-Kele* (2002), a blue and white ceramic coke bottle, as well as *Mai Dang Lao* (2002), a bronze fast-food hamburger box and utensils. Both titles play on the pronunciation of the two brands, 'Coca-Cola' and 'McDonald's in Chinese. On the surface, the pieces may appear to veer closely in concept to that of Ma's work. Both artists' works stem from transcultural lives. They both also underline the asymmetries of socio-economic change in China with the flow of brand images seeping into China's everyday. However, Zhang's work comes from a history of works in which he fuses together his experience as an artist living within two cultures simultaneously, rather than underlining the urgency of nostalgic longing as Ma does. Unlike Zhang, who has been living in the U.S. since 1982, Ma sets out from a different point of departure. Like Ma's 'New China Series', the bottle marks Zhang's interest in the infusion and intermixing of Western lifestyle and global consumer culture into and within China. Unlike Zhang, Ma's intent is additionally admixed with an urge to maintain a so-called traditional, historical, and cultural base (Figs. 6.2 and 6.3).

After working in various mediums including bronze, metal, glass and paper pulp, in 2005, Ma visited Jingdezhen, known for its porcelain since the Han dynasty, and found in its craftsmanship and lifestyle the inspiration for his 'New China Series'. Each of his works is crafted from clay set from molds made in the forms of TV sets, lipstick, perfume, or other iconic vintage 1980s items from an era of conspicuous

Fig. 6.2 Ma Jun. *New China Series, Coca Cola Bottles*, 2007. Porcelain, 30 × 50 × 50 cm (square of 50 × 50 cm for the wooden box). (c) Ma JUN and courtesy L.A. Galerie Lothar Albrecht, Frankfurt, Germany

Fig. 6.3 Ma Jun. *New China Series, Coca Cola Tins*, 2007. Porcelain, 30 × 50 × 50 cm (square of 50 × 50 cm for the wooden box). (c) Ma JUN and courtesy L.A. Galerie Lothar Albrecht, Frankfurt, Germany

consumption. Finally, Ma 'antiques' the pieces through a process that includes imparting a cracklature.

On yet another plane, Ma's sculptures go beyond the clash of East and West or symbolic use of medium. The work of Marcel Duchamp was an early influence on the artist, and Ma uses the very same space-time coordinates of his pieces to affect the impact of his work, which is invariably ever-changing. He is quite aware that his work takes on a different perspective when situated amid an art fair, thousands of miles away in New York City or Germany, than when it sits perched within his studio. Thus, the piece is read with a multiplicity of possibilities. Outside of China, the medium itself becomes exotic and foreign. Inside China, the pieces speak of a daily clash between recognizable tradition and rapid, everyday modernization. Yet in the West, too, there remains something familiar—the Western 1980s culture of extravagance that is also undergoing retro-nostalgia in the popular culture. However, the perspective is altered, as rather than as in Ma's case, nostalgia is produced from a vantage point of a fundamental longing for memories of a childhood in the

U.S. or Europe, rather than of growing up in one's home country undergoing an infiltration of Western wares goods and ideals.

With a constantly developing international consumer culture, along with tourism and travel, the move of certain urban settings into the cosmopolitanism of global centers like Shanghai, Beijing, New York and Tokyo seems inevitable. Along with this comes a constant flow of energy, thought, goods, services, and the people and multimedia technologies that carry them back and forth. As a result, a chaotic ether of cultural histories is generated that threatens to slowly lose its boundaries and shift its meaning as it crosses from one border into the next. A Chanel bottle is brought to China and becomes an organic part of what modern China recognizes as its own. It becomes part of the daily cosmopolitan intermixing with another life. Like chinoiserie centuries ago, the work is created from the imagination of a place or the foundational myth of nation that no longer exists. However, unlike chinoiserie of old, Ma's work embodies a possessing of power through his appropriation of the form.

The medium of china in turn brings with it an obvious symbolism imbued with place, orientalism and history. Similar to Ma's works, traditional Qing dynasty Chinese ceramics were commodified and made specifically for the European market in the form of chinoiserie with multiple colored landscape and figurative scenes. The owner of L.A. Gallery, Lothar Albrecht, notes that while Ma's works sell well in both China and Europe, his collectors are more concentrated in Europe.[2] This seems to be echoed in New York art dealer Regis Krampf's comment on Ma's work: 'What's more exotic to a foreigner's eye than Chinese porcelain? If that sculpture can also play with subject matters that are familiar to us, you have a hit.'[3]

For Ma's work, he explains that no one specific time in history or one specific dynasty's works is more important within the overall reading of his pieces, underlining an idea of a history that is recalled beyond a linear narrative. It is the imagined, yet still very real past of a country or group of individuals—the core comparative past of one generation of Chinese to the next. It is the slowly-fading notion of tradition, of a culture, though it is always shifting and changing in the way it is read and understood. Ma's works situate and re-situate themselves within a whirlwind of international interest in Chinese art that has gained momentum since the early 1990s, and the burgeoning of global urban centers with their cosmopolitan intermixing of slowly-blurring cultures and traditions within everyday life.

Ma does not criticize this inevitability, but perhaps its consuming totality; if only elements of a traditional China could remain. Yet 'traditional' China had always been evolving, though perhaps not at such a fast rate. Ma states: 'I'm just raising the question: While our lifestyle is changed by these products, what will our future be like? Will China, the country that appreciates china so much, lose its own aesthetics in china?'[4]

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[2]Albrecht, Lothar. Interview by the author, March 2010, New York, NY, audio recording.

[3]Chang, Alexandra. "The Future of China: Ma Jun." *Wynwood Magazine,* February 2008.

[4]Chang, Alexandra. "The Future of China: Ma Jun." *Wynwood Magazine,* February 2008.

Tomokazu Matsuyama—A Reflexive Japonisme

Wrestling at the center of Tomokazu Matsuyama's art is the notion of an über-culture which, like Ma Jun, is struggling with the apparent chaos of an increasingly cosmopolitan urban life. For artists like Matsuyama, who travel frequently between one metropolitan center and another, one local culture is brought to intermingle and reshape another experienced culture. In the worlds of his paintings, various icons of cultural meaning intersect as non-sensically, and yet remain as commonplace as a Coca-Cola bottle placed on a table in a sushi restaurant in the U.S. Through the use of randomized points of contact between wandering cultural signifiers, such as appropriated *ukiyo-e* prints and contemporary fabric patterns, the artist investigates the nebulous overlapping space of common polar dichotomies including design and art, East and West, contemporary and traditional, and order and chaos. And instead of individual elements of form and content, he finds an organic chaos in the nature of the everyday.

In Matsuyama's work *Kirin* (2006), the artist uproots the image of the mythological creature symbolizing 'prosperity' in Japanese culture and figures it amid an abstract white space, dripping in a brightly colored contemporary acrylic palette, with a fumbling character in modern Western garb trying to climb up on its back. The artist is well aware that the artwork is being viewed within an international art market context in which the original iconic cultural meaning of the *kirin* will be lost. Instead, with this piece as well as his newly spawned series of investigative paintings involving the icon, the artist questions this shift of meaning now reappropriated and rearing its mythic head in a layered patchwork international setting outside of its original culture (Fig. 6.4).

In his works *Unit* (2006) and *Shunger* (2006), the artist appropriates images that originate in Japan's Edo period *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints of beautiful women,

Fig. 6.4 Tomokazu Matsuyama. *Kirin*, 2006. 5 × 5 ft, acrylic on canvas. Courtesy of the artist

Bijin-Ga, as well as of the exquisite artistry of the spring pictures, *Shun-Ga*. These two pieces demonstrate Matsuyama's research into traditional woodblock prints and textiles. His interests stem from a childhood spent in the traditional city of Takayama, Japan, where these age-old industries still exist, and from his past as a graphic designer with an interest in contemporary patterns and colors. In *Shunger* the artist plays with modern polka dots and striped patterns paired with heaps of overflowing fabric and arms and legs, taken directly out of a combination of Utagawa Toyokuni's (1769–1825) works portraying highly emotive characters caught amid their sexual exploits. Matsuyama is able to re-situate the characters of an intimately entwined couple and a man bending backwards, and remix them into a contemporary international mélange of icons and patterns, thereby losing the original meaning of the piece and its sense of cultural belonging as a traditional Japanese erotic print. Instead, these objects are consciously inserted into the inter-textual world of contemporary conceptual art (Figs. 6.5 and 6.6).

The heightened awareness of randomized international overlaps and fluidity, as well as highly acute consciousness of his own contemporary art aesthetic resonate from Matsuyama's background as a graphic designer and his earlier works based in the urban subculture of street-influenced artwork.

Returning to the U.S., Matsuyama landed in New York City directly after 9/11, where the U.S. had declared a 'war on terror' and a focus on cultural difference was at its peak. Matsuyama decided to dub himself Matzu-MTP, hoping to produce questioning around his 'aka' identity. In the art market, his works were scrutinized and labeled as street-influenced or design. In his work *Minority* (2005), Matsuyama painted his alter ego as the Japanese icon of the goose, an animal traditionally featured as a side character rather than as the main subject of an artwork. His works increasingly strove to meld his Japanese and American influences in contemporary modern art, street, and design work.

Matsuyama also began to utilize an acrylic on heavy watercolor paper technique that combined controlled paint splatters and heavy solid painted areas.

Fig. 6.5 Tomokazu Matsuyama. *Shunger*, 2006. 20 × 28 in. acrylic on paper. Courtesy of the artist

Fig. 6.6 Tomokazu Matsuyama. *Unit*, 2006. 18 × 32 in. acrylic on paper. Courtesy of the artist

His technique reflects a conscious desire to mimic and combine the effect of traditional Japanese *tarashikomi* techniques used in early silk and paper watercolor painting, in which drops of paint are layered and intermingled with others while still wet. The result is his work from 2006 that reappropriates characters from traditional ukiyo-e prints, such as *Shunger*, *Kirin*, and *Unit*.[5]

Artists such as Matsuyama, who engage in travel between urban centers, maintain a free-flowing life within a set of multiple communities. Scholar and critic Hugh Kenner's lecture series and book titled *The Elsewhere Community* explains that it is through travel and coming face to face with the unknown, or 'elsewhere,' that the evolution of art and the self is enabled.[6] Attempting to conceptualize Matsuyama's patchwork world of segmented communities of exchange, an expanded view of Kenner's "elsewhere community" may allow for an ongoing connectivity of exchange where the artist serves as nexus. Welsch's concept of transculturality is useful to expand this idea. As Welsch maintains:

> The transcultural webs are, in short, woven with different threads, and in different manner. Therefore, on the level of transculturality, a high degree of cultural manifoldness results again—it is certainly no smaller than that which was found between traditional single cultures. It's just that now the differences no longer come about through a juxtaposition of clearly delineated cultures (like in a mosaic), but result between transcultural networks, which have some things in common while differing in others, showing overlaps and

[5]Chang, Alexandra. "Tomokazu Matsuyama: An Organic Cosmopolitanism." in *Tomokazu Matsuyama*. *Found Modern Library*, Gingko Press, 2008.

[6]Kenner, Hugh. *The Elsewhere Community*. Ontario: House of Ananasi Press, Limited, 1998, 87.

> distinctions at the same time. The mechanics of differentiation has become more complex—but it has also become genuinely cultural for the very first time, no longer complying with geographical or national stipulations, but following pure cultural interchange processes.[7]

Transculturality becomes an avenue in which not only influence, thought, and artistic exchange are enabled and brought back to one's own community through interactions with an 'elsewhere,' but rather than such a static form in terms of circumscribed memories, an active intermeshing of urbanisms is created—investigating this idea of a maintained borderless connection now possible through the internet and frequency of travel.

Further emphasizing the importance of place, scholar Margo Machida points out that the cosmopolitan space of these artists is not a floating one. It is grounded in localism and in the communities where the artists find their multiple places in differing, mixing and interconnecting visual cultures.[8] And for each of these artists there remains the significance of their backgrounds, notions of home, and importance of place—despite the idea of living in an in-between space, as can be seen in the works and iconography of both Ma Jun and Matsuyama. With this idea of creating the home wherever one travels, their itinerant life is in fact grounded in localism, in places traveled and associations around particularities of place and urbanisms—perhaps even offering the notion that the artist as nomad is in fact a theoretical rather than an empirical state of being.

David Diao—Art Historical Place

Diao is an artist from China who grew up in British colonial Hong Kong under the influence of the protestant Lutheran mission. After moving to the U.S., he found himself imbued by and working under the Bible of Abstract Modernism in New York City. Diao's works have been shown in mainstream galleries such as Leo Castelli and Postmasters, and he was one of the first artists represented by Paula Cooper. He lives in and was very much a part of the downtown loft art scene, yet found himself an outsider to the Asian American art movement during the time of heightened multicultural dialogue and backlash in the late 1980s and early 1990s. His work grew to co-opt the art historical icons of the Western art historical lexicon—the very art historical personae of Richter and Rodchenko, the legacy of a Modern art ontology of Alfred H. Barr, and the icons of Bauhaus and Western

[7]Welsch, Wolfgang. "Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today." In *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*. Eds. Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash. London: Sage. 1999. 194–213.

[8]Machida, Margo. *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008, 197.

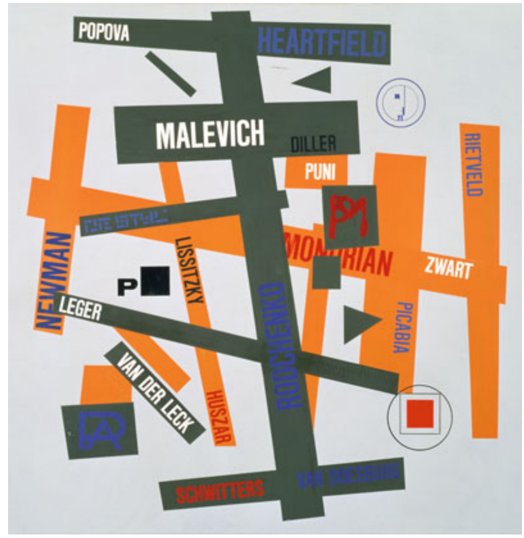

Fig. 6.7 David Diao. *Tree*, 1998. Acrylic on Canvas 84 × 84 in. (213 × 213 cm). Collection: Cherng Piin Gallery, Taipei. Courtesy of the artist

Modernist architectures. Diao utilizes these references as a play with international standards and measures of visual art and design, and in turn investigates his status as both included in this realm and yet excluded as an artist from China/Hong Kong living and showing in the West and the international art market (Fig. 6.7).

Diao began to work as an artist in New York City in the 1960s, and later taught for three decades at the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program. His early acceptance by the mainstream New York art world proved to be a double-edged sword, generating a certain degree of ethnic ressentiment.

As an Asian American artist, Diao, now looking back, admits to the need to conceal his ‘Asian-ness’ in relation to his earlier work as a purist of Modernist Abstraction. Diao, then enmeshed in Greenbergian formalism, remembers clearly the comments by art critic Robert Pincus-Witten in a review in *Artforum* that underlined his use of certain colors as specifically Asian, linking them to the beige tones of traditionally painted screens. In reaction, Diao altered his color palette to a vibrant color scheme, feeling the need to underline his commitment to abstraction as such, untainted by essentialist claims of ethnicity.

During the 1980s, Diao picked up the post-modern, deconstructionist turn in his work, acknowledging the art historical influence of Bauhaus, De Stijl, and the Russian avant-garde. Diao’s work *Barr Talk* serves as a mechanism that invites the viewer to re-read Alfred Barr’s well-known mapping of Abstract art from 1890 to 1935. The artist transforms the chart into a critical deconstructionist comment on the artificial constructions of the art historical timeline.

In the early 1990s, Diao began to investigate metonymic possibilities of self within his works with a bold step out of the concealment of abstraction. With *Carton d’invitation* and other fake invitations and posters from seminal mainstream museums, Diao is critiquing the mainstream art world and its boundaries of

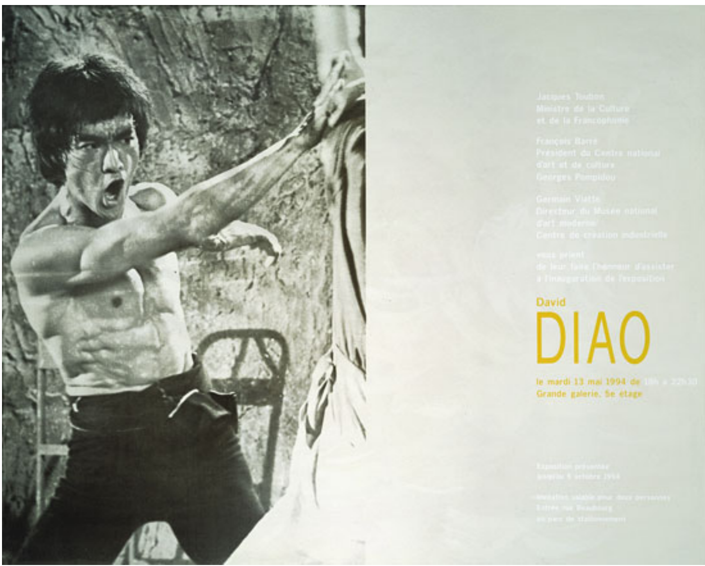

Fig. 6.8 David Diao. *Carton d'Invitation*, 1994. Acrylic, silkscreen and vinyl on canvas 76 × 96 in. (193 × 244 cm). Courtesy of the artist

acceptance by countering its positioning of his self as Other. In these works, Diao presents the viewer with his Asian American name 'David Diao.'[9]

In *Twin Dragons*, Diao reuses the silkscreened image of Bruce Lee from *Carton d'invitation* citing the gesture of Lee's punch as similar to an artist's gesture when painting. At the other end of the painting, he juxtaposes the silkscreened image of a famous photo of Jackson Pollock at work in his studio. In the center, the two images overlap. Could this overlapped space be the conceptual space in which we are to understand Diao's state of suspension between cultural projection and actual self? (Figs. 6.8 and 6.9). In the painting *Dancing,* Diao plays dress up as Matisse, an icon of Western art history. He foregrounds his own image in the canvas, taking over the role of the artist, while the specter of Matisse's work haunts the background.

In *Looking*, Diao imitates a famous photo of Barnett Newman looking at his work, which is placed side-by-side with Diao standing in front of his own work, in this case a chronological graph-like charting of his own artistic career. Diao's self-reflection and Western art historical structures contaminate one another and interweave within the painting.

Diao's 2005 exhibition 'Demolished/At Risk' included his photo of *Mies Van der Rohe's Spoor-Tugendhat House* (2004). The image of the 1930s home located in Brno in the Czech Republic is marked with a yellow spray paint streak where the

[9]Chang, Alexandra, "Rethinking Conceptual Space: David Diao/Gang Zhao at Mid-Career." *David Diao/Gang Zhao*. New York: Asian American Arts Centre, pp. 5–11.

Fig. 6.9 David Diao. *Twin Dragons*, 2000. Acrylic and silkscreen on canvas, three panels overall 72 × 156 in. (183 × 396 cm). Courtesy of the artist

artist admitted to having taken a 'leak' when he couldn't find a bathroom nearby. The spray is a violence to the house, yet it is also seen as the artist's work, his mark. Similarly in his piece *Sitting in the Glass House* (2003), Diao silkscreened a photo of himself inside the Philip Johnson Glass House, occupying the iconic space with everyday ease. Instead of being seen from the margins, in this instance he is seen as an equal, inserted into the space. While it may be argued that the artist's very act of inserting himself into such representations of Western cultural signifiers re-inscribe the artist's own subject position within this asymmetrical power function, the visual acts of ownership flips this function in turn.

Diao's latest series, 'Da Hen Li House Cycle' (2008–2009), serves as an interesting departure for the artist. The 'Da Hen Li House Cycle' references the artist's home in Chengdu, China. This is the first reference Diao has made to his own history and family in his oeuvre. The cycle is fixed around the image of the tennis court, which serves the artist as the only accurately measurable space in his memory of a home that has since been destroyed. The tennis court also became a new marker of colonialism for the artist, who was born in China and moved to Hong Kong due to the Communist Revolution before settling in New York during his teens. In New York, Diao attended a Lutheran high school and played on the tennis team. There, he was often marked as an outsider and remembers that his schoolmates once placed a yellow star of David in his room as a racist act, calling him a 'Chink Jew.' The tennis court motif also holds another significance for the artist, who had a complicated relationship with his domineering father who insisted that he learnt the sport, and also who died on a tennis court later in life (Fig. 6.10).

The motif of the tennis court also continues in his new work titled 'Family Resemblance,' which the artist takes from Wittgenstein. Renamed from the initial title 'Colonial Games,' in this series of works, the artist comes to terms with his past. The artist purposefully references Robert Motherwell's series of *open* paintings in these works, where rectangular courts of differing sizes overlap and

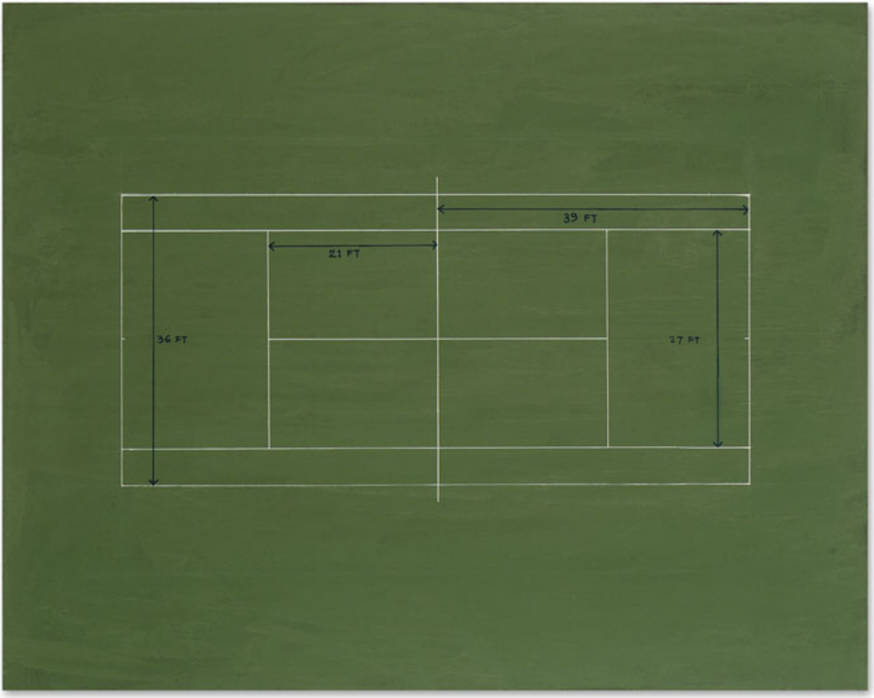

Fig. 6.10 David Diao. *Standard Measurement for Tennis Court*, 2007. Oil and vinyl on canvas 28 × 36 in. (73 × 91.5 cm). Courtesy of the artist

mimic the rectangular shapes of stacked paintings. In one piece altered from the original work included in the 'Da Hen Li House Cycle', instead of draping a Chinese flag over the tennis court, the artist changed the flag to one painted in white, which means both 'death' in Chinese and 'surrender' in the West. [10]

Patty Chang: Reframing

A second generation Chinese American artist born after the 1970s, Chang did not engage in the identity politics of the generation before her and instead finds herself, like Diao, included yet a cultural outsider of the dialogue. Chang studied performance under Eleanor Anton at the University of California at San Diego after deciding her studio art courses were not reflecting her goals. The range of Chang's work extends from performance to video work involving herself as subject, to more recent works in which she investigates her own role as off-screen auteur.

[10]Diao, David. Interview by the author, August 2009, New York, NY, audio recording.

The artist's video style is influenced by her work in the internet porn industry for 3 years starting in 1996, which paralleled the burgeoning of her earlier career in New York City. Chang served as both subject as well as director in the live interactive encounters during this time. She could frame and adjust the view of herself so that while a cropped image of a body part was being viewed online, she could also be reading a book outside of the frame. The resulting imagined image seen by the viewer was in fact far from the whole reality. She observed about the process: 'It's super intimate, but it's also very, very distant. I think that is a quality of film that I am interested in because film is very much about eliciting empathetic reactions from people, but at the same time it's completely about distance because the medium separates you from a "live"-ness.'[11]

In her earlier pieces, including *Bath, Fountain* and *Contorsion*, Chang utilizes the camera to film herself with very controlled framing. She only allows us to see what she wishes. In the work *Fountain* and using her bare body in *Bath*, she frames herself in the intimate and everyday setting of the bathroom. Yet in these works she sets the viewer askew with disorientating illusions of herself drinking water from the ground and angled reflections produced by mirrors. In *Contorsion*, Chang brings humor into her work in which she purposefully references Chinese contortionists, drawing from these acrobats the embedded notions of fantasy, stereotype and awe of the body of the *other*. Instead, Chang appropriates the subject of the contortionist and subverts the image through the amusing use of another person's legs resting on her shoulders. It is a ploy, but one which delivers an underlining accusation of assumptions and gives voice to the objectified body (Figs. 6.11–6.13).

In her 2009 work *The Product Love,* created while living in the U.S., Berlin and China, Chang stages the historic moment recreated as a porno film of the collision of two iconic greats representing East and West. Her work focuses on Anna May Wong, the idealized embodiment of a Hollywoodian East, and her meeting with

Fig. 6.11 Patty Chang. *Bath*, 2000. C-print dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist

[11]Chang, Patty. Interview by the author. September 1, 2009, Brooklyn, NY, audio recording.

Fig. 6.12 Patty Chang. *Fountain*, 1999. Video still. Courtesy of the artist

Fig. 6.13 Patty Chang. *Contortion*, 2001. 40 × 60 in. digital c-print. Courtesy of the artist

Walter Benjamin and his subsequent narrative of their encounter in the magazine *Die Welt*. Still probing images of the West and East, she is concerned with created realities and concepts of East and West. She also comments on the created image as such, mistranslation, and the role of the artist as self-aware auteur that stems from her experience of self-direction in the porn industry earlier in her career (Figs. 6.14 and 6.15).

On one channel of the video, the artist films scholars translating the *Die Welt* passage, each translating the passage differently. Another channel shows the behind-the-scenes footage of the creation of a porn film depicting the encounter of Anna May Wong and Walter Benjamin, played by two Chinese actors. Implied in the use of the porn medium are notions of intimacy as well as the erotic imagination, yet actual understanding and communication are blurred by the assumed

Fig. 6.14 Patty Chang. *The Product Love*, 2009. Two-channel digital video installation (running time: 42 min). Photo: Courtesy of Mary Boone Gallery, New York

Fig. 6.15 Patty Chang. *The Product Love*, 2009. Two-channel digital video installation (running time: 42 min). Photo: Courtesy of Mary Boone Gallery, New York

illusion of the medium. The question remains: What are we in fact seeing? Chang has framed the film through her own artwork, thus reinserting herself into the film, yet on another level, she is sharing control with the Chinese directors she hired to direct the porn film with whom she found it difficult to explain what she had hoped to create.

Chang had also hoped to see footage of Anna May Wong's films in German, especially 'The Flame of Love' (1930), which Wong had recorded in French,

English, and German. However, the archival footage remained elusive. In *The Product Love,* Chang searches for something similar which remains out of reach, and thus unable in its final state to be controlled or completed. The artist explained that the encounter between Wong and Benjamin occurred as a historical fact, but the final documentation in *Die Welt* was only that of Benjamin's story with Wong's voice absent. Chang questions this meeting of icons and cultures, and she creates her own framing of the impossibility of understanding the meeting.

A Translocal Positionality

Chang, like each of the artists in this paper, uses a 'twist' or a repositioning of the self in relation to her work and the dominant visual narrative in which an amalgam of Western and Asian icons and images, from consumer design and art historical icons to medium, intermingle. Repositioning the self in order to invert the asymmetrical power function of alterity, many artists have chosen to utilize methods of reappropriation, creating such a 'twisting' of the power function by playing out the politics of positionality in their artwork. Yet like Chang, Diao, Matsuyama, and Ma, these artists are not overtly political in their work. Instead, the work examines subtleties of race, iconography, constructed mythologies, and the art historical narrative itself.

Each of these artists works and shows in internationalised metropolises—Tokyo, Beijing, New York City, Frankfurt, Berlin, among other cities—and are situated in urbanised transcultural spaces in which images flow through and intermingle. These flows of imagery become significant through the very porous translocal aspect of the movement of their work and selves. It is through the translocal reading of the image, whether transferred through diasporic flows or international cultural overlaps, that historical context and power play are fully realized through their works.

Within the notion of localisms that derives from their grounded transculturality contains a regressive pull toward defining a reinscribed cultural context that allows the reappropriated images to have such potency. What remains is a residue of the uneven power structures that contextually surround the images and media these artists use in their works. The very transcultural networks they find themselves inhabiting allows for their positioning as both the subject of historical asymmetries of power as well as the active countering of those asymmetries. It is through the artists' self-recognition of their positionality within a real life context of grounded localism and its specificities of power asymmetries that enable the reappropriation of loaded imagery and media with which these artists and their works gain agency.

Part III
Circulating Images

Chapter 7
Pictorial Encounter: Iconoclasm and Syncretism on India's Western Coast

Alexander Henn

Introduction

This essay deals with the violent campaign which Portuguese-Catholic forces launched against Hindu culture in India in the second half of the sixteenth century. The areas affected were part of the Estado da Índia or Portuguese colonial empire in Asia and were located, above all, on India's western coast.[1] The most severe damage was done in Goa, the headquarters of the Estado da Índia, and in Baçaim, Bombai, Damão and Chaul, that is, the Provincias do Norte or Northern Provinces. Driven by an old Judeo-Christian adversary against 'idolatry' or idol worship, the violent onslaught especially targeted images and icons of Hindu gods. Spared from this iconoclasm were solely images which Hindus managed to bring to safekeeping outside the Portuguese-controlled territories, where an emerging Hindu diaspora culture gave refuge to the 'escaped deities' in newly constructed temples (Axelrod and Fuerch 1996). Above all, the campaign did not simply aim at destroying Hindu monuments and images, but in an obviously strategic and carefully planned manner it systematically replaced Hindu monuments with Catholic churches, chapels, crosses and shrines. The effects of the campaign were devastating. In little more than two decades, most Hindu temples, shrines and images in the Portuguese-controlled territories were either destroyed or removed, and most Hindus who were not willing to convert to Christianity were expulsed or had fled the area.

Although aiming thus at the ruthless destruction of Hindu iconography and its replacement by Christian images, the campaign also triggered however an intriguing and unintended form of transculturalism, that is, the syncretistic fusion of Hindu and Catholic concepts and practices related to images. This curious effect emerged in particular from the fact that the attack reconfirmed rather than denied the theological supposition that religious images are invested with iconic power,

[1]Mailapur, the township of Madras (Chennai, Tamilnadu), where the Portuguese had built a church over the claimed grave of the Apostle St. Thomas, was another site affected by the campaign.

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and thereby added to the centuries-long ecclesiastical controversies and uncertainties regarding the meaning and legitimacy of the use of images in Christian practice. Moreover, it can be shown that it was again by the reference to religious images, monuments and their locations that many Indians remembered and in a ritualistic way kept alive the iconic significance of what Christian zealotry attempted to eradicate. Ironically, the policy of replacing Hindu by Christian images and monuments also effected this when, centuries later, Hinduism was revived in the territories that once had been or still were under Portuguese control, Hindu temples and shrines were rebuilt in close proximity to those Christian monuments which once were meant to replace them. More intriguingly even, ethnographic research shows that these unintended consequences of the iconoclastic campaign, the pictorial memory of the destroyed and the spatial cohabitation of Hindu and Catholic iconography are today especially prone to devotional practices pursued by Hindus and Catholics alike, which tend to cross and undermine the formal boundaries and doctrines that are meant to keep the two religious traditions apart.

My goal in this chapter is therefore twofold. With the help of historical and ethnographic research, I will show that the early modern Portuguese conquest and Catholic mission in Asia pursued a distinct and strategic aim with regard to religious iconography, that is, to destroy all Hindu images and replace them by Catholic images. Subjecting the case to an inspection informed by art history and semiotic theory, I shall however also reveal that, ironically, it was precisely the focus on images that undermined the rationale of the campaign and prepared the ground for a peculiar form of transcultural flow of concepts, media and motives between Hindu and Catholic cultures in those parts of India that once had been under Portuguese-Catholic control.

The Campaign

The campaign against Hindu culture was initiated by the incoming new governor of the Estado da Índia Martim Afonso de Sousa (in office 1542–1545), who arrived in Goa in 1541 together with Francis Xavier, the charismatic co-founder of the Jesuit order. Afonso de Sousa had come to India with a well-prepared plan, sanctioned by Portuguese King João III, to perform a *viagem do pagodes,* that is, a major attack on Hindu temples outside the Portuguese-controlled territories. The plan targeted, among other sites, the famous Tirumale-Tirupati temple complex in Andhra Pradesh which, in the sixteenth century, was an important religious and economic asset of the rulers of the kingdom of Vijayanagara in Central India (Subramanyam 2001). Although the audacious plan to attack Tirumale-Tirupati was eventually given up, because Afonso de Sousa had to concede the military superiority of Vijayanagara, there was nothing to prevent the new governor from directing violence against the Hindu temples within the Portuguese-controlled areas. The area first affected was the Ilhas de Goa, that is the islands of Chorão,

Divar, Jua and Tiswadi in the estuary of the Mandovi river, where the Portuguese-Catholic regime had built its capital and headquarters. The devastating effects soon became visible. From a visiting Italian Jesuit, Nicollo Lancilotto, we learn, that on his arrival in Goa in 1545, "there are no more temples in this island [sic; i.e. the Ilhas de Goa], but there remains an infinite number of Moors, Gentiles and bad Christians" (D'Costa 1962: 163). Although D'Costa can only refer to 'native sources' for his observation that the number of temples destroyed on the Ilhas de Goa amounted to 160 (D'Costa 1962: 163), archaeological findings indirectly support his assessment. The Ilhas de Goa, we learn, was not only the heartland of the Chalukya (600–700 CE), Śilāhāra (800–1000 CE) and Kādamba (1000–1400 CE) dynasties and the site of major historical cities such as Gopakapattana (modern Velha Goa, Tiswadi) (Mitragotri 1999). Archaeologist Gritli von Mitterwallner also confirms that "there must have . . . existed many temples [there]" (Mitterwallner 1983: 24).

The destruction of the temples of the Ilhas de Goa, it shows, was only the beginning. Viceroy and governor of India João de Castro (in office 1545–1548), acting on behalf of King João III (ruled 1521–1557), continued the campaign and extended it to include Bardez, Salcette and Baçaim. The sources also indicate that high clericals of the newly established Diocese of Goa, in particular João d'Albuquerque, the first bishop (in office 1538–1553), and Miguel Vaz, the vicar general (in office 1532–1547) (D'Costa 1962: 163), were actively involved in it. Moreover, there is evidence that the campaign was intensified. Hence, an order entitled 'Provision of Dom João de Castro to Tear Down the Temples on Order of the King' issued in 1550 reveals that the campaign against the *pagodes* now targeted not only Hindu temples, but—playing on the dual meaning of the term *pagode*, which could stand for 'temple' as well as 'idol' in early modern Portuguese (Subrahmanyam 2001: 42)—also ordered the destruction of Hindu idols and images. The provision further banned the celebration of Hindu feasts and rites and prohibited Hindus who had remained on the Ilhas de Goa from using the services of Brahmanical priests from the *terra firme*, that is, the adjacent mainland that was not under Portuguese control. Based on a letter from the king to the governor, the provision reads as follows:

> Dom João de Castro, friend. I, the King, send you many greetings. As you know, idolatry is such a big offense against God that I will not tolerate it to exist in these countries [India] that are under my Lordship and, because I have been informed that there exist in the Ilhas de Goa some idols, in public and in hiding, which have done such great harm to Our Lord . . ., I strongly recommend to You and order that from now on, . . ., You assert that there will not be any of the said idols, neither in public nor hidden, in the said Island of Goa and that no craftsmen can make them from stone, or wood, or copper, or any other metal. And likewise [I order] that in the entire Island there should be no Gentile festivals in public, nor should its inhabitants bring Brahman priests from the mainland; and [I] order that the houses of all Brahmins and Gentiles, which are suspected to have the said images, are searched, and the proper enactment of all these issues [orders] should be asserted by severe penalties...... (Wicki 1969: 162–164)

The provision was confirmed by João d'Albuquerque, the bishop, who acknowledges his duty to "destroy this very bad idolatry . . . in the countries of Your Lordship, the Islands [of Goa] and in Baçaim". He goes on to address Padre

Belchior Gonçalvez and the Jesuits proselytizing in Salcette, Simão Travaços, the Vicar General of Baçaim, and the Padres of the Franciscan Order who were active in Bardez, empowering and authorizing them to "destroy and tear down existing temples and temples under construction or repair, wherever they are found". All this, he adds, is part of our obligation to "extinguish the sect of Maphamede [Islam] and Gentilica [Hindu] and all that is opposing the faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ in my diocese" (Wicki 1969:164). The reconfirmation and repetition of these and similar orders and prohibitions during the rule of King Sebastião (ruling 1557–1578) and Governor Constantino de Braganca (in office 1558–1561) made the sixteenth century the period during which the Hindus of Goa and the Northern Provinces lost most of their temples, shrines and idols to ruthless iconoclastic violence.

Iconoclasm

When dealing with the question of what triggered the violent campaign and what were its motives, reference is usually made to its concurrency and connection with religious politics prevailing in contemporary continental Europe (Pearson 1967; De Souza 1990; Subrahmanyam 2001). More precisely, historians argue that the violence against Hindu culture was a direct result of the emerging conflict between the Protestant movement and the Catholic Church. Thus the events in India have been related to the elaborate Council of Trent which—spread-out over three papal pontificates and no less than 25 sessions held between 1545 and 1563 in Trento and Bologna in Italy—formulated the Catholic response to the Protestant Reformation. Commonly considered to have propagated a kind of Counter-Reformation, the council both mitigated and countered the Protestant challenge by redressing certain grievances of contemporary Catholicism and boosting its recovery, not the least by enforcing its overseas missions. This led in Goa to the council directly effecting three major events: the introduction of the Inquisition in 1560, which targeted 'Protestant heretics' and newly converted Christians suspected of 'relapsing into pagan practices', a series of *Concilios Provinciales* held between 1567 and 1606 which aimed to enhance the efficacy of the conversion process, and the notorious iconoclastic campaign against Hinduism. Francis Xavier, the celebrated 'Apostle of the East', is commonly held to have been the leading figure in the enforcement of the counter-reformative ideologies and policies in Asia.

As alluded to before, the controversies over pictorial representations were long pending within Christian circles and became a virulent issue once again in the emerging conflict between the Protestant Movement and the Catholic Church. Although Martin Luther (1483–1546) pursued only a moderate critique of the use of images in Christian practice, Humanists like Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536) and reformers like John Calvin (1509–1564) and Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531) attacked the images much more harshly. The Protestant revival of the image-debate eventually turned into a *Bildersturm* or wave of iconoclastic destruction in Catholic

churches and chapels in France, Holland, Germany and other European countries, which had its climax in the decade of the 1560s (Jedin 1935; Freedberg 1982). It is important, therefore, to highlight the concurrency of the iconoclastic violence in Europe and India, which means that, precisely at this time, when activists of the Protestant movement went out to destroy and deface Catholic images in central Europe, the agents of the Portuguese-Catholic colonial regime in India attacked and destroyed Hindu images in Goa and the Northern Provinces.

It is this striking concurrency of iconoclastic violence in Europe and India which underlines that the campaign in India was triggered by the revival of long-standing Judeo-Christian attitudes against religious images. More precisely, the campaign was directed against what Judeo-Christian theology despised as 'idolatry', that is the alleged worship of the divine through images. Clearly, this anti-image attitude was a policy by which the early Christian Church had set itself apart from classical Romans and Greeks to whom the worship of gods and goddesses represented by idols and images was common practice. The Judeo-Christian image-ban was thus constitutive for the Christian doctrine, something that is evidenced, among other things, in its prominent positioning as the first of the Christian Ten Commandments, which combines the monotheistic credo with the prohibition of the pictorial depiction of the divine:

> I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them (. . .) (The Bible 1991, Exodus 20:2–5)

It is noteworthy, however, that despite its centrality in the Christian doctrine, the image-ban was never uncontested, nor was there ever unclouded accord about its meaning among the various branches of Christianity. Instead, controversies over religious images variously caused outbreaks of iconoclastic violence and became part of sectarian wars between Christians. In particular they triggered the schism between the Eastern and the Western Churches in the eighth century. In the Western Church itself, the image-issue was sufficiently critical and complex to nurture centuries-long theological debates that discussed pictorial representations in the light of the singularity of divine creation, morals of decency regarding the body, the authenticity of natural forms, and the ways demons and the devil were suspected to act. As Michael Camille elaborates (1989), one source of the image-ban in the medieval ages was the assumption that, given the doctrine of the singularity of divine creation, human artifice imitating nature in images and sculptures amounted to blasphemy (Camille 1989: 33). Pictorial art was also despised for its capacity to "make what is not", as Saint Paul put it (Camille 1989: 37), and to show what was prohibited to look at. Hence, the depiction of forms and shapes not found in nature, such as Janus, the three-headed Roman god, and the depiction of nude bodies, such as Artemis, the Greek goddess, made the figures of the classical pantheon into epitomes of forbidden idols. Another serious reservation against pictorial representation was its alleged tendency to deception. Not only were images despised for

faking nature in the way we look down upon artificial flowers today (Camille 1989: 36). In particular three-dimensional sculptures were also considered dangerous simulacra and feared to be hidden sites of demons, fallen angels or the devil, something which allegedly capacitated them 'to come alive' and speak or act like living beings, thereby bewitching or possessing people. Theological debates over the legitimacy of images became more complex in the light of the neo-Platonic division of body and soul. Not only did this Christian epistemology, which had been a central issue at the Second Council of Nicaea in 780, privilege the spiritual and the word before the sensual and the image, prizing, in Augustine's terms, 'faith as the virtue, by which we believe what we do not see' (Camille 1989:13). The intricate question of whether or not the image was considered distinct from its prototype also became a crucial criterion for distinguishing believers from infidels. Thus, Christians claimed to distinguish the image from its prototype and only venerate what the image represents, while pagans where blamed for taking the image and its prototype as one and worshipping the image itself.

These and other issues of Christian representational theory and praxis became so significant in the early modern context, that for European Christians the notion of the 'idolater' became a generic synonym for 'pagan', respectively the Other in the contemporary colonial encounter in Asia, America and other parts of the world. In travelogues, chronicles, missionary letters and other writings dealing with India, the explicit description and defamation of 'idolatry' became a standard literary praxis. Notably, its description did not just despise the alleged worship of idols and images of gods and goddesses, but very often associated 'idolatry' with cruel and inhuman practices which, at latest since Nicòlo de Conti's travelogue (c.1385–1469), had become stereotypes in European writings about India. Thus, 'idolatry' was often related to religious festivals during which men allegedly pierced their bodies with metal hooks and swung themselves from high poles, or women were burned alive on the funeral pyres of their husbands, or people had their bodies crushed by the ceremonial chariots carrying idols of gods through the streets (Major 2005). Moreover, the stigmatization of alleged representational misbehavior also became a main subject of contemporary pictorial illustrations. Hence, early European images of 'Hindu deities' not only show, as Partha Mitter (1977) aptly put it, 'much maligned monsters', but also take evident pain in graphically depicting the 'sinful worship' that is dedicated to idols or images (Fig. 7.1).

Encounter

Notwithstanding the dire effects at its time, the early modern Christian zealotry could not prevent the revival of Hinduism in its territory in modern times. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the gradual political liberalization in Portugal and, eventually, the political independence of India and Goa allowed Hindus to resettle and build temples again in the areas that had been or still were under

Fig. 7.1 *Idol of Calicut*, illustration from *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema in Egypt, Syria, Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix, in Persia, India, and Ethiopia, A.D. 1503–1508*, cit. Mitter 1977:20

Portuguese-Catholic control.[2] More intriguingly, the modern revival of Hinduism reversed the rigidly monotheistic Christian culture of the early modern Portuguese-Catholic regime and prepared the ground for a remarkable religious pluralism and, in certain parts, even a syncretistic intersection of Hinduism and Catholicism in the area.

In order to account for this intriguing development, it is necessary to recall that religious images remained a controversial issue at the center of European Christianity. Should religious images be treated like symbols and their use thus be restricted to pedagogic purposes, in particular to the education of the illiterate, as had been suggested by Pope Gregory in the seventh century and was propagated again by early modern Protestant Reformers and Humanists? Or are religious images to be treated like icons that have a certain affinity to what they represent, and can thus be instrumental in the mediation of prayer and transfer of bliss, as most Catholic theologians argued? What exactly distinguishes worship from other forms of respect paid to images? How can the prototype of an image be distinguished from the image itself? These and other questions had been disputed among Christian theologians since medieval times and became critical issues again at the time of

[2] Bombai had become part of British India during the seventeenth century. The cities of Baçaim and Chaul were first conquered by Maratha forces and later, in the nineteenth century, also became part of the British Empire. All these territories gained political independence in 1947. Goa, Damão and Diu formed the territory that became the longest-held European colony on Indian soil, and was liberated from Portuguese rule by a military intervention of the Indian army only in 1961.

the Protestant Reformation. At the Council of Trent, a delegation of Catholic theologians from the highest-ranking universities in Europe tried to establish what appears today to be a hairsplitting distinction between *latria*, that is illegitimate worship of images, and *veneratio*, that is legitimate veneration of images. The distinction between the one and the other, it was argued, marked the difference between pagans and Christians (Jedin 1935:177).

> Is it likely that the countless men who went on pilgrimages to particular images, who sought aid from a favourite painting or sculpture, or who went to be healed by the miracle-working powers of a specific shrine made this kind of distinction? All the evidence suggests not (Freedberg 1982:139).

A Christian image from Goa (Fig. 7.2) indicates that not only the Catholic *plebs*, as Freedberg assumed, but also a good part of the Catholic clergy and other educated classes—including those who had set out to conquer Asia and convert its people to Christianity—did not make these distinction. Instead, they continued to invest religious images with iconic power, thereby blurring the division which theological doctrine and Protestant reformers attempted to draw between Christians and 'idolaters'. The picture shows a statue of St. Anthony, the Franciscan saint, in an unusual posture which, according to a local legend, emerged from a curious occurrence in the Goan village Siolim in the year 1600. It was at that time, the accompanying legend tells, that Franciscan missionaries had brought a statue of St. Anthony to the Konkan coast and started to build a church in the saint's name. While doing so, the monks however were repeatedly threatened and their work obstructed by a big snake which appeared and tore down over night what the workers had built during the day. This went on and on, the legend continues, till one day the pious workers, no longer knowing who to turn to for help, placed the statue of St. Anthony for the night in the worksite. Miraculously, next morning the

Fig. 7.2 *St. Anthony of Siolim* (Goa, Bardes), photograph Gabriele Henn

malicious snake was found dead, strangled by the statue of St. Anthony itself, and the construction of the church could be completed (D'Cruz 1994). Worth noting, today, is that there is nothing enigmatic about this image and story to the people of Siolim, Hindus as well as Catholics. To them, the snake is of course the Hindu god Vetal, a Konkan manifestation of the great Shiva, who quite regularly manifests himself as a snake and whose ancient temple was located at or nearby the site where today the church of St. Anthony stands. This is confirmed by archival documents vouching for the historical existence of *Vetalache tolli ani xet*, that is, the 'land and field of Vetal' near today's church (D'Cruz 1994: 6).

So the curious statue of St. Anthony of Siolim is not only an iconographic metaphor of the fact that European missionaries in the sixteenth century did destroy Hindu temples and icons in Goa and replace them with Catholic churches and images. The statue also marks an instance of the fact that the Christian iconoclasts themselves invested images with iconic power, if also paradoxically with the power to eradicate those demons which arguably lured 'idolaters' to believe in the power of images.[3] In more general terms, the Siolim case illustrates the well-known fact that although unintentionally, to some extent iconoclastic violence always acknowledges and reaffirms what it destroys. In Siolim, this curious effect is not only evinced by the fact that the Christian image manifests the 'pagan god' at the moment of his alleged eradication. The effect is also evinced by two notable social customs observed in the village today. One custom is that, next to Catholics, many Hindus of Siolim also pay homage to St. Anthony. Thus Hindus not only quite routinely visit the saint's shrine outside the church to pray and offer flowers. Some Hindu shopkeepers also display his image next to Hindu iconography in their shops. Hindu devotional gestures towards St Anthony are most intensive on the day of the saint's annual feast and during the local Zagor ceremonies, when the saint is jointly invoked and honored by Hindus and Catholics (Henn 2000: 84). The other custom is that Hindus of Siolim to this day remember and regularly visit the icon of Vetal, the ancient Hindu village god, which, at the time of the destruction of Siolim's major Hindu temple in the sixteenth century, had been evacuated to the village Palle (Bicholim) in Goa's hinterland. In fact, a local church chronicle of 1931 reports, although with open disdain, that, until recently, even some Catholics of Siolim followed the *incoerente costume* to accompany the Hindus visiting their former village god (Attaide Lobo 1931: 15).

Since the official church evidently considers pictorial allusions to Hindu gods in Christian iconography inappropriate, Siolim's St. Anthony marks a rare exception. Images of St. Michael-Killing-the-Dragon, which show the dragon with details known from early modern representations of Hindu gods, is the only other example

[3]It is again Michael Camille(1989: 122f) from whom we learn that there is an old Christian tradition, transmitted both textually and pictorially, that gives evidence to saints who by their prayer or mere presence make pagan idols tumble and fall apart. While this tradition can be seen as a model of St Anthony of Siolim, the Goan case is curious for the fact that here it is the saint's image itself which is said to have destroyed the 'pagan god'.

I can think of that can be found in former ‘Portuguese India’. This notwithstanding, local mythology and devotional practices dedicated to Catholic saints, shrines and crosses that do remind of Hindu divine or tutelary beings are frequent, above all in Goa. A prominent example is Our Lady of Miracles, the tutelary deity of the town of Mapuca in Goa. According to local legend, she is one of seven divine Hindu sisters. Six of these are identified as the goddesses Lahirai, Mahamai, Kelbai, Adipai, Morzai and Sita, all but the last of whom have temples in Goa. The seventh sister, Mirabai, is said to have converted to Christianity and became the Catholic patron saint of Mapuca. Not surprisingly, Our Lady of Miracles is regularly worshipped by Hindus and Catholics and receives the greatest veneration on the day of her annual feast in May. Interestingly, however, the devotional practices of the two communities, although performed side-by-side, do show a certain distinction. Thus, while Catholics offer candles, Hindus poor oil over the statue of the saint, thereby reminding of her former Hindu identity. Devotional offerings and practices devoted to Hindu gods or tutelary beings are found most frequently at aniconic Christian shrines and crosses. Generally, oil lamps, as opposed to candles, mark Hindu traditions, while offerings of green bangles indicate Hindu goddesses and offerings of betel leaves indicate Hindu gods or guardians associated with the Christian shrines or crosses.

More explicit hybrid expressions that can be related to the historical iconoclasm are found in what might be called Hindu-Catholic twin-shrines. Two variations of these twin-shrines are notable. One shows Hindu and Christian shrines in close spatial proximity. A notable example is given by the shrines of Our Lady of Vailankanni, a popular incorporation of the Catholic Mary, located back-to-back with a shrine of Shri Dev Bodgeshvar, a famous local tutelary god, in the market of Mapuca in Goa (Fig. 7.3). Another variation consists of single shrines housing icons

Fig. 7.3 *‘Twin-Shrine: Shri Dev Bodgeshvar and Our Lady of Vailankanni’*, Mapuca (Goa, Bardes), photograph Gabriele Henn

or images of both religious traditions. An example of this variation is a shrine once again of Our Lady of Vailankanni located at the central plaza of the city of Margao in Goa, which also displays an image of Damodar, the Hindu *gramadev* or local god of the city. The historical emergence of these twin-shrines is rooted in the circumstance, mentioned earlier, that the early modern iconoclasts did not just destroy Hindu temples and shrines, but replaced them with Christian monuments. This practice was not uncommon in contexts of political conquest at the time. Ottoman Muslims transformed the Christian Hagia Sophia in Constantinople into a mosque; Spanish re-conquistadores planted a Christian cathedral in the Moorish Mesquita of Cordoba; the king of Portugal made Lisbon's largest synagogue into a church. In Goa, though, the replacement of religious monuments assumed special proportions and arguably also received a different meaning from the fact that it did not just affect singular symbolic landmarks, but systematically replaced all Hindu temples, shrines, and idols with Christian chapels and crosses. Replicating thus the ancient local pattern for the spatial allocation of religious monuments, which basically privileged central and liminal locations, the Christian onslaught on Hindu iconography prepared the ground for a peculiar case of Hindu-Catholic cohabitation. For when Hindus in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries once again built temples and shrines in the areas that had formerly been or still were under Portuguese control, they again followed the old localistic patterns, so that today many Hindu and Catholic monuments are located in close proximity to one another and compete, so-to-speak, for one and the same spot. Quite naturally, the twin shrines are the object of syncretistic practices. People, Hindus and Catholics, as a rule, pay some kind of homage to both the Hindu and the Catholic sacred beings represented in the shrines. Motives for doing so may differ. The sacred beings may be honored for some known quality, such as healing power, or just because they are both associated with the same locality or space. Modes of syncretistic practices may also differ and range from elaborate prayers and offerings to minor gestures of acknowledgement. At some shrines, ritual practices are formalized, especially for outstanding occasions such as the annual feast day of the shrine. On such days, rituals are either jointly performed by selected Hindu and Catholic families who act as caretakers of the shrine, or Hindus and Catholics take turns in performing and financing the ceremonies.

Finally, another form of pictorial memory which reflects and, in a certain way, revises the results of the early modern iconoclastic violence against Hinduism should be noted. These are the memories and practices associated with those icons and images which Hindus managed to salvage from destruction in the sixteenth century by smuggling them out of Portuguese-controlled Goa. As Paul Axelrod and Michelle Fuerch have documented in their article *The Flight of the Deities* (1996), the particular commemorative power of these icons and images is based, above all, on two circumstances. One is marked by the fact that the icons and images where reinstalled in temples built outside the Portuguese-controlled areas. The exiled Hindus thus formed a 'Hindu diaspora culture' which literally encircled Portuguese Goa. Another important circumstance was that the Portuguese managed, through political negotiation with the weakened Muslim Adil Shah dynasty,

to enlarge their possessions in Goa in the eighteenth century, thereby incorporating the territories where the new temples for the 'escaped deities' had been built. Fortunately, though, political liberalization in Portugal and the political power of Hindus in India had grown sufficiently by that time to prevent the newly acquired territories, which henceforth became known as the Novas Conquistas or New Conquests of Goa, from being subjected to the same iconoclasm that once had struck the Hindu culture in the territories that had been conquered before, and henceforth came to be called the Velhas Conquistas or Old Conquests of Goa. As a consequence, the idols and images of the Hindu goddesses and gods salvaged from the Old Conquests and transported to the New Conquests became instrumental in keeping alive memories of the Hindu temples, traditions and genealogies which the Portuguese Catholic regime had destroyed or attempted at least to eradicate. In many villages, these commemorative functions are expressed today by local myths telling of the hideouts and secret removal of the images, as well as ritual activities connecting communities, deities and temples associated with the ancient and the new locations of the displaced deities. In some cases, the commemoration of pre-Portuguese Hindu culture and the circumstances of its survival in pictorial memories and practices is celebrated in grand style. Thus, Axelrod and Fuerch (1996) describe the annual ritual 'return' of the goddess Bhagvati from Marcel (Bicholim, New Conquest) to Chimbel (Tiswadi, Old Conquest), and of Shanta Durga from Fatorpa (Quepem, New Conquest) to Cunculim (Salcete, Old Conquest), two major festive 'pilgrimages' during which the once displaced goddesses are carried in solemn processions to their ancient homes. Once again it should be noted that the festivals not only commemorate the roots of the goddesses in the Old Conquests and their escape from Portuguese-Catholic iconoclasm, but also mark another outstanding instance of inter-religious communion, since in both cases the goddesses are venerated by Hindus and Catholics and their annual festivals are jointly celebrated by members of both religious communities.

Conclusion

Since the goal of the early modern iconoclastic attack on Hindu culture was to eradicate 'pagan idolatry', it is a notable irony that it was precisely religious iconography that became instrumental in undermining the establishment of Catholic hegemony in Portuguese-controlled India. Essential for this intriguing development were images that became the focus of cultural memories and ritual practices that transgress the boundaries and blur the practices which, according to doctrinal perspectives, divide the communities of Hindus and Catholics. Notably, this transgression or syncretism was and, to this day is facilitated by a number of different factors. The political significance of the images played a role, as did assumptions about their iconic power, in particular since both were enhanced rather than diminished by the violence directed towards them. The sacred beings associated

with the images and the memories of how they became the target of the iconoclastic attack became also important, thus enabling people to remember, for instance, Hindu gods even after they had been replaced by Catholic Saints. Finally, ritual activities and certain qualities of the images—as for instance the fact that they are regularly taken for ritual visits to other villages deities, or their capacity to embody and transfer healing power, or patterns of their localization in space—became crucial in predestining them to become objects of worship across doctrinal boundaries. Given the complexity of these theoretical perspectives—the historical trajectories and practical modalities which thus were and are involved in evoking the syncretistic practices—what is it that the ethno-historical case study can add to the recent theoretical reappraisal of the concept of syncretism in the humanities?

In order to answer this question, it is important to notice how leading scholars in the field locate the historical origins of the term 'syncretism'. Tracing the term from its rather unspecific use in classical Greek philosophy, Rosalind Shaw and Charles Stewart, in their seminal reader on *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism* (1994), pinpoint the emergence of the term syncretism to the period of religious wars and civil strife that accompanied and followed the Protestant Reformation in central Europe. More precisely, they name Humanist George Calixtus (1586–1656), as the leader of a circle of Protestant theologians who debated the possibilities for a doctrinal and ritual reconciliation of the diverse Protestant denominations in what was called the 'syncretistic controversies' (Shaw and Stewart 1994: 4). Peter van der Veer, who contributed a chapter to the same volume, relates the topic to the context of the post-colonial religious pluralism in India—which incidentally was shattered at the time of writing the essay by a wave of Hindu-Muslim communal riots—and traces syncretism in a similar way. He identifies the origins of the term in theological discourses at the time, when "Lord Herbert [1583–1648] produced a universal definition of religion"—something, as he adds a few lines further on, that challenged "the universality of the truth of the Church and of Christendom as the sacred community of believers [and gave] way to a plurality of religious truth and communities" (Van der Veer 1994: 197). Both scholars thus locate the origin and, by implication, the political rationale of the term syncretism in the period of Late Renaissance Europe, which was characterized not only by religious encounter, but also by the emergence of a plurality of religions. Van der Veer's elaboration of the subject in the Indian context and, incidentally other chapters of the volume dealing with Africa, South America, South and South-East Asia, expand the theme to include the discussion of religious encounter and religious pluralism in the post-colonial world. The book illustrates another common theoretical trend inasmuch as most of the contributors turn from theories related to theology and religious studies, which so far had dominated the subject, and discuss syncretism explicitly as political discourse and process. Importantly, the 'politics of religious synthesis' thus analyzed in the book are far from romanticized and, apart from the reconciliation of religious differences, also discuss anti-syncretistic politics and ideologies, political domination through syncretistic assimilation and, perhaps most intriguing, cases where people, seemingly

paradoxically, engage in syncretistic practices and, at the same time, reaffirm their religious or cultural identities vis-à-vis others.

Readdressing the ethno-historical situation from India against the backdrop of these current theoretical debates, an ambivalent picture emerges. On the one hand, there can be no doubt that the early modern Portuguese-Catholic onslaught on Hindu culture was part of a political encounter between what we perceive today as Hinduism and Christianity. In fact, borrowing a phrase used by Carmen Bernard and Serge Gruzinski (1988), the Portuguese-Catholic iconoclasm in India can be seen as a 'war of images', which attacked and replaced religious monuments and iconography in the first line as landmarks or embodiments of political power. Political power relations in a context of religious diversity also seem to be the *raison d'être* of what Axelrod and Fuerch describe as the subaltern 'culture of resistance' that opposed the Portuguese-Catholic hegemony, above all by syncretistic rituals and practices.

> Connections between Hindu and Catholic festivals—they write, and we should add here that theses were especially facilitated by practices revolving around religious images—demonstrate the complex relationships between the resistant Hindu culture in the Goan hinterland and the native Goan Catholic culture that developed in Portuguese-controlled territory (Axelrod and Fuerch 1996:393).

On the other hand, a change of perspective to early modern agents and circumstances reveals motives and conditions which arguably were not only not part of a self-conscious experience of religious diversity, let alone religious pluralism, but strictly speaking had not even to do with religion at all. More precisely, I argue that to the early modern perspective which, interestingly, resonates in the view of local practitioners to this day, the syncretistic practices gain their rationale and significance at levels which are both larger and smaller than what a modern perspective has come to perceive as an interaction between diverse world religions.[4] In order to appreciate this perspective it becomes necessary to recall that the early modern Portuguese-Catholic perpetrators of iconoclasm in India explicitly identified their targets as manifestations of the opposite or negation of what they called Our Holy Faith. In other words, to them the encounter was (still) not between two religions but between (Christianity as the only possible) Religion and paganism. Similarly, we need to remember that the early modern European

[4]The implicit argument that the concepts of 'religion' and 'world religion' have to be critically reflected in the scholarly and political context of their emergence has been elaborated in various ways. Jonathan Smith (1998) traces the notion of 'religion' as a rhetorical device of classifying the Other in the early-modern Spanish expansion in South America. Tomoko Masusawa (2005) argues that the 'invention' of the distinction of world religions served a number of political purposes that helped to sustain the Christian hegemony and European colonial supremacy in the world. Scholars of Indology have argued that the formation of Hinduism as a singular religion' was largely influenced by colonial forces and circumstances (Inden 1986).

dispute about the use of religious images in Christian practice, although couched in theological controversies between Protestants and Catholics, was not actually about theology, but about the Truth, that is, in modern parlance, about semiotic and epistemological issues. More precisely, the iconoclasm and dispute about religious images were part of what Michel Foucault describes in his *Les Mots et les Choses* (1966 [Engl. 1973]) as a major shift in the construction of knowledge at the European transition from pre-modern to modern times. At one end of this transition was the idea that 'the words and the things', that is the signs and the signified are related by a distinct similarity or affinity, something that has its paradigmatic manifestation in images and icons and that modern semiotics came to classify as iconicity (Burks 1949). At the other end was the system of signification relying on distinct and arbitrary cultural codes, something that has its exemplary manifestation in language, in particular in its written form and that modern semiotics classifies as symbolicity (Burks 1949). Arguably, the syncretistic perceptions and practices emerging from the Portuguese-Catholic onslaught on Hindu culture were based on the fact that Catholics and Hindus, as well as those who destroyed images and those whose images were destroyed, shared the semiotic assumption that religious images are invested with iconic power. In fact it can be argued, with the limitation that concepts of similarity and affinity are also culturally constructed and therefore semantically restricted, that the iconicity of images lends itself per se to forms of transcultural communication that differ from the communicative possibilities realized with the help of the symbolicity of language and text.

What, therefore, deserves to be called pictorial syncretism, that is syncretism facilitated by pictorial devices, is further characterized by the modalities of its practical embodiment and performative enactment. If the semiotic constitution of pictorial syncretism refers, as mentioned before, to a perspective that goes beyond the modern political discourse of religious pluralism by involving larger epistemological implications, then the modalities of its practical enactment undermine the modern political discourse of religious pluralism by working at levels that interrelate religious perceptions and practices without invoking or challenging the doctrines and identities associated with modern notions of religion. The ethnohistorical case study reveals a great number of such minor gestures by which people refer to traditions or sacred beings that formally are not their own, without ever questioning formal religious boundaries, let alone their religious identities. In fact, it is the rule rather than the exception, and not the slightest bit paradoxical, as the political theory of syncretism usually insinuates, that people, at one and the same time, engage in such syncretistic gestures *and* reaffirm their religious identities vis-à-vis others. What facilitates and empowers these syncretistic gestures are religious expressions of existential human experiences and concerns – such as commemoration of the past, neighborhood in space, and concerns for well being, health and protection - which gain their significance, rather than meaning, by being embodied in palpable manifestations and accessible through tangible practices. Images and

icons are exemplary, though not exclusive, religious manifestations of human experiences and concerns that escape doctrinal control by being as it were both too large and too small to be equated with what a modern political perception calls religious identity.

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Chapter 8
Kannon – Guanyin – Virgin Mary: Early Modern Discourses on Alterity, Religion and Images

Eva Zhang

Religious difference is a crucial concept for defining an early modern European identity and constituting a polarity between the self and the Other. Cultural accommodation, such as the Jesuits attempted for instance in China and Japan, is more infrequent among religious encounters of the early modern period. These encounters and exchanges between Europe and Asia had a significant impact on the self-definition of these societies. On the basis of these different internal and external perceptions, new formulas of depicting 'otherness' appeared. In order to visualize the Asians as people of a different culture, new visual and iconographic codes had to be invented. Such images raise the following questions: what kinds of religious images and information were developed and exchanged between East Asia and Europe? What modification processes took place, and which models of visualizing early modern discourses on alterity and religion have arisen?

During the early modern missions in China and Japan, some missionaries recognized the iconographic similarities between Guanyin, the Chinese Buddhist bodhisattva of mercy, and the Virgin Mary of Christianity, and merged depictions of the two in order to convert the Chinese and Japanese people more easily.[1] Guanyin – the Chinese bodhisattva of compassion – was one of the more popular bodhisattvas in Chinese Buddhism and is also worshiped in Japan, where her name is Kannon.[2] Through the early missions in China and Japan different entanglements and manifestations of Kannon – Guanyin – Virgin Mary iconography occurred. In Europe, on the other hand, a wide range of Asian religious images emerged and numerous discourses arose from them. This leads to the following question: is the

[1]A Bodhisattva is Sanskrit for 'enlightenment-being' and denotes a Buddha who has not yet achieved supreme enlightenment. A bodhisattva can intentionally choose not to enter Nirvana in order to help all human beings to achieve salvation. For the development of the concept 'Bodhisattva' in Mahayana Buddhism (see: Cat. Berlin 2009, pp. 1–2).

[2]For a detailed description of the Japanese Kannon tradition and iconography (see Cat. Zürich 2007, pp. 89–194).

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Kannon – Guanyin – Virgin Mary an example of occidental perceptual schemata being applied to other cultures, or of a proto-scientific approach for elucidating the origins of religion?

Virgin Mary in East Asia

During the sixteenth century, more and more European missionaries travelled to Asia and returned home with their own ideas, pictures, and stories from Asia.[3] Western missionaries, traders and scholars created a multitude of diverse and colourful images of Asia. Initially, most of the accounts of journeys to Asia emerged from the numerous letters and reports from the Jesuits. The cognitive interest, the intention and the approach of the Jesuits differed essentially from those of other Europeans in Asia.[4]

The Jesuits pursued an accommodation policy, which consisted in a simplified adaption of the 'Chinese culture' and acculturation by blending elements from Confucianism with Christianity.[5] They believed in a 'Prisca Theologia', the doctrine that a single, true, theology exists and runs through all religions, and which was given by God to man in antiquity.[6] This approach of 'ancient theology' for encountering other cultures is based on the early church fathers' attempts to trace back Christianity to ancient pagan texts. The writings of Hermes Trismegistus, Pythagoras, Plato, Zoroaster and the Brahmans have been identified as early sources of Christian truth in encounters with other cultures with literate histories, such as Egypt, Greece, India and China.[7] Thanks to the Jesuit Joachim Bouvet (1656–1730), Fuxi, the legendary creator of the Yi Jing or 'Book of Changes', one of the oldest Chinese classical texts, was added to the canon of the 'Prisca Theologia'.[8] The iconographic entanglement of Guanyin, Kannon and the Virgin Mary in the Jesuit China missionary approach is associated with the 'Prisca

[3]These were not the first European missionary attempts, however. In the early fourteenth century a European mission was established for just a few decades in Kahnbaliq (Beijing), which ended in 1369 and was then forgotten for centuries (see Arnold 1999, pp. 15–31; See also Loewe 1988, pp. 179–212).

[4]See: Brancaccio 2007, pp. 9–11.

[5]The Jesuit missionaries took a top-down approach, so their adaption of 'Chinese culture' is the adaption of the court and literati culture. Similarly for Klaus Schatz S.J., the dialogue of the Jesuits with the scholarly elite in China formed the centre of their missionary approach (Schatz 2000, p. 78; See also Collani 2000, p. 89; Demattè 2007, pp. 53–71).

[6]Brancaccio 2007, p. 57.

[7]Perkins 2004, p. 307.

[8]Perkins 2004, p. 9.

Theologia', together with the Jesuit approach of accommodation and the assumption of an early mission in India by apostle Thomas.[9]

In 1578, when the Spanish Franciscans reached Macao, they carried in their procession a small print of the 'Virgin and Child after St. Luke', copied from a panel in St. Maria Maggiore, Rome.[10] A larger version of the Virgin and Child after St. Luke reached Macao in 1581, destined for the Jesuits. There is a report from c. 1590 by Matteo Ricci, one of the founders of the Jesuit China mission, that this picture was displayed for some time at the Jesuit residence in Kwantung, and then hidden when the missionaries found it was being confused with the Chinese Buddhist figure of Guanyin, who is depicted with a child in her arms, the symbol of the son desired by Chinese mothers.[11]

The Jesuits soon abandoned their reservations about using iconographic similarities and positive cultural accommodation between Guanyin and Virgin Mary, and commissioned many depictions and statues of the Virgin.[12] Although the Jesuits, like the Chinese Confucian literati, adopted a strongly anti-Buddhist position, they discovered traces of Christianity transmitted through the already mentioned 'Prisca Theologia' and through the confusion of the assumed Apostle Thomas missionary legacy in India.[13] One of the first accounts of these Christian remains can be found in Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza's writing from 1585: '*Historia de las cosas mấs notables, ritos y costumbres, del Gran Reyno dela China…*'.[14] Mendoza refers explicitly to images of the Virgin Mary with Child that can be found in China.[15] Additionally, he cites Pater Gaspar de la Cruz as eyewitness:

> In the City of Cantao in the middest of the river which is of fresh water and very broad, is a little islet on the which is a kind of monastery of their sort of priests; and within this monastery I saw an oratory high from the ground very well made, with certain gilt Steps before it, made of carved work, in which was a woman very well made with a child about her neck, and it had a lamp burning before it. I suspecting that to be some show of Christianity, asked of some laymen whom I found there, and some of the idol's priests who were there, what that woman signified, and none could tell it me, nor give me any

[9]According to D. E. Mungello: 'This was a pervasive confusion which helped to ease the entry of Christianity into China' (Mungello 1989, p. 161). For an early ethnographical and philosophical view on this issue, there is an at times very amusing approach to this topic, which is strongly influenced by the anthroposophical philosophy of Rudolf Steiner (see: Karutz 1925).

[10]McCall 1948, p. 47.

[11]Bailey 1999, p. 29; See also: Mungello 1999, pp. 27–33.

[12]Bailey 1999, p. 89.

[13]'Moreover, Christianity shared with Buddhism elements such as belief in an afterlife, the idea of heaven and hell, and the practice of celibacy which were very un-Confucian. From Ricci's Diary and later controversial works one can observe that precisely this similarity to the Other (Buddhists) forced the Jesuits to differentiate themselves from the other and emphasize their difference.' (Standaert 2000, p. 356; see also: Lach and Van Kley 1993, p. 1655).

[14]For a detailed description and translation of the Latin edition from 1655, see Grießler (1992).

[15]Grießler 1992, p. 48.

> reason for it. It might well be the image of Our Lady, made by the ancient Christians that Saint Thomas left there, or by their occasion made, but the conclusion is that all is forgotten.[16]

In c. 1655, Martino Martini, another very influential member of the Jesuit Mission in China wrote in his '*Novus Atlas sinensis*':

> Many clear traces of Christians have been found in this city Zaitun [Quanzhou] and in the very walls not a few stones marked with the sign of the cross of salvation: and also images of the most holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with angels prostrate on the ground.[17]

These accounts of depictions of Virgin Mary images in China have been mentioned and copied by numerous authors on China in the seventeenth century.[18] One possible explanation is that the accounts of Jesuits in China conceal the iconographic similarities between Guanyin and the Virgin Mary to verify through these supposed Christian iconographical remains their doctrine of the 'Prisca Theologia'. Others speak from a different point of view. In particular, the Franciscans and Dominicans were, in Europe as in Asia, opponents and competitors of the Jesuits, and thus highly critical of this approach. Domingo Fernàndez Navarrete, a Dominican who was in China from 1657 to 1673, gives a crucial commentary on an account of a prominent converted Chinese Jesuit on the Guanyin – Virgin Mary analogy:

> Among the rest of the famous Idols of the Foe's Sect [Buddhism], there is a woman they call Kuon In Pu Sa. Some say she was Daughter to a King of India: Others that she was a Chinese Maid, who liv'd on the Mountains near the City Macao. Doctor Paul a Chinese, put it out in Print that she is our Blessed Lady; the ground for his opinion he says is, that the Image has remain'd there ever since the Preachers out of Syria preach'd the Gospel in that Empire. When they were all dead, the Chineses made an Idol of it. It is possible it might be so, but very able Missioners of the Society make a doubt of it, and they like that Book as ill as I do. The most likely, as the Christian Men of Learning make out, is that there never was any such Woman, but it is a Fiction. The meaning of her Name is, that she sees the wants of those that bear Devotion to her a thousand Leagues off; that she hears their prayers at the same distance, and most readily supplies them. They represent her with a great many Hands, one Image of her in Canton has 24 to signify the great Favours she does, and her extraordinary Liberality. The Multitude have a great deal of Devotion to this Monster.[19]

Navarrete's position as a Dominican, who stands like the Franciscans in strong opposition to the Jesuit mission's approach in China, is clearly against the 'Prisca Theologia' and its practice of accommodation. When he came back to Rome in 1673 he acted as a prefect of the Dominican mission to discuss the question of

[16]Gaspar da Cruz (1569): Tractado em que se [. . .]. Cited by Boxer (1967, p. 213).

[17]Cited after Arnold 1999, p. 146.

[18]Furthermore, the Jesuits detected in Tibet similar traces of Christianity. Antonio de Andrade came in 1624 to Tibet, where he stayed for 15 years. In a letter to Rome he reports the existence of a Tibetan form of the mother of God, probably the bodhisattva Prajnaparmita, which he describes as the Tibetan Virgin Mary (Van Kley 1983, p. 810; see also: Lach and Van Kley 1993, p. 1649).

[19]Navarrete 1704, pp. 82–83.

Chinese Rites.[20] But besides his anti-Jesuit stance, he describes clearly one of the many possible manifestations of Guanyin with an iconography that includes 24 arms, but he conceals that there are indeed iconographic depictions of Guanyin that are similar to the Christian iconography of Virgin Mary.[21]

Chinese representations of Guanyin originated in India, where the Bodhisattva was depicted as a male deity and known by the Sanskrit name Avalokiteśvara ('He/Lord who looks down').[22] When Buddhism spread to China, many of the original images were modified to be compatible with Chinese culture and beliefs. And the ancient encounters of eastern and western traditions of sculpture, which led to Greco-Buddhist art, also had an impact on the transformation of Guanyin.[23] One of these transitions entailed changing the gender of Avalokiteśvara from male to the female or androgynous Guanyin. This process started at the end of the Tang Dynasty (618–906) and during the Song Dynasty (960–1279), a female type was established.[24]

The particular manifestation of Guanyin that the Jesuits interpreted as the Virgin Mary is most possibly her iconographic depiction as Songzi Guanyin. The Songzi Guanyin is one of the more popular forms in which she is depicted as a female figure with a child in her arms. This child is not her own but symbolizes the quality of Guanyin as 'Giver of Children' and she who 'Gifts Sons to Mothers'.[25] So the Guanyin with Child may be an iconographic analogy to the Virgin with Child, but her concept and function differs fundamentally from Mary as 'Mother of God'. Guanyin's manifestation as Songzi appears for the 'first time' in the Ming Dynasty

[20]The Jesuit mission's approach in China and Japan led to the Chinese rites controversy in Europe, which lasted from the 1630s to the beginning of the eighteenth century. The Chinese Rites controversy was an inner Catholic dispute primarily between the Jesuit and Dominican orders. The controversy centred on three basic questions: Are the rites for Confucius and the emperor idolatrous, is ancestor worship a social practice or a religious one, and what is the right Chinese translation for 'God'? Pope Clement XI decided against the Jesuit argument that all these rites are non-religious, took sides with the Dominicans, and finally banned through two papal decrees in 1715 and 1742 all above mentioned rites for the Chinese Catholics. This greatly complicated the Jesuit missionary approach in China as well as in India, and finally led to the ban of Christianity in China (Mungello 1999, pp. 81–84).

[21]There are at least 33 incarnations of Guanyin (see Eichenbaum Karetzky 2004, p. 55).

[22]For a detailed description of the transformation process from Avalokitesvara, who first emerged as a 'handsome Indian prince', then changed into a god with multiple heads and/or arms, and finally transformed into a female goddess, see Eichenbaum Karetzky (2004 p. 1–27; see also Cat. Berlin 2009).

[23]For further reading, see Allchin 1997; Bentley 1993.

[24]See Eichenbaum Karetzky 2004, p. 22; Ebert 1989, pp. 83–91; Cat. Berlin 2009, p. 6; see also Kim 2001, p. 17; see also Yü 1996, pp. 97.

[25]In the Chinese Confucian social order, male heirs were crucial for the continuance of a family (see also: Eichenbaum Karetzky 2004, p. 64).

Fig. 8.1 Guanyin (Dehua, Fujian). Eighteenth Century. Innsbruck, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Sammlung Schloss Ambras (Photograph courtesy of Ambras Castle)

(1368–1644) in the sixteenth century, when the Jesuits came to China.[26] During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, immense quantities of figurines depicting Songzi Guanyin were produced in Fujian province, which was famous for its local blanc-de-Chine porcelain (Dehua ware) (Fig. 8.1).[27]

There is a clear iconographic resemblance between these blanc-de-Chine Guanyins and the Virgin Mary with Child. To quote Jeong-Eun Kim:

> When one learns that these two different religious images were handled by the same artistic communities, it is not surprising to notice the iconographical resemblance between the Child-giving Guanyin and the Madonna and Child. Fujien was a coastal province where Christian missionaries visited as early as the thirteenth century. Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, Spanish conquistadors and Jesuit missionaries brought sculptures to China and also commissioned Fujienese craftsmen, the very same artisans who produced the image of the Child-giving Guanyin, to create Christian images, most frequently of the Virgin and Child theme. As a result, "the Madonna looked some what Chinese and the Kuanyin looked almost 'Gothic'.[28]

But there is no positive proof of whether the iconography of Songzi Guanyin was influenced by the appearance of the Jesuits, was coincidence, or was an adaption

[26]Earlier iconographic encounters by the Nestorians, for example, are implausible due to their problematic relation regarding the Virgin Mary. But according to Chün-fang Yü, there a few earlier White-roped Guanyins were known holding babies, and at least one stele survived with a depiction of this manifestation from 1082 (see: Yü 1996, p. 98).

[27]Godden 1979, pp. 257–281; see also: Donnelly 1969, pp. 8–12 and pp. 152–158.

[28]Kim 2001, p. 20.

and conversion of another Buddhist origin.[29] Summing up, the Jesuits recognized an iconographic analogy between Guanyin and the Virgin Mary, and used it for their own purposes to convert the Chinese more easily and to prove that Christianity existed since ancient times in China, which was important for convincing the Chinese literati who were allegedly prone to be reluctant when it came to innovations.[30]

In Japan, in contrast to China, the development of the entanglement of Virgin Mary iconography and depictions of Kannon, the Japanese equivalent of Guanyin, differs drastically, although the Jesuits' impact there was similar to that in China early on. In 1583, the Venetian Jesuit Giovanni Niccolò (1563–1626) founded an art workshop in Japan, the so-called 'Niccolò School'.[31] At its zenith, approximately 20 artists produced Catholic art, European copies which were adapted to the Japanese taste for an Asian audience, and supplied religious art to Japan, India and China.[32] One of the few surviving artworks of this School is the 'Madonna of the Snows', a Madonna following western iconography but whose facial features, high eyebrows and 'bee-stung' lips, were customized to the Japanese taste.[33] But from the beginning of the seventeenth century Christianity was prohibited in Japan, iconoclasm arose, the missionaries were expelled and only some of the Niccolò School Marys survived.[34] During the Tokugawa shogunate period in Japan from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, when Christianity was prohibited under pain of death, some underground Christian groups worshiped the Virgin Mary disguised as a statue of Kannon; such statues are known as Maria Kannon and are mostly of Chinese (Dehua ware) origin. Several surviving Maria Kannons have a cross concealed at an inconspicuous location.[35]

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[29]Donnelly 1969, p. 154. Regina Höfer supports this assumption (see Cat. Berlin 2009, p. 7). Patricia Eichenbaum Karetzky is of the opinion that Ming dynasty (1368–1644) Guanyin with child is 'based on Western icons of the Madonna and child' (Eichenbaum Karetzky 2004, p. 23). This assumption is shared by Jeong-Eun Kim, who additionally quotes Chün-fang Yü, an expert of the sinicization of Buddhism: 'The religious basis for this iconography came from Buddhist scriptures, but its artistic rendering might have been influenced by the iconography of the Virgin' (Kim 2001, p. 21).

[30]The detection and translation in 1623 of the Nestorian stele erected in 781, lent itself to a similar function. For the Jesuits it was an important piece of evidence for early Christianity in China and an illustration based on the stele was published by Athanasius Kircher in his 'China illustrata' (see Mungello 1989, pp. 164–172).

[31]See Bailey 1999, p. 53.

[32]Mochizuki 2009, p. 248.

[33]Even kakemono framing allows for a traditional Japanese hanging (see: Mochizuki 2009, p. 248).

[34]Bailey 1999, p. 58.

[35]The Tokugawa shogunate is also known as the Edo period, named after the Japanese capital Edo, which is now Tokyo. In 1603 Tokugawa Ieyasu established the Tokugawa shogunate, a feudal regime, after a long Warring States period. The Tokugawa family ruled until 1868, when the Meiji Restoration deposed the Tokugawa. One of the new laws of the Tokugawa shogunate was the ban of Christianity by Tokugawa Ieyasu, who regarded the Christian religion as a threat to the inner

For the duration of the Christianity ban, the Tokugawa authorities developed a totally new purpose for depictions of Virgin Marys: copper relief tablets for the *fumi-e* Ceremonies (Japanese: *fumi* for 'stepping-on' and *e* for 'picture').[36] The use of *fumi-e* began with the persecution of Christians in Nagasaki in 1629, and the *fumi-e* were copper relief depictions of Jesus or Mary on which suspected Japanese Christians had to step on to show that they were not believers in this religion.[37] Here the function of Virgin Mary depictions shifted from devotion and worship to a medium for ritual Christian persecution.

Guanyin and Kannon in Europe

Two of the most influential and popular illustrated compilations on China and Japan in the seventeenth century were Athanasius Kircher's *China illustrata* from 1667 and Arnoldus Montanus *Atlas Japannensis* from 1670. Both accounts were published by Jacob van Meurs in Amsterdam and use similar sources and illustrations.[38] Both are problematic but fascinating compilations of contemporary sources on East Asia and can be considered to contain the most up-to-date knowledge of seventh century China and Japan in Europe. While in China and Japan, the Jesuits pursued the strategy of accommodation, the discourses in Europe followed a different approach. The polyhistor Athanasius Kircher was one of the most productive and influential Jesuit scholars of the seventeenth century, and in his book on China *China illustrata* he mostly dispenses with accommodation and takes a hermetic approach. Arnoldus Montanus, a Dutch protestant theologian, used a comparable approach in his account of Japan. This hermetic approach was embedded in Kircher's encyclopaedic worldview, which demanded universality, or to quote Joscelyn Godwin: 'At least three motivations were behind Kircher's interest in the world beyond Europe. One was to fill in the gaps in a knowledge that aspired to universality, and especially to complete the tale of how languages and religions had evolved after the Universal Deluge. A second was the passion for curiosities, whether material objects or reports of strange creatures and customs. A third was the missionary zeal that proclaims itself in the frontispiece to *China Illustrata*.'[39] Montanus's scholarly motivation can be compared to Kircher's except for the

stability of Japan. Soon after the ban, a merciless persecution of Christians began, but some Christian groups (Kakure Kirishitan, the Japanese term for 'hidden Christians') survived to outlive the persecution, which lasted from 1614 to 1873 (Turnbull 1998, pp. 1–7; see also Bailey 1999, pp. 102–124).

[36]For a detailed description of the ceremonies, see: DaCosta Kaufmann (2004, pp. 303–341).

[37]Mochizuki 2009, p. 251; see also: Linhart 2008, pp. 320–321.

[38]Although there are several strong arguments that Kircher's *China Illustrata* was published primarily by Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge, who had a contract with Kircher and was also the publisher of many of Kircher's books. I thank Paola von Wyss-Giacosa for this information.

[39]Godwin 2009, p. 237.

missionary zeal, which is replaced by the depiction of the exclusive presence of the Dutch East India Company in Japan, the only European holder of a trade licence there.[40]

The European name for Guanyin in seventeenth century books on China was mostly Pussa, a misspelling of p' u-sa – the Chinese popular name for bodhisattva.[41] In Kircher's *China Illustrata* from 1677, we find an illustration (Fig. 8.2)

Fig. 8.2 The Idol Pussa: Athanasius Kircher; *China illustrata*. 1667, Jacob Meurs. Amsterdam (Photograph courtesy of Heidelberg University Library)

[40]And furthermore Montanus' account of Japan is more popular scientific than that of Kircher, who ranked among the scholarly elite in Europe.

[41]Lach and Van Kley 1993, p. 1737. Joscelyn Godwin suggests the name 'Pussa' came from a European misinterpretation of Mantras to e.g. Guanyin, which ended with the word pusa. '. . .and Europeans hearing this repeatedly must have taken that for the name of the god or goddess' (Godwin 2009, p. 247).

after a Chinese original, brought back from China by the Jesuit Johann Grueber, depicting Guanyin respectively Pussa. The text describes Pussa as the Chinese Cybele:

> The image or idol of Pussa sits above a lotus flower. She has great modesty and grace despite the marvellous contortion of her hands. Eight arms come from her left side and eight arms from her right. Each hand holds mystical symbols, such as swords, hellebards, books, fruits, plants, a wheel, ornaments, a box, or a flask.[42]

In the following Text Kircher gives a compendium of different stories about the origin and function of the goddess and comes to reason that he agrees with the Chinese literati:

> They say that this Pussa is the ruler of nature. I might more aptly say she is the Chinese Isis or Cybele, by whose influence everything is conserved and made fertile.[43]

Kircher's method of equating Chinese Buddhist images with ancient Egyptian and Greek gods is due to his scholarly focus as proto-Egyptologist, and can be seen as an attempt to align the unfamiliar to a familiar European framework.[44] A similar approach can be detected in Arnoldus Montanus's description of Kannon (Fig. 8.3), the Japanese equivalent of Guanyin[45]:

> But in the Center or middle of the City [Osaka] stands the much celebrated Temple of the idol Canon, whom the Japanners believe hath the absolute Power over all sorts of fish and fowl that haunt the water, he being as their Neptune, or Sea-commanding God. . . . To this sad place many wretched People resort, who, weary of their Lives, either suffering under Poverty, or Chronical Infirmities, or distracted with blind Zeal, in Fits of their Melancholy, here expecting to be freed from all their Sorrows, and to enter into present Happiness, by drowning themselves in this their Soul-saving Pool of their Water-God : But first they warily consult Canon himself in the Portal, seeking his Advice; from which, as their fond Fancies dictate, they either return full of Hopes, or desperately throw themselves headlong in, and for a quicker dispatch, greedily swallow the water. This kind of dreadful Sedecede, or destroying themselves, is not unlike the ancient Worship of the Teutonick Goddess Hertha, which Tacitus relates thus . . ..[46]

Like Kircher, Montanus draws a parallel between Guanyin and a goddess of European origin, even though he selects a Teutonic goddess. It is noteworthy that the corresponding illustration (Fig. 8.3) shows not a Japanese manifestation of Kannon but a depiction of the Matsya Avatara, the first incarnation of Vishnu as a fish from Kircher's *China illustrata* (Fig. 8.4). The Jesuit missionary Henry Roth brought an Indian miniature of the Matsya Avatara to Rome in the seventeenth

[42]Kircher 1987, p. 132.

[43]Kircher 1987, p. 133.

[44]See Mungello 1989, p. 8.

[45]There are some other depictions of Kannon in Montanus's account of Japan, showing a similar approach. And Montanus also gives an explanation of the differences: *'In Osacca stands also a Temple of Canon; but the image of the god is quite another Figure, which is a custom among the Japanners, never to make the same Deity alike'* (Montanus 1670, p. 177).

[46]Montanus 1670, pp. 92–93.

Fig. 8.3 The idol Canon: Arnoldus Montanus; *Denckwürdige Gesandtschafften der Ost-Indischen Gesellschaft in den Vereinigten Niederländern, an unterschiedliche Keyser von Japan*. 1670, Jacob Meurs. Amsterdam (Photograph courtesy of Heidelberg University Library)

century.[47] In Rome, Kircher made a copy of the miniature and sent it to Amsterdam, where the simple copy (Fig. 8.4) was inserted into his encyclopaedic account on China. There it illustrates a text passage: *'Brahmins and the Ten Incarnations of God, in Which the Indians on Both Sides of the Ganges Believe'*.[48] In Amsterdam the rough sketch, after the elaboration by an engraver (Fig. 8.3), was transferred into another context. It now depicts the Japanese idol Canon in a text passage in Arnoldus Montanus' account of Japan.[49] This seems unproblematic to Montanus because Kircher himself wrote two chapters about the parallels and common origins of Indian, Chinese and Japanese idols and the half-human, half-fish depiction of the Matsya Avatara seems to be not so far removed from the textual description of Kannon as the Japanese Neptune.[50]

The two examples of Kircher's Guanyin and Montanus's Kannon have shown two depictions that have no iconographic similarity with the Virgin Mary. But even

[47]Kircher 1987, pp. 156–162. For a detailed analysis of the 10 incarnations of Vishnu and the afterlife of Kircher's sketches, see: Wyss-Giacosa (2006, pp. 229–253; see also Schierlitz 1927, p. 132).

[48]Kircher 1987, p. 128.

[49]Montanus 1669, p. 86.

[50]Furthermore there is also some accurate information in the text: for instance, it relates that in some areas of East Asia, Guanyin is worshipped as the protector of fishermen and sailors.

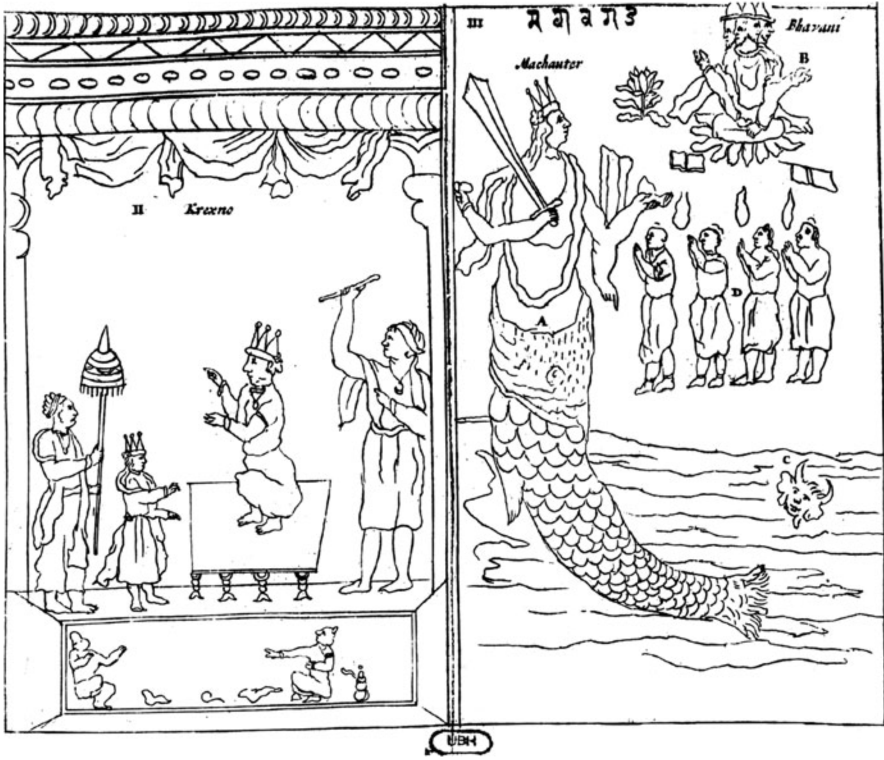

Fig. 8.4 Vishnu's incarnation as a fish: Athanasius Kircher; *China illustrata*. 1667, Jacob Meurs. Amsterdam (Photograph courtesy of Heidelberg University Library)

when a depiction (Fig. 8.5) is shown where the iconographic similarity seems obvious to the observer, the text remains silent, as the following Guanyin example in Olfert Dapper's account on China from 1670 demonstrates:

> Amongst other Images, the Idol or Goddess Quonin is in great esteem, being represented in the Shape of a Woman, as appears by the following Sculpture, with two Children, on each side one; one holds a Cruse of Water in both Hands, and the other stands in a Praying posture, with elevated Hands. They say that this Quonin commands and protects House-keepers, Plants and Waters; wherefore they ascribe great power to her, and every one, whether Rich or Poor, placing her in the best Room of his House, shews especial honor to this Deity, keeping a perpetual Lamp burning before her. In some Temples this Image is seventy three Cubits high. Many also have the other two Images represented in the following Sculp, standing in their Chambers, one with a Child in her Lap, and the other with one in her Hand; to both which they shew great honor and reference, yet less than to the Goddess Quonin. These Images have all of them an open Slit behind, into which the People put in and present pieces of Money.[51]

[51]Dapper 1670. Text comes from the English edition from 1671. In the English edition the author Dappert is confused with Montanus (Montanus 1671, pp. 581–582).

Fig. 8.5 Guanyin: Olfert Dapper; *Gedenkwaerdig Bedryf Der Nederlandsche Oost-Indische Maetschappye, op de Kuste en in het Keiserijk Van Taising of Sina*. 1667, Jacob Meurs. Amsterdam (Photograph courtesy of Heidelberg University Library)

The Kannon – Guanyin – Virgin Mary eventually found her way to Europe as sculpture. In an inventory from April 1697 describing the assets of Queen Mary II in Kensington House, we find mention of *'Two large white fine figures being women each with child'*.[52] This description refers to blanc-de-Chine figurines of Guanyin with child, which were very popular subjects in eighteenth century princely collections.[53] A sales record of the English East India Company from November 1699 includes 141 figurines of 'women with children'; 106 'Sancta Marias' and 69 'White Sancta Marias'.[54] The term 'Sancta Marias' belongs to Chinese figurines depicting Guanyin with child. There are a wide range of Guanyin models that were imported to the European market. Besides typical Chinese depictions of Guanyin with and without child, very rare models of Guanyin remodelled in the European style of Mary and Child came to Europe.[55] Some of these rare European style Marys

[52]Godden 1979, p. 257.

[53]The European obsession with porcelain led to its mass production, and figurines of Guanyin in particular became very popular (see Cat. Berlin 2009, p. 47).

[54]These 'Sancta Marias' can be found in huge quantities in many English porcelain sales records of the eighteenth century (see Godden 1979, pp. 260–280).

[55]For the different manifestations of Guanyin in blanc-de-Chine figurines, see: Donnelly (1969, pp.152–160; see also Godden 1979, p. 261).

Fig. 8.6 Guanyins from the Collection August the Strong. blanc-de-Chine, Chinese porcelain from Dehua. Around 1675–1725 (Photograph courtesy of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden)

look entirely Baroque.[56] Another European influence can possibly be found in the hairstyle of some Guanyin, which exists in many European eighteenth century collections. The hairstyle has an astonishing resemblance to an eighteenth-century European hair fashion, the *fontange*.[57] In the great porcelain collection of August the Strong in Dresden, of the many blanc-de-Chine Guanyin (Fig. 8.6) some can be found with at her neck, which can certainly be considered to be Marys.[58] Also, the first European copies of Guanyin figurines came to be produced in August the Strong's porcelain manufacture in Meissen. Between 1708 and 1710, Johann Friedrich Böttger developed first the so-called red porcelain, and then white porcelain which was comparable to Chinese porcelain. One of the very early copies of Chinese originals from the collection of August the Strong are two Guanyins dating from 1710 to 1715.[59]

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[56]Donnelly 1969, p. 196.

[57]Donnelly 1969, p. 255.

[58]Donnelly 1969, p. 195.

[59]Pietsch et al. 2006, pp. 76–77.

The imported Guanyin seems to have lost its original identity in the eighteenth century collections and was translated into "Sancta Maria" or more simply a "women with child" or "dolls with babe-in-arms".[60] In the written discourses, the analogy of Guanyin and pagan goddesses continued. In an account on China by the French Jesuit missionary Jean-Baptiste Du Halde (1674–1743): '*The general history of China*' from 1736, a chapter on porcelain describes the Guanyin figurines produced in Dehua in Fujian province in the following way:

> They make also curious Statues of Kouan in, which is a Goddess famous in China; they represent her holding a Child in her Arms, and she is invoked by barren Women who are desirous of Children; it may be compared to the antique Statues of Venus and Diana, with this difference, that the Statues of Kouan - in are very modest.[61]

How do these observations help to answer the opening question: Is the Kannon – Guanyin – Virgin Mary an example of applying occidental schemata of perception to other cultures or a proto-scientific approach for elucidating the origins of religion? As the seventeenth century source materials demonstrate, it can be seen as a very cautious proto-scientific discourse on the origins of religion, but these discourses persisted in a Eurocentric worldview. Therefore different cultures shared the same images but not the same ideas about these images. And under the very specific circumstances of the Jesuit mission in China, it was a tool of applying occidental schemata to Virgin Mary iconography. Of course the European discourses in China and in Europe condemned Buddhism as idolatry. But the Jesuit approach of accommodation in China allowed the identification of a common origin and universal elements of values and religious truth shared by Christianity and Chinese religions. This is evident in the desire to bind the Guanyin – Kannon – Virgin Mary to complementary iconographic visualizations of universal essences of religion.[62]

Back in Europe, this attempt at accommodation and Syncretism was not transferable.[63] For Kircher and Montanus, their Hermetic approach meant that they saw Guanyin and Kannon as descendents of the pagan deities Cybele or Isis, but not of the Virgin. Guanyin and Kannon are, like all ancient or contemporary idols, descendants of the devil or, to cite Kircher:

> Thus their temples are not much different from those of the Egyptians, in which in place of the gods every variety of monster was to be seen. From this chapter it is obvious who was the inventor of such a monstrous religion, namely the Devil, father of monsters.[64]

[60]For 'dolls with babe-inarms', see the Dresden inventory of August the Strong from 1721, in Donnelly (1969, p. 338).

[61]Du Halde 1736, pp. 349–350; see also Godden 1979, pp. 261–162.

[62]See also Mungello 1989, p. 136.

[63]'Syncretism, which overlaps with convergence, refers to the incorporation of elements from one culture into another. This process can involve a fusion of forms and meanings that is very hard to discern. In Syncretism, the same image can have quite different meanings and resonances for two cultures – Cecilia Klein calls it 'visual Bilingualism,' and Jill Leslie Furst uses the term 'parallel reading' (Bailey 1999, p. 29).

[64]From Kircher's *Œdipus Ægyptiacus* (1652–1654), p. 422. Cited after Godwin (2009, p. 255).

Furthermore, a strong encyclopaedic curiosity in the accounts on China and Japan and the desire to place unfamiliar knowledge in a familiar European context can be detected – both of which led to a lack of deeper, unprejudiced, non-Eurocentric perception of China and Japan. Therefore the Kannon – Guanyin – Virgin Mary example ultimately stands for the failure of a transcultural visual and verbal religious dialogue in early modern Christian discourses.

These 'internal' European discourses were provoked by the Jesuit strategy of accommodation, which was excoriated and caused the 'Chinese Rites Controversy'.[65] It was one of the most discussed intellectual and religious debates around 1,700, involving leading scholars such as Leibniz and ended with Pope Clement XI banning the rites and any religious accommodation through a decree of 1704, which was reinforced by a Papal bull *Ex illa die* in 1715.[66]

In China, Pope Clement's decree brought about a backlash. Emperor Kangxi strongly disagreed with Pope Clement and banned Christian missions in China, which he expressed in a Decree in the year 1721:

> Reading this proclamation, I have concluded that the Westerners are petty indeed. It is impossible to reason with them because they do not understand larger issues as we understand them in China. There is not a single Westerner versed in Chinese works, and their remarks are often incredible and ridiculous. To judge from this proclamation, their religion is no different from other small, bigoted sects of Buddhism or Taoism. I have never seen a document which contains so much nonsense. From now on, Westerners should not be allowed to preach in China, to avoid further trouble.[67]

In sum, the striking iconographical resemblance between some manifestations of Guanyin or Kannon and the Virgin Mary caused a transcultural dialogue about these similarities, predominantly in Chinese/European Jesuit circles. The European discourse on the other hand neglected the similitude of Guanyin and Virgin Mary, although the European Collectors admired the imported Guanyins most probably on account of this resemblance. However, they were never worshipped as Virgin Marys but used as decorative items of chinoiserie. The manifestation of Guanyin as Songzi Guanyin and the Virgin Mary represents a female archetype, which can be found in many cultures, like for instance the ancient Egyptian Isis nursing her son Horus. Thus this archetypical iconography makes the transfer of images perhaps more easy, but the perception far more complex due to the multilayered and context-bound interpretation of these images. Thanks to the huge interest of early modern Europe in China and the more or less total disinterest of China in Europe, the transfer of discourses and images of Guanyin and the Virgin Mary was asymmetrical and therefore Eurocentric. One of the very rare Chinese sources from the Chinese literati and a member of the 'Grand Council' of the Qing court, Zhang

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[65]For the Chinese Rites Controversy, see page 175, footnote 20.

[66]The meta-problem of the 'Rites Controversy' was how to mix or accommodate Christianity with other cultures (see Perkins 2004, pp. 26–32).

[67]Li 1969, p. 22.

Tingyu (1672–1755), may explain this asymmetrical character of the Guanyin – Virgin Mary encounters between Europe and China:

> In the twenty-ninth year of Wan-li [1601], li Ma-tou [Matteo Ricci] arrived in Peking. He called himself a man of the Great Western Ocean,. . . and, through the intermediation of a eunuch named Ma T´tang, presented his native products to the Emperor as tribute . . . The tribute this man has presented consists of the images of a Heavenly Lord and His Mother,. . . a tribute that is highly irregular.. . .. These things, to quote Han Yü, [Famous author of the Tang Dynasty] are 'unclean, inauspicious items that should not be allowed to enter the Imperial Palace.[68]

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[68]Cited after Li 1969, p. 14.

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Chapter 9
The Work of Goddesses in the Age of Mass Reproduction

Sumathi Ramaswamy

> *Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction.*
>
> Walter Benjamin[1]

> *I can no longer think what I want to think. My thoughts have been replaced by moving images....*
>
> Georges Duhamel[2]

On October 25, 2006, in a country already thronging with all manner of divinities and sacred personages, a new goddess put in a spectacular appearance at a gathering of academics, intellectuals, and other celebrities in New Delhi, India. Her formal name is "English the Dalit Goddess,"[3] and she is the product of a collaboration between the New Delhi-based Dalit intellectual, activist, and journalist Chandrabhan Prasad[4] and artist Shanti Swaroop Baudh, also the proprietor of

[1]Benjamin 1985: 223.

[2]Georges Duhamel, quoted in Benjamin 1985: 238 (Duhamel's comments were made in response to "the shock effect of film.")

[3]The term "Dalit" ("ground down" in Marathi and Hindi) has been in use since the early decades of the twentieth century as a self-designating category for that class of people who used to be referred to as *avarna* (lit. "without caste" in Sanskrit) in Brahmanical and scriptural Hinduism. Since the 1970s, the term has come to denote a subjectivity of radicalism and contestation, binding together "those who still suffer violent oppression with those who are educated spokesman for a new and just society" (Zelliott 2008: 453). For the purposes of this analysis, it is also worth noting with D. L. Sheth, "Dalits, cannot be described as a simple, political conglomerate of castes, or as an economically homogeneous class. It is a *new post-caste formation* that is structurally more tentative and more open-ended than caste" (Sheth 2008: 92, emphasis mine).

[4]Prasad has been recently described as "one of the most significant critical voices within the Dalit movement" and as "young and charismatic...almost a cult figure" (Menon and Nigam 2007: 95–97). The best introduction to his activities and interests may be found on his official website, www.chandrabhanprasad.com. In an interview posted on the Internet in February 2001 in response to questions posed by S. Anand, Prasad describes himself as a journalist, researcher, and activist. In his own words, he was born "in a sleepy village of district Azamgarh, east Uttar Pradesh, in September 1958." His parents were illiterate but by "Dalit standards, economically well-to-do." After graduating

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a Delhi-based Dalit publishing house called Samyak Prakashan.[5] The occasion for the celebration was the 206th birthday of Thomas Babington Macaulay: English historian, Whig politician, and the colonial administrator most famously known in India for heralding in English as the official language of British India in 1835.[6] At a time when few perhaps in Britain even remember who Macaulay is, or recall his birthday, let alone celebrate it, why would a group of Indians in Britain's most important former colony gather to commemorate this ghostly presence from the

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from a local college near his birth village, Chandrabhan himself went on to study in one of India's premier universities, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in New Delhi, where he got his Master's in International Politics as well as an M.Phil. While at JNU, he began reading the work of B. R. Ambedkar, a man who has had an abiding influence on him as well as on so many other Dalit activists and leaders of our times. Between 1983 and 1987, Prasad worked as well for the Communist Party of India (ML), although he soon became disillusioned with his fellow leftists' disavowal of the persistence of caste identity, and their support for Marx over Ambedkar, as he puts it. In 1991, he launched the Dalit Shiksha Andolan (Movement for Dalit Education) in his home state, and also became convinced about the necessity of envisioning a Dalit movement that was pan-Indic and rooted in values of capitalism and private enterprise. The central concerns for that movement, as he stated in an interview, are "land, quality education for all Dalits, democratisation of KNOWLEDGE, and public institutions including media, democratisation of the capital, redefining democracy, etc. Unless English-speaking Dalits take up the Dalit movement as their profession, a pan-Indian Dalit movement will remain a dream" (Anand 2001). In 1999, Prasad started writing a column in the English-language daily *The Pioneer* (published from New Delhi), and is arguably the first Dalit journalist to publish in a major newspaper in English. Selections from Prasad's provocative "Dalit Diary" column may be found in Prasad 2003 and Prasad 2004. For recent, wide-ranging profiles of Prasad published in the global media, see http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/30/world/asia/30caste.html?_r=2&pagewanted=1 and http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/30/AR2008083002299.html.

[5]In the course of an interview in February 2008, Baudh told me a little bit about himself. He was born in 1949 in Delhi, and members of his family were great admirers of Ambedkar (who, in fact, suggested the name that was bestowed upon him); he subsequently wrote and published a book on Ambedkar titled *Baba Saheb As I Know Him*, 2002). Shanti Swaroop studied at the Anglo-Arabic High School and got a college degree from Dayal Singh College (Hindi-medium). Geography was one of his courses of study. He subsequently went on to work for the Central Government for 21 years, a job from which he retired a few years ago to pursue in interest in painting and publishing works (in Hindi and English) related to Buddhism and Ambedkar. His publishing house, Samyak Prakashan (established in 1999), also prints lithographs of Ambedkar, and other figures (Jotirao Phule, Savitribai Phule, Periyar Ramasami Naicker) important for recent Dalit history. He first met Chandrabhan Prasad some time in 2000 at a Dalit meeting that both men attended.

[6]Macaulay's minute of 2 February 1835 (recorded on 7th March 1835 in the official consultation) advocated that the colonial state should shift financial support from India's classical languages (Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian) to English (language and literature), and also proposed that Western science through the medium of English should henceforth be the focus of British pedagogic efforts. The result, he wrote, would be the production of a citizenry that was "Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." For one of Prasad's early articulations on Macaulay, see an essay published in *The Pioneer* titled "The Impure Milk of Lord Macaulay?" (Prasad 2003: 185–87). Today, in Prasad's movement, Macaulay is hailed as "the father of Indian modernity."

Fig. 9.1 *English the Dalit Goddess*, Print, 2009. Co-designed by Shanti Swaroop Baudh and Chandrabhan Prasad, New Delhi

imperial past, and to do so by unveiling a portrait of this unusual goddess? The answer lies mostly in the image itself and in the image-event, so my theorization *must* start from it.[7]

I begin, therefore, by inviting you to take a look.

When I first saw the image (reproduced here as Fig. 9.1 in a slightly later print) on a computer screen in October 2006, I experienced—as I suspect you do as well—a flash of recognition, followed by a delighted gasp and burst of laughter. This led,

[7]In a longer study, I consider the many other complex implications of this image, especially the manner in which it speaks to a shifting linguistic politics in post-Liberalization India. Here, in the context of the goals of this volume, I confine myself to an analysis of the iconography of the image.

Fig. 9.2 Statue of Liberty, New York

of course, to an enormous stirring of my curiosity which has brought me to this day, when I have begun to write about it. Especially when placed side by side with its globally recognizable Euro-American ancestress, prototype, and model (Fig. 9.2), the image leads me to ask, following anthropologist Michael Taussig, why this laugh and why this stirring of the senses in this manner? Surely, if Taussig is right, this follows from "the simple fact that observing mimesis is pleasurable. And just as surely there is an element of colonialist mastery in this laughter. . ..."[8] So, this essay is about taking pleasure from documenting an act of mimesis unfold before our eyes—and mediated by the numerous technologies of twenty-first century modernity—even as it is about asking what form of mastery is being performed when "the West is mirrored in the eyes and handiwork of its Others."[9] But along the way, I also hope to ask if pleasure alone is the affect that is mobilized when we—and others—see this image. What anxieties and doubts might this act of mimesis also disclose, alongside a sense of unbelonging and perhaps even unhomeliness that it possibly signals? As a scholar of popular visual culture in India, I am also provoked

[8]Taussig 1993: 225–226.

[9]Taussig 1993: 236.

to understand the place of image-making, and art practices more generally and statue building in particular, in recent Dalit movements of resistance and strategies of speaking back to millennia of crushing oppression wielded by a caste Hindu hierarchy.[10] But why would this particular modality of resistance lead these two Dalit men into such a sensuous, some would even say, brazen embrace of the West more generally and the United States in particular? Indeed, why even this urge to embody, and to materialize? And why does this urge lead them to the female form, and to this particular one? For, as we ask this last question, we surely must remember that there are many female exemplars to choose from in a subcontinent that for more than two millennia has repeatedly turned to the figure of the goddess for inspiration, succor, and resistance—models who have been consciously *and* conspicuously rejected in this novel mimetic gesture. And not least, and perhaps above all, why deify English, and at this current conjuncture? A whole host of questions, only some of which I begin to respond to in this essay by first turning, as I must, to Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi's sculpture *Liberty Enlightening the World*, more popularly known as the Statue of Liberty, dedicated in New York city's harbor in October 26, 1886.

Tropicalizing the Statue of Liberty

In his complicated ethnography of the Cuna Indians of Panama, *Mimesis and Alterity*, which has partly provoked my own analysis in these pages, Taussig reminds us that the West has long been everywhere, in the form of tangible goods and even more so in its images, facilitated as this dispersal has been by the various technological innovations of the age of mechanical reproduction, an age marked by the rebirth, recharging, and retooling of the mimetic faculty. This resurgence, facilitated by modernity's mimetically-capacious technologies such as the camera, discloses "an almost drug-like addiction to mime, to merge, to become other—a process in which… images chase images in a vast, perhaps infinitely expanded chain of images…."[11]

I shall respond to Taussig's invitation to chase images in a vast expanded chain of images by tracking some of the *tropical* entanglements of Ms. Liberty, entanglements that have been forgotten, disavowed, or merely footnoted in the dominant narrative about the Statue as a Euro-American work of art, icon of

[10]Scholarship on this is still emergent, but see especially Guru 2008; Jain 2010; Jaoul 2006; and especially Tartakov 1990, 2000, 2003.

[11]Taussig 1993: 43. In recent years, Bruno Latour has been similarly calling for a redefinition of "iconophilia" as "respect not for the image itself but for the *movement of the image*" (Latour 1998: 421, emphasis mine). He writes, "if we follow the path of iconophilia, we should, on the contrary, pay even more respect to the series of transformations for which each image is only a provisional frame" (Latour 1998; see also Latour 2002).

French-American friendship, and US national symbol. In doing so, I have been inspired by post-colonial theorizing on the process of tropicalizing that urges us to collapse distinctions between the here and the elsewhere, and to un-do stable identity formations in the metropole that set up impermeable boundaries around a center seemingly untouched by distant and foreign Others. So tropicalizing is a strategy for undoing the fiction of an originary West, and to argue that Euro-America is not some pristine unity whose mastery is re-affirmed when it finds itself replicated, reflected or mimicked in the tropical world of its former colonies: for "the West" is itself already creolized or hybridized through the presence of its Others.[12] This is not a purely theoretical exercise, for I hope to argue that the new Dalit goddess is only the latest in the Statue of Liberty's many tropical re-incarnations and some intimations outside the Euro-American sphere in which she has been resolutely placed and sealed off—by many scholars and by a patriotic viewing public. Indeed, I hope to show that there is an ironic logic at work in Ms. Liberty's appropriation by the Dalit cause in postcolonial India, for *her* birth may lie in a mimetic encounter with a surprising subaltern Other.

I refer to the fact that Bartholdi's famous sculpture had its origin possibly in the form of the female *fellah* or peasant woman who he witnessed at work in the fields when he first visited Egypt in 1855–1856 in his early twenties. Recent scholarship has shown that Bartholdi was immensely productive in Egypt during his short stay there (from November 1855 to July 1856), producing 211 drawings, 28 oil studies, and 103 calotypes—the man was clearly provoked and inspired![13] On his return to France, he showed several of his Egyptian works in various salons and exhibitions over the next decade, the most relevant for us being the drawings and clay models of "an Egyptian woman holding a light aloft" and "Egypt under the features of a female Fellah," which he executed between 1867 and 1869.[14] These he hoped would inspire the Egyptian ruler Ismail Pasha to commission him to build a colossal statue for the entrance of the recently completed Suez Canal, whose opening Bartholdi attended when he visited Egypt again in 1869. Art historian Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby writes that there can be no doubt of the ancestral connection between "fellah" and "Liberty," although Bartholdi himself subsequently disavowed this. In other words, in chasing our chain of images that link *English the Dalit Goddess* to *Liberty*, we have to (re)turn east—and closer to India—and locate ourselves in Egypt, and to the form of the female fellah laboring in the fields of whom Bartholdi made at least five extant clay models and two watercolor drawings which subsequently morphed into what we today know as the Statue of Liberty. Grigsby concludes, "The Statue of Liberty, so remote and abstractly chastened and

[12]I am paraphrasing here from Pinney (2003), who argues that "Europe was always a reflection of other times and places, never a self-present unity awaiting its replicatory colonial enunciation." [127–128]

[13]I am drawing here on Grigsby 2005; Provoyeur 1986: 83–96; Trachtenberg 1976: 46–57.

[14]As quoted in Grigsby 2005: 41–42.

generalized, began in actual encounters with Egyptian peasant women."[15] In turn, in his authoritative study of the Statue of Liberty, Marvin Trachtenberg writes that even Bartholdi's "lust for the colossal" was possibly triggered by his exposure to Egypt's colossal monuments that he witnessed on his voyage up the Nile: "the dream of equaling [these] became a mainspring of his artistic life."[16] Viewed from a re-location thus to Egypt, the monumental statue in New York's harbor no longer has a stable original identity against which later mimetic alters—such as the Dalit goddess—can be confidently construed, given that "it is far from easy to say who is the imitator and who is the imitated, which is copy and which is original."[17]

Tracing sources of inspiration for works of art, as we know, can be a tricky business, and ultimately I am less interested in claims of origins—revealing though they are in this particular instance—and more so in acts of disavowal, such as have led to the silencing of female muses who have animated male creators, or of native knowledges appropriated into metropolitan science. And Bartholdi was vehement in the 1880s in his rhetoric of denial when he insisted that "a little sketch" he had done for Ismail Pasha was a representation of "Egypt under the features of a female Fellah," and a "purely business transaction." *Liberty Enlightening the World*, on the other hand, was a "pure work of love," executed to ostensibly cement the growing friendship between France and the United States.[18] Yet, as Albert Boime has very convincingly demonstrated, Bartholdi's colossal sculpture was the brainchild of French conservatives intended for certain American conservatives and business interests associated with the Franco-American Union, even as it was meant to draw attention to French technological prowess and enterprise.[19] For the French jurist Laboulaye, whom Bartholdi credited with the idea behind the project that led to the gift and eventual shipment of the statue to New York, liberty was not to be confused at all with equality, and was read more in terms of a guarantor of individuality and sturdy "republican values" stripped of revolutionary fervor and attributes. Laboulaye and other sponsors of the Liberty project were deeply suspicious of the masses as well as revolution and insurrection from below. Indeed, Laboulaye disparaged Delacroix's famous bare-breasted Liberty with her gay red bonnet and pike fervently summoning her followers to battle. The new Liberty project was all about respect for law and order, and about the material demonstration of the calming power of reason. Ironically, in light of the later Dalit

[15]Grigsby 2005: 44. Trachtenberg however concludes that despite these Egyptian precursors, Bartholdi's model was based on the Colossus of Rhodes (1976: 52–53).

[16]Trachtenberg 1976: pp. 43–46. This is not to discount the neo-Classical roots of the colossal in European art in which Bartholdi was trained as a sculptor in France, but Trachtenberg writes, "it was this voyage up the Nile that seems to have really brought out his latent attraction to the colossal" (p. 46). For Bartholdi's impressions of the Egyptian colossi, 30 years after his initial encounter with them, see Trachtenberg 1976: 46–48.

[17]Taussig 1993: 78.

[18]Quoted in Grigsby 2005: 43.

[19]Boime 1987.

appropriation of the Statue of Liberty, it is important to note that Laboulaye also thought "there was often more liberty in a caste system than in societies without social distinctions."[20]

What is it that has made the Statue of Liberty such a globally recognizable image of our times? In an essay published on the occasion of its centennial celebrations in 1986, Anne Palumbo and Ann Abrams point to the technologies of mass reproduction that have endlessly replicated and disseminated the image, although of course there is no detailed micro-historical study of the manner in which the Statue of Liberty has become "legible and learnable" in diverse parts of the world, especially outside Euro-America.[21] What we do know is that even before Bartholdi's *Liberty Enlightening the World* had been completed as a statue, pictures of it began appearing in American newspapers and magazines and as lithographs and trade cards, as well three-dimensional miniature replicas.[22] And such reproductions only proliferated after its unveiling in October 1886, coming to stand in for the United States as nation and country: it soon became the dominant American icon, rivaling even the Stars and Stripes. So much so that in a 1915 publication, Henry D. Baker, American Consul in Bombay, urged American manufacturers of cotton piece goods preparing their trademarks and advertisement for the Indian market to use the Statue of Liberty to capture "the native fancy."[23]

That the Statue of Liberty has become a globally legible image through the work of mass reproduction is driven home to us by artist Cosmos Sarchiapone's collage *Statue of Liberty Centennial 1886–1986,* which assembles mass-produced cards of the statue issued over a period of a century, each different and yet also significantly alike. In doing this, Sarchiapone invites "the viewer to ponder the extent to which such images have come to pervade our consciousness. When we reflect that each individual card stands for thousands more exactly like it, we begin to appreciate that even the homely postcard represents the proliferation of the image of the Statue of Liberty on a monumental scale."[24] On the other hand, Andy Warhol's work *Liberty Enlightening the World 24 Times*, with its serial images of the colossal statue, alerts us to the risks that inevitably accompany the mass proliferation of an image subjected to the drives of technological mimesis, leading to the "leaching of meaning and an inevitable slide in the direction of the banal."[25] This conclusion would follow from Walter Benjamin's influential (but now contested) argument

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[20]Boime 1987: 116.

[21]Palumbo and Abrams 1986. See Wikipedia page, "Replicas of the Statue of Liberty" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Replicas_of_the_Statue_of_Liberty (the majority of the examples cited here appear, however, in metropolitan contexts).

[22]In fact, the American Committee of the Statue of Liberty distributed these replicas in the course of its fund-raising for the pedestal on which the statue now stands (Palumbo and Abrams 1986: 231).

[23]Baker 1915: 143.

[24]Palumbo and Abrams 1986: 233.

[25]Palumbo and Abrams 1986: 233.

about the loss of aura in the age of mass reproduction.[26] Such works of art alert me however to Judith Butler's insight from another context, that mimetic acts produce "the very notion of the original as an *effect* and consequence of the imitation itself."[27] Which is to say that for vast millions of people who recognize the Statue of Liberty—including most Dalits from India—but who have never physically traveled to New York city and been in the presence of the image, the endlessly reproduced, circulating and mobile proxy summons up the putative originary and rooted presence, even as it displaces it. In making this argument, we enter the realm of the simulacrum and recent theorization that valuably teaches us not to prioritize the original over the copy, indeed asks us to treat every representation as an image with a life of its own in distinction from its original.[28]

The Statue of Liberty disperses globally not just through the arts and commerce of mechanical repetition, but also in singular acts of statue building, and these are particularly revealing of mimetic networks in tropical and subaltern contexts away from the metropole. Thus in March 1887, barely 5 months after Bartholdi's statue was unveiled in New York, a smaller replica of Liberty was installed at the center of the first colonial exhibition in Hanoi city to publicly proclaim the French civilizing mission to its new colonial subjects in Indochina. Mark Philip Bradley writes:

> After the exhibition closed, *Liberty* was moved to a more permanent installation at the nearby Place Neyret, where it anchored a figurative spatial geography of French power and authority in Vietnam. *Liberty* rested on the southernmost tip of the expansive Avenue Puginier, named to honor the well-known Catholic missionary who had played a central role in the French conquest of northern Vietnam. From *Liberty*'s visage the avenue traversed the Citadel, which housed the colonial military forces; passed the beaux arts mansions that provided offices for the civil colonial administration; and finally, at its northernmost point, flowed into the imposing Place Puginier, dominated by the grand residence of the governor-general for French Indochina.[29]

If the Statue of Liberty could preside over more than half a century of French colonial oppression in Vietnam, back in its originating hemisphere, it got entangled in Cuban struggles against Spanish imperialism: indeed, in 1902 a Cuban version of the Statue of Liberty presided over the inaugural festivities of the new Republic as its emblem, apparently inspired by José Marti's essay on the statue at its unveiling in 1886 in New York to which he was witness. Two decades later, in 1920, Alfredo Zayas re-deployed it as his party's symbol in the elections of that year in Cuba to

[26] Benjamin 1985.

[27] Quoted in Potolsky 2006: 132.

[28] Potolsky 2006: 150–156.

[29] Bradley 2000: 3. See also Wikipedia site, "Replicas of the Statue of Liberty," which mentions that the statue was 9 ft 4 inches in height, and was known to locals unaware of its history as the "Statue of the Open-Dress Dame." It was also apparently referred to as "Round Eyed French Lady" (Ba Dan Xeo). The statue, deemed a "Humiliating Remnant," was torn down on August 1, 1945. I am grateful to Mark Bradley for his email of October 13, 2009, and for his painstaking translation of an article from the Vietnamese newspaper *Dong Phap*.

Fig. 9.3 The Goddess of Democracy, Tianenmen Square, Beijing, May 1989

counter his Liberal opponent José Miguel Gomez (who was apparently not a US favorite) and to signal his own pro-US tendencies.[30]

Of course, in our own times, the most publicized non-metropolitan context in which the Statue of Liberty was discursively and materially drawn into a potentially mimetic event was the 1989 student movement in China, and the unveiling of the so-called Goddess of Democracy (*minzhu nushen*) on May 30th in Tiananmen Square in Beijing (Fig. 9.3).[31] As we now know, the global media were quick to treat the 33-ft/10-m tall papier-maché sculpture as a simple reproduction of the Statue of Liberty, and the Chinese government as well got political mileage out of this identification and used it as a pretext to destroy the Chinese work of art as well as to de-legitimize the students. Drawing however upon the writings of many China

[30]*La Nacion*, January 1, 1887 and Guerra 2005: 247. Of course, much more can be said about the complex deployment of the Statue in the Americas than is possible here within the framework of this paper.

[31]I have found one of the most perceptive analyses of the antecedents as well as making of the sculpture in Peckham 2008. For a remarkable "eye-witness" report, see Tsao 1994. I have also benefited from Chow 1991; Esherick and Wassertstrom 1994; Feigon 1994; Wu 2005; Zhang 1998.

scholars, I have learned to think of the Goddess as a pastiche figure who at once resembled the Statue of Liberty (a replica of which was paraded down the streets of Shanghai a few days earlier), but who at the same time could inter-visually connect with traditional bodhisattva images, Chinese folklore figures, socialist-realist sculptures of revolutionary heroes found in Tiananmen Square, as well as giant white statues of Mao that had been floated during parades in the 1960s.[32] In particular, I want to draw attention to Robin Peckham's argument that "the most dramatic features of the piece were its intended ephemerality, its figuration as a haunting always simultaneously in the past and in the future, its performative and performance-based monumentality, its cultural and historical pastiche, and its public expression of private desires."[33]

In the stories about the Goddess of Democracy that have circulated since her brief life in Tiananmen Square, two elements are of interest to the argument I am developing here.

First, the Goddess was materially created out of a pre-existing figure of a Chinese peasant man apparently grasping a wooden pole in both hands; the bottom part of his staff was cut off and the top was changed into a torch; "his" hair was lengthened, breasts were added, and the face feminized.[34] Tsao Tsing-Yuan writes that the student-creators of the Goddess were particularly drawn to Vera Mukhina's monumental statue "A Worker and Collective Farm Woman," which had originally appeared atop the Soviet Pavilion at the 1937 Paris World Fair and "is still much admired in China."[35] Just as the female fellah or peasant woman triggered Bartholdi's mimetic endeavor in the 1870s, a Russian farm woman as embodied in a statue was the model for the Chinese student-sculptors in May 1989. It is worth noting in both instances the occlusion and mystification of the subaltern female laboring body as it comes to be monumentalized as sculpture, and reproduced as impassive "goddess."

Second, despite the fact that the Goddess of Democracy was eventually modeled on other figures, apparently the intention had originally been—according to many reports, including Tsao Tsing-Yuan's eyewitness account—to try to construct a replica of the Statue of Liberty, a figural materialization that would echo slogans dear to Western liberal democracies that were also shouted in the student protests, such as "Give me Liberty of Give me Death," "Government of the people, by the people, for the people," and "We Shall Overcome." Many journalists remarked on the students' media-savvy in using symbols and words strategically chosen to capture the attention of the West, the consensus being that their movement received

[32]Esherick and Wasserstrom 1994: 38; Feigon 1994: 133. For an image of the replica of the Statue of Liberty in Shanghai, where it was placed in front of City Hall, see Wu 2005: 45.

[33]Peckham 2008.

[34]Feigon 1994: 132–33.

[35]Tsao 1994. Wu cites a conflicting report from the *New Yorker* (dated October 23, 1989) in which it is recounted that a female student posed for the Goddess and some pictures of the Statue of Liberty were consulted. Hu's sources however confirm Tsao's account (Wu 2005: 248).

the attention of Euro-America because “they” at last seem to want to become like “us.” However, I want to invoke Taussig’s more complicated notion, via Benjamin, Adorno, and James Frazer, of what he calls the magic of mimesis wherein “the model, if it works, gains through its sensuous fidelity something of the power and personality of that of which it is a model.”[36] To get hold of something or to capture it by means of its likeness is also to establish a palpable, sensuous connection between the original and the representation: copy, connection, and sensuous knowing go together. Rather than merely seeing the Goddess of Democracy (and the other related acts of miming the West that the world witnessed in May 1989) as the instrumentalist manipulation of the international media by the Chinese students, I would like to suggest that what we were possibly witness to is the establishment of a palpable contact with the West, an act of sympathetic magic that reminds us of James Frazer’s words, “things act on each other at a distance through a secret sympathy.”[37] In his theorizing about mimesis, Theodor Adorno argues that where Enlightenment rationality seeks to standardize and classify, mimesis does not respect rigid divisions between subject and object. So it is akin to “touch, soothing, snuggling up, coaxing.” Adorno also compares mimesis to the sense of smell. Unlike the more rational sense of sight, which functions best at a distance from the object, smell literally mingles self and other. “When we see, we remain what we are; but when we smell, we are taken over by otherness.”[38] In other words, rather than keeping the world at bay, mimesis brings it closer, forging a bridge between self and other, creating a community of sympathy and action. Such sympathetic action resulted in the replication of the Goddess of Democracy outside China, such as we witness in many reiterations that appeared from Hong Kong to San Francisco, not to mention the provocative Victims of Communism Memorial in Washington, D.C.[39]

I am reminded again of Taussig’s comment about images chasing images in a vast, perhaps infinitely expanded chain of images, such acts of chasing mediated in this case by television broadcasts. The Statue of Liberty seemingly returned to her putative originary habitat in Euro-America, but this is no simple return, transformed as it has been through the work of the Other. At the same time, although she is destroyed in China, *minzhu nushen* lives on in her mimetic reincarnations elsewhere. In the age of mass reproduction, images might stop chasing other images

[36]Taussig 1993: 16. In sympathetic magic, Taussig also writes, “the magician exploits the bond felt to connect the image with what it is an image of” (2009: 110).

[37]Quoted in Potolsky 2006.

[38]Quoted in Potolsky 2006.

[39]For details on these, see especially the section titled “Replicas” on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goddess_of_Democracy and Wu 2005: 49; 162. See also Peckham’s comment, “These copies represent not so much the success of a particular artistic model, but rather the distributed quality of a redemptive hope; the Goddess has become the icon of the entire process of the Beijing Spring.” (2008).

(as we will see a little later), but never actually face death, living on as they do in proxies, copies, and numerous other mimic forms.

Almost the Same but Not Quite

Might this mimetic impulse of creating a community of secret sympathy account for the surprising capture of the likeness of the Statue of Liberty by Chandrabhan Prasad and Shanti Swaroop Baudh in 2006 in India? In other words, are these Dalit men performing an act of sympathetic magic that would enable the downtrodden Dalits of India to conscript new allies in the West, especially the United States, to enter the world of global capital, and bypass the entrenched caste hierarchy and elites of the subcontinent who have over the millennia kept them down?[40] To begin to think my way through this question, I finally turn to my anchor image *English the Dalit Goddess*, which began its pictorial career as a computer-generated image, assembled from various web-based images that artist Shanti Swaroop recreated with the help of Photoshop.[41] Subsequently, this image was printed as a poster, with an elaborate poem on the goddess by Prasad (Fig. 9.1), that I shall partly analyze later in this essay. About 1,000 copies of this poster have been printed and distributed across India, mostly by Prasad himself as he visits places to spread the word.[42] A bronze statue of the goddess, about 2 ft in height, was also unveiled at a function in New Delhi on October 25, 2009, and replicas given away as gifts to attending guests. The foundation stone for a temple to the new goddess in Prasad's home state of Uttar Pradesh was laid on April 30, 2010 with the intention of opening it by October 25, 2010, on the anniversary of Lord Macaulay's birth.[43]

Almost the very first thing that strikes me when I look at this bodyscape is that she is almost the same but not quite, to invoke Homi Bhabha's felicitous phrase

[40]It is important to note here that Prasad appears even more hostile about the danger and threat posed by the "Shudra" or "OBC" (Other Backward Caste) to the Dalit cause than he is to upper castes, even declaring that the Dalit and the Brahman have a common enemy in the Shudra (Anand 2001).

[41]The digital image was then printed and "unveiled" on October 25, 2006, by Antara Dev Sen (editor of the English journal *The Little Magazine*, and daughter of Nobel-laureate and economist Amartya Sen) to cries of "Goddess English long live!"). Author's interviews with Baudh, February 3, 2008 and Chandrabhan Prasad, February 22, 2010; see also http://www.dailypioneer.com/columnist1.asp?main_variable=Columnist&file_name=prasad%2Fprasad182.txt&writer=prasad)

[42]The image with the poem is also posted on Prasad's official website (www.chandrabhanprasad.com). (Interview with Chandrabhan Prasad, New Delhi, 22 February 2010.)

[43]Email communication from Chandrabhan Prasad, April 24, 2010. Unfortunately, due to various bureaucratic reasons, the opening has been delayed. For contemporary media coverage (national as well as global) of the April 2010 event, see Hotwani 2010; Joseph 2010; Shyam Babu 2010.

from his widely-cited essay on colonial mimicry.[44] For Bhabha, such figures of difference that are almost the same but not quite can be a menace to the colonizing power. I would like to consider whether such a figure of difference can also be a source of sympathetic magic in a post-colonial environment, the "sly civility" of the colonized native giving way to the mimetic capture of a key "Western" symbol by a globalizing Dalit "desire to defrost ourselves and dissolve into the emancipatory world of Capitalism."[45] Kancha Illiah, who has emerged over the past decade and more as a fierce spokesperson for Dalit and oppressed castes' interests, has observed recently, "In the cultural realm, globalization seems to have opened up a new channel of hope for the historically suppressed masses."[46] I want to consider whether this "channel of hope" is instantiated at the symbolic level by such acts of sympathetic magic in the here and now.[47]

To begin with, I shall explore the "not quite" elements of this bodyscape, each of which complicates any simple reading of this portrait as a straightforward act of copying: the fountain pen that replaces Liberty's flaming torch, the yellow hat that adorns the Dalit goddess's head instead of the crown with its 25 viewing windows, a computer monitor complete with keyboard and mouse in place of the pedestal and a spoked wheel on the screen, and of course, most strikingly, an outline map of "India," its critical northern, western, and eastern boundaries all done away with in a burst of beautiful colors. More so than any of the other "not quite" elements, it is the presence of the map of India that reveals the radical subversive potential of this bodyscape which speaks back—powerfully and resonantly—to a dominant visualization of the Indian map as the home and abode of the mother/goddess Bharat Mata (or Mother India) (Fig. 9.4).[48] Such images of a cartographed Mother India, which began to circulate in a wide variety of media in India from the early years of the twentieth century, were revitalized and redeployed from the 1980s onwards as part of a resurgent upper caste Hindu nationalism's attempt to colonize the public visual sphere.[49] When I met with and spoke to Baudh in February 2008, I specifically asked him about the imperative to include the map of India—and in this form, its critical borders undone, possibly leaving the nation-state open to the world. He mentioned his interest in geography as a college student in Delhi, as well as his

[44]Bhabha 1994.

[45]Chandrabhan Prasad, quoted in Menon and Nigam 2007: 95. "A few Dalits as billionaires, a few hundred as multi-millionaires and a few thousand as millionaires would democratize and de-Indianize Capitalism" (ibid.). In the October 2009 party that was thrown to celebrate yet another birthday for Macaulay ("the father of Indian modernity,"), several speeches were made on the importance of Dalit capitalism; several budding and successful Dalit entrepreneurs were invited to the event and were especially felicitated. For an important discussion charting why and how Prasad's agenda marks a critical shift from opposition to globalisation to its embrace in the name of "Dalit capitalism," see Menon and Nigam 2007: 95–102.

[46]http://www.thehindu.com/2003/02/22/stories/2003022200621000.htm

[47]For Dalit politics of "the here and now," see Nigam, forthcoming.

[48]Ramaswamy 2010.

[49]Brosius 2005.

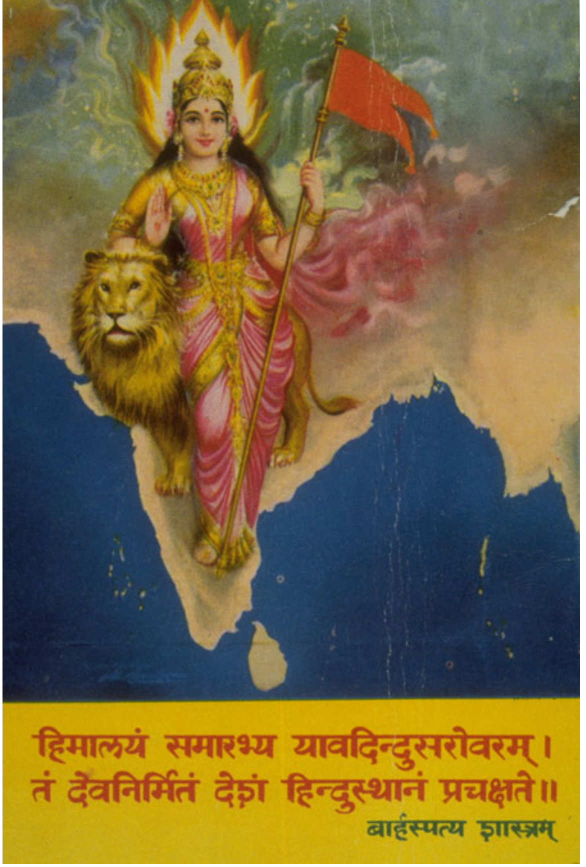

Fig. 9.4 Bharat Mata. Picture postcard printed by Karnatak Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, circa 1990

fondness for drawing maps. When Prasad commissioned him in 2006 to produce a likeness of the new Dalit goddess, he said he went straight to the internet, located virtual maps of India available there, but rather than take them on board as such, showing the country as a bounded entity, he did away with external borders and internal divisions. He then grew passionate, and remarked, "This is our land. We are the original inhabitants. We are the original OWNERS of this land. We will never destroy or hurt our COUNTRY. This is our PROPERTY and we will get it back at some point."[50] We know virtually nothing about Dalit engagement with the science of cartography, or the use of maps to claim spaces within Indian national territory in the name of Dalits. Here I can point to two precedents: In the 1940s, Chaudhury

[50]My interview was conducted in a mixture of Hindi, English and Hinglish. The words in caps however were uttered in English. In a published interview dating to 2001, Prasad insisted that "unless radical land reforms take place in India, Dalits can never, and should never, think of achieving freedom" (Anand 2001).

Rahmat Ali (who coined the term Pakistan, and also tried to visualize it cartographically) issued a map that inscribes an unbounded territory (in the Gangetic heartland) named "Akhootistan" (Land of the Achuts, or Untouchables).[51] More recently, in the 1990s a website called Dalitstan.org posted a map of India with a space for what it called "Dalitstan."[52] It is revealing that Prasad and Baudh are much bolder than these earlier examples, for they claim the entire map of India—indeed Indian national territory and beyond—for Dalits "as original owners of this land," even as they prepare to stake out a place for Dalits as critical players in the new wired economies of global capitalism in a neo-liberal India to which entrée is possible only through English.

As we well know, it is through the map as an artifact that all manner of claims to territorial possession have been imagined, anticipated, and made in modernity. The use of the map form of the nation in Indian modernity has been complex and variegated, but of particular relevance for my argument here is the rush to claim cartographic space for Mother India, for her prominent "nationalist" sons such as Gandhi, as well as for the numerous deities of the Hindu pantheon, especially male gods like Vishnu, Shiva, Rama, Krishna and Hanuman.[53] In his many writings on this project, Prasad has been surprisingly silent about Mother India and the "big men," her mostly Hindu sons, in whose company she is invariably shown in patriotic art, but he is particularly vocal in his opposition to the Hindu pantheon.[54] Curiously disavowing materialist arguments for Dalit oppression, he singles out "the powerful Saraswati-Lakshmi-Durga triumvarate," as he names it, as the chief weapon in the arsenal of the Hindu caste hierarchy.[55] This in itself is a surprising claim, given that feminist scholars would point to the "taming" of the goddess over the long haul of patriarchal Hinduism when male deities have ultimately triumphed, reducing the autonomous and powerful multi-armed and multiply-armed *Sakti* to

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[51]Rahmat Ali 1946. For Dalit manoeuvrings for a homeland during the Partition of India, see especially Butalia 2000; Rawat 2002.

[52]http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dalitstan and http://en.allexperts.com/e/d/da/dalitstan.htm (accessed March 2008).

[53]Ramaswamy 2007, 2008, 2009. The hyper-visibility accorded to a female divinity in Hindu-Indian territorial space is itself an unusual outcome of gendered nationalist politics in colonial and post-colonial India, as I have argued elsewhere (Ramaswamy 2010).

[54]I quote from the web-interview with S. Anand (dated to February 2001) in which he observes,

> If there is a divinity that can take on the Hindu pantheon, it is Lord Buddha. However, being a great feminist, the Buddha wouldn't take on the exalted goddesses, Saraswati, Lakshmi and Durga, despite the fact that they have historically discriminated against the 'untouchables'. Who, then, is left to fight this formidable trinity whose hatred of Dalits is no secret?... So Dalits began looking for a goddess who could overwhelm the powerful Saraswati-Lakshmi-Durga triumvirate. They understood that the inhuman practice of untouchability was part of the Hindu caste system. Over a period of time, they began to realise that only the Goddess English had the power to destroy the caste order.

[55]See Chandrabhan Prasad, "The road to Dalit empowerment was paved by Lord Macaulay." (Posted on October 26, 2006 (http://www.dnaindia.com/sunreport.asp?Newsid=1060755).

a demure consort-figure. Nevertheless, Prasad is essentially right in maintaining the focus on the female divinity figure, given that Dalits and other oppressed beings in the Hindu-Indic world repeatedly turn to the goddess to help them out in times of distress and trouble. And importantly, the terrain of India—which Prasad does not want to relinquish as he charts out his agenda for Dalit capitalism—has become through nationalist symbolic activities (secular as well as Hindu) the realm of the goddess Mother India from whom essentially the Dalit project has to wean away its constituents.[56] The struggle for power takes place on an essentially feminized terrain around contending female bodies.

The pen in the bodyscape metonymically invokes the hallowed figure of Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956), the father-preceptor of the modern Dalit political movement and a personal hero for both Prasad and Baudh. In the mass-produced public iconography of Ambedkar in the form of prints and statuary that have surfaced over the last few decades in different parts of India, the Dalit leader is typically presented as a man in a formal business suit, generally blue, with one or several fountain pens in his pockets, a book in his hand (usually the Indian Constitution), and his right arm raised in a teaching gesture (Fig. 9.5).[57] As Gary Tartakov writes, "He is a city man, a man of learning, and a man—not a god."[58] Unusually, Ambedkar has rarely if ever been shown occupying a map of India in the dominant mass print culture of the bazaar and street over the past three-quarters of a century; now through Baudh and Prasad's efforts, he too has laid claim to the map of India—if only metonymically, through the upraised arm holding a pen, signaling that it is through secular modern knowledge rather than traditional services that Dalits will find empowerment.[59]

Prasad is also clear that along with the gods of Hindu India, the languages of India—the everyday spoken tongues of Dalits and others—are also the source of the oppression of his fellow Dalits, bearing as these do the legacy of caste humiliation and hierarchies. His implicit argument here is against Sanskrit (which he correctly

[56]In my most recent discussion with Prasad, when I queried him about the presence of the map in the image, he immediately invoked the name of Mother India ("Bharat Mata") and said, "We have too many images of Bharat Mata looking fair and upper caste. We have to take it [sic] back" (Author's interview with Prasad, February 22, 2010, New Delhi). Over the course of the twentieth century, many language movements across India have feminised and maternalised the spoken tongue of their constituents (On the feminisation of Tamil, see Ramaswamy 1997; on Telugu, see Reddy 2006; on Hindi, see King 1994). English the Dalit Goddess joins the company of such female exemplars and has to compete with them at the symbolic level for allegiance.

[57]Jaoul 2006; Tartakov 2000. For an insightful analysis of these "modernist" elements in the evolving Ambedkar public iconography and the ambivalences it might generate among a class-riven Dalit community today, see Guru 2008.

[58]Tartakov 1990: 411.

[59]At the same time, I believe that this bodyscape signals a shift in Dalit politics to a post-Ambedkarian moment when the focus is no longer on securing "safeguards" in government institutions, but to put pressure on the private/corporate sector to become equal opportunity employers (on this, see Menon and Nigam 2007: 97–99).

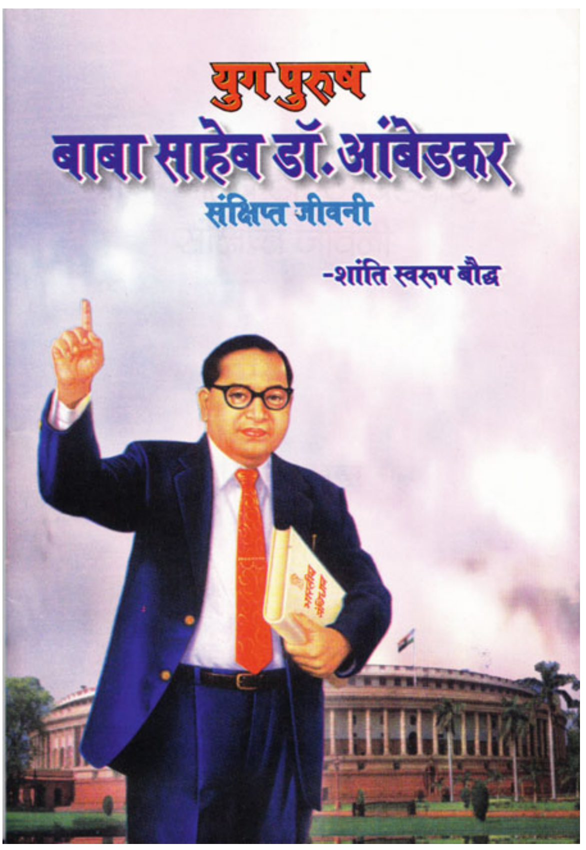

Fig. 9.5 B.R. Ambedkar. Book cover designed by Shanti Swaroop Baudh 2006

reads as having had an over-riding influence on these languages, but perhaps incorrectly reduces to only its ritual power), but his overt argument is against tradition itself—in whose name Dalits have been kept down.[60] Hence the computer as the pedestal on which the new English goddess stands, for it is the symbol of science and technology which would be the means through which Dalits could overcome millennia of being associated with the lowliest tasks of society, and also being confined to public sector employment in post-independent India. In his interviews, Prasad points to the clear danger of IT becoming another Sanskrit, and the hold of the upper castes on technical education and highly skilled jobs in the IT sector is well known, even if not well documented.[61] Dalit emancipation is truly not possible unless Dalits become part of the "IT revolution" with its promise of

[60] Anand 2001.

[61] Quoted in Anand 2001. Prasad estimated in 2001 that only 0.00001% of the Dalit populace even possibly owned a personal computer (see also Prasad 2003: 170–172).

"air conditioned anti-sweat labour."[62] Since "the road to IT revolution goes via English and Computers," not surprisingly Prasad's new icon of English stands on a computer.[63]

Finally, of course, there is the matter of the yellow hat, which was Prasad's addition to the image.[64] I want to recall that part of Bartholdi's conservative reconfiguration of the figure of Liberty was the discarding of the red cap or Phyrigian bonnet, which had been the historic emblem of liberty in paintings such as Delacroix's. As Albert Boime notes, "To choose a calm posture instead of a vehement one for the female Liberty, a heavily clad figure instead of partial nudity, and to eliminate the Phrygian bonnet was clearly to signify that emphasis would be on the calming power of reason rather than on a fervent call to unceasing battle."[65] By bringing back the bonnet—yellow rather than red though it might be—the Dalit mimetic act on the margins of Euro-America triggers in us a moment of recollection regarding a former tradition in France of associating liberty with popular upsurge from below. At the same time, in places like modern India, the hat was also the symbol of the colonial West, serving to distinguish the European from the colonized. As Emma Tarlo writes:

> Throughout the difficult relationship between Indian and European dress, the head usually emerged as the most sensitive of all sartorial issues: those Indians who adopted European hats were often accused of taking on superior British airs. Most, though by no means all, took care to avoid wearing the *sola topi* [pith helmet] which almost amounted to the British equivalent of caste dress.[66]

Given that donning a European hat in colonies like India becomes a key sartorial marker of the "mimic man," it is not perhaps surprising that the Dalit goddess adopts a hat in her mimetic attempts to create a community of sympathy with new allies for a new project—the project of English as the language that would prepare Dalits for their engagement with global capital. This is, to borrow a phrase from Michael Taussig again, "the magic of western gear," a putting on that enables "contact with the West, the touch, the feel, like putting on a skin."[67]

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[62] Anand 2001.

[63] Prasad 2003: 172. For an important endorsement of Prasad's project by a key entrepreneur in the Indian IT sector, see Nilakeni 2009: 80–89. Nilakeni's endorsement makes one wonder whether Prasad's project in the name of Dalit empowerment might actually play into the neo-liberal agendas of twenty-first century Indian capitalism (I am grateful to Chandan Gowda for this insight).

[64] Interview with Shanti Swaroop Baudh, New Delhi, February 8, 2008 and with Chandrabhan Prasad, February 22, 2010. Prasad told me that he added the hat to make the image "look like an Englishman" [sic]. Note that newspaper reports refer to this object as a "hippie hat."

[65] Boime 1987: 122.

[66] Tarlo 1996: 57

[67] Taussig 1993: 191. To recall, Ambedkar also always appears in a Western suit in most popular representations. For some interesting observations on such Dalit sartorial departures from the look of "the political man" in India, see Nigam, forthcoming.

I am also interested in the bright yellow hat as a revelatory sign of defiance and distance towards symbols that we might associate with the Indic world over the many millennia during which they evolved prior to the arrival of “the West” at its doorstep. Indeed, other than the wheel on the computer screen—which metonymically connects the Dalit goddess to Buddhist iconography, mimetically recovered in Indian nationalist symbolic politics and in contemporary Dalit visual practices[68]—Baudh and Prasad’s bodyscape marks a conspicuous and conscious rejection of an “essential” India as expressed in a Sanskritic-Hindu worldview.[69] Earlier I invoked Taussig’s invitation for us to chase images in a vastly expanded chain of images. What we are witness to in this bodyscape is that even while it gets entangled in a mimetic network woven over the past century and more around the Statue of Liberty (an icon that I have now ceased to think of as exclusively Euro-American), there is a radical cessation—an end—to the chain of images that have linked these two Dalit men to an Indic world associated with Sanskritic Hinduism, and recently revived through the resurgence of upper-caste nationalism. The Dalit intellectual Gopal Guru once wrote, “Dalits have no nostalgia: what they remember is only the history of humiliation and exploitation.”[70] In its intensely anti-nostalgic appearance, marked by rejection and cessation, this bodyscape visually alerts us to a painful history of past humiliation and exploitation. “We want European culture, which is the best,” Chandrabhan Prasad declared provocatively in an interview, claiming as well that for Dalits, the arrival of the British was a blessing—just as their departure in 1947 was a disaster since it threw them back at the mercy of caste Hindus.[71] This is a reading of British rule with which we might disagree, especially in the face of what we know of the colonial period as having actually strengthened and consolidated the hold of Brahmanical Hinduism on India. It is also clear that in colonial India, “Western education” did not really reach the masses, nor was the intention to make scientific and technological knowledge readily available to Indians. Nevertheless, this bodyscape simultaneously announces the problem that its Dalit creators have with their (Hindu) Indian inheritance, even while reaffirming their commitment to a modern and secular India as a place that is their home, indeed of which they are the original inhabitants. Just as English allows them to forge a pan-Indian Dalit identity, the Statue of Liberty—that hyper-real figure that has come to be so indelibly associated with freedom and democracy in our times, not least through the mimetic activities on the margins—enables them to signal their desire for a new kind of politics based on an embrace, rather than a rejection, of the

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[68]The wheel appears as well on the pedestal of many Ambedkar statues installed in public spaces in recent years, and is also part of the logo of Baudh’s publishing house. It is another reminder that this Dalit project, for all its imitation of the Statue of Liberty, is very much an “Indian” project, and a “secular” Indian one at that.

[69]For a similar break by Ambedkar in the 1920s, see Jaffrelot 2005.

[70]Quoted in Anand 2001.

[71]Prasad also declared provocatively in another interview, “The British empire came to India too late and left too early,” http://in.rediff.com/news/2007/mar/08inter.htm

West. Lest detractors should dismiss their project as a sign of continuing thralldom to "the West," especially illegitimate at a time when India has begun to assert itself as an emergent super-power on its own terms, I want to recall the Statue of Liberty's many tropical entanglements, as well as its eventual origins in the figure of a laboring subaltern body akin to that of the Dalit's.

This is why in spite of welcoming a hermeneutics of suspicion regarding authorship, originality, and uniqueness, which the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction encourages us to cultivate, I still want to insist—at least for this bodyscape and for its ancestral figure, the Statue of Liberty—on an exploration of origins, for such an examination allows us to once again claim that figure—dominantly seen as a sign of the United States, even by our Dalit protagonists—for a project situated at the putative margins rather than in the metropole.

The Wager on English in Dalit India

Chandrabhan Prasad intends that the new Dalit deity should be more than just a "poster goddess," with a life confined to the mass-produced products of technological mimesis. In some of his writings, he has clearly assigned her an important performative, even ritual, role that is revealing of his larger aspirations regarding the future place of English in India, especially Dalit India. So, he calls upon Dalit parents to show an image of the Goddess English "for a minute" to new born Dalit infants. He then advises:

> OK
> Go ahead
> Lean toward the baby
> Lean poetically
> Reach out the ears
> First the left ear
> Whisper now
> "A-B-C-D"
> Turn to the right
> Whisper
> "1-2-3-4"
> Enthralled, Goddess English has embraced the baby.

Not least, October 25th—Macaulay's birthday—would be celebrated every year as "English Day," since it was thanks to that lord that the elite stranglehold on education by a monopoly on Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic began to unravel.[72] This

[72]See Chandrabhan Prasad, "The road to Dalit empowerment was paved by Lord Macaulay." (posted on October 26, 2006 (http://www.dnaindia.com/sunreport.asp?Newsid=1060755)

would be the new Dalit "bhagavati jagaran" day.[73] At the inaugural celebration for the goddess—and Macaulay—on October 25, 2006, in New Delhi, the Dalit poet Parak recited a poem to the new Dalit deity, as revealed in Baudh's portrait, which included the following verse:

Oh, Devi Ma
Please let us learn English
Even the dogs understand English.[74]

And Prasad himself insisted, "Today, English-speaking Dalits and Adivasis are less disrespected, therefore, empowered by Goddess English, Dalits can take their place in the new globalised world."[75] In a follow-up essay Prasad posted on the internet, he wrote:

> English makes it much easier for all Dalits to leave caste-based occupations. Will English-speaking Dalits, for instance, be asked to skin dead cows? Will English-speaking Dalits be expected to clean gutters and roads? Will English-speaking Dalits be content to work as menials at landlords' farms? The Goddess English can empower Dalits, giving them a chance to break free from centuries of oppression.[76]

Indeed, in his poem on the goddess, Prasad writes:

Without Dalit Goddess English, knowledge is a gun without cartridges
Without Dalit Goddess English, education is a pen without ink
Without Dalit Goddess English, a degree is a book without pages.

Most provocatively, in an interview subsequent to the unveiling ceremony, Prasad defended his support for English against the criticisms of well-meaning Indian intellectuals, some of who were reportedly "aghast" at the abandoning of the Indian vernaculars in the new Dalit project:

> Let all Indian languages wither away and let all Indians speak English by 2060 or so. Many of the regional problems will disappear. The fights between Kannada and Telugu or Tamil will be solved. India will be a better nation.[77]

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[73]This is the closest Prasad comes to embedding his new goddess in a Hindu-Indic ritual world: *Jagran*s are all-night ceremonies featuring the singing of prayers through which the devotee's chosen deity is "awakened" (For an excellent ethnographic discussion of the role of jagrans in contemporary Punjabi villages that draws attention to how mass printing, loudspeakers, movies and cassette tapes have been incorporated into an older ritual practice, see Erndl 1993: 84–104).

[74]See also Prasad's statement, "Alok Rai, the Hindi legend Premchand's grandson, has also protested against Dalits abandoning ethnic languages. He is a professor of English at Delhi University. He has a dog named Rocky. He talks to his dog only in English. Even his dog understands English and he doesn't want Dalits to know English. What hypocrisy!" http://in.rediff.com/news/2007/mar/08inter.htm

[75]http://www.dailypioneer.com/columnist1.asp?main_variable=Columnist&file_name=prasad%2Fprasad182.txt&writer=prasad

[76]See Chandrabhan Prasad, "The road to Dalit empowerment was paved by Lord Macaulay." (posted on October 26, 2006 (http://www.dnaindia.com/sunreport.asp?Newsid=1060755)

[77]http://in.rediff.com/news/2007/mar/08inter.htm. For a powerful statement criticizing Prasad's critics, see historian Shahid Amin's brief note, "Patriotism for the Oppressed," *The Hindu Magazine*, December 03, 2006, http://www.hindu.com/mag/2006/12/03/stories/2006120300040100.htm

In response to the interviewer's question, "Do you want kill Indian languages," he responded, "I don't want to kill it [*sic*]. I want a museum of Indian languages, culture and traditions. Lock Indian culture in the museum. Let it go to the museum and let all of us speak English."[78]

In such maneuverings, two things are revelatory of the manner in which Prasad would like to position Dalits in the complex language economy of twenty-first century India: an un-sentimental alliance with English; and a remarkable lack of ambivalence about the language that even the most unabashed Anglophiles in the subcontinent have not generally professed. It is well known that English has had a long history of admirers and supporters in the subcontinent from at the least the early years of the nineteenth century. Chandrabhan is also not the first to see English as a Dalit panacea.[79] Yet what does stand out is the absence of affect and ambivalence with which he argues—to date—for its importance for a Dalit engagement with a capitalist global economy, an absence that marks his mimetic capture of a female figure who for all appearances looks "Western" (and cannot be mistaken for an Indian), and is emphatically not a mother and cannot be readily confused with one (unlike the other goddesses of India). Indeed, in the many statements that Prasad has made on English, including ones conferring the status of "goddess" on it, he does not extend to it the affect-inflected category of "mother tongue" by which the spoken languages of India have been referred since the later nineteenth century.[80] So, English is to be embraced by Dalits as their new (and only) language, but not named as their mother tongue.

In the intellectual genealogy Prasad provides for his project, he invokes Babasaheb Ambedkar, who once referred to English as "the milk of lionesses," clearly using the gendered (and maternalized) vocabulary that become naturalized in colonial discourses about languages. The other figure whose inspiration is repeatedly invoked is Savitribai Phule, wife of reformer Jotirao Phule (another figure who occupies a high place in the evolving new Dalit pantheon of exemplars and heroes),[81] whose poems (in Marathi) feminizing English (as mother, rather than goddess, although the two, as we know, merge into each other in many contexts) have been recuperated and publicized:

> English language (is) our English mother
> With verve and zeal sets us free
> Mother English is not of a Mughal
> Neither of a Peshwa Brahmin nor of a fool
> Mother English imparts true wisdom

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[78]http://in.rediff.com/news/2007/mar/08inter.htm

[79]Anand 1999; Dasgupta 2000; Nilakeni 2009.

[80]On the gendered politics of languages in colonial and post-colonial India, see Ramaswamy 1997.

[81]Anupama Rao writes that "Phule was the first to recuperate Dalits' history as a militant struggle against Brahmanical hegemony" (2008:13). It is worth noting that this "founding antagonism" between Brahman and non-Brahman, including Dalits, is not as important for Chandrabhan, and indeed he even proposes that Brahmans and Dalits should form an alliance against the Shudras.

> With love revives the oppressed ones
> Mother English embraces the downtrodden
> Caressing and bringing us up who are fallen
> Mother English breaks shackles of inhumanity
> Restores humanity to the neglected
> . . .
> "Givers of knowledge, the English have come
> Learn, you had no chance in the bygone millennium
> We'll teach our children and learn ourselves
> We'll receive knowledge, gain wisdom and learn.
> . . ..
> "Mother English has come
> Forlorn'n dark is our hopelessness
> Ominous fears of heaven n' Hades
> In such a dismal time of ours
> Come, O English Mother's hour
> Throw off this yoke of traditional beliefs
> Break open the door and walk out free
> Learn to read and write dear ones
> Opportune times; Mother English has come.
> . . ..
> "In English rule we've found our joy
> Terrible days gone, Mother English ahoy!
> . . ...
> "Cry out aloud! And shout!
> Mother English is OUT[82]

Yet, even while making a plea for the importance of English, neither Savitribai nor Ambedkar called for a rejection of other languages of the subcontinent that Dalits have habitually spoken. Yet this is what Prasad does in a new post-colonial move that is as intensely anti-nostalgic about the Indian past, as it is mimetic of the global West:

> We will deactivize our roots-based preferences—caste, language, religion, culture, food habits, and lifestyle. We will realize that nostalgia is a psychological weapon of the dominant. For at least a few hours, we will sign off from the wisdom that we had never asked for.[83]

"Signing off from the wisdom that we had never asked for"—that is the critical *anti-nostalgia* that invigorates Prasad's politics and for which English is as essential

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[82]"Dalit Diary: Sunil Sardar." *The Pioneer*, New Delhi, Sunday January 6, 2008. Sardar has based his translation on a work titled "Sahitya Anni Sanskruti Mandal" edited by M.G. Mali and published by the Government of Maharashtra, 1988. This appears to be a composite translation based on at least three poems that Savitri Bai wrote in English, two of which are titled "Ingreji Mawli" (English is my mother"), and a third titled, "Ingreji Shikka" (Learn English). Two of these poems are in the *abhang* genre (conventionally used to praise the Lord Vithoba in the devotional movements of Maharastra), and the third is in a *padhya* or verse form. I am enormously grateful to Shefali Chandra for her clarifications on this point. For the larger gendered contexts in which we might want to place Savitri Bai's iterations regarding English, see Chandra, forthcoming.

[83]Chandrabhan Prasad, "The English Day" (Invitation for celebration on October 25, 2009).

as it is for forging a pan-Indian identity for Dalits who are otherwise fissured by the very particularistic attachments that have also grossly subordinated them to dominance and denigration by all other castes arraigned against them—and as it is for embracing rather than rejecting globalization. Needed, this anti-nostalgia might be a signature sentiment animating a Dalit politics that does not have to bear the burden of maintaining authenticity, purity, and a commitment to a hallowed past that are essential to upper-caste status.[84] Paradoxically, the historically oppressed have a greater freedom to choose new symbols in the new global age, as Kancha Illiah writes.[85]

In an important new analysis, Nivedita Menon and Aditya Nigam have argued, "The story that the Dalits want to narrate can be told only with reference to the history of caste oppression. It is there that the secret of their exclusion and cultural mutilation lies."[86] Chandrabhan Prasad is not oblivious to this history of oppression—on the contrary, as his many statements make clear. But he has also diagnosed that the real "secret" of their exclusion lies in being kept out of the world of English, which has meant that Dalits have been unable to become participants (let alone leaders) in a global knowledge-economic system. Indeed, on December 23, 2005, about 10 months before the unveiling of *English the Dalit Goddess,* Prasad hosted another party in New Delhi—to celebrate a new agenda, that of "Dalit capitalism." The invitation letter to this unusual party read:

> Like a remorseless despot, history mauled and molded us into the grave world of the untouched, unheard and unspoken. . .Frozen into the time frame of history. . .we now desire to defrost ourselves, and dissolve into the emancipatory world of Capitalism.[87]

And it is this agenda that has led Prasad into an embrace of the United States, and hence of course of the Statue of Liberty, a move that put him at odds with other Dalit and Leftist intelligentsia of India. As he himself put it, "Another pet-theme of Dalit movements is opposing globalization and indulging in US-bashing. To me, globalization is a global phenomenon. Instead of wasting resources, time and talent in trying to stop the unstoppable, Dalits should seek their share in it."[88] In his many writings, the United States has emerged as the paradigm for the "democratization of capital," and for opportunities provided for Black entertainers, journalists and billionaires to emerge to the fore. Although Menon and Nigam note that "there is an air of the utopian in his representations of contemporary American society. . ." it is worth recalling here Taussig's argument that "the wonder of mimesis lies in the

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[84]I have also benefited here from my reading of Aditya Nigam's articulation of a Dalit politics of "the here and now, a refusal to defer important questions of power and representation to any distant future" (Nigam forthcoming).

[85]http://www.thehindu.com/2003/02/22/stories/2003022200621000.htm.

[86]Menon and Nigam 2007: 19. See also Nigam forthcoming.

[87]Quoted in Menon and Nigam 2007: 95.

[88]Quoted in Menon and Nigam 2007: 98. See also Prasad's column in May 2000 for *The Pioneer* titled "Why Not Borrow Good Ideas from the US?" (Prasad 2003: 121–23).

copy drawing on the character and power of the original, to the point whereby the representation may even assume that character and that power."[89] The mimetic capture of the Statue of Liberty for the Dalit cause might be more than a carnivalesque gesture on the part of Prasad (although it is certainly that as well).[90] It represents as well the new Dalit wager that with the blessing of English, the "magic" of global capitalism will rub off on the followers of the new goddess and help nurture a new generation of Dalits *away* from the dustbin of history to which they have been confined over the millennia. In Prasad's words in praise of the new goddess:

> With Goddess English, the baby will not grow to serve landlords.
> With Goddess English, the baby will not grow to skin dead animals.
> With Goddess English, the baby will not grow to enter drainages.
> With Goddess English, the baby will not grow to raise pigs and buffaloes.
> With Goddess English, the baby will not grow to chase field rats.

The endgame of course is that Goddess English will enable the formation "Dalit Capitalist" to not seem a contradiction in terms. The Statue of Liberty is likewise a fitting image to mimic from this point of view, given that its early history was clearly connected with America's growing capitalist class, "mighty money kings," and narrow business interests.[91] In this regard as well, this Dalit mimetic experiment performed at the margins reminds us of a history of the monument in the metropole that has become occluded in its subsequent mystification as a beacon for "your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free."

Image and Affect in the Age of Transcultural Turbulence

By way of a brief—and provisional—closure to this set of reflections on the mimetic capture on the margins of the metropole of an iconic image of Euro-America, the Statue of Liberty, I return to some of the key terms of this volume as laid out by Christiane Brosius and Roland Wenzlhuemer in their introduction and insist that any study of turbulence and transculturation ought necessarily to compel us to also attend to the politics and semiotics of affect. If the "violent collision" between cultures unleashes "new histories, new ideas, and new means of representation," as Nicholas Mirozeff has noted (see this volume, introduction), we also need to consider how viewers of an image that has been unmoored from the former context in which it had been originally produced, respond to it when it finds new homes and addresses. The Dalit project that I have examined in this essay leads me

[89]Taussig 1993: xiii.

[90]For the adoption of "the distinctive idiom of carnivalesque celebration and excess" by some Dalit intellectuals and politicians, see Menon and Nigam 2007: 102.

[91]Boime 1987.

to wonder if anti-nostalgia and a carnivalesque spirit of dark humor, rather than a melancholic yearning for lost pasts and disappeared homes, is one of the affects that we need to take into consideration as we analyze how images enter the global flows of our times and shed any pretensions of being authentic and original.

If anti-nostalgia is the principal affective register within which we might place this particular Dalit project, what sort of ethics of seeing does this image then demand of us? I would suggest that at the very least it compels us to move away from a "bad copy" model in which an image such as *English the Dalit Goddess* would necessarily be denigrated, and instead asks us to pay as much attention to the work it is doing as we do to "the original" which it sought to capture. Each act of replication might result in a movement away from "the original," and in turn puts pressure on how "the original" itself comes to be seen: hence my suggestion that when we have seen the Dalit English Goddess and return our gaze to the familiar Statue of Liberty in New York harbor, we look at the latter anew—and differently. That too is part of the ethics of seeing we need to cultivate when we confront the global—and asymmetrical—flows of images.

Not least, I would like to suggest that we ought to take into consideration in this age of mass replication and transculturality the struggle over newness, as producers of images attempt to gain attention at a time when that attention is under pressure to move on to the next novelty that appears on the horizon, sometimes within seconds. Is this what accounts for the "performative excess" with which Chandrabhan Prasad has been charged, as he attempts to "root" and "authenticate" his new Dalit goddess in an old culture that has repeatedly been confronted with the proliferating visions of the divine feminine?[92] How can he—or for that matter anyone who participates in this new brave world of transcultural turbulences and the "twittered gaze,"—hope to build a constituency for his particular project, and to do so in a manner that steers clear of the shock-and-awe tactics that the military-industrial complexes of the hyper-modern West have generated in recent times? This question serves as a reminder that image-making in the age of mass reproduction, of transcultural turbulence, and global flows is a fraught and risky business that the feeble-minded and weak-hearted enter at their own peril.

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[92] Anand 2010.

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Chapter 10
Pushpamala N. and the 'Art' of Cinephilia in India

Ajay Sinha

Art teaches us to see into [inside of] things/Popular art and kitsch allows us to look out from the inside of things.
Walter Benjamin[1]

Art and Flow

The 'things' to which Walter Benjamin refers imply a world of objects and images that participate in our social life and 'organize our private and public affection,' as Bill Brown explains.[2] For Benjamin, 'art' is a way of seeing inside the very things that, on the opposite side of his backslash, are also the subject of popular art. I want to explore a compelling example of Benjamin's triangulated and relational sense of 'art' in the works of Pushpamala N., a contemporary artist in India. Since the mid-1990s, Pushpamala has gained an international reputation for photographic projects in which she uses her body to impersonate a wide range of subjects from popular media and film. While artists regularly engage with media images around the world, my argument will be that Benjamin's sense of art goes largely unrecognised in modern and contemporary art. This is primarily because art's ethical and cultural value is gauged not by its affective relationship to things but by the degree to which art is able to separate the human sensibility from the world of affective things. This 'disinterested' approach, well-known as Kantian aesthetics, informs the politics of

I thank Pushpamala N. for a close reading of the essay, Ashish Rajadhyaksha for serving as an important interlocutor, and Mimi Hellman for tough criticism and astute editorial suggestions. If my arguments still end up short, it is entirely my fault.

[1]Walter Benjamin's 'Einiges zur Volkskunst,' in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 6:187, translated and quoted in Miriam Hansen, 'Not a One-Way Street,' *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 25, no. 2, Angelus Novus': Perspectives on Walter Benjamin, Winter 1999, p. 337, note 83.

[2]Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory,' *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 28, no. 1, Things, Autumn 2001, p. 7.

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modernist art criticism and art practice to which Pushpamala belongs. Unsurprisingly, the modernist assumption frames my essay as well, and provides a point of departure for my analysis of flow. I will try to prove that it is indeed Kantian aesthetics that sets the exact limit which prevents Pushpamala from taking a dip into image worlds that scholars of Indian popular culture explore as what Christopher Pinney calls 'corpothetics'.[3] But then I shall also try to prove that in Pushpamala's work the Kantian terms, including 'art,' come surprisingly close to Benjamin's embodied sense, and leads to a kind of flow we could call art-flow that has largely remained dormant and frozen in modern and contemporary art practices, as well as poorly understood both in media studies and art criticism.

I wish to start my consideration of flow with a short video Pushpamala made in 1997, titled *Indian Lady*. I saw the video played as a loop at the Bose Pacia Gallery in New York City in 2004, where it was set up at the entrance to the artist's exhibition, *Indian Lady*, seemingly as a guiding metaphor for the show. The artist, posing as an Indian tourist, steps in front of a painted backdrop showing skyscrapers of a generic, Euro-American city. Clad in a red sari, she enters the frame from the right, pointing here and there with a sense of wonder, and then disappears on the left of the painted cloth, only to re-emerge on the right and continue the routine once again, and yet again.

The video makes us imagine flow as a single technological loop that brings bodies and images together within a temporality of allure. My Oxford American Dictionary explains allure as 'the quality of being powerfully and mysteriously attractive or fascinating'. As a noun, the term stabilises a relationship between the two components of the loop without making a distinction between the subject and the object of allure. Pushpamala's video asks us to investigate the temporality of allure itself, without tilting the balance towards the human subject (as in art criticism), or the environment in which it exists (as in media studies).[4] I will shift my investigation from the artist to the technological loop and define allure in Pushpamala as what Roland Wenzlhuemer referred to in his conference presentation as the 'tar-like stickiness of flow'. Pushpamala will not only provide a provocative example of 'stickiness' from the field of modern and contemporary art practices and criticism, which is underrepresented in this volume, but also challenge us to consider flow contrary to a commonplace, directional notion in media studies, where flow, especially its transculturality, is usually imagined as the geographical and territorial spread of capitalist imagery. Wenzlhuemer's challenge

[3]Christopher Pinney, *'Photos of the Gods': the Printed Image and the Political Struggle in India*, London, Reaktion Books, 2004, p. 8, for a sharp critique of art's relation to the 'conventional approach to aesthetics... which over-cerebralizes and textualizes the image'.

[4]If we isolate and privilege the two components of the video loop for analysis, we will no doubt find 'the other' to be fabricated, as Pushpamala herself highlights here: Her overblown expressions recall bad acting in a B-movie, while the canvas backdrop ripples (and the city wobbles) when the figure moves behind it to return to her position on the right.

involves developing a method for beholding the technological loop all at once, bringing its two components into what Roland Barthes calls, in the context of photography, a 'haunted relationship' between the image and its referent.[5]

Iconophilia

Modernist misrecognition of Pushpamala's projects manifests when we freeze frame the technological loop and focus on the artist, reading Pushpamala's impersonations as an artist's knowing wink at us and a tongue-in-cheek critique of mass culture. For art critic Geeta Kapur, for instance, Pushpamala is an 'openly masquerading artist' engaged in a 'retake on the arts of representation'. In one of her early projects, titled *Phantom Lady or Kismet* (1998), for example, Pushpamala poses as the Phantom Lady, clad in cape, mask, and leather boots after a B-movie stunt queen of the 1930s called Fearless Nadia. Framed like stills from action films and *film noir*, the photographs play out covert missions and repressed desires in decadent mansions and mysterious streets. Given the sense of humour, Kapur sees Pushpamala's relation to commercial media as mimicry in Homi Bhabha's sense, that is, a performance of close likeness in which the artist does not intend to be quite the original, in spite of verisimilitude. Emerging from darkness wearing mask and leather outfit, or bathed in fluorescent light, Pushpamala's fetishised body refers to the libidinous energies of 'mass-produced kitsch' only to introduce within it an 'empty enigma'. The 'ironic denouement' reveals 'a kind of pristine self, a demonstrably false innocence' within kitsch's 'foreclosed quest'. The denouement redeems the artist from the erotics of kitsch, and invests her with a modernist fantasy of human agency interrogating the commercial media's production of technological modernity.[6]

To be sure, a very good criticism has been forwarded in precisely this modernist vein. Madhav Prasad analyses in Pushpamala's *Phantom Lady* and other projects a Brechtian 'gestus,' understood in theatre as a repertoire of gestures, poses and expressions that disengages us from our natural, emotional relations to the material world (i.e., the erotics of Kapur's kitsch), allowing access to a more human,

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[5]See Geoffrey Batchen, 'Camera Lucida: Another Little History of Photography', in Robin Kelsey and Blake Stimson (eds.), *The Meaning of Photography*, Williamstown, Massachusetts, Sterling and William Clark Art Institute, 2008, pp. 85–86, and note 40.

[6]Geeta Kapur, 'Dismantling Norms: Apropos an Indian/Asian Avantgarde,' in *When Was Modernism: Essays on Contemporary Cultural Practice in India*, New Delhi, Tulika, 2000, pp. 398–399. Kapur perceives the involvement of fetish in Pushpamala, but she also redeems the artist (the "speaker") from it through the performativity of a 'demonstrably false innocence'. The last phrase invokes a Marxist and Structuralist relation to fetish, which as William Pietz points out, "has always been a critical discourse about the false objective values of a culture from which the speaker is personally distanced." William Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish, I," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no 9, Spring 1985, p. 14.

'sub-historical... past'.[7] Suzie Tharu reads the title of Pushpamala's recent photo-performance, *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs*, as 'citation' of a colonial trope, meaning a deliberate performance (similar to 'gestus') that triggers an array of conflicting evocations to destabilise the original, colonial fantasy.[8] Ashish Rajadhyaksha develops the deconstructivist performance in a detailed analysis of a single image from Pushpamala's *Native Women* series, titled 'Lady in Moonlight' (Fig. 10.5). Comparing Pushpamala's embodied copy with the original painting by the well-known nineteenth century artist, Raja Ravi Varma, Rajadhyaksha is reminded of the 'rich forgotten detail that the public record leaves out,' namely the material circumstances of the artist's studio in the nineteenth century. This includes the Maharashtrian or Gujarati model who might have posed for the artist, and the likely erotic relationship between the two as suggested by the way the 'Lady' is bathed in moonlight, the glow of an impossible back-light, and the 'moulded fillers highlighting the Lady's arm and breasts.' Pushpamala's copy goes behind the original image in order to approximate 'the condition of originality – the classic original, even, from which she copies'. In this way, it not only makes the painter accountable for his illusionistic ploy, 'the all-too-evidently-fabricated Varma painting's reluctance to own up to any such originary status,' but also radically critiques *'authenticity* as a criterion, followed by her foundationally amoral repudiation of authentic*ation* before the pure-fabricated simulations of the 'record' as pure-representative pure-erotic *desire*.'[9]

In art criticism, Pushpamala's material practice, organized around the desire of an invisible or threatened subject, makes it an example of iconophilia in Bruno Latour's sense of the term. According to Latour, 'Iconophilia is respect not for the image itself but for the movement of the image.'[10] For an iconophile, the image is not a concrete thing, but an illusionistic 'effect' of 'mediators' (instruments, information, technologies, institutions, social groups, and so on), which gather

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[7]See M. Madhav Prasad, "The Last Remake of Indian Modernity?," in *Pushpamala N.: Indian Lady*, exhibition catalog, Bose Pacia, New York, 2004 (unpag.).

[8]Suzie Tharu, 'This Is Not An Inventory: Norm and Performance in Everyday Femininity,' pp. 8–23, in Pushpamala N. and Clare Arni, *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs*, exhibition catalogue, Bose Pacia Gallery, New York, Nature Morte, New Delhi, and Gallery Chemould, Mumbai, 2004.

[9]Ashish Rajadhyaksha, 'Elimination of Authenticity,' in Pushpamala N. and Clare Arni, *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs*, exhibition catalog, Bose Pacia Gallery, New York, Nature Morte, New Delhi, and Gallery Chemould, Mumbai, 2004, pp. 83–85. Italics are his.

[10]Bruno Latour, 'How to be Iconophilic in Art, Science and Religion?' p. 421, in Caroline A. Jones and Peter Galison (eds.), *Picturing Science, Producing Art*, New York, London, 1998. This section is mostly in response to Sumathi Ramaswamy's provocative suggestion during the conference to consider Latour's iconophilia, for which I am thankful to her. The extended evaluation of current scholarship on Pushpamala also became necessary here in response to two anonymous readers of this volume, who wondered if my essay contributed anything 'that is new to the already substantial body of critical writing on these works of the artist.' I thank the readers for an opportunity to clarify between what I am calling modernist iconophilia and what I will soon define by contrast as cinephilia.

around the image and produce what Latour calls the ‘scenography’ of a cultural sphere or a social field. Iconophilic scenography is similar to the system of linear perspective in a Renaissance painting. The mediators point at the image only to produce in it a vanishing point, or a fantasy of ‘remote phenomena and abstract features’ that organises the visual and spatial order in which the mediators as well as the present, iconophilic viewer come together and participate.

In Rajadhyaksha, Pushpamala’s tableau is not simply a copy of the original Ravi Varma painting, but a scenography of postcolonial art. Her material representation and the subject hidden behind the original painting become interrelated mediators that produce within art practice what Latour calls ‘person-making’. Latour explains person-making as the ‘condition of felicity of speech act,’ through which the iconophile and the mediators participating in a coherent spatial order ‘become present’ to each other. The exchange is exemplified in the sentence ‘I love you,’ implying ‘that it is given as a gift and that this gift generates in those who give as well as those who receive it a form of personhood.’[11] For Rajadhyaksha, Pushpamala’s ‘interpellative double-take’ of Ravi Varma’s painting operates within a similar economy of gift. Rajadhyaksha names the gift ‘the embodiment of nation,’ and describes it in an exchange comparable to Latour’s ‘I love you,’ but posed as a question Pushpamala’s copy asks the viewers: “What does this painting make of you?” In this way, the material copy brings Ravi Varma’s ‘elsewhere’ and the viewer’s present moment into a shared felicity of speech act, lending an ‘authenticity effect’ to the ‘subjective conditions’ of both historical moments. In the end, for Rajadhyaksha, Pushpamala’s speech act ‘crucially draws attention… to *a historically new* spectatorial gaze, the new standpoint from where such representations “make sense” to the language of liberal rationality’.[12] This last term, ‘liberal rationality,’ points to the vanishing point of postcolonial iconophilia, staged through the spectatorial strategies of art criticism.

Art criticism is at its best here, and within national culture it makes postcolonial art a rigorously liberal form of democracy. In the spirit of full disclosure, I confess that my own work as an art critic continues to invest in this iconophilic practice. I want to suggest, however, that Pushpamala asks us to rethink the iconophilic cultural form described here. Consider an idea of performance put forward by the artist herself. Describing her mother’s early career as an amateur actress, Pushpamala states: ‘The performance brings in autobiography and subjectivity,

[11]Latour, ‘How to be Iconophilic,’ p. 428.

[12]Rajadhyaksha, ‘Elimination of Authenticity,’ pp. 85–88. In essence, what Rajadhyaksha provocatively calls ‘elimination’ in his title can be called the dissemination of the authentic into the body politics of the national subject through what Ravi Vasudevan calls ‘shifting codes, dissolving identities’ in his analysis of ‘social’ films of the 1950s. See Ravi Vasudevan, ‘Shifting Codes, Dissolving Identities: The Hindi Social Film of the 1950s as Popular Culture,’ pp. 99–121, in Ravi Vasudevan, ed., *Making Meaning in Indian Cinema*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2000.

besides the irony and critique. One is inside the image, not just outside, looking.'[13] This statement is double-edged. At one level it argues for 'autobiography and subjectivity' as if they were the 'subjective conditions' of iconophilia. At another, it also situates those terms of identity within the concrete image, *not* beyond it. Such ambiguity tugs at the dominant critical understanding of her work. In particular, it complicates the vanishing point of liberal rationality that informs much art criticism. The liberal rational iconophile seeks to disentangle what Rajadhyaksha calls the 'classic original' from the seductive power of images that could equally lead to the libidinous energies of what Benjamin calls kitsch in my opening epigraph. By contrast, I suggest that Pushpamala engages in a sort of transcultural border-crossing. Her 'being inside the image, not just outside, looking' claims to step over the limits of art and generate an illicit flow with kitsch, which postcolonial iconophilia has overlooked. The transcultural movement requires another sort of explanation.

Mimesis and Cinephilia

Being 'inside the image' or in a role is a familiar notion for actors, but what does it mean for a visual artist to be inside the image, and how exactly does she stay there? To begin, I suggest that Pushpamala expresses a mimetic desire, requiring a readjustment in her training as an artist at an art school. Unlike Bhabha's mimicry, this desire starts with mimesis, implying what Michael Taussig calls 'copying, or imitation' of something as a way of setting up 'a palpable, sensuous connection between the very body of the perceiver and the perceived.'[14] Given an on-going fascination with cinema, and her elaborate performance of *Phantom Lady* and other cinema-related projects, we can name Pushpamala's mimetic desire cinephilia.[15]

[13]Pushpamala N. and Clare Arni, *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs*, exhibition catalogue, Bose Pacia Gallery, New York, Nature Morte, New Delhi, and Gallery Chemould, Mumbai, 2004, p. 135. Admittedly, Pushpamala's interview is staged as a parody in which the Phantom Lady is interviewed by a sari-clad journalist, both played by Pushpamala. It is, however, also true that the artist's mother was in fact an amateur actress. In quoting from the Phantom Lady's interview, thus, I will treat her ventriloquism essentially as mimesis, not parody, knowing that a parody's most penetrating power also lies in its ambivalence between mimesis and subversion, as discussed by V. Narayana Rao, David Shulman and Sanjay Subramanyam, *Symbols of Substance: Court and State in Nayaka Period Tamilnadu*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 21–22.

[14]Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*, New York, 1993, p. 21.

[15]Pushpamala's earliest interest in film – not exactly an acting career – can be traced back to her brief appearance in Kumar Shahani's film, *Khayal Gatha* (1989). Her ongoing interest in commercial cinema and her taste for gothic glamour continue in *Paris Autumn* (2008), and *Phantom Lady – The Return* (2010, in progress).

Let me sharpen this idea by distinguishing it in contrast to the dominant concerns of scholarship on cinephilia in Euro-American film studies.

The term has been theorised in film criticism as a viewer's personal attachment to a film, expressed (mostly in France) through ritualised viewing practices in front of the screen and a fascination with individual (mostly American) filmmakers. This Euro-American form results in highly individualised responses by a small group of filmmakers and critics who wrote in journals, such as the *Cahiers du Cinema,* in the 1950s and 1960s.[16] More relevant for Pushpamala, however, is to recognize that the land of cinephilia stretches beyond the film-viewing practices and rituals of Paris and New York to include a broader history of cinema at the end of the nineteenth century, when the magic of the moving image first mesmerised audiences all over the world.[17] The global form is best explained by Siegfried Kracauer in terms of a general film audience, whose consciousness is 'lowered' through exposure to the shock effect of film and whose sensorium is thrown into 'organic tensions, nameless excitements' at the expense of reasoning.[18] The cinephilic seizure represents a radically different model. As opposed to the specialized, self-reflexive, intellectual grasp of a Euro-American connoisseur of cinema, here the 'self as the mainspring of

[16]Christian Keathley, *Cinephilia and History, or, the Wind in the Trees*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2006. For the origins of Film Studies in Euro-American cinephilia, see Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen, 'From Cinephilia to Film Studies,' 217–232, in Lee Grieveson and Haidee Wasson, eds, *Inventing Film Studies*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2008.

[17]Arguably, one could push this global form beyond cinema history, when viewers of early photographs first imagined, and wrote about, what Keathley (op. cit.) calls 'winds in the trees,' the movement of visible and invisible things in still images. Alan Trachtenberg, 'Mirror in the Marketplace: American Responses to the Daguerreotype, 1839–1851', pp. 60–73, in John Wood (ed), *The Daguerreotyype: A Sesquicentennial Celebration*, Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 1989. Also, for technologies for creating the illusion of motion in still images in the nineteenth century, see Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1990. Tom Gunning provincialises the canon of high-minded Euro-American cinephilia by exploring a prior history of taste for pure thrill in theatre and cinema among the Euro-American literate class around the 1900s. See Tom Gunning, 'The Horror of Opacity: The Melodrama of Sensation in the Plays of André de Lorde,' pp. 50–61, in Jacky Bratton, Jim Cook, and Christine Gledhill, eds., *Melodrama: Stage, Picture, Screen*, London, British Film Institute, 1994.

[18]Siegfried Kracauer, 'The Spectator,' in *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 159. Also, for a comparable idea of 'shock' in Walter Benjamin, see Susan Buck-Morss, 'Aesthetic and Anaesthetic,' *October,* no 62, Autumn 1992, pp. 3–41. For the 'susceptibility' of film audience in India, see William Mazzarella, 'Making Sense of the Cinema in Late Colonial India,' pp. 63–87, in Raminder Kaur and William Mazzarella (eds.), *Censorship in South Asia: Cultural Regulation from Sedition to Seduction*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2009, pp. 73, 76–80. For global cinephilia in relation to Indian commercial films, see Monika Mehta, 'Reading Cinephilia in *Kikar Ha-Halamot/Desperado Square*, Viewing the Local and Transnational in Sangam/Confluence,' *South Asian Popular Culture*, vol 4, no 2, October 2006, pp. 147–162.

thoughts and decisions relinquishes its power of control,' energised as if by some external force.[19]

The contrast with modernist art could not be clearer. Cinephilic seizure dislocates the modernist artist, if we understand by the latter term a self-conscious, self-intensified figure that resists and reframes the scopic regimes of capitalist media images through modes of transgression and transcendence. Instead of the distanced agency and redemptive force of such a figure, Pushpamala's body becomes a fetish, known by its radically 'untranscended materiality' according to William Pietz. For Pietz, fetish represents 'a subversion of the ideal of the autonomously determined self,' and becomes 'a kind of external controlling organ directed by powers outside the affected person's will'.[20]

The 'affected person,' whose body is pulled into a temporality of allure, becomes key to my understanding of Pushpamala's photo-performance against the 'liberal rationality' of the artist. Pushpamala introduces the affected cinephile in the *Phantom Lady* and other early projects. But I will focus here on an especially ambitious project, *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs*, completed in 2004. [21] I choose this project because it extends beyond film to include the visual culture of modern India at large, helping us to explore in Pushpamala's cinephilic imagination a consistent mode of artistic production. Unlike film-related projects that reflected the general ambience of commercial cinema, *Native Women* depends on single images, offering a good opportunity to compare the artist's re-enactment with the original referent. Pushpamala's desire for 'being inside the image' can thus be demonstrated in the details of a transcultural flow of bodies and images, and fully distinguished from the spatial and cultural practice of modernist iconophilia. Her use of photography, which remains undertheorised in art criticism, will become significant for describing the temporality of cinephilic allure as a form of what Taussig calls 'tactile knowing' emerging from inside the image world.[22]

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[19]Walter Benjamin's idea of 'innervation' is closer to this sensory seizure. Miriam Hansen explains Benjamin's term as 'a physiologically 'contagious' or 'infectious' movement that would trigger emotional effects in the viewer, a form of mimetic identification based in the phenomenon known as the Carpenter Effect.' See Miriam Hansen, 'Benjamin and Cinema: Not a One-Way Street,' *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 25, no. 2, 'Angelus Novus': Perspectives on Walter Benjamin (Winter 1999), p. 318. Hansen explains the Carpenter effect in note 38: 'Named after William B. Carpenter, a nineteenth-century British physiologist who first discovered that we tend unconsciously to mimic the movement of another person whom we are observing.' See William B. Carpenter, *Principles of Mental Physiology, with Their Applications to the Training and Discipline of the Mind, and the Study of Its Morbid Conditions*, New York, 1878.

[20]William Pietz, 'The Problem of Fetish II: the Origin of the Fetish,' *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics,* no. 13, Spring 1987, p. 23.

[21]Pushpamala N. and Clare Arni, *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs, 2000–2004*, project funded by the India Foundation for the Arts, Bangalore, and publication distributed by Nature Morte, New Delhi, Gallery Chemould, Mumbai, and Bose-Pacia, New York, 2004.

[22]Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*, p. 24.

Image Event: Cinephilia vs. Iconophilia

The starting point of the *Native Women* series is always a concrete visual reference from the everyday image flow in modern India. *Lakshmi* is based on a well-known icon of calendar art (Fig. 10.1). *Criminals* is taken from police records of two chain snatchers published in the *Times of India*, Bangalore, in 2001. *Cracking the Whip* uses the cover of *India Today* magazine featuring the South Indian film star-turned-politician, Jayalalitha. *Toda* copies a nineteenth century, anthropometric photograph of an Andaman islander Pushpamala found in a publication, titled *Indian Through the Lens*, edited by art historian Vidya Dehejia (Fig. 10.2). *Returning from the Tank* reproduces a painting by the nineteenth century artist Raja Ravi Varma (Fig. 10.3). The selection seems random. Taken from different sources, these images only share the fact that they belong to the print media, and thus are part of what Kracauer calls a 'secretion of the capitalist mode of production.'[23] Pushpamala's choice suggests a consumer's restless swipe at the swarming mass of

Fig. 10.1 Pushpamala N. and Clare Arni, 'Lakshmi,' *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs* series, 2000–2004 (Courtesy: Bose Pacia, New York)

[23]Siegfried Kracauer, 'Photography,' in *The Mass Ornament* (1963) translated, edited, and with an introduction by Thomas Y. Levin, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1995, p. 61.

Fig. 10.2 Pushpamala N. and Clare Arni, 'Toda,' *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs* series, 2000–2004 (Courtesy: Bose Pacia, New York)

Fig. 10.3 Pushpamala N. and Clare Arni, 'Returning from the Tank,' *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs* series, 2000–2004 (Courtesy: Bose Pacia, New York)

media images, and not an artist's sustained gaze on the systematic and iconic within the visual and material field that commonly defines a modernist art practice.

The fact that it is a print is important. Buck-Morss points out that, unlike an artwork which is *made*, 'a print is always *taken*' from a large web of images in which it lives a 'nomadic' life.[24] Pushpamala publishes notes on her selections that go beyond the image to document this act of taking. They include reference to newspapers, exhibition catalogues, and magazines, as well as bookstores and private collections - in short, the material network that brings the image within the artist's purview. For instance, 'Yogini' is not simply a copy of a sixteenth century Deccani miniature painting, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City (Fig. 10.4). Instead, Pushpamala's documentation shows its provenance to be 'a colour reproduction from 'India: Art and Culture, 1300–1900' (by) Stuart Cary Welch, a book discovered by Pushpamala at Scott's bungalow, Srirangapatna, and finally photographed for reference by Clare in a Cochin Jew town bookshop.'[25]

The detailed record points to not only what is visible to us, namely the painted figure of a magician who changes forms in medieval folklore. It also reveals what is invisible to us, namely, the changeability of the image itself into one of many identical copies circulating around the world through a network of commercial

Fig. 10.4 Pushpamala N. and Clare Arni, 'Yogini,' *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs* series, 2000–2004 (Courtesy: Bose Pacia, New York)

[24]Buck-Morss, 'Visual Studies and Global Imagination,' Tate lecture online. See: http://channel.tate.org.uk/media/26613605001

[25]*Native Women*, 40.

markets and social demands. It is only as an industrial reproduction that a sixteenth century, Deccani painting from the Met becomes available in a remote corner of South India. What Pushpamala's photographer, Clare Arni, photographs in the bookshop is not only the image from the Met, but also what Susan Buck-Morss calls an 'image event,' that is, an instance when the mobile image is suddenly 'stumbled upon' in a distant region.[26]

Buck-Morss's description of the bodily contact with print must be distinguished from what Nicholas Mirzoeff calls a 'visual event.' Buck-Morss's is an encounter with the 'image-form,' which is realised when the print becomes a concrete, sensory object comparable to a 'commodity-form'. By contrast, Mirzoeff's visual event is 'an interaction of the visual sign, the technology that enables and sustains that sign, and the viewer.'[27] Mirzoeff clearly describes iconophilia.[28] His visual event dissolves the image-form into the social and spatial domain of viewers, signs and visual technologies, in other words, Latourian mediators. By contrast, Buck-Morss's image event comes closer to a cinephilic experience. If an iconophilic visual order depends on the gaze and deictic gestures of mediators, a cinephile is 'blind'.[29] She 'stumbles upon' the image form, and remains fascinated by it, describing more accurately the relationship between body and image that plays out in Pushpamala's work.

A cinephilic image event, then, is quite unlike iconophilia. For a cinephile, the image event amounts to what William Pietz (explaining Michael Leiris) calls 'singular moments of "crisis" in which the identity of the self is called into question, put at risk, by a sudden encounter with the life of the outside world.' According to Pietz, the crisis 'brings together and fixes into a singularly resonant unified intensity an unrepeatable event (permanent in memory), a particular object or arrangement of objects, and a localized space.'[30] The sudden, localized, personalized contact with

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[26]Susan Buck-Morss, 'Visual Studies and Global Imagination,' talk at the Tate Gallery, 03.06.2004. See video on Tate Channel at: http://channel.tate.org.uk/media/26613605001.

[27]Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, London and New York, Routledge, 1999, p. 13.

[28]As if arguing against the image form, Latour writes that iconophilia 'teaches us that there is nothing to see when we do a freeze-frame of scientific and religious practices and focus on the visual itself instead of the movement, the passage, the transition from one form of image to another.' Latour, 'How to be Iconophilic in Art, Science and Religion?,' op. cit., p. 421.

[29]I take the idea of blindness from Michel de Certeau, who defines it in a description of two views of New York City's Manhattan island comparable to the distinction between iconophilia and cinephilia I pursue here. One (iconophilic) view is that of a god-like voyeur, who has the 'voluptuous pleasure' of 'seeing the whole' city as the rise and fall of skyscrapers (i.e., 'texturology') from the top of the (now destroyed) World Trade Center, and the other is the sense of a walker on the streets below, whom Certeau describes as 'blind,' because he never sees the city in its totality, and can only incorporate it through bodily movements unfolding slowly over time. Michel de Certeau, 'Walking in the City,' pp. 91–93, in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Rendell, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984.

[30]William Pietz, 'The Problem of Fetish, I,' *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 9, Spring 1985, p.10.

the outside world defines the temporality of cinephilic allure, when the various, disconnected elements of the image event resonate in the cinephile with a half-forgotten memory of a different time.

To explore this cinephilic crisis in Pushpamala's work, another model is required. The network of global print media and socio-cultural demands that brings her in contact with a distant image of 'Yogini' in a local bookstore in Cochin, or a middleclass home in Srirangapatna, also generates in that image an otherworldliness. [31] The blind cinephile, stopped in her tracks, faces a problem of recognition similar to that posed by a distant relative in town, or a stranger staring at someone from a distance, in whom one searches for familiarity by rummaging through faded memories. For W. J. T. Mitchell, this otherworldly quality makes the image a 'totem', which literally translates as 'a relative of mine' in the Ojibwey language.[32] The recognition of totem, which treats the encountered image as a concrete and visible presence to which to return, reverses the logic of the iconophile's illusory vanishing point and its scenographic relations.

Material Practice

Pushpamala insists on the materiality of her ensemble, reproducing in her body what Benjamin calls an 'exact fantasy' of the encountered image.[33] Assisted by her photographer, she first builds an image archive by collecting other images comparable to her example. Then, in an elaborate production – including collaborations with scenic artists, costume designers, rickshaw decorators, lighting designers, and cinematographers - she materially re-configures the original into an embodied referent. Quite literally, she steps into each of her images, orienting her body to accurate representations of the original. Her *Lakshmi* carefully re-creates the flatness of Ravi Varma's original oleograph (Fig. 10.1). By contrast, her *Lady in*

[31]The cinephilic crisis and fixation is underscored in Pushpamala's documentation by the two sites that make up the image event of *Yogini*. Scott's Bungalow in Srirangapatna resonates with a history of colonial encounters in the late eighteenth century. The Cochin Jewtown Bookshop indicates the inter-related life world of communities that settled during the city's early-modern period of maritime commerce, so beautifully described by Ashis Nandy in his 'Time Travel to a Possible Self: Searching for the Alternative Cosmopolitanism of Cochin,' in Ashis Nandy, *Time Warps: Silent and Evasive Pasts in Indian Politics and Religion*, New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, 2002, pp. 157–209.

[32]W. J. T. Mitchell, 'The Surplus Value of Images,' p. 98, in *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2005. The animate, interpersonal quality of the image implied in the feeling of being stared at from a distance is how Walter Benjamin describes the 'aura' of the image. See Miriam Hansen, 'Benjamin, Cinema and Experience: 'The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology',' *New German Critique*, no 40, Special Issue on Weimar Film Theory, Winter 1987, pp. 187–189.

[33]Benjamin's term in Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*, p. 51.

Fig. 10.5 Pushpamala N. and Clare Arni, 'Lady in Moonlight,' *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs* series, 2000–2004 (Courtesy: Bose Pacia, New York)

Moonlight closely imitates the strong light-and-shade effects of Ravi Varma's painting (Fig. 10.5).

Pushpamala credits her various collaborators in order to emphasize the labour that went into the re-staging. For example, we learn that *Lakshmi*'s set was painted by the commercial artist, K. Sampat, of Raja Arts. Her make-up is by the make-up artist Ramakrishna. The jewellery and crown are rented from Nataraja Dress Company, Majestic and Prabhat Stores (who seem to furnish accessories to commercial theatre companies). This excess of information resembles the credits at the end of a feature film. More to the point, it draws attention to the fact that Pushpamala's is not simply a digitally manipulated image. Rather, it is a spatio-temporal re-configuration of a flat image. The 'life-size. . .three-dimensional painted tableau'[34] requires breaking the coherence of the original image, and matching its details part by part, using a combination of commercial products, visual technologies, and professional expertise available in the local bazaar in her city of Bangalore.

How do we understand the meticulous labour of this spatio-temporal ensemble? I suggest it conveys a desire for contact with that which is not, and never will be, in the artist's possession, making her careful construction what Pushpamala calls 'a

[34] *Native Women*, p. 136.

kind of discipline' of reaching out to the authenticity of the original image.[35] The insistent, obsessive discipline defines the labour of allure, and the materials generated by it become enchanted objects, displayed in art galleries and vitrines, and reproduced in 'the process series' in the catalogue.

The cinephile's obsessive engagement with media images can be described accurately in Michel de Certeau's terms as an 'art of memory.' Partly comparable to the speech act of Latour's iconophilia, Certeau's memory does not pre-exist the act of remembering, but is actualised and authorised in the moment of recollection. But here is the difference: 'Standing in the same relation to time that an "art" of war has to manipulations of space, an "art" of memory develops an aptitude for always being in the other's place without possessing it, and for profiting from this alteration without destroying itself through it.'[36] In short, unlike the felicity of a speech act, whereby the viewer and the image become present to each other within a shared space of exchange, memory is a secret operation across different spaces and temporalities. 'Like those birds that lay eggs only in other species' nests, memory produces in a place that does not belong to it.'[37] I want to bring Pushpamala's material and bodily engagement with media closer to Certeau's idea of the 'art' of memory, especially the notion of transculturality suggested there, by identifying in her cinephilic re-production three interrelated operations: emplacement, melodramatic recreation of the body, and the graphology of her tableau.

Emplacement

For Pushpamala, the original image is not only an occasion for recollection but also a constraint on her copy. It requires, as she says, 'a kind of discipline' on her part. *Yogini*, thus, involved not only employing professional costume designers and backdrop painters, but also an assistant who raised Pushpamala's scarf using an invisible string so that it fluttered in the tableau exactly as in the image. 'If one gets sloppy, the picture loses its rigor.'[38] The handstand in *Toda* took 3 months to make, involving scale drawing, an engineering design and a construction in wood and steel geared wheels that required visiting a metal scrap yard, welding the wheel in place, and finally, staining the device with bitumen to make it look old.

Pushpamala's discipline is best seen as 'emplacement,' a spatio-temporal tactic explained by Mark Cheetham in Immanuel Kant's use and understanding of the

[35]*Native Women*, p. 136.

[36]Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 87.

[37]Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 86.

[38]*Native Women*, p. 136.

term ‘art’.[39] Art is a critical concept that emerges late in Kant’s philosophy, only in his third Critique, the *Critique of Judgment* (1790). In a period when modern disciplines such as art history and philosophy were being shaped, the term became an important means for Kant ‘to establish the irrefragable borders of his own discipline, philosophy, in (superior) relation to its neighbors.’ Cheetham describes Kant as a temporary ‘*boarder*’ of art, one who moved into its discourses so as to ever more firmly mark the borders of his own discipline of philosophy against them. While Kant’s third Critique is inconceivable without art, Cheetham explains: ‘What we might ironically call his ‘patronage’ of the visual arts and art history can be understood as an example of the spatial procedures of the *parergon* – the mutual definition and reciprocal dependency of the work (*ergon*) and what lies outside it (*parergon*).’[40] In describing her material copy of the original image as an exercise in ‘discipline,’ Pushpamala introduces Kant’s ‘spatial’ procedure in the field of modern and contemporary Indian art.[41]

The spatial procedure of emplacement is key to Kant’s notion of art, and Michel de Certeau contextualizes it in relation to the chronology of Kant’s overall philosophical thinking. ‘Kant treats the relation between the art of operating (*Kunst*) and science (*Wissenschaft*), or between technique (*Technik*) and theory (*Theorie*), in the context of an investigation that has moved from earlier versions of taste towards a critique of judgment.’[42] It is in this transition – in chronological terms, from his plan for the *Critique of Taste* (1787), to his composition of the *Critique of Judgment* (1790) – that he ‘encounters art . . . as a parameter of practical knowledge exceeding knowledge and having an esthetic form.’ Certeau points out that by 1790, ‘the traditional antinomy between “operation” and “reflection” is transcended through a point of view which, acknowledging an *art* at the root of thought, makes judgment a “middle term” (*Mittelglied*) between theory and praxis.’[43]

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[39]Mark A. Cheetham, ‘Immanuel Kant and the Bo(a)rders of Art History,’ pp. 6–24, in Mark E. Cheetham (et. al.) eds, *The Subjects of Art History*, Cambridge (England), Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 13. Cheetham borrows the term ‘emplacement’ from Edward C. Casey.

[40]Mark A. Cheetham, ‘Immanuel Kant,’ p. 13. Cheetham uses Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, for the use of *parergon*.

[41]To be sure, Pushpamala by no means constitutes the first occasion in which Kantian thinking is addressed in Indian image practices. ‘Kantianism’ is frequently invoked as a modernist guilt in Indian art and cultural practice. For a brief distinction between Kantianism, also called neo-Kantianism, and ‘Kant’s text *an sich,*’ see Kajri Jain, ‘More than meets the eye: The circulation of images and the embodiment of value,’ *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, vol. 36, nos. 1 and 2, January–August, 2002, Special issue, ‘Beyond Appearances? Visual Practices and Ideologies in Modern India,’ edited by Sumathi Ramaswamy, p. 52, note 12. For a trenchant critique of neo-Kantianism as a numbing ‘anaesthetics’ shaping the practice of art and art criticism in urban India, see Christopher Pinney, *‘Photos of the Gods’: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India*, London, Reaktion Press, and New York, Oxford University Press, pp. 18 and 21.

[42]Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 72, and p. 216, note 19.

[43]Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 72.

Pushpamala's discipline is also a matter of 'aesthetic judgment'. As in Kant, her discipline is situated within the body, but it is emphatically *not* contained in that body as a self-generating, enclosed system.[44] The discipline is activated in relation to the image world as a dialectical 'art of operation,' which Kant explains in everyday examples cited by Certeau: '(W)here I come from, he writes (in *meinen Gegenden*: in my region, in my 'homeland'), the ordinary man (*der gemeine Mann*) says (*sagt*) that charlatans and magicians (*Taschenspieler*) depend on knowledge (you can do it if you know the trick), whereas tightrope dancers (*Seiltänzer*) depend on an art.'[45] Kant's art of tightrope dancing, explains Certeau, 'requires one to maintain a balance that is never permanently acquired; constant readjustment renews the balance while giving the impression of "keeping" it. The art of operating is thus admirably defined, all the more so because in fact the practitioner himself is part of the equilibrium that he modifies without compromising it.'[46] The material labour of Pushpamala's exacting, three-dimensional tableau is similar to the spatio-temporal art of 'keeping balance'. As in tightrope dancing, the on-going calibration and recalibration of props, lighting, pose and expressions activates the body within the material ensemble itself as a medium of image flow.

Pushpamala's version of Kantianism exploits a marginalised possibility for flow in postcolonial art in India. In standard critical thought, aesthetic practice has essentially meant interrupting or subverting the (colonial) technological loop of which a transcultural media flow is made. Instead of interruption, Pushpamala reanimates the material and technological circuits in her body. This is the real edge of her work. By weakening the artist's gaze and control on the image world, her cinephilic enchantment reveals an 'illicit' relationship between postcolonial art and popular image practices, making her guilty of the corporeal erotics scholars

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[44]Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 72. By contrast, for Kantian aesthetics in relation to 'autogenetic… autonomous, autotelic subject,' see Susan Buck-Morss, 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered,' *October*, vol. 62 (Autumn 1992), pp. 3–41, especially pp. 8–10. Buck-Morss overlooks the chronology of Kant's *Critiques*, which proves to be crucial for Certeau's understanding of the place of 'art' in Kant's thought. Buck-Morss considers Kant's third Critique, on 'aesthetic judgment,' as an integral part of his Second Critique, on 'moral judgment.' According to her, the Second Critique is normative for Kant, since it posits an internal 'moral order' of human consciousness against the human sensory experience based on his First Critique, on 'reason' as an innate 'source of cognition'. By extending this norm into the Third Critique, Kant's 'aesthetic judgment' also becomes a purely internal, 'autogenetic,' moral and epistemological practice. The chronological slippage and retrospective reading of Kant's texts makes Buck-Morss assimilate 'Kant's text *an sich*' with what we today commonly know as Kantianism, the model for a purely cerebral and internally-regulated form of subjectivity. Martha Woodmansee explains that what we know as Kantian subjectivity is a product not so much of Kant's own writings but of the uses of Kant in Germany and England starting in Kant's own lifetime. See Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994.

[45]Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, § 43, in *Werke*, ed.W. Weischhedel 9n.p. Insel, 1957, V, 401–402, referred to in Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 73 and 216, note 19.

[46]Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 73.

usually associate with popular culture. In his groundbreaking work on Indian commercial chromolithographs, for instance, Christopher Pinney develops a detailed 'corpothetics' for printed images of gods precisely to reanimate transcultural flow of bodies and images against the "numbing" effects of Kantian aesthetics.[47] Pushpamala's art should not be confused with popular corpothetics, but her Kantianism also challenges the dichotomous way in which the 'popular' is conceptualised. Her originality, and indeed her marginality in relation to issues raised in this volume, is that she helps us rethink 'art' as a mimetic production of image flow *within* Kant's very terms.[48] Emplacement makes Pushpamala's cinephilic art an inherently transcultural tactic, practiced by this temporary *boarder* of the popular image world.

Melodramatic Body

Pushpamala's art of emplacement should make clear by now that the body we see in her copy is only partly that of the artist; it is of course that, but only nominally. The body we see cannot be assimilated or authorized by the modernist imaginary, namely, the fantasy of a transcendent human sensorium resisting and shielding itself against the image. Nor can the artist's body be seen as an expression of hybridity, at least not as readily as Homi Bhabha imagines its subversions in naming the process: 'Hybridity… is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power.'[49] True, Pushpamala's balancing act generates a flicker of the artist's body within the three-dimensional tableau. But how should we understand this bodily flicker,

[47]Christopher Pinney, *'Photos' of the Gods: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India*, London, Reaktion Books, 2004, p. 8.

[48]The failure to acknowledge Kantianism is startlingly common in scholarship. Here is Latour, who distinguishes iconophilia's 'person-making' (exemplified by his sentence 'I love you') with a qualification: It 'does not mean subjectivity. It is full-blown mediation, a form of life, with its own form of judgment, its canon, its empirical world, its own taste and skills. Truth and falsity, faithfulness and infidelity are carefully detected, measured, proved, demonstrated, elicited. Nothing is less unmediated, affective, evanescent than this sturdy, careful, accurate mechanism to evaluate love. A large part of our life is spent – well spent! – in developing those skills and honing those forms of judgment.' Latour, 'How to be Iconophilic,' p. 429. The misrecognition of Kant is shocking in this passage, where Kant's own terms ('taste,' 'judgment,' and so on) are made to contradict what is assumed to be Kantian 'subjectivity'.

[49]Homi Bhabha, 'Signs Taken for Wonders,' (1985) in *The Location of Culture*, p. 112, quoted in Kobena Mercer, 'Anatomies of the Body Politic,' in p. 330, in Francis Frascina ed. *Modern Art Culture: A Reader*, London, New York, Routledge, 2009. Bhabha's 'disavowal' dominates much recent cultural critique. See Laura Mulvey's essay on Cindy Sherman in the same volume.

hovering between our recognition of the artist and our recognition of the re-enactment, without hastening to mark her as subversive by default?

I suggest we read in Pushpamala's tableaux the representation of a melodramatic body. As Peter Brooks explains in the context of its invention in the theatre of the French Revolution, the melodramatic body is 'imagined semiotically rather than the eternal body,' carrying the burden of performing social and cultural meanings that are no longer simply given to it, as in the Ancien Regime. 'It is when this traditional system is evacuated of meaning by the Revolution that a new aesthetic of embodiment becomes necessary.'[50]

Pushpamala's material production can be seen as an elaborately staged, melodramatic 'body writing'.[51] To be sure, the melodramatic body is not Buck-Morss' 'autogenetic... autonomous subject,' but rather a product of the 'aesthetic of embodiment'.[52] Using psychoanalysis, Brooks explains its operation as hysteria, reminding one of 'the psychoanalytical concept of 'acting out': the use of the body itself, its actions, gestures, its sites of irritation and excitation, to represent meanings that might otherwise be unavailable to representation because they are somehow under the bar of 'repression'.[53]

Leaving aside Brook's particular, psychoanalytical concerns, to which I have no access in Pushpamala, I want to explore the formal procedures of melodramatic body-writing in relation to Pushpamala's cinephilia.[54] If iconophilia's speech act makes bodies 'present' for each other, melodramatic body-writing treats 'one's own body as that most alien land,' as Franz Kafka imagined.[55] The difference between the two can be explained using Benjamin's description of a screen actor, who performs in front of the camera, as opposed to a theatre actor in front of a live audience. I compare Pushpamala to Benjamin's screen actor, whom the camera

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[50]Peter Brooks, 'Melodrama, Body, Revolution,' pp. 11–24, in Jacky Bratton (et. al.) eds., *Melodrama: Stage, Picture, Screen*, British Film Institute, 1994, p. 18. Brooks' recognition of a 'new aesthetic of embodiment' in the context of the French Revolution is historically closer to Kant's idea, since Kant himself would have had the French Revolution in mind when he completed his *Critique of Judgement* in 1790. For a brief reference to Kant's journalism during the French Revolution in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, see Certeau, op. cit., p. 74.

[51]Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, p. xi.

[52]Buck-Morss, 'Aesthetic and Anaesthetic,' *October*, 62, Autumn 1992, pp. 8–9.

[53]Brooks, 'Melodrama,' in Bratton et. al., *Melodrama*, p. 19.

[54]Both, melodrama and cinephilia, suggest a bodily fantasy in relation to something else that is repressed and misrecognised, but the image world of cinephilia cannot be conflated with histories lived in the human mind. Tom Gunning has criticised Brooks' gestures towards psychological pasts and focused on melodrama as a purely dramatic and cinematic 'thrill' in nineteenth-century theatre and early film. Tom Gunning, 'The Horror of Opacity: The Melodrama of Sensation in the Plays of André de Lorde,' pp. 50–61, in Jacky Bratton, Jim Cook, and Christine Gledhill, eds, *Melodrama: Stage, Picture, Screen*, London, British Film Institute, 1994.

[55]Walter Benjamin, quoted in Miriam Hansen, 'Benjamin, Cinema and Experience: The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology,' *New German Critique*, no. 40, Special Issue on Weimar Film Theory, (Winter 1987), p. 220.

turns into a fragmented detail of the *mise en scéne* no different than a prop. Her body is given coherence only in editing, and her humanity is brought to life much later as a moving shadow flickering on a screen far away from the site of production.[56] Similarly, Pushpamala's body is integrated and animated in the context of the tableau and its subsequent photographic reproduction.

Pushpamala's embodiment of the image world can be explained by returning once more to Kantian aesthetics, this time to establish its link with Benjamin's thoughts on image flows. In India, Pinney describes aesthetics as a hindrance for image flows using Susan Buck-Morss's influential essay on the connection between Kantian aesthetics and fascist 'aestheticization of politics,' so feared by Benjamin and other thinkers of the Frankfurt School in the 1930s.[57] As Miriam Hansen points out, however, the connection between Kant's 'aesthetic' and Fascist 'aestheticization' is too linear. In particular, it overlooks dialectical thinking that is so ingrained in Benjamin.[58] I want to elaborate on Buck-Morss vs. Hansen debate in order to distinguish Pushpamala's melodramatic 'body-writing' of the image world from the sensuous 'corpothetics' of popular art.

The Hansen-Buck-Morss debate centres on how the two scholars recognize the persistence of Kant in Benjamin. The main contention rests on their assessment of a crucial term in Benjamin's dialectics on the human body, namely its 'innervation' in relation to modern technology. According to Buck-Morss, 'innervation' is the natural response mechanism of the human nervous system, which Benjamin struggled, and ultimately failed to retrieve from the numbing effects of repeated exposure to the modern media. Here Kant's aesthetics provides an originary moment, when the human body first enters the phantasmagoria of modern technological environments. It is in reaction to the overwhelming shock of wars in the late eighteenth century that Kant imagines 'aesthetics' as a protective shield of an internally-coherent, self-generating, machine-like individual, exemplified for Buck-Morss by his figure of a 'warrior'. Imagined as an armoured body, Kant's warrior anticipates the war-machine as the ultimate expression of the 'anaesthetic

[56]Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility: Second Version,' pp. 30–32, in Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin, eds, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2008. Benjamin's idea comes close to Sergei Eisenstein's idea of a 'model actor,' who learns to break down its subtlest movements into distinct fragments that could be controlled in front of the camera's 'analytical' eye and made expressive, for instance, in a close-up. Sergei Eisenstein, 'The Montage of Film Attractions,' (1924), in Peter Lehman, ed, *Defining Cinema*, New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press, 1997.

[57]Susan Buck-Morss, 'Aesthetic and Anaesthetic,' *October*, 62, Autumn 1992, pp. 3–41, referred in Pinney, *'Photos of the Gods,'* op. cit., 18–19. In her article, Buck-Morss develops a thesis on the 'numbing' and deadening of the sensorium' in an explanation of Kant's aesthetics and fascist anaesthetisation as interlinked operations that respond to the shock of industrialisation. Pinney applies these 'numbing' operations to British colonial art education and urban 'fine arts' practice and art criticism.

[58]Hansen, 'Benjamin and Cinema,' op. cit.

seal' the fascists and the futurists celebrated – and Benjamin fought against – in the early twentieth century.[59]

In contrast to Buck-Morss' view of the natural human sensorium that 'aesthetics' protects against modern technology, Hansen's Benjamin believes that 'there is no body beyond or outside of technology, neither in immanent political practice, nor even in his visions of messianic reconstitution.'[60] Consequently, when Hansen's Benjamin thinks of activating the neurological response mechanism, he does not mean restoring a pre-industrial, organic constitution of the human nerve, but rather the possibility of re-imagining and reproducing the human sensorium *within* modern technological environments and fascist scopic regimes themselves.[61] For Hansen's Benjamin, 'innervation' is an aesthetic tactic of a technologically altered sensorium. In this scenario, the Kantian 'warrior' is not simply an armoured war-machine-like body, but rather a body which is made alert through disciplined immersion in the technology of war. It is a product of aesthetic inscription, if you will, not autogenesis. Benjamin's own example of inscription (one of only two instances where he actually uses the term 'innervation' according to Hansen) comes from the Buddhist context, where a 'discipline of breathing in yoga meditation' uses a 'prayer wheel' to help 'the aesthetic integration of external rhythm'.[62]

The Buck-Morss-Hansen debate on innervation, based on a linear vs. dialectical understanding of the human body's relation to media flows, has implications for media studies and visual anthropology, as well as art criticism. The linear model is quite common, and it describes the numbing effects of capitalist technology spreading across various (previous) human geographies. By contrast, the recreation of the body within, and through, a technological loop is barely understood. Pushpamala's cinephilic imagination and material practice provides an alternative model for flow in a Kantian-Benjaminian genealogy of a dialectically conceived body and its spatio-temporal operations. The cinephile is a Kantian figure similar to Kant's warrior, Benjamin's practitioner of Buddhist meditation, and Michel de Certeau's tightrope dancer mentioned earlier – all exemplifying a human sensorium that is reconstituted as an 'exact pictorial fantasy' of technological environments.

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[59]In relating Kant to Fascism, Buck-Morss participates in the 1990s in a rigorous feminist critique of Kant, from whose narcissistic idealisation of a castrated, phallus-like humanoid machine Benjamin needed to be retrieved. For a feminist critique of Kant, see Karen Lang, 'The Dialectics of Decay: Rereading the Kantian Subject,' *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 79, no 3 (Sept 1997), pp. 413–439. Also see Martha Woodmansee, *The author, art and the market: rereading the history of aesthetics*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994.

[60]Hansen, 'Benjamin and Cinema,' p. 325. Bill Brown also points to Benjamin's 'innervation' as the 'mimetic internalization of the physical world – eventually the internalization of the technological apparatus.' Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory,' *Critical Inquiry*, 28.1, 'Things', Autumn 2001, pp. 12–13, note 32.

[61]Hansen, 'Benjamin and Cinema,' p. 325.

[62]Hansen, 'Benjamin and Cinema,' p. 319. A delightful typographic error here misspells 'aesthetic integration' as 'ascetic integration,' I think.

Graphology

Externalised and generalised by the camera as what Vico Acconci calls 'a system of possible movements,'[63] the artist's body is assimilated, detail by detail, into the material ensemble. If emplacement refers to Pushpamala's spatial procedures, and melodrama the cinephile's body-writing, we need one more term to address the materiality of the ensemble that finally comes together to be photographed. I want to use Benjamin's idea of 'graphology' as my last concept to explore the resemblance between Pushpamala's tableau and the original image.

Graphology is the product of what Benjamin calls 'non-sensuous similarity.'[64] In his short, wonderful essay on mimesis, Benjamin explains a natural, universal propensity for non-sensuous similarity in a time when a comprehensive understanding of the 'laws of similarity' between the microcosm and macrocosm informed mimetic practices such as dance, the reading of entrails and stars, and the science of astrology, in which 'the newborn was thought to be.. perfectly moulded on the structure of the cosmic being.' The emphasis on "perfectly moulded" identity distinguishes Benjamin's mimetic idea both from a linguistic metaphor, whose resemblance to the referent is partial, and verisimilitude, which is achieved through complete 'sensuous similarity' between the representation and its referent. The 'non-sensuous' requires the referent to recede, and only appear within the representation as a repressed image.

Pushpamala's cinephilic ensemble is an example of non-sensuous similarity. It resembles the original image only in an uncanny way, in the Freudian sense meaning a disquieting strangeness built into the familiar, as opposed to verisimilitude, which could equally have been achieved through a digital manipulation. Non-sensuous graphology is an occult form of mimesis, involving magical thinking. Benjamin exemplifies this type of mimesis in a child who not only pretends to be a shopkeeper or a teacher but also a windmill and a train. The best example of graphology in the modern period is the written language, which, according to Benjamin, is 'the most complete archive of non-sensuous similarity'. The written language is 'a medium into which the earlier powers of mimetic production and comprehension have passed without residue, to the point where they have liquidated those of magic.' In this archive of graphic fragments, meaning does not reveal itself with the immediacy of the signified in spoken language, but in 'flashes' of recognition of that lost sense of connection. The occult ability of graphology to embody repressed meaning becomes key to understanding the tableau Pushpamala's photographer, Clare Arni, finally photographs.

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[63]Vito Acconci, 'Notes on my Photography, 1969–70,' in *Vito Acconci: Photographic Work*, NY 1988, reprinted in Douglas Fogle, *The Last Picture Show: Artists Using Photography, 1960–82*, Minneapolis, 2003.

[64]Walter Benjamin, 'On the Mimetic Faculty,' (1933) in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, London, Verso, 1969, pp. 160–163, for all quotations in this paragraph.

Performative Photography

Pushpamala’s tactic of emplacement, her reconfiguration of a melodramatic body, and the production of a material tableau as an exact fantasy of the original image, are all interlinked forms of bordercrossing that make up her photo-performance. It should be clear by now that these bordercrossings are not only spatial but also temporal. The image event, which threw the cinephile into crisis, triggered a mimetic relationship between the artist’s material present and the image, leading to the non-sensuous, graphic form of a tableau. The temporality of Benjamin’s graphology, however, needs expert reading, that of an astrologer or a shaman. In Pushpamala, I suggest, it is Clare Arni’s photography that becomes the expert mechanism charged with reading the significance of her laboriously created spatio-temporal tableau.

Photography is crucial to Pushpamala. Its use distinguishes Pushpamala’s work from ‘performance art,’ which is normally staged in front of a live audience and archived in photographic images. To emphasize the distinction, Pushpamala has often called her projects photo-romance or photo-performance. The logic of photography employed here, however, is archaic. It does not intervene self-reflexively in the visual and material field, as in much late twentieth century practice, but rather records what is in front of the camera, as in the nineteenth century. [65] In fact, Pushpamala’s work derives its poignancy precisely through photography’s ‘outspoken affinity for unstaged reality,’ as Kracauer writes, and not by staging other possible realities for the camera, as in vernacular photography.[66]

Benjamin elaborates on this outspoken affinity in a way that is useful for Pushpamala. In comparing a photograph by the nineteenth century English portrait painter, David Octavius Hill, to the frescoes the artist made using photographs, Benjamin finds the ability of the camera to leave an indexical trace of unstaged reality in an image ‘new and strange’. In Hill’s photograph of a Newhaven fishwife, Benjamin writes, ‘there remains something that goes beyond the testimony to the photographer’s art, something that cannot be silenced, that fills you with an unruly desire to know what her name was, the woman who was alive there, who even now is still real and will never consent to be wholly absorbed in *art*.’[67]

[65]Margaret Iverson, ‘Following Pieces: On Performative Photography,’ in James Elkins ed, *Photography Theory*, 2007, pp. 91–108.

[66]Siegfried Kracauer, ‘Photography,’ in *Theory of Film*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 18. For a few examples of staged realities in photography, see Christopher Pinney, chapter 3, ‘Chambers of Dreams,’ pp. 108–209, in *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs*, London, Reaktion Books, 1997; Val Williams and Anna Fox, eds, *Street Dreams: Contemporary Indian Studio Photographs from the Satish Sharma Collection*, London, Booth-Clibborn in association with Shoreditch Biennale, 1997; Heike Behrend, ‘Love à la Hollywood and Bombay: Kenyan Postcolonial Studio Photography,’ *Paideuma: Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde*, vol 44, 1998, pp. 139–53.

[67]‘A Small History of Photography,’ in *One-Way Street*, pp. 242–243.

According to Benjamin, a photograph performs this compelling indexicality at two levels, both important for the rich temporality of Pushpamala's photo-performance. One is the level of 'inscription,' which Benjamin distinguishes from the level of 'reception.'[68] The haunting presence in Hill's photograph is the result of indexicality at the level of inscription, whose logic is well-known, but worth repeating. Photography depends on the eye of the camera, which pulls an instantaneous image out of the flow of life passing in front of it. The photographic image registers not only the subject at which the camera is aimed, but also everything within the purview of its mechanical eye, including details the photographer may not have intended, or involuntary movements of the subject's body. Benjamin writes: 'It is through photography that we first discover the existence of this optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis.'[69] The analogy with psychoanalysis suggests that the repressed content of a photograph does not refer to a pre-existing condition of meaning, or 'a Heideggerian "thingness" of things' to be recovered, but rather 'an eruption of the uncanny' within the occult graphology of the photograph itself.[70] The only difference is that the location of the optical unconscious is not in the viewing subject but in the world of things being viewed, which is then available as a visible trace in the photographic image. The camera's appetite for the optical unconscious is signalled in the visual excesses of Pushpamala's copy. In her *Returning from the Tank*, for example, notice details such as the figure's shadow in the sand, or the breeze gently sweeping up her sari, or real footprints left behind when her assistants cleared away – traces of flow that slip out of the artist's control, and distinguish the compelling materiality of the photograph from the controlled conditions of the painting on which it is based (Fig. 10.3).

In Pushpamala's photographs, when we contemplate both the original referent and its material re-configuration, the exacting details of her fantasies generate a heightened sense of wonder. The amazing thing is not that Pushpamala is showing what was not there in the original image, but that she is showing what was already there but hidden as the optical unconscious of the image. In Pushpamala's photocopies, we see more details than were at first visible in the original referent. At the very least, there is the flickering presence of the artist's body. In *Toda*, her clothing, which you might find differentiating her copy from the naked figure in the original image, in fact becomes a vivid example of Benjaminian graphology, where the copy is an uncanny flicker of a long-forgotten past (Fig. 10.2). The artist attributes her shyness from nudity to her middleclass modesty, but the flicker of modesty also draws attention to the original subject, who posed naked for the camera in order to

[68]Hansen, 'Benjamin and Cinema,' pp. 337–338.

[69]Benjamin, 'Small History,' *One Way Street*, pp. 242–43.

[70]See Hansen, 'Benjamin and Cinema,' p. 338, for this distinction. In this regard, Pushpamala's retrieval of the 'subjective conditions' of the 'classic original' in Rajadhyaksha's analysis indicates the desire for 'Heideggerian thingness of things,' from which I am trying to distinguish my analysis.

act out the colonial fantasy of primitiveness even while moving about clothed in daily life, and being educated and civilised by missionary activities.[71] At the level of inscription, then, Pushpamala’s photo-copy draws attention to the record of a technological loop hidden in the original image.

There is one more layer of complication. In a final move, Pushpamala serialises the fragments she has seized from image flows so that her representations begin to intermingle and invade each other’s spaces. In one of the images, categorised in the exhibition catalogue as ‘The Popular Series: An Album of Picturesque scenes of Native Beauties,’ the sari-clad figure from the *Returning from the Tank* poses in a way that shifts from the Ravi Varma original. The figure, while still standing against the rural backdrop, now has a wedding-cake pedestal placed next to her. She wears dark glasses and holds a white, cordless phone, as if posing in a contemporary, commercial photo studio.[72] In another, the figure from the *Lady in Moonlight* stands in a tight mid-shot against a shelf of domestic products – a coffee grinder, lotions, a pair of scissors and reels of thread, and prominently displayed pink bras and panties, copying a 1969 calendar print showing the film star Saira Banu, made for ‘National Glass’ by Vijay Kumar and now in the Patricia Uberoi collection. How are we to understand this intertextuality of her photography?

I want to suggest that Pushpamala’s intertextual references continue to reveal the optical unconscious of the original image, this time turning to the second aspect of Benjamin’s temporal logic of photography. Hansen explains the logic as indexicality operating at the level of reception. Consider Benjamin’s reading of a photograph of the photographer Karl Dauthenday, posing during his engagement with his young fiancée, whom Benjamin describes as ‘the woman he later discovered, on a day shortly after the birth of her sixth child, lying in the bedroom of their Moscow house with her veins slashed.’[73] For Benjamin, the ‘ominous’ future is already part of the temporality of the photograph. Explaining this future as the ‘magical value’ of the photograph, he writes: ‘No matter how artful the photographer, no matter how carefully posed his subject, the beholder feels an irresistible compulsion to search such a picture for the tiny spark of contingency, of here and

[71]G. E. Dobson, a zoologist with the Indian Museum, Calcutta, for instance, wrote in reference to his photograph of five naked Andamanese women in 1872 that, prior to the photograph, he saw one of the women almost everyday at the school house or the church ‘neatly dressed in white’. See Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 46–49, for this as well as a similar case of the ‘Juang Girls,’ who are captured naked in E. T. Dalton’s *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* in 1872, but who are recorded as dressed in white by end of the century.

[72]The figure holding a telephone, a common motif in commercial photo studio, literally recalls the popular genre of “White-telephone films,” produced in fascist Italy during the 1930s to show faux elegance acquired by the urban middle-class through consumerism. See Elaine Mancini, ‘Film Weapons for and against the Regime: 1935 in Italy,’ *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 3, no. 3, Propaganda, October 1980, pp. 55–60.

[73]Walter Benjamin, ‘Little History of Photography,’ pp. 276–278, in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, op. cit., for quotation and images.

now, with which reality has, so to speak, seared through the image-character of the photograph, to find the inconspicuous place where, within the suchness (*Sosein*) of that long-past minute, the future nests still today – so eloquently that we, looking back, may discover it.'[74] The dialectical logic of 'suchness' (not to be mistaken with Heideggerian 'thingness' of things) includes the viewer's present as the possible (read: the 'long-forgotten') future registered in the photograph.

The temporality of 'suchness' is only possible through photography. Pushpamala's "Ethnographic" and "Popular" Series produce a relay of that long-forgotten and possible future which silently 'nests still today' in the 'suchness' of the original image. In relation to *Toda*, for example, Pushpamala produces two different relays of the original image, one emerging from the checkerboard grid, the other from the subject standing in front of it. In the checkerboard grid, Pushpamala explores the original, colonial discourse of anthropometric photography and knowledge production, wherein the grid represented a scientific scale against which previously-unknown people in various parts of the world were measured, identified, categorized, and understood. In other words, the grid signalled the moment at which these people gained visibility and identity in the colonial world. Pushpamala elaborates on the power of the grid to make unseen people visible, and unknown people knowable, by placing in front of it her other, fictional impersonations (Fig. 10.6).

It is tempting to read in this relay a critique of the colonial fantasy of science staged by a postcolonial artist. Pushpamala's second series, however, suggests otherwise. Those images elaborate on the Toda figure, who moves beyond the grid and ties the colonial and postcolonial contexts into a single mimetic network. The figure passes through a range of contemporary image practices. One shows her wearing dark glasses, another shows her sitting proudly at a sewing machine, reproducing images of the Malian studio photographer, Seydou Keita, who has gained international fame for showing his native subjects in playful and audacious contexts. Evoking desires of wholesome, commodity-consuming middleclass women stimulates a flow beyond the national frame, linking not only the 'Third World' at large, but also such practices as nineteenth century American daguerreotypes, where middle class, domestic values were first made visible in relation to industrial products in posed studio photographs.[75]

Invisible global networks are also made visible in another relay of *Toda*, in which Pushpamala reproduces a photograph from the 1930s of the Hungarian-Indian artist, Amrita Shergil, sitting in front of an easel in her studio, brush in

[74]Overall, the recent translation in the *Work of Art in the Age of Technical Reproducibility volume*, op. cit., is far better, but the clunky phrase – 'the suchness (*Sosein*) of that long-past moment' – is more eloquently translated as 'the immediacy of that long-forgotten moment' in *One Way Street*, p. 243.

[75]See Alan Trachtenberg, 'Likeness and Identity: Reflections on the Daguerrean Mystique,' pp. 173–221, in Graham Clarke ed., *The Portrait in Photography*, London, Reaktion Books, 1992.

Fig. 10.6 Pushpamala N. and Clare Arni, ‘Yogini E-11’ from ‘Ethnographic Series,’ (Toda grid with Yogini) *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs* series, 2000–2004 (Courtesy: Bose Pacia, New York)

Fig. 10.7 Pushpamala N. and Clare Arni, Toda as Amrita Shergil in her studio, from ‘The Popular Series: An Album of Picturesque Scenes of Native Beauties,’ *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs* series, 2000–2004 (Courtesy: Bose Pacia, New York)

hand, looking defiantly at the viewer (Fig. 10.7). While Shergil represents for art critics not only a modern feminist artist, but also ‘an inadvertent “feminization” of modern Indian art,’ as Geeta Kapur puts it, Pushpamala’s relay reaches across the

blind spot of modernism.[76] Instead of the modernist aesthetico-political distinction between high and low art forms, the self-fashioning of an individual artist in her private studio and role-playing in a commercial photo studio become, through the 'suchness' of Pushpamala's photography, interconnected parts of a single, global image flow and a shared cosmology of modernity.

Art as Transcultural Flow

In this paper, I was inspired by Roland Wenzlhuemer's challenge to attend to the 'tar-like stickiness' of media flows. I have distinguished the sticky web of relations that brought images and bodies together in Pushpamala's *Native Women of South India* from Bruno Latour's idea of iconophilia, mainly because the latter also represents a kind of image flow that shapes social and disciplinary fields. My exploration of Pushpamala's work began within the field of modern and contemporary art, where popular media images are now regularly used.[77] In that disciplinary space, however, Pushpamala represents a minoritarian strand that has slipped critical scrutiny. My contention is that art practice, when seen as iconophilia, cannot account for minoritarian strands at all; it can only absorb them as mediators within the scenographic arrangement of deictic points and counterpoints arranged around a vanishing point. Indeed, art criticism has so far mostly, albeit quite insightfully, shown in Pushpamala a provocative example of modernist iconophilia, from which I have tried to distinguish my analysis.

The distinction between cinephilia and iconophilia is substantial. If iconophilia is the material production of authority and autonomy of mediators participating within modern technoscapes, cinephilia indicates a consumer's susceptibility to the technological phantasmagoria of modernity. While both generate mobility between bodies and images, the iconophile partakes in the power of the image, whereas the cinephile remains excluded from power relations by a temporal and cognitive distance. If you will, iconophilia represents the visual and spatial order of culturality. By contrast, cinephilia is eminently an example of transculturality, characterised by a desire for mimetic bordercrossing. Pushpamala's desire for 'being inside the image, not just outside, looking' helps rethink transcultural flow not simply as a geographical bordercrossing but as a sticky form of 'art' that has gone unnoticed in modern Indian visual practices as well as media studies.

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[76] Geeta Kapur, "Body as Gesture," p. 4, in *When Was Modernism: Essays on Contemporary Cultural Practice in India*, op. cit.

[77] Geeta Kapur, 'subTerrain: artists dig the contemporary,' pp. 46–83, in Indira Chandrasekhar and Peter C. Seel, eds., *body.city: Siting Contemporary Culture in India*, Delhi, Tulika, 2003. Thomas Crow has argued that the relationship with popular culture has 'always' been an integral part of modernist art. Thomas E. Crow, *Modern Art in the Common Culture*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1996.

Chapter 11
The Changing Image of Sinhalese Healing Rituals: Performing Identity in the Context of Transculturality

Eva Ambos

Introduction

Anthropologists are increasingly confronted with images when doing research on performance and ritual. This is not to say that images did not play a role earlier in anthropology, but rather that images have in recent years developed new quantitative and qualitative dimensions through the support of mass media and new technologies. With this, we are witnessing a 'new visuality of culture' (Mirzoeff 1998: 3). However, images do not illustrate or visualize the empirical material or reality on a one-to-one basis; to claim this is to refer them to the realm of unidimensionality, that is, reducing them to mere 'presentations' of reality, with fixed and objective meaning. But, as Hans Belting noted, images 'happen' (Belting 2005: 302, 303), and are thus interactive: their transmission and perception, and I would add their interpretation, are dependent on the body and a medium. If 'image' is considered in a twofold sense, as a physical artefact *and* as a mental representation (Belting 2005: 303, 304) then their power can be grasped; the actual visualization thereby interacts with the representation. However, the image itself is constantly changing as it is also interacting with the exterior reality (Mirzoeff 1998: 7). I will use, then, the term 'image' in two senses, first as a concrete visualization, be it in texts, photographs or other media, and second as representation, i.e., a framework for interpretations of the performance traditions this essay focuses on.

Healing performances in Sri Lanka, traditionally carried out during the night in villages, have undergone dramatic changes during the last century, leading to the development of different images: from their original purpose as a means to heal, to the term 'devil dances', and to the recent promotion as a national heritage. However, images have influenced in turn the development of the performance traditions. When observing how images of performance traditions in Sri Lanka are handled – how carefully the traditional performers collect and store any visual item which gives proof of their familys' tradition, how colonial gazing was eager to discover the exotic Other, how the Tourism Board displays them on every imaginable item to attract tourists, how politicians use the images of the dancers on propaganda

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posters – one cannot but emphasize the entanglement of the production, circulation and consumption of images in power relations.

Firstly, I argue that identity is performed with the support of images in the twofold sense mentioned above. This essay will demonstrate how not only the representation of the performance traditions changed, but in the same process, the representation of the (traditional) performer's identity and of the state. However, identity is not merely represented, that is, performance traditions are not only expressive – even more so, identity is created, negotiated, sustained or undermined (Sax 2002: 5). Can *images* generate such power on their own? No, I will not fetishize and reify images or claim that they develop a dynamic outside the context of their production, circulation and consumption. In contextualizing images, actors are involved, namely producers and 'objects', consumers and distributers, onlookers and performers, who ascribe meaning to them. Only then do images gain their power. Thus, images do not transcend human agency. This is underlined by the fact that social *imaginairies* are not produced accidentally, but that they are generated by a strategic 'politics of images' (Belting 2005: 305).

This brings me to my second point. I shall argue that the production, circulation and consumption of images is embedded in power relations and in the performance of identity. Images are productive in Michel Foucault's sense of the word. They are centred on dominant, hegemonic discourses and, conversely, like discourses they produce knowledge and subjectivities. Colonialists were the first outsiders to observe the performances. From then, certain images have been drafted and circulated in a new quality through several media such as texts, photography and exhibitions. Beginning with this, a process started in which the images influenced the performance traditions, that is, the practice itself. Thus, images *of* these performances became models *for* the performances (cf. Geertz [1966] 2004: 7). This is not to say that images became independent of subjects, developing a life of their own – they are still produced, circulated, consumed, and looked at by human actors, and they need the human body to come into existence or become animated (Belting 2005: 307). Following on from that, although images may be mobile and transgress boundaries, they are nevertheless accompanied by ideologies. Thus, images are embedded in power relations. Consequently, they affect the status of people who perform their identity by falling back on those images.

What kind of identity is at stake? As Wolfgang Welsch might answer, a transcultural and no longer cultural kind of identity is performed. He harshly criticizes the 'traditional concept of single cultures', which consists, according to him, of 'social homogenization', 'ethnic consolidation' and 'intercultural delimitation' (Welsch 1999: 194, 195). For him, transculturality is the concept that fits modern societies, as it is 'a consequence of the *inner differentiation and complexity of modern cultures*' (Welsch 1999: 197). He stresses that hybridization is characteristic of cultures today; if a 'regional-culture rhetoric' still exists then it must be, as he states, merely 'simulatory and aesthetic'. Correspondingly, there is nothing foreign or own anymore (Welsch 1999: 198). In the course of this essay, I will elaborate how, with the support of images, a thoroughly cultural identity is performed and finally, I will take a critical look at the concept of transculturality in this context.

I will compare two performance traditions in Sri Lanka in order to make my argument that images are embedded in power relations. The performance traditions I have researched are traditionally performed by the same caste. Originally, their purpose was to heal (Section "The Performance Traditions as a Means to Heal"). In this article, I will show that the emergence of different images led however to a distinct development within the performances' very own traditions. This will be illustrated by discussing the performance of identity with regard to the Sri Lankan nation state (Section "A Sinhalese Buddhist Nation Displayed"). In the sections "The Colonial Gaze: The Emergence of 'Devil Dances'" and "The *Imaginaire* of 'National Heritage'", I will provide two examples of the transformations these healing performances underwent in the face of colonialism and nationalism, from 'devil dances' to a form of national heritage. Thereby, I will argue that in each of these processes of image production, circulation and consumption, asymmetries are entangled. Then I will turn again to the performance of identity, this time with regard to the traditional performers (Section "Performing Identity: From Ritualists to Artists"). My argument will thus be forwarded from two different angles: first, from a diachronic one in order to trace the biography or history (cf. Belting 2005: 303) of these images – i.e. their changes and flows through history; second, my argument then takes on a synchronic perspective, aimed at depicting their 'lifestyle' or 'life' (cf. Belting 2005: 303).

The Performance Traditions as a Means to Heal

The foci of this essay are two performance traditions in Sri Lanka, both traditionally performed by the *beravā* (lit. drummer) caste. The *yaktovil* complex originated in the so-called 'low country' in the coastal areas of the South and South-West. The *kohombā kankāriya* is traditionally performed in the 'up country', the region around Kandy, the former seat of the kings, geographically situated in the middle of the country. Originally, the purpose of the performance traditions was to heal a patient, a household or even a whole village afflicted by *yaksa* or *deviy*ō *dosā* (demon or god sickness). Generally, they are performed by a group of *ädurō* (ritualists), together with at least two drummers. Elaborate dancing and comic-dramatic scenes compromise an essential part of the performances together with the recitation of *mantrā* and *set kavi* (auspicious verses) and offerings to gods and/or demons. The 'stage' is situated in front of or inside the patient's house where the health seeker's kin, neighbours and friends form the audience. The ritualists are exclusively Sinhalese-Buddhists as are (usually) the patients and audience. Only males are allowed to perform.

In the case of the *ves näṭuma* or Kandyan dance, a term the British assigned to it, dances are performed to please the gods. The *kohombā kankāri*, the highly elaborated traditional performances dedicated to the God Kohomba from which they originate, usually last thirty hours. Their purpose might be to ward off the evil eye, to heal a single patient, but more often to bless a whole village. They consist mainly of *ves näṭuma* as well as the singing of *set kavi*. According to the legend, the

tradition was brought from India. The first healing performance was carried out in the fifth century B.C. by the Indian healer King Malaya for King Panduvas (cf. Reed 2002: 248), a successor of Vijaya, the legendary founder of the Sinhalese race. It was thus important to safeguard the line of Buddhist Sinhalese kings. Only comparatively recently, according to ritualists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, have these performance traditions shifted from the palaces of the kings to the houses of *radala,* the aristocracy, and to the village and ordinary people.

The *yaktovil* tradition by contrast is focused on *yakku* demons, and not dedicated to the gods. Large-scale *yaktovil* usually last from sunset to sunrise. In this case, they consists of healing practices (e.g. uttering of *mantrā,* cutting of limes, offerings) as well as comic and dramatic elements (e.g. mask dances, comic dialogues), in which patients and ritualists may become possessed. Their purpose is not only to chase off the demons, because the relationship is far more complex. The *yakku* are summoned, fed (offerings), and finally asked to desist from the patient.

The healing process, although differently interpreted, is well documented for the *yaktovil*. Less is written about the *kohombā kankāriya* tradition, at least in terms of publications in English[1]. While some scholars do not assign the dances and the dramatic-comic elements a role in the healing process, and thus reduce them to entertainment, Kapferer (1991), among others, interprets them at their core as serving the ritual's efficacy in many ways. First, they change the consciousness of the patient from that of a sick to a healthy person through the medium performance (e.g. dance, drumming, comedy). Second, they attract an audience, which is crucial in confirming the patient's redefined status (Kapferer 1979: 110, 128–130). Both audience and patient have to be convinced of the ritualist's power to heal, to control the demons, to communicate with the gods (cf. Sax 2003: 388). Third, they create the presence, not illusion of the demonic, of an atmosphere of collective energy, which might be underlined by possession episodes (cf. Schieffelin 1998: 194; Sax 2003: 390). The ritualists in fact explain the dances in terms of appeasement of the demons or of pleasing the gods. However, according to them, the essence of the healing process is the *mantrā* or auspicious verses (*set kavi*) – and only through them, and in the context of performance itself, do they bestow the dances with power and efficacy (cf. Sax 2003; Schieffelin 1998).

Although still performed on behalf of a patient, *yaktovil* are generally declining while *kohombā kankāri* are only very rarely carried out for an individual patient nowadays which was confirmed in the course of my fieldwork. The reasons for this are similar to those for the downward trend in the low country rituals (cf. Simpson 1997: 48; Reed 2002: 271). There are high costs, which are usually mentioned first of all by the ritualists, fewer sons are willingly to become ritualists, and new systems of knowledge (e.g. biomedicine) are emerging. Moreover, the breakdown

[1]A recent book (*Dance and the Nation: Performance, Ritual, and Politics in Sri Lanka)* about the transformation of the *kohombā kankāriya* tradition towards national heritage has been written by Susan Reed, could not be taken into consideration for this article as it just came out in the middle of 2010.

of village structures makes it difficult to organize large-scale healing rituals (Gombrich/Obeyesekere 1988: 7; Simpson 1997: 51, 52; De Silva 2000: 94, 97) (Figs. 11.1 and 11.2).

Fig. 11.1 A masked *ädurā* during a yaktovil on the South West Coast 2006

Fig. 11.2 Tittapajjala Samanaweera *Gurunnānsē* in a *ves* costume performing *vannam* dances at a temple close to Kandy 2010

A Sinhalese Buddhist Nation Displayed

The government of Sri Lanka reflects on value and use of the performances and their images for economic and political strategies. For that reason, the state attempts to take over the image production, especially of those, which promote unity in times of disintegration (Simpson 1997: 54). 'The national cultural project' (Hettige 2000: 182) of the state began with the national revival after the former British colony Ceylon gained independence in 1948: 'native arts' have been developed through public patronage by the new nation state (Hettige 2000: 178, 179, 198). In order not to appear as a flat, empty image, the young nation state, a 'modern' Western concept, needed social knots as identity markers for the new citizen to identify with. 'Culture' became one such knot used to animate the empty image of the nation state to create a 'Sinhalese Buddhist imagined community' (Kapferer 1988: 97) where, for the first time, ethnicity, religion and nation became aligned.

This is supported by a process of 'culturalization' described by both Bruce Kapferer (1988: 1-5) and Premakumara De Silva (2000: 89). 'Culturalization' denotes the transformation of rituals that no longer count as religion or as a means to heal but are performed as 'culture', i.e. are a fetish of it. Thus, the process begins with a de-ritualization and ends with the objectification and essentializing of culture. Heritagization is therefore one instrument through which the new nation state attempts to create a sense of community (Polit 2010: 31, 34). Through the condensation and reification of culture, identity is made keener and more strongly demarcated.

This process of culturalization requires purification. 'Protestant Buddhism' (Gombrich/Obeyesekere 1988), a movement which began to evolve in the nineteenth century is characterized by its criticism towards 'magical-animistic' elements like *yaktovil* as being non-Buddhist and pre-modern (Kapferer 1991: 25, 42; Gombrich/Obeyesekere 1988: 215–216, 218). In the course of this process, an idealized and essentialized image of Buddhism proper as opposed to 'magic' developed which informed the promotion of a national Sinhalese Buddhism. Thus, 'Protestant Buddhism' is highly involved in the denigration of what is understood as 'non-Buddhist' (Tambiah 1992: 6, 7; Gombrich/Obeyesekere 1988: 213). This points to a larger governmental agenda where the 'national' is discussed as pure Buddhist and Sinhalese, and Buddhism seems to be omnipresent and all-embracing as the religion of the modern nation state. In this ethnic-chauvinistic climate, often perpetuated through aggressive forms of nationalism which is reflected in the civil war, the need emerges to demarcate religion and ethnic identity on at least the ideological level. This self-representation of the country as Sinhalese Buddhist has a long tradition because the Sinhalese kingdoms have always been perceived as protectors of Buddhism as well; this found its continuation in the declaration of Buddhism as state religion in 1972. The rather new dimension here is the relationship to the 'Other', that is the emphasis on purity in the denial of the country's multi-cultural legacy, which is reflected in the civil war (Rajasingham-Senanayake 2002: 44).

The low country performances seem inappropriate for this national identity project, above all because of their association with the ‘dark side’ of religion. Instead, Kandyan dance is represented as ‘the’ national, and Buddhist dance. It is favorized because *yaktovil* are associated with the ‘other branch’, i.e. non-Buddhist. Furthermore, the image complex of the ‘devil dance’ is linked up with *yaktovil*, which I will show in the next section, rather than in Kandyan performances. But the most important reason is the perception of Kandyan dance, and Kandyan culture in general as genuine and ‘pure’ and Kandy as the (religious and political) centre of Sri Lanka, while low country culture is seen as rather corrupted and hybrid due to the absorption of elements from other cultures (cf. Reed 2002: 252; Seneviratne 1978: 11; Obeyesekere 1979: 286, 287): only in 1815 while the rest of the island had been under colonial rule for centuries, did the British capture the town which was the last capital of the Sinhalese kings and the centre of resistance.

The image of Kandyan dance is politically exploited. By being accompanied by Kandyan dancers, for example, when they open a public building, politicians place themselves in the tradition of the Kandyan kings and aristocracy. Accordingly, during the 2010 parliament elections, one candidate of Kandy district advertised for himself with posters showing Kandy dancers and drummers (Fig. 11.3). This political exploitation can be illustrated further when looking at the Kandy *Äsala perahära*, one of the greatest processions in South Asia and meanwhile ‘the’ tourist event in Sri Lanka, in which Kandyan dance was introduced in 1919. Genuinely a multi-religious event, this aspect is nowadays neglected and instead, its roots in the dedication to a ‘Buddhist’ king are highlighted. The *perahära* has a special importance for the Sri Lankan nation state: it developed from a ritual to an embodiment of ‘national culture’ (Seneviratne 1978: 120, 143). The government seeks to present Kandyan performances to create a line from a glorious, Sinhalese-Buddhist past to recently-established national identities (cf. Seneviratne 1978: 120, 121), and thus, to legitimise the current regime. The display of culture as national and at the same time Buddhist, and with which other groups cannot necessarily identify, is even more

Fig. 11.3 An election poster in Kandy district 2010

crucial with regard to the ethnic tensions surrounding the civil war. Because the power of its image supports the creation of an imagined Sinhala Buddhist nation, other groups in the nation state are excluded and thus depicted as 'other'.

This points to a larger development in Sri Lanka which declares everything as Buddhist and Sinhalese so as to generate a narrative of 'pure' Buddhism as the religion of the modern nation state - as we saw in the case of Kandyan dance, which is indeed represented as source of 'authenticity and cultural purity' (Reed 2002: 253) but stems in fact from a rural, pre-Buddhist healing ritual. It is noteworthy that the 'pure' Sinhalese Buddhist identity is not necessarily rooted in a 'genuine' Buddhism, which is by the way an ideal type, but is made up by opposing it to the Tamil ethnic and nowadays religious Other in a time when Sinhalese Buddhist chauvinism seems to be winning more and more ground.

As this section shows, power relations are entangled in the promotion and sponsoring of these images and visualities. The representation of the nation becomes even more pressing in modern times when problems of demarcating 'nation', 'ethnicity' and belonging in general become more acute. The performances are not on the wane, but their original context, healing rituals, is transformed to fit the national post-colonial identity project, which favours a modern purified, but still traditional ethnic Buddhist identity. 'Cultural nationalism' (De Silva 2000: 101) or 'Culture in nationalism', according to Kapferer (1988: 1, 2) 'becomes an object, a reified thing, something which can be separated or abstracted from its embeddedness in the flow of social life' and further (1988: 2): '…nationalist passion can be seen to be generated in the act of religious contemplation of culture in which a national self and a national other are defined…' In thus transforming healing rituals into 'culture', this fits the national identity project if it contributes to the creation of the imagined Sinhalese Buddhist community, as in the case of Kandyan dance, while practices like the *yaktovil* dances function rather to build up an 'Other' – and noticeably a non-Buddhist one. In the following two sections, I shall focus on the 'biography' of these images, how they have developed from 'devil dances' to national heritage, and point out the accompanying asymmetries.

The Colonial Gaze: The Emergence of 'Devil Dances'

Colonialism began in Sri Lanka with the landing of the Portuguese in 1505, followed by the Dutch. The British, who arrived in 1796, came to rule over the whole island with the capture of Kandy in 1815 until the island's independence in 1948. This was the first time that the entire island was under colonial rule. Prior to that, the area around Kandy had remained free of colonial rule nearly three centuries longer than the low country. The colonial imagination was not only interwoven with Orientalist discourses but also with concrete practices such as the colonial administration of people (Wickramasinghe 2006: 48, 49), aimed at 'scientifically' fixing images in order to control, govern and discipline the colonized subjects. For example, the British recorded in the census of 1901 for the first time

'Low Country Sinhalese' and 'Kandyan Sinhalese' as two separate groups (Wickramasinghe 2006: 54) whereby slight differences became codified as essential. This contributed to the image of the Kandyan region as the 'epitome of tradition' (Wickramasinghe 2006: 54) vis-à-vis the low country, which is still evoked nowadays by the state in order to promote 'pure Sinhalaness' (Section "A Sinhalese Buddhist Nation Displayed").

In this field of image and knowledge production, Sinhalese religion was reified and essentialized for the colonialists. It was opposed to European religion, and became, to a certain degree, reducible to 'devil dances'. The healing performances, associated with demons, were already described in colonial times as 'devil dances' (Dickman 1863: 143; Hildburgh 1908: 169; Sirr 1850: 51–53; Hagenbeck 1922: 47–48; Andrews 1896; Seligmann 1908; Grünwedel 1893: 71–88; cf. Knox 1681: 76–78) by colonialists, missionaries, scholars and travellers, with the emphasis of 'exorcism', as the 'darker side' of Buddhism (Scott 1992a: 302). Other words that are commonly used to highlight this 'darker side', i.e. 'magic', as a means of othering include 'occultism' (Corner-Ohlmus 1899: 814; Godakumbura 1946: 185), 'superstition' (Gooneratne 1865) and 'demonism' (Gooneratne 1865). Accordingly, the ritualists have been labelled derogatorily as 'devil dancers' or 'devil priests' (Grünwedel 1893: 72; Gooneratne 1865: 10; cf. Copleston 1908: 275; Wirz 1954: 2).

Postcards and colonial photographs from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries provide visual proof of the colonial gaze, which reduces the performances to 'devil dances'. On them, the 'devil dancers', usually without distinguishing between low- and up-country dancers, are represented as icons of Sinhalese religion, its 'darker side'. The photographic gaze, thereby, appeared as more scientific and as more representational of reality, as even 'equivalent to empiricism', according to Anne Maxwell (1999: 11), than images obliquely generated through literal descriptions and exhibitions.

The colonial, visual exposure of the performance traditions found a new medium in 'anthropological displays', which took place in the West. Between 1882 and the 1930s, the firm Hagenbeck mounted several exhibitions with its 'Singhalesen-Truppe', ranging from shows in the Hamburg Zoo to a Ceylonese village at the World Exhibition 1908 in London (Thode-Arora 1989: 29, 169–175). The Ceylon exhibitions displayed not only 'devil dancers' but also 'snake-charmers', 'dwarfs', and a potpourri of 'curios', thus giving prominence to spectacle (Maxwell 1999: 17). The idea was to invoke the illusion that these societies could be grasped in this way. While the exhibitions were directly related to colonialism (Thode-Arora 1989: 167; Maxwell 1999: 7), in displaying colonized people, in fostering the colonial *imaginaire* and legitimizing the colonial project, anthropology played a role in this process by instilling the displays with scientific value (Thode-Arora 1989: 128; cf. Maxwell 1999: 8).

Traces of these colonial images centred on 'devil dances' and the separation between 'pure' Buddhism and 'magic' are to be found in the anthropological discourse. David Scott (1992a: 301, 302; 1994) has stated that categories like 'exorcism', 'demonism' and 'possession' do not appropriately describe *yaktovil,*

and that anthropologists often use these Western frameworks unreflectedly. The assumption, according to Scott (1992a: 312; Goonatilake 2001: 125), that these practices are more 'essential' to the religion of the Sinhalese, stem from colonial-missionary discourses. This leads to the construction of a 'misleading ethnographic image' (Scott 1992a: 302). The distinction between Buddhism and 'magic' operates mainly on an ideological and cognitive level, but this claim cannot be substantiated when the two are observed in practice.

A look at some works in the anthropological literature (i.e. Wirz 1954; Ames 1965; Obeyesekere 1979; Ryan 1953; Gombrich/Obeyesekere 1988; De Silva 2000: 18) reveals essentialist categorizations of *yaktovil* as 'magical animism', a 'popular cult' or a 'spirit religion', that is embedded in structuralist dichotomies in Sinhalese Buddhism like 'practical' vs. 'ideal', 'this-worldly' vs. 'other-worldly', 'magic' vs. 'religion' (cf. Vogt Frýba 1991: 185, 186). Some scholars depict these healing performances, 'the other branch', as belonging to Buddhism, while others label the branch 'non-Buddhist'. Implicit or explicit hierarchizations between Buddhism proper and 'the other branch,' which already was an issue in colonial times (Scott 1992b: 349, 353, 354, 359), augment these dichotomies. And these dichotomies and hierarchizations have been taken over by nationalist Reform Buddhists, meaning that the orientalist colonial categories have provided post-colonial national movements with a source to pursue a 'politics of difference' (cf. Breckenridge/Van der Veer 1993: 9).

The colonial gaze 'discovers' exotic things in order to sustain asymmetrical relations between colonizer and colonized subject, between researcher and researched subject, between West and East to legitimate colonialism and power relations in general. The 'devil dancers' associated with backwardness and superstition became, for the first time, emblems of Ceylon, the later Sri Lanka. A differentiation in the representation of low country and Kandyan performances is not yet made. The colonial gaze was not so much focused on this distinction, but rather on the opposition between religion, i.e. Buddhism, and 'magic', East and West. The first dichotomy between Buddhism and 'magic' was likewise picked up by Reform Buddhists. Only later – in the first third of the twentieth century when Kandyan dance, as often mentioned by my informants, was put on the stage with the support of British patrons – did the image appear to become more differentiated: while low country performances seem to be suitable for presentation as antidote counterweight to 'proper religion', be it Christianity, be it Buddhism, Kandyan dance slowly turns out to become represented as Buddhist. 'Song of Ceylon', the famous film of Basil Wright from 1934, in which Kandy dance is associated with Buddha and only *yaktovi*l are still represented as 'devil dances', underlines this.

The interaction between the display of colonized people, whether through exhibitions, photography or writings, and colonialism itself (cf. Maxwell 1999: 1, 20) become obvious or, to put it more generally, power relations have played a crucial role in the production, consumption and reproduction of the image of the 'devil dance'. In orientalist representations (Scott 1992b: 337–341), the division is made between Asia and Europe. By taking one image (e.g. 'devil dances') to reify, de-contextualize and depict it as iconic, a whole culture or region is viewed through

that lens (Goonatilake 2001: 89, 126; Scott 1992b). The image of the 'devil dances' and related images (i.e. 'exorcism', 'demonism', 'magic'), both in written and visual material, were set up as a trope to create an otherness that is at the same time translated into familiar categories. It becomes obvious that images that are entangled in asymmetrical relationships need a mirror or counter image to 'function': in displaying or representing the Other, the Self is constituted (Sax 1998: 294). For a long time also anthropologists constructed an *imaginaire* of 'the field' as other, pre-modern and entirely different from Western culture. However, not only asymmetrical relationships between West and East are at stake. The image of the 'devil dancer' also reflected, sustained and created asymmetrical relations in Sri Lanka, namely in the course of the so called Buddhist revival in which Buddhism was and is depicted as pure, that is, without 'magical' elements. Goonatilake's book (2001) provides one example for such an approach in his harsh and often polemical critique of leading 'Western' anthropologists: In attacking Kapferer and others as looking through a 'distorting prism' or having a 'hallucinogenic view' (Goonatilake 2001: 126) on Sinhala culture, he himself paints throughout his book an image of Buddhism as pure, rational and superior, harshly separating Buddhism and the 'Other' e.g. 'magic', 'religion', an even more 'distorting view', thus absorbing himself elements from colonial discourses and characteristic for contemporary Sinhala-nationalist language. This exemplifies what Breckenridge/Van der Veer (1993: 11) termed 'internal orientalism', that is, the absorption of orientalist categories into post-colonial nationalist discourses.

The *Imaginaire* of 'National Heritage'

After Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948, the new nation state soon began a campaign to fill this mostly empty abstract image of the 'nation' with life. This included a turn towards something that might be termed 'identity' or 'heritage politics'. Heritage is linked to imaginations of nationhood (cf. Polit 2010: 32). However, the ground was not bare but had already been prepared by colonial mechanisms of image production and circulation – the 'new' national *imaginair*e began paradoxically, if not seamlessly, with the colonial one. This is not to say that the 'Indigenous' did not produce or consume any images relying on the performance traditions before, but its scale and elevation on the national level was new. As I will show in the course of this section, in particular the asymmetry between Kandyan and low country performances was adopted and even furthered. Primarily, heritage is a discourse (Polit 2010: 32) which is, in the sense of Foucault, productive, because it generates authoritative knowledge, images and subjectivities. The process of 'heritagization' (Polit 2010: 34, 35) and its preservation entails selection and exclusion. Certain cultural practices are epitomized as heritage, i.e. as representing the nation, like Kandyan dance, while at the same time others like Tamil or Muslim traditions are excluded.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, new contexts for performing the rituals, or elements that had been de-contextualized from them, have arisen. Tourist shows, national performances in the mass media and cultural displays at the village level (De Silva 2000) are increasingly turning into conventional arenas of display of visual features – eye-catchers – such as dancing or drumming, which appear to be perfectly suitable means for exhibiting what is labelled 'culture'. For instance, Kandyan as well as low country dances were displayed in the Independence Day Parade of 2010, disturbingly alongside a martial military pageant; the University of the Visual and Performing Arts frequently arranges night-long performances to teach students the dances; a tour of the Bandu Wijesooriya Dance School through Germany, which showed traditional dances as part of Sri Lanka's cultural heritage, took place in 2006. With this, healing elements such as the recitation of *mantrā* are neglected in order to adapt the performances to the taste of new consumers and to new forms of representation. Images, consumed by new audiences, generate new meanings. By 'staging religion', elements of these performances are shifted to new public spheres (i.e. mass media) and, like that, generate and circulate new images.

Kandyan dance, in fact, has become *the* national symbol (Reed 2002: 247). Subsequently, the state is its key patron (cf. Reed 2002: 246, 250, 258): it sponsors tours abroad; funds national dance troupes; organizes national performances; establishes cultural centres – in short, the image production and circulation has become institutionalized by the state. While low country dances also show a certain degree of institutionalization - there are for instance national competitions, awards and certificates for both traditions (cf. Kapferer 1991: 59; Reed 2002: 272) – they nevertheless receive scant attention from the state. While Kandyan dance for example was already incorporated into the school curriculum in the 1950s (Reed 2002: 248), low-country dance was not included until nearly forty years later.

I argue that this is entangled with a variety of images that are generated, circulated and consumed. The image of Kandyan dance as Buddhist began to crystallize during late colonial times, while low country dance continued to adhere to the image of the 'devil dance'. The image of Kandyan dance as iconic for the nation is but one example in which Sinhalese and Buddhist identities merge. To generate and sustain that image, the heritage of other groups like the Tamils and Muslims has been excluded – especially during the civil war, this attempt to depict Sri Lanka as predominantly Sinhalese Buddhist advanced to become a part of the war propaganda.

The performances are transformed moreover through the intensified tourism in Sri Lanka to a kind of tourist art. To this end, orientalist images of unspoiled culture and magic are consciously mobilised in the staging of culture. To satisfy desires for exotic and cultural authenticity, the performances are adapted to the taste of tourists, i.e. to the images tourists have in mind when they think of Sri Lanka. However, the offer, i.e. the representation of 'culture' also shapes the image tourists have in their minds. In 'cultural shows' at hotels, for instance, tourists are able to immerse themselves temporarily in a foreign culture. The all-powerful gaze of the tourist tries to grasp the whole culture through a condensed, pre-manufactured image which actually is handed to them on a silver platter by the state: of Kandyan dance as a cultivated art form, and the low country performance as an exotic relic of past.

This heritagization entails the commoditization of aesthetic practices in order to sell 'culture'. Hence, Kandyan dance is promoted and commercialized as *the* cultural icon for tourism (cf. Reed 2002: 248, 249). *Yaktovil*, however, are advertised in travel guides, travel documentaries and tourism promotion materials as 'devil dances' and exorcisms – sketches from the colonial discourse – to attract tourists. The commodification and circulation of this 'tourist art' includes selling low-country dance masks, DVDs and cassettes, cultural shows for tourists, all manner of souvenirs such as postcards, statuettes, batiks with images of dancers and, a relatively new trend, 'beach mask dances' or 'raves' to attract younger tourists in particular. Hence, performance traditions or 'culture' become commodities. Although partly initiatives of private business seeking units, the state, i.e. the government is engaged in the production and circulation of these images. Yet, its purpose is not only to earn money – it is a strategy to display the image of a modern nation state, still valuing its (Buddhist) 'folk arts', which however, it has overcome.

Power relations have been created, sustained or sometimes undermined on several levels. Above all, the national elite became interested and involved in the preservation and selection of tradition during the process of its heritagization (cf. Polit 2010: 42). Heritage politics also means identity politics – that is, heritage as a discourse is related to the construction of identities in that it becomes the icon for a certain group (Polit 2010: 34, 35), in the case of Sri Lanka the 'imagined community' of a Sinhalese Buddhist nation. As Polit (2010: 42, 43) illustrates for the transformation of performance traditions into theatre in Uttarakhand, India, these theatre plays are not meant as rituals but as *images* of rituals, whereas these images become differentiated in a process of exclusion and selection. By comparison, Kandyan dance has turned into a national symbol and serves the construction of an *imaginaire* of a post-colonial modern nation state. In the process of heritagization, therefore, the ritualistic aspect that connects the performance traditions in the perception of 'Moderns' with 'backwardness' or 'superstition' has to be downplayed in order to represent the state as modern (Reed 2002: 250; cf. Polit 2010: 41, 43, 44; Kendall 2001: 32, 33). A modern nation state represents itself through what is imagined to be 'tradition'. This 'tradition' has to fit (modern) notions of art and heritage and has to be suitable for the upper classes. Furthermore, it has to serve as an identifier which is not rural, backward, non-Buddhist, low caste or ritualistic. Having elucidated in this section the process of nationalization and heritagization, I will now elaborate on how the images serve the performance of identity in the case of the performers.

Performing Identity: From Ritualists to Artists

As I hope to have shown, images are entangled in power relations. After elaborating on the diachronic perspective, that is, the development and transformation of the image of the performance traditions from their original purpose as a means to heal

to the colonial gaze on them as ‘devil dances’, which passes over into the staging of culture as national heritage, I will now elucidate the ‘performative creation of communities and *thereby* of selves’ (Sax 2002: 12), whereby asymmetrical relationships are reflected and formed. I will now elaborate more on the performance of identity linked to the images and how these images provide a cultural resource, a means for differentiation, this time for the performers themselves.

A performative approach to identity formation has the advantage of perceiving it as contextual, processual and non-essential. This is not to say that in the context of transculturality, as some may argue, identity is more fluid and less clearly demarcated. In contrast, I argue that especially in times of globalization, when many social theories emphasize the fluidity and non-essentiality of identity, the agents in my field do not doubt their identity, i.e. whether they are Hindu or Buddhists, on the contrary, identity might be even more clearly demarcated, boundaries are sharpened and native ideas highlight non-permeability and internal cohesio. This is not only revealed on an ideological level, but also on the level of concrete praxis and in performances. As Sax (2002: 11) states, the focus must particularly be on ‘ideas that are performed and texts that are embodied.’ If we perceive human bodies as ‘living media’, which produce, perceive and project images (Belting 2005: 306, 315), we are able to bring together images and a performative approach.

Since I am not dealing primarily with performances but with images *of* them, the power of images has to be elaborated (cf. Polit 2010: 42). Insofar as they are also images *for* performances, that is, images influence the actual practice and thus the negotiation of identity, they support the performance of identity. Through images and their transformations, performance traditions become linked to the marketing of tradition, ‘culture’, and politics. Thereby, encounters with ‘the Other’ become negotiated, whether in a colonial, touristic, or national context. In this way, the ‘Other’ is visualized in order to constitute the Self, as the constitution of the Self is dependent on a mirror image. Images will always compete, but the elites who control the means of representation are often, if not always, able to produce and circulate distinctly authoritative images. Thus, as Sax argues, ‘the representative currency is clearly controlled by the dominant group’ (2002: 14). I will focus this section, as I did in the section “A Sinhalese Buddhist Nation Displayed”, on asymmetrical relationships not so much between societies, but within a society, namely Sri Lankan. There are two striking asymmetries related to the reflection and generation of images, the first is between new and traditional performers, the second concerns Sinhala Buddhists and the ‘Others’ inside the Sri Lankan nation state, which is illustrated in the prior section “The *imaginaire* of ‘national heritage’”.

The *beravā* caste, perceived as low (Gooneratne 1865: 10; De Silva 2000: 39–41; Simpson 1997: 45; cf. Wirz 1954: 2, Vogt Frýba 1991: 165,166; Reed 2002: 249) traditionally provides the dancers, drummers and ritualists in Kandyan as well as in low country rituals. Their identity is closely related to the performance of these traditions, but the name ‘*beravā*’ is nevertheless pejorative if used to refer not to caste but to people. The caste system in Sri Lanka, especially in the Kandyan area emerged from a feudal tenure service system to the king (*rajākāriya*) (Simpson

1997: 45), which was a complementary rather than a hierarchical system of labour. Most traditional families rightly emphasize the important function their family's tradition has had, both in the Kandyan *rajākāriya* system, as well as in the life of ordinary villagers to heal sickness. The image of the 'devil dancer', 'exorcist' or 'magician' at the margins of (Buddhist) society is in any case ubiquitous – these labels were imposed on the performers when negotiating asymmetrical relationships between Buddhism and 'non-Buddhism' (e.g. 'magic', Hinduism), West and East and 'high' and 'low' caste.

Correspondingly, the attitude of the people from the *beravā* caste towards their cultural property (Simpson 1997: 48) is ambivalent. On the one hand, many traditional performers decide to give up their rituals because of the connection with caste discrimination and prejudices. In the mass media, the rituals are depicted as backward, superstitious or non-Buddhist and become increasingly associated with low classes and castes. Thus, they develop into a status marker (Simpson 1997: 49, 50; Reed 2002: 258; Seneviratne 1978: 128; cf. Van der Horst 1995: 155). On the other hand, some traditional performers handle their family's heritage with confidence, identify with it and consider it as social capital (cf. Simpson 1997: 50; Reed 2002: 258, 259). However, some integrate and adapt the performance traditions into modern structures. Since the 1930s, *kalāyatana* (lit. 'arts institutes, i.e. village dance schools') have been established. Dance troupes are created, and even travel abroad to present 'culture'. Previously a lineage-based tradition, *ädurō* have to open the transmission of knowledge to other families outside their *paramparave* (lineage) so as to secure pupils (cf. Reed 2002: 246, 250; Simpson 1997: 48; De Silva 2000: 39, 40, 50). There are however, still ritualists who are interested in the preservation of the tradition. However, others who adapt fully to the taste and expectations of new audiences such as tourists might be keen to leave behind the image of the village healing performances (cf. Reed 2002: 258). Another strategy is aimed not only at preserving their knowledge but also at locking up the circle of knowledge transmission (cf. Simpson 1997). The traditional teacher-pupil based system that includes the acquisition of skills and tools (i.e. recitation of *mantrā*) needed to perform a huge range of rituals is maintained. In this case, group identity is displayed ever more consciously and the image of the village healing performance traditions is not only accepted, but is highlighted.

Due to the 'nationalization' of Kandyan dance, the question arises who or whose body should serve as a vessel to contain, perform and represent 'culture'. In earlier times, these positions were exclusively in the hands of the *beravā* caste (Ryan 1953: 189; De Silva 2000: 39–41; Simpson 1997: 45). However, the rural traditional performer families from 'low' castes no longer fit the image of a modern nation state which values its past and tradition but does not live according to them anymore. Interwoven with the redefinition of 'ritualists' to 'artists' and the dance to a modern business with little or no caste connotation (cf. Hettige 2000: 179; Reed 2002: 255; Seneviratne 1978: 166), are higher castes and national elites who latch onto this image of 'pure' Kandyan culture as uncorrupted by Western and non-Buddhist influences. They began to show their interest in it and today, they

dominate Kandyan dance not only as patrons but, according to Reed (2002: 249, 251, 268; c.f. Hettige 2000: 179), also in the field of dance itself.

Thus emerges the image of the cultivated, disciplined middle or upper class artist who displays his or her skills and tools, a commodity which is acquirable for everybody, even for Westerners, everywhere, if required, from hotels to international stages, from processions to cultural displays. The process by which the control over activities that traditionally were the esoteric knowledge of a few traditional families of the *beravā* caste is shifted to other groups (Simpson 1997: 53; cf. Ryan 1953: 188, 189, 292), is much more advanced in the case of Kandyan dance. The reason for this, I argue, is that the image of Kandyan dance is 'pure' and Buddhist, whereas low country dance is perceived as rather backward and non-Buddhist. However, the lack of patronage, and thus control over low country dance by the state and elites, appears paradoxically to secure the survival of *yaktovilya* as a healing ritual: because it has not been fostered and 'elitisized' the way Kandyan dance has, low country performances are not so much de-contextualized and the replacement of traditional performers seems to be less grave than in the up country.

Thus, while the cultural property of the *beravā* caste, both in the low country and in the Kandyan area, is modernized, nationalized and economically upgraded, in many cases discrimination against the traditional families persists, if covered (cf. Reed 2002: 254, 256, 262–265; De Silva 2000: 39–41; Amarsingham 1981: 337, 339; Simpson 1997: 45, 49; Ryan 1953: 20, 288; cf. Kendall 2001: 29, 30): '. . .many dancers undergo the profoundly dehumanizing process of being used as bodies for the nation – bearers of tradition and of art but not worthy of even the simplest respect.' (Reed 2002: 267).

However, the traditional performers also take advantage of the images and could to a certain degree improve their social status (cf. Simpson 1997: 52; Reed 2002: 246, 264). Traditional families are aware of the images and use them actively, which explains their identification with the performance traditions so as to satisfy for instance the need for exotic and cultural authenticity, to earn their livelihood through 'selling culture' or performing the nation, and finally as a resource to negotiate their identity. This performance of the Self takes place however within the limits of 'discursive demarcations' (Butler 1993: 1). Identity is not only reflected through images, but also created, sustained or undermined. This proves to be paradoxical if we take in consideration that the cultural property of the *beravā* caste, who until the second half of the twentieth century had been forcibly excluded from education (Simpson 1997: 50; Ryan 1953: 292–295), is nowadays exploited by everybody for political and economic purposes. Thus, the traditional performers seem to disappear increasingly from sight as the institutionalization and marketing of their cultural practices and their images progresses.

Not the traditional performers matter for the state's national identity project, only their cultural practices – due to the transformation of the images of the performance traditions and the de-contextualization of the practices the medium (the performers body) is separated from the image (the dances). The bodies of higher castes and classes, 'disciplined bodies', became the new medium for the projection of the image. This process has progressed much further in the case of

Kandyan dance due to state patronage, elitization and de-contextualization: thus, the visibility of the cultural practice is a trap for the traditional performers. Not only the negotiation of the cultural identity of the traditional performers is at stake, but the formation and representation of the identity of the Sinhalese Buddhist majority and that of the nation respectively, as I illustrated earlier.

Conclusions

The recurring topic throughout the history and tenor of the images of the performances are matters of performing identity, the identity of the traditional performers, as well as the identity of the Sri Lankan nation state. The notion of asymmetries points to the generation and nourishing of power relations in which the production, circulation and consumption of images is embedded and accompanied by ideologies like ethnicity and hegemonic discourses (e.g. heritage). Images interact with reality (Mirzoeff 1998: 7) and can serve political aims: politics is made by controlling them or at least their media (Belting 2005: 305). Even though they might be mobile and transgressing boundaries, and in a sense 'transcultural', they nevertheless serve identity formation. They might have a history and tenor, but this does not mean that they transcend human agency. The images of performance traditions are not only entangled but also feeding each other - they are all centred on oppositions and asymmetries, such as between Buddhism and 'the other branch', Us and Them, colonizer and colonized, Sinhalese and Tamil. In that sense, they are part of a dominant discourse and a powerful ideology in support of otherizing.

The overall framework for establishing these asymmetries is the juxtaposition of ideologies of 'purity' and 'hybridity'. Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism is one example of purifying tendencies, as purification which is followed by expunging 'foreign', often more ritualistic elements: 'religions so harnessed to nationalism are often regarded as purified and more orthodox than before.' (Kapferer 1988: 5). Religion and cultures are 'traditionalized', i.e. brought back to the roots or orthodoxy, and at the same time paradoxically 'modernized', i.e. categorized, reified, objectified. Thus, the repudiation of rural, 'backward' and ritualistic practices, as for instance by 'Protestant Buddhists', is part of such a purification process, where nationalism, religion and ethnicity converge. The state presents itself as pure and authentic in order to foster a modern (i.e. national, ethnic) Sinhalese Buddhist identity whereby the culture of other groups becomes invisible. Influences or exchanges with 'other' cultures are denied in the name of purism, thus contradicting the multi-religious and multi-cultural history of the island, and only a co-existence is admitted. The flip side of the coin is the concept of hybridity - as used for example by Welsch (1999: 198) to describe transculturality - because it implies that there is by contrast a singularity, a 'pure' culture, and thus stems from the same discourse (Rajasingham-Senanayake 2002: 63). Moreover, hybridity is the rule, not the exception. The Other is declared as hybrid, i.e. as inauthentic, the Self as pure. 'Purity' as an ideology receives a high value in times of globalization and

transculturality, especially if related to nationalism. Both, purity and hybridity are essentialized in cementing identity. The concept of performance as for example used by Judith Butler (1993) or William S. Sax (2002), in contrast, emphasizes the processual and contextual aspects of identity.

A weighting of processual aspects of identity does not preclude that its performance is based on ideologies of purity. This has to be viewed in the context of the civil war: While earlier, differences between the diverse groups within the nation state have been acknowledged, which was needed in order to build up an enemy image, in recent times there is has been a Sinhalese Buddhist 'takeover' of Tamil Hindu practices (Gombrich/Obeyesekere 1988: 426), and according to the dominant discourse, it contains nothing syncretic or hybrid, but solely something genuinely Buddhist. This ideology of purity and the image of Kandyan culture as authentic are the reasons why Kandyan dance is chosen to represent the nation as a national symbol and institutionalized as 'pure' Buddhist culture. In contrast, low country culture and thus dance are perceived as hybrid and therefore not suitable for representing the nation state.

Transculturality is closely linked to notions of purity and hybridity. It is not discussed here as something measurable or as an objectifiable category, but as a discourse or ideology with consequences for societies and therefore embedded in the creation of power relations. Transculturality is often based on an old fashioned concept of culture as homeostatic, essential, static, pure and self-contained. Welsch (1999: 194, 195) provides an example for such an approach. However, if cultures are considered as being in constant interaction and exchange with each other, as open, and humans as creative agents, then transculturality is the rule, so much so that the concept is almost obsolete. Welsch's (1999: 197, 198) description of the term 'transculturality' as hybrid, diverse, open (linking with other cultures) does not fundamentally differ from current cultural theories in anthropology. Thus, if transculturality is perceived in the sense of *transcending* culture, the merging of two or more cultures, or as hybridity, as Welsch (1999: 198, 201) does, the term is no help in reading the history of the images of the performance traditions: in every stage of that history, the asymmetry between Self and Other and the tension between purity and hybridity is underlined. Rather than having multi-religiosity or cultural diversity, e.g. acknowledged hybridity, we face religious intolerance and purism, leading to class or ethnic struggles. Thus, authenticity and 'regional-culture rhetoric' have not become just 'folklore' and 'simulatory', as Welsch (1999: 198) states, but are powerful discourses and images that are embedded in asymmetries.

However, if transculturality is used in terms of paying attention to 'global flows' between societies, e.g. crossing of cultures, the process not the result, then it sheds light on the influences for example the British colonialists had on the image of the performance traditions or on global discourses like that of 'heritage'. Nevertheless, 'global' ideas such as modernity, goods and so on are negotiated and ascribed with (cultural) meaning by actors. Localities are not dissolved in transculturality in contrast, images and ideas of what 'culture' and 'nation' constitutes are even more harshly negotiated and defended on a local level. Transculturality is locally visible and anchored and thus becomes local or culture again.

The national elites as well as the 'Protestant Buddhists' are looking through a 'modern' gaze on the performance traditions, that is, taking over images such as that of superstition and pure Buddhism to distinguish themselves from their 'other' fellow citizens. However, these images are locally adapted, thus transformed, and used for different political strategies (to perform identity). Thus, identity is even more clearly demarcated, the claim of an own genuine collective identity (i.e. as a nation, as an ethnic group) is even more pressing in transcultural times. Humans in their roles as local actors do often not accept notions of hybridity and fluidity of identity and therefore not a theoretically assumed transcultural identity but resisting transcultural tendencies to homogenize, but they are driven by the quest for authenticity, thus purity. Thus, the debate around transculturality oscillates between hybridity and purity, fluidity and fixation, globalization and localization. This, I think, is the paradox of transculturality: whereby on the one hand, through globalization cultural-religious exchange prevails, and therefore, hybridity, on the other hand however, on the local level 'modern' essentialist concepts of nation, ethnicity or religion demand a kind of purification.

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Chapter 12
An Exotic Self? Tracing Cultural Flows of Western Nudes in *Pei-yang Pictorial News* (1926–1933)

Sun Liying

Abstract After Western nudes were introduced to China during the Late Qing, they were often condemned as immoral and obscene. Their public circulation was thus strictly limited before the mid-1910s. Yet, as of the mid-1920s, the perception of Western nudes had changed: now they were considered beautiful and made into icons as the symbols of 'Western civilization'. As a consequence, the art form flourished and formed substantial flows in Chinese print, later becoming indispensable in Chinese pictorials such as *Pei-yang Pictorial News* (*Beiyang huabao* 北洋畫報).

This interesting cultural phenomenon challenges us to think of Western nudes in Chinese print in terms of 'transculturation': what was the broader cultural context of the occurrence of Western nude images in the West? What were the crucial factors before/after nudes were reprinted in pictorials that allowed these images to be de-contextualized, reframed and reinterpreted for the Chinese context? Who were the agents? (How) was Western culture objectified during this process?

By examining flows of Western nudes as manifested in *Pei-yang Pictorial News* from 1926 to 1933, I will trace the origins of the Western nudes found in these periodicals, while exploring the roles such pictorials played and the transcultural strategies editors employed when integrating Western nudes into Chinese culture. I will argue that *Pei-yang Pictorial News* created a type of 'exotic Self' by means of surrounding the nudes with traditional Chinese cultural elements as well as framing them with captions that were loaded with Chinese literary allusions. Imported nudes were thus empowered with a distinct Chinese cultural imaginary.

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> *Culture is never a pure object but always the hybrid product of networks. Or to be brief, all culture is transculture.*
> Nicholas Mirzoeff [1]

As an artistic genre introduced into China during the Late Qing, the nude was exotic: it was a form, a genre, and a sight from abroad and not indigenous.[2] Before the mid-1910s such representations were often condemned as immoral and obscene, and accordingly their public circulation was strictly limited. By contrast, as of the mid-1920s, nudes, especially Western nudes, came to be widely considered as beautiful and began to be iconised as symbols of 'Western civilization' (used as the translation for Chinese *xifang wenming* 西方文明).[3] A substantial flow of nude images between China and the West consequently became visible in China's pictorials, which offered these unfamiliar body spectacles to Chinese readers.[4] Editors of Chinese pictorials chose different strategies to rearrange Western nudes within the Chinese cultural framework, and here we can see how the process of transculturation, intensively discussed by Mirzoeff, was involved. Today, it may be more accepted that 'all culture is transculture', but in such a historical case study, more is still required to explain what exactly happened during these initial processes of transculturation. In his use of the term, Mirzoeff goes back to Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz who considers 'transculturation' to mean not. . .

> . . .merely acquiring another culture, which is what the English word *acculturation* really implies, . . .the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as deculturation. In addition, it carries the idea of the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena, which could be called neo-culturation.[5]

[1]Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture (2nd edition)* (London, New York: Routledge, 2009), 41.

[2]'Exotic' will be explained more in a later text. In this paper, 'nude' or 'nudes' will be used merely as technical terms from art history to refer to images of (1) totally uncovered bodies; (2) upper bodies uncovered; (3) covered but very limitedly with diaphanous materials. The theoretical debate over 'nudity' and 'nakedness' cannot be part of this essay, it is dealt with in a part of my Ph.D. dissertation 'Body Un/Discovered: *Luoti,* Editorial Agency and Transcultural Production in Chinese Pictorials (1925–1933)'. In the text, especially in translations, I shall follow the conventional usage of "nude" and "naked", as in "nude images" and "naked bodies", without referring to the debate.

[3]My understanding of the 'West' derives from Shu-mei Shih's *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, 1–2), in which the 'West' is used not only to refer to 'the nations of Europe and North America,' but also as 'a symbolic construct.' Shih adopts the latter from the definition developed by the Indian Subaltern Studies group, which considers the 'West' as 'an imaginary though powerful entity created by a historical process that authorized it as the home of Reason, Progress, and Modernity.' Shih concludes that the 'West' is 'a construct distributed and universalized by imperialism and nationalism.'

[4]The use of cultural 'flows' here is inspired by Arjun Appadurai's concept. See his *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) and *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[5]Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (New York: Knopf, 1947), 103. This quote appears in Nicholas Mirzoeff's *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, 41. I thank Nicholas

This study will engage in examining precisely the process of deculturation, neoculturation and transculturation. I will examine how Western nudes were recontextualised in a Chinese context by scrutinizing the flow of nudes to *Pei-yang Pictorial News (Beiyang huabao*北洋畫報, abbr. BYHB*)*, and addressing the following questions: Where were the possible origins of the nudes in BYHB? Why were nudes considered to be exotic? How did editors arrange nudes in BYHB? What were the connotations of nudes for the editors and readers, what did they seem to denote? I will approach these questions in two sections. After a brief introduction of BYHB, the first section of this paper will investigate the origins and genres of some of the nudes that appear on its pages and attempt to delineate image flows in the journal. The second section will show how BYHB contextualized nudes by juxtaposing them with classic Chinese art and by adding captions containing classic allusions, both in spite and because of their exoticism for the readers. I argue that in so doing, BYHB integrated nudes, through successive stages of deculturaltion and neo-culturation, into a Chinese aesthetic framework, and substantially formed a type of 'exotic Self.'

Reproduction of Nudes: Exoticism

BYHB was founded by Feng Wuyue馮武越 (1895–1936) on July 7, 1926 in Tianjin. Born into an elite family, Feng had a politically and economically supportive social network.[6] From its founding until the beginnings of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, BYHB went through 1587 issues and 20 supplementary issues; initially the pictorial was published weekly, then every 3 days, and finally every

Mirzoeff for discussing this issue with me during the Annual Conference 2009. Apart from Mirzoeff, Wolfgang Welsch developed 'transculturality' a key concept to discuss transcultural issues. See his 'Transculturality–The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today', in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, edited by Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (London: Sage, 1999), 194–213.

[6]Feng Wuyue was an important figure in Tianjin during the Republican era. His father, Feng Xiangguang 馮祥光 (1875–?) was a diplomat (see Xu Youchun 徐友春ed., *Comprehensive Biographical Dictionary of the Republican Period, Minguo renwu da cidian*民國人物大辭典, Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 2007, 2054); his uncle, Feng Gengguang馮耿光 (1876–1953), acted as head of the Bank of China, and his wife Zhao Jiangxue 趙絳雪(?–?) was the sister of the famous Marshal Zhang Xueliang's 張學良(1901–2001) lover Zhao Yidi趙一荻 (1912–2000). Feng Wuyue used to study aviation and radio in France and Belgium in 1920s. For a brief biography of Feng Wuyue, see an short essay by Wang Xiangfeng 王向峰, 'Illustrating Old Tianjin: Feng Wuyue as the Founder of Beiyang huabao' (*Tu shuo lao Tianjin: Beiyang huabao chuangbanren Feng Wuyue* 圖說老天津:≪北洋畫報≫創辦人馮武越), http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2004-07-24/00103807426.shtml, (accessed on 15 March 2010). Unless specifically explained, all internet sources in this paper are stored in the Digital Archive of Chinese Studies (DACHS, http://www.sino.uni-heidelberg.de/dachs/) and can be checked there (password required).

other day.[7] BYHB is regarded as one of the most important photoengraving pictorials in Republican China. Through this central position, it provides us with a key opportunity to trace the flow of nudes.

Having had prior experience in running illustrated magazines,[8] Feng Wuyue explicitly expressed his wish to edit an outstanding pictorial from the very first issue of BYHB. He regarded pictorials as a practical tool to 'integrate all the happenings and objects which could be widely publicized through pictures and photos,' because 'the advantage of a pictorial is that everyone can read and everyone likes to read.'[9] Thus, BYHB aimed at publishing 'news, fine arts, science, entertainment, various pictures and literature' and pursued its goal of 'popularizing knowledge (*puji zhishi* 普及知識).'[10] However, this publishing goal did not enable BYHB to be consumed by 'common people (*pingmin* 平民)' – on the contrary, the pictorial was very aware of the fact that 'our newspaper has been called a newspaper for the elite all along (*benbao xianglai bei chengwei guizu de baozhi* 本報向來被稱爲貴族的報紙)' even ten years after the publication of its first issue.[11] Considering the language used in the essays by famous intellectuals as well as editors' notes, I believe that BYHB mainly circulated among both male and female readers of the urban middle class and also above all in intellectual circles (*zhishijie*智識界) in North China.[12]

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[7]Feng was responsible for both running the business financially and establishing BYHB's style from 1926 to 1933. In 1933, Feng sold BYHB to Tan Linbei 譚林北 (?–?), owner of Tianjin Tongsheng Photo Studio. A number of intellectual figures, such as Liu Yunruo 劉雲若 (1903–1950), Wu Qiuchen 吳秋塵 (?–1957) and Wang Xiaoyin王小隱 (?–?), acted as editors or contributors for several years. A brief history of BYHB can be found in the 'Publisher's Note' (*Chuban shuoming* 出版說明), which appears on the first page of each volume of the reprints. For more detailed descriptions of BYHB publishing history see Wu Yunxin 吳雲心, 'Finely Edited and Printed *Beiyang huabao*' (*Bianyin jingzhi de Beiyang huabao* 編印精緻的≪北洋畫報≫, in *Seeking Lost Writings in the Ocean of Tianjin Newspapers* (*Tianjin baohai gouchen* 天津報海鈎沉), ed. Committee of Cultural and Historical Materials (*Wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui* 文史資料委員會) (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 2003), 132–134. The same book includes a list of short biographies of important Tianjin local editors and journalists, such as the aforementioned Wang Xiaoyin (p.180–181), Feng Wuyue (p.186–187), Liu Yunruo (p.191–192) and Wu Qiuchen (p. 215).

[8]Before BYHB, Feng had founded the *Children's Magazine* (*Ertong zazhi* 兒童雜誌) and *Pictorial World* (*Tuhua shijie*圖畫世界), see Wuyue武越, "Note by Bigong" (*Bigong ziji*筆公自記), BYHB 101 (July 6, 1927), 5.

[9]Jizhe 記者, 'A Few Words I Want to Say' (*Yao shuo de ji ju hua* 要說的幾句話), BYHB 1 (July 7, 1926), 2.

[10]Jizhe, ibid.

[11]Yuntuo雲若, 'Ten Years of BYHB' (*Beihua shi nian*北畫十年), BYHB 1422 (July 7, 1936), 11.

[12]Ibid. For other important evidence see Jizhe, 'On the Fourth Anniversary' (*Si zhounian zhiyu* 四週年致語), BYHB 495 (July 7, 1930), 2; Yexin夜心, 'Congratulations at BYHB's Seventh Anniversary' (*Zhu Beihua qi zhounian jinian* 祝北畫七週年紀念), BYHB 956 (July 7, 1933), 2.

Analysis of the Sources of Nudes

In the first section, I will analyse the sources of the nudes published in BYHB so as to explore what type of nudes appear most often in this pictorial. On leafing through the BYHB issues (1926–1933),[13] one gets the impression that images of nudes appeared frequently, and that most nudes are photographs of Western women.[14] In order to validate this impression, I undertook a statistical investigation of, for example, September issues of BYHB from 1926 to 1933, in which the following questions were considered: How many issues are there in the month of September in total? How many nudes were published? How many nudes depict Western females? How many nudes are photographs? The result is shown in Table 12.1.

Column A demonstrates that BYHB published two issues weekly from 1926 to 1928, and three issues weekly from 1929 to 1933. If we consider an average of 4 weeks per month, column B shows that one to two nudes appear weekly on average, though they are not in each issue and sometimes only once every fortnight.[15] Columns C and D draw our attention to the fact that most nudes are in fact photographs of Western women. This statistical survey supports the initial impression that photographic nudes of Western women do indeed constitute the majority of the nudes in BYHB (1926–1933).[16] Except for the aforementioned nudes, there

Table 12.1 Statistical investigation of Nudes in BYHB September issues (1926–1933)

September of	(A) Issues in total	(B) Number of Nudes	(C) Western	(D) Female	(E) Photography
1926	8	3	2	2	2
1927	7	6	6	6	6
1928	8	2	2	2	2
1929	13	5	4	5	4
1930	13	6	5	5	5
1931	13	8	8	8	8
1932	14	6	0	4	2
1933	12	4	3	4	3

[13]1933 concludes the focus period, because since after 1933 nude images almost completely disappeared from not only BYHB, but also all the major pictorials as the New Life Movement spread.

[14]In this paper, 'Western females' mainly refer to European and North American women. Although not always the case, most females presented in the images of nudes are Caucasian.

[15]I noticed that only two images were published in September 1928, which seems to be below average. As a supplementary comparison, I examined the earlier as well as later issues, and found four in August and five in October, which means the average number of nudes stays 3–4 every month. The result agrees with the conclusion that roughly one to two nudes appeared on average per week from 1926 to 1933.

[16]In the examined issues, four images in total contain naked male figures. Three of them are photos, such as BYHB 18 (4 September 1926), 3, BYHB 530 (27 September 1930), 2 and BYHB 826 (3 September 1932), 2; one is oil painting, BYHB 831 (15 September 1932). The first image is about a naked four-month-old Chinese baby boy.

are also other genres of nudes, such as reproductions of oil paintings, line drawings, and statues etc., which have not been individually taken into account in this statistical sample.

Identifying Western Nudes

The fact that these nudes seem to be depicted in a rather similar style challenges us to consider where they originated. Is it possible to trace and delineate trajectories of the flow? Ideally, we would like to be able to identify each of the Western nudes in the pictorial by comparing them to other sources. Yet the origin of each particular photograph is difficult to determine, as the majority of photographs carry neither their original title nor the artist's signature or studio name. All we see is the rare occurrence of a general description such as 'Famous Western Nude Photograph', or 'Nude study' but these are too vague to be of use. Nevertheless, having compared the data of numerous nudes,[17] I was able to spot the origin of one series of nudes, which appears to be representative in BYHB: erotic postcards, or so-called 'French postcards', sometimes 'naughty postcards.'

Erotic postcards, according to Martin Stevens' introduction to his collection in *French Postcards: Album of Vintage Erotica*, appeared almost immediately after the birth of photography itself, and experienced their 'golden age' from around 1900 until the end of World War I.[18] Michael Köhler points out in *The Body Exposed* that erotic postcards had unchallenged control of the market for erotic photographs from 1905 to 1925.[19] For instance, more than 14 million erotic postcards were produced and circulated in Great Britain alone by 1899**;** and by 1910, more than 30,000 people were employed in the erotic postcard industry in

[17]The data I used as comparison mainly included images from: Erik Nørgaard, *With Love: The Erotic Postcard* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1969); Günter Bartosch, *Der Akt von Damals: Die Erotik in der frühen Photographie: Aus der privaten Sammlung von Ernst und Günter Bartosch* (Munich; Berlin: Herbig, 1976); *Nude 1925* (New York: Morgan & Morgan, 1978); Jules Griffon, *The Golden Years: Masterpieces of the Erotic Postcard* (Panorama City, CA: Helios Press, 1978); D. M. Klinger, *Die Frühzeit der erotischen Fotografie und Postkarten/The Early Period of Erotic Photography and Postcards*, vol.5 (Nürnberg: DMK-Verlags-GmbH, 1984); Jorge Lewinski, *The Naked and the Nude: a History of Nude Photography* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987); Paul Hammond, *French Undressing: Naughty Postcards from 1900 to 1920* (London: Bloomsbury Books, 1988); Peter-Cornell Richter, *Nude Photography: Masterpieces from the Past 150 Years* (Munich: Prestel, 1998); Hans-Michael Koetzle and Margie Mounier, *1000 Nudes: Uwe Scheid Collection* (Köln: Benedikt Taschen, 1994); Martin Stevens, *French Postcards: Album of Vintage Erotica* (New York: Universe Publishing, 2006); Alexandre Dupouy, *Erotic French Postcard: From Alexandre Dupouy's Collection* (Paris; New York: Flammarion; Distributed in North America by Rizzoli International Publications, 2009).

[18]Martin Stevens, introduction to *French Postcards: Album of Vintage Erotica*, op.cit.

[19]Michael Köhler ed., *The Body Exposed: Views of the Body, 150 Years of the Nude in Photography* (Zurich: Edition Stemmle, 1995), 57.

Paris.[20] 'This concentration – and France's reputation for liberty – earned all nude and erotic cards the euphemistic nickname "French postcards,"'[21] even when they were not produced in France. Although their original stated purpose was 'compensating for the shortage or permissiveness of the painters' models,'[22] erotic postcards served as a cheap mass medium for the transmission of erotic fantasies, and were thus distributed world-wide.[23] Erotic postcards can be divided into two categories: one showing 'nudes', and the other 'sexual behaviour.' The latter category was never officially allowed to be circulated by mail.[24] Even trade of the first category remained illegal until after the turn of the twentieth century.[25] Except for these few details, not much is known about the production of these postcards, since many of the photographers and publishers seem to have preferred to remain anonymous.[26]

How can one ascertain whether an image in BYHB comes from an 'erotic postcard' or not? In the most ideal scenario, one would be able to locate identical nudes in Western collections of erotic photographs and erotic postcards (or French postcards); or, if this is impossible, the second option is to find out whether the models appearing in the nudes in the Chinese pictorials could be identified through comparison to the Western images, even though the original postcard images are not found in any known collection; the third is to find if a model appears in other nudes in BYHB and if her picture thus seemingly belongs to a series of photographs; fourth, if sometimes the nudes bear seals of their producers, photographers or photo studios which are specialized in the production of erotic images; fifth, if the 'style' of the images matches that of the most popular genres of postcards in the West; and sixth, if it fits in with other images selected and edited in the same pictorial. The above characteristics are not necessarily mutually exclusive; on the contrary, the more evidence that can be detected in one particular nude, the more convincing our conjecture about its possible origins will be. In the following discussion, two examples will be used to illustrate these aspects.

The first example is Fig. 12.1, reproduced in BYHB in July 1927. In the image, a female model is sitting on a chair in front of a mirror with the curves of her back and

[20]Cf. Allison Pease, *Modernism, Mass Culture, and the Aesthetics of Obscenity* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 84.

[21]Cf. Martin Stevens, ibid.

[22]Dupouy, introduction to *Erotic French Postcard,* 2009.

[23]Joseph Slade gives a good summary of academic works on this theme in his *Pornography and Sexual Representation: A Reference Guide*, vol.II (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2001), 588–590.

[24]Cf. William Ouellette, and Barbara Mildred Jones, *Erotic Postcards,* 1977.

[25]Michael Köhler ed., *The Body Exposed*, 57.

[26]Cf. Michael Köhler ed., *The Body Exposed,* 57. Lisa Z. Sigel discusses the producer and the circulation of the postcards in 'Filth in the Wrong People's Hands: Postcards and the Expansion of Pornography in Britain and the Atlantic World, 1880–1914.' *Journal of Social History* vol.33, no. 4 (2000), 859–885.

Fig. 12.1 BYHB 104 (16 July 1927):3

bottom displayed to the viewer. She supports her body with her left elbow on the frame of the mirror and her right hand drops down softly, holding a flower. The huge mirror plays a central yet interesting role in the image: it reflects the front of the model's body, at the same time as it enables the model to gaze at the potential spectators through the mirror. Besides a pair of high-heel shoes, she wears some other accessories, such as a necklace, a watch or a bracelet, and a ring. The same image can be found in the section of 'Erotic Postcards' in a book entitled *1000 Nudes*,[27] a collection by Uwe Scheid (1944–2000), who is regarded as 'a leading expert on erotic photography' and who has 'built up one of the largest and most remarkable collections of its kind.'[28]

Three other images with slightly different postures but the same model and settings are collected in *Erotic French Postcards* (no page number), *Der Akt von*

[27] Hans-Michael Koetzle and Margie Mounier, *1000 Nudes*, 351.

[28] ibid., back cover.

Fig. 12.2 http://www.artandpopularculture.com/Image:Kiki_by_Julian_Mandel.jpg (Accessed on 20 February 2010)

Damals (page 107) and online sources (see Fig. 12.2).[29] Therefore we can conclude that Fig. 12.1 is in fact one image of a series. Moreover, in the right corner of Fig. 12.1, the signature 'J. Mandel' draws our attention. 'J. Mandel' is Julian (or Julien) Mandel, a successful photographer of popular erotic nudes, many of which were reproduced as postcards, though his background still remains ambiguous and subject to debate.[30] The woman in Figs. 12.1 and 12.2 can be identified as Alice Ernestine Prin (1901–1953), better known as 'Kiki de Montparnasse' thanks to her enormous fame as a singer, actress, artist and model. She was praised as the Muse of

[29]See http://www.artandpopularculture.com/Kiki_de_Montparnasse (accessed on 13 September 2009).

[30]In *Erotic French Postcards*, 'J. Mandel' is identified as 'Julien Mandel' (see index part, no page number). Related academic research is not yet known. Some online information claims that 'Julian Mandel' (1872–1935) and 'Julien Mandel' are different spellings in English and German, but both names might be pseudonyms. Nonetheless, he was a famous erotic photographer based in Paris. See: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julien_Mandel?uselang=de (accessed on 10 January 2010).

Paris, and worked for many artists, including Chaim Soutine, Julian Mandel, Jean Cocteau and so on.[31]

The imprint of 'J. Mandel' provides an important link among the different images. In addition to this, the imprint can be clearly traced to a group of other nudes in BYHB, such as '*Shuixie* (睡鞋)' (Sleeping Shoes, BYHB 71, 19 March 1927, 3); '*Quxian de zhen mei* (曲線的真美)' (The Genuine Beauty of Curves, BYHB 75, 2 April 1927, 3) and 'Couching *Ci fu* (雌伏)' (BYHB 131, 22 October 1927, 3), just to name a few. Besides the prints by 'J. Mandel', 'P.C PARIS' and 'A·N PARIS' are also often found in the nudes in BYHB. Imprint signatures, as mentioned previously, are a crucial means of identifying 'postcards'. Both Figs. 12.3 and 12.4 (to be discussed later), for example, bear the imprint 'P.C PARIS' in the lower left corner. In certain cases, one postcard could be found to carry more than one imprint or signature; in these cases, we may surmise that the postcard had been distributed by more than one channel.[32] For example, the photograph in Fig. 12.1 published in BYHB bears the imprint of 'J. Mandel', but the identical image collected in *1000 Nudes* has '204 P.C PARIS', which appears in Fig. 12.2 as well. In fact, more studio imprints can be spotted in Chinese print media throughout the Republican Era, including journals such as *Pastime* (*Youxi zazhi* 遊戲雜誌, 1913–1915), *Eyebrow Talk* (*Meiyu* 眉語, 1914–1916), *Shanghai Sketch* (*Shanghai manhua* 上海漫畫, 1928–1930), *Linloon Magazine* (*Linglong* 玲瓏, 1931–1937) and so on.[33] The reproduction of nudes appearing in Chinese journals reflects the prosperous development of the corresponding medium in Europe and its global dissemination. The cultural phenomenon of erotic postcards serving as visual material for China's pictorial magazines, however, has not yet been given adequate scholarly attention. To my knowledge, no academic work has discussed the phenomenon thoroughly. [34]

[31]For the life of Alice Prin, see her memoires. *The Education of a French Model*, (trans. Samuel Putnam, introduction by Ernest Hemingway, New York: Boar's Head Books, 1950) and Billy Klüver and Julie Martin's *Kiki's Paris: Artists and Lovers 1900–1930* (New York: Abrams, 1989). There is also a French graphic novel that depicts Kiki's life, see Catel Muller and José-Louis Bocquet, *Kiki de Montparnasse* (Bruxelles: Casterman, 2007).

[32]Klinger collects and sorts several of the most important European early photography studios, including 'Leo', 'A. NOYER', 'P.C PARIS', 'A.N Paris', 'J. B.', 'A.N PARIS-J. MANDEL Paris', 'J.A.Paris', 'E.R.PARIS', 'L.P PARIS' and 'E.L.F. Paris'. See *Die Frühzeit der erotischen Fotografie und Postkarten/The Early Period of Erotic Photography and Postcards*, vol.5, 44–55.

[33]Background information of *Youxi zazhi* and *Meiyu* is discussed by Michel Hockx in his *Questions of Style: Literary Societies and Literary Journals in Modern China 1911–1937* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003), 118–144. The postcards phenomenon in the journal *Meiyu* is examined in a current joint research project 'Women and Scandal in Early Modern Chinese Literature: The Journal *Meiyu* (Eyebrow Talk, 1914–1916)' by Michel Hockx and myself. The images of nudes in *Shanghai Sketch* and *Linloon Magazine* are discussed at chapter-length in my PhD dissertation.

[34]In this regard, Wu Fangcheng significantly contributes to collecting and compiling the materials related to the public debate on live drawing and nude figure painting, which were mainly published in *Shenbao*. See Wu Fangcheng 吳方正, 'The Reason for the Nude: Questions Concerning Nude Figure Drawing in China at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century' (*Luode liyou - ershi shiji*

Fig. 12.3 BYHB 156 (18 January1928): 2

An editor's note in BYHB in 1928 further confirms this observation. When the editor speaks about how to successfully run a pictorial periodical for as long as possible, he explicitly mentions that the visual sources in BYHB include 'foreign postcards.' Considering the large amount of erotic postcards in BYHB, the 'foreign

chuqi zhongguo renti xiesheng wenti de taolun 裸的理由——二十世紀初中國人體寫生問題的討論), *New Studies in History* (*Xin shixue* 新史學) vol.15, no. 2 (2004), 55–110. The materials are indexed and recorded in *The Ever-Changing Shanghai Art World: Index of Art News in Shenbao 1872–1949* (*Shanghai meishu fengyun – 1872–1949 Shenbao yishu ziliao tiaomu suoyin* 上海美術風雲——1872–1949 申報藝術資料條目索引)(edited by Yan Juanying 顏娟英, Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2006). Part of the materials explicitly shows the circulation of erotic postcards in the early Republican era, which I will discuss more in a later text.

Fig. 12.4 BYHB 220 (12 September 1928): 3

postcards' mentioned in the editor's note quoted below indicates the general acceptance and use of erotic postcards in journals such as BYHB:

> No doubt it is not that difficult to run a pictorial: [one can reprint] one's friends or relatives' antique calligraphies and drawings inherited from their ancestors; [one can reprint] several people's artwork produced over the course of their lives; and then [one can] reprint a certain number of old editions and reprint some foreign postcards. It is fairly easy to publish three to five hundred issues of such pictorials repeatedly, but it is quite difficult to support this process indefinitely. . .辦畫報固然不難,把親戚朋友以及祖傳的古董書畫,和幾個人的畢生著作,再翻印若干若干舊版,翻印幾張外國明信片,忠則盡命的印行三五百期畫報,尤其易上加易,但是維持永久便難了. . .. . .[35]

[35]Jizhe, 'Inaugural Words of the Volume' (*Juanshou yu* 卷首語), BYHB 251 (1 December, 1928), 2. My emphasis.

The 'foreign postcards' mentioned above are not yet literally linked to 'French postcards.' However, the connection is fully revealed by one of BYHB's adversaries in a debate. The debate started with a letter by Wang Xiaoyin, one of the BYHB editors in December 1928. He wrote to the editor of another recently-founded Tianjin pictorial, *Le Vulgarisateur* (*Changshi huabao*常識畫報) in order to correct a mistake in the previous issue.[36] In the following month, *Le Vulgarisateur* actively engaged in criticizing BYHB or publicly responding to BYHB's criticism. Without directly mentioning BYHB's name, one essay started its argument by saying that 'a certain pictorial has reprinted hundreds of foreign postcards…while blaming us for reprinting [postcards] 某畫報翻印外國明信片不下數百張…反說我們翻印.' This was followed by a whole paragraph of detailed information concerning how and where BYHB collected the postcards:

> [Let] us honestly say a sentence: which Chinese pictorial does not reprint foreign postcards! The certain pictorial, from its first appearance until now, has already reprinted hundreds [of postcards]. Not only [did they] reprint postcards, they also reprinted all [kinds of] foreign lewd photographs, lewd albums and film magazines. [I] would ask: among them, oil paintings are mostly collected by foreign museums and galleries, how could [you possibly] acquire [the collections] here? Among the reprints, the photographs do not go beyond the products of three French printing companies: André Noyer, Spina and Braun, and each costs ranging from fifty to ninety centimes in Paris. As for "fleshy" photographs, they were initially secretly bought from foreign countries… 我們老老實實的說一句:中國的那份畫報不翻印外國的明信片!某畫報從出版到現在翻印的已是數百張了。不只翻印明信片,併外國誨淫照片,誨淫照像冊,電影雜誌全都翻印。試問其中油畫多是外洋各博物院,美術廳所存的,能羅緻得來麼?其中畫片,不外是法國 André Noyer, Spina, Braun 三印刷公司的出品,在巴黎每張售價自五十生丁至九十生丁。至於肉性照片本是在外國鬼鬼祟祟買來的…[37]

The short essay points out that reproduction of the postcards was not a secret in editing pictorials in the late 1920s. Apart from postcards, foreign – particularly French – photographs, albums as well as film magazines could all be selected to enrich the content of Chinese pictorials. Interestingly, the essay stated that André Noyer, Spina and Braun were the three major postcard-printing companies and one

[36]*Le Vulgarisateur* was founded on November 8, 1928 in Tianjin, almost two and a half years later than BYHB. Only 14 issues (no.14, 21 January 1929) are preserved and reprinted in *Comprehensive Pictorials in Republican China: Tianjin Vol.I* (*Minguo huabao huibian Tianjin juan* 民國畫報彙編 天津卷 一) (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 2007). As its name suggests, *Le Vulgarisateur* had, in fact, a close association to Chinese networks in Paris.

A group of Chinese students planed and founded a 'Common Knowledge Society' (*Changshi she* 常識社) in Paris, and then decided to create such a pictorial in order to advocate physical, scientific and aesthetic education in Tianjin. For more details see 'Editor's Note' (*Bianji shi suo hua* 編輯室瑣話), *Le Vulgarisateur* vol.1 no.1 (8 November 1928), 7. A few books have mentioned *Le Vulgarisateur* very briefly, but they contain many mistakes. No academic research is known.

[37]Guaian 怪厂, 'An Irrelevant Answer by a Certain Pictorial' (*Mou huabao zhi dafeisuowen* 某畫報之答非所問), *Le Vulgarisateur* vol.1 no.14 (21 January 1929), 62.

could buy their products conveniently in Paris.[38] If we consider that the editor-in-chief studied in Paris in the 1920s and had just returned to China in 1928, it is not implausible that he had visual experience of postcards in Paris and could recognize the reproduction of Parisian postcards in BYHB, or in pictorials in general.

Another example of the dissemination of French photographs is a group of four nudes published in BYHB in 1927 and 1928. We can trace the origins of this group of images through the means mentioned above.[39] First of all, they present the beauty of a single model wearing various accessories while standing, sitting or lying down. In spite of these different poses, the emphasis on her voluptuous body and her smile heightens the erotic atmosphere of the scene. Secondly, by comparing it with the collections in *Der Akt von Damals* (The Nude of the Past)*,* we can identify this model as 'Marguerite.' The nickname 'Marguerite' was well known among the collectors of erotic postcards because of her 'elegant curves [and] gestures' as well as her 'glamour and inexplicable smile'.[40] According to the same book, she appears so often in the antique erotic postcards that almost one in every three images in the collection is an image of her – mostly unveiled, sometimes in lingerie.[41] Thirdly, in two of the four images (Figs. 12.3 and 12.4), she is veiled with exactly the same transparent satins and stays in front of the same vase and curtain, which means the two nudes probably belong to the same series. Fourthly, each image bears the imprint of 'P.C PARIS'. This evidence again leads us to one conclusion: the nudes in the pictorial are reproduced from erotic postcards.

Tracing the Flow

The examples of Kiki and Marguerite's nudes demonstrate that flows of images of nudes can be identified. Further, they show the actual involvement of erotic postcards in BYHB's visual presentation. The question is then: how did the flow

[38]Further study of the three printing companies is required. As I mentioned, the imprint 'A. N.' appears frequently, but it is more commonly identified as 'Alfred Noyer'. See a list of postcard publishing houses http://www.metropostcard.com/guideinitials.html (accessed on 25 January 2011).

[39]The four images are '*Jinmei* (盡美)', BYHB 151 (1 January 1928), 7; 'Smile *Qiaoxiao* (巧笑)', BYHB 156 (18 January 1928), 2, 'Babylonian Beauty *Guse guxiang* (古色古香)', BYHB 161 (11 February 1928), 3 and 'Self-Satisfaconti *Guxiang* (古香)', BYHB 220 (12 September 1928), 3. Except that the first image '*Jinmei*' (literally: Perfection) does not have an English title, all of the English titles are taken directly from BYHB, including 'Self- Satisfaconti', which must be a misprint for 'Self -Satisfaction'.

[40]Günter Bartosch, *Der Akt von Damals,* 119 and 150.

[41]For information on Marguerite see Günter Bartosch, ibid. According to the same book (119), Marguerite literally means 'pearl', and it was only a fictitious name. In fact, the name could mean 'daisy' in French as well.

actually happen; how did these postcards flow to China, and why did they appear in BYHB? In this section, I will describe the flow from two perspectives: first, from the point of origin, i.e., how popular the production of erotic postcards was in Europe; and secondly, from the point of arrival, i.e., what were the possible ways that BYHB could receive the postcards so as to reproduce the images?

How did these European postcards get to China? European erotic visuals, not only postcards, had already been exported to China in the Late Qing period. We do not have any official statistics to demonstrate the scale of the phenomenon, but debates or news reports on 'obscene pictures' (*yinhua* 淫畫) can be found in print media such as *Shenbao* 申報 and *Shibao* 時報, appearing regularly from 1878 to 1928.[42] Aside from 'obscene pictures,' a later report in *Shenbao* also mentions 'postcards of love' (*aiqing hua youpian* 愛情畫郵片) and 'postcards of a naked young girl' (*luoti shaonü hua youpian* 裸體少女畫郵片).[43] Based on the description in the reports and debates in the 1910s, Wu Fangcheng presumes that the images which caused this uproar might have been imported or brought by foreign companies, thus flowing to China, then to be sold either clandestinely by individuals on the streets of the cities or close to a harbour where foreign ships gathered, or even publicly by particular publishing houses.[44] One early example of how erotic postcards were reproduced in Chinese print media is the journal *Eyebrow Talk*. In my work with Michel Hockx, we found that more than 30 images in the front illustrations of 18 issues can be ascertained as being postcards, over half of which were Western nudes. In short, at least more than a decade before BYHB existed, erotic postcards, with or without sexual behaviour, were already circulating in China.

How did the images of nudes migrate through geophysical territories? How did the editors of BYHB possibly find the nudes that they were going to use in their journal? By checking captions, editors' notes and discussions, we can identify two manners in which these nudes were disseminated: Firstly, nudes were donated by famous people from their own private collections, such as Feng Wuyue's collection of postcards 'Tasting Grapes', 'Mirror' and Jianwen's 'Spring'. [45] Secondly, nudes

[42]*Shenbao* and *Shibao* were both daily newspapers, and were among the most important newspapers in Shanghai. After examining reports and articles in *Shenbao,* Wu Fangcheng concludes that from 1878 to 1928, reports on *'obscene pictures' (yinhua* 淫畫*)* appear rather regularly (i.e., ranging from one to three reports almost every year, to five in 1912); however, the reports disappeared after 1928. For concrete numbers see Wu Fangcheng, ibid.

[43]'Lewd Western Books and Images Cut Off at Source' (*Xiwen yin shuhua laiyuan yi duan* 西文淫書畫來源已斷), *Shenbao* (5 January 1919). Cf. Wu Fangcheng, ibid., 61–62.

[44]Cf. Wu Fangcheng, ibid., 61–63. The 'postcards of a naked young girl', according to Wu, can be illustrated by an image from the advertisement on *Shibao* (7 September 1917), see Wu, ibid., 62.

[45]Feng's two images have Chinese titles, but they are not necessarily direct translations of the English titles. For example, the Chinese title of 'Tasting Grapes' is *Putao xianzi* 葡萄仙子, BYHB 21 (15 September 1926), 3; the Chinese title of 'Mirror' is '*guying zilian* 顧影自憐', BYHB 69 (March 12, 1927), 3. I found an identical image of 'Mirror' in Michael Köhler ed., *The Body Exposed*, 61. The seal of 'P.C PARIS 2151' appearing in both images clearly indicates that it was

were sent by journalists or volunteers from various places in Europe. For instance, a journalist named Hansheng 漢生 often mailed images of nudes from Germany to BYHB. A nude entitled '*Xiwu* 習舞' (Practicing Dancing) was described as 'Sent by Hansheng from Germany' (*Hansheng zi De ji* 漢生自德寄) in the caption to the image.[46] Therefore, BYHB claimed that 'these past two years, [letters with] materials provided to our pictorial, have been fluttering to us like snowflakes from home and abroad (本報兩年以來, 供給材料的, 國外國内幾如雪片飛來).'[47] As a pictorial founded by Chinese who used to study in Paris, *Le Vulgarisateur* seems to have had more opportunities to buy postcards directly from Paris because it even tells that 'lewd photographs' could be bought from the Place de la Concorde and the square close to the Arc de Triomphe.[48] Additionally, considering that postcards circulated on a secret market (albeit illicitly, as mentioned earlier), one could presume that nudes might also be purchased by the working staff at the market.

In short, BYHB reproduced a number of nudes, the vast majority of which were erotic photographs depicting Western females. Most of these were originally erotic postcards. Though not allowed to be sent, erotic postcards were still widely circulated in Europe, and their existence in China was recorded in the debates and reports on 'obscene pictures' (*yinhua*) in Chinese print media from the 1880s. Between these two points, the possible trajectory of the image flow might be formed either by commercial agents or by the staff related to BYHB. It is clear that as erotic postcards travelled from Europe to China, they also delivered the attraction of the strange or foreign to the Chinese audience and provided the audience with 'exotic' visual pleasure and excitement.[49] In my understanding, not everything 'foreign' is

originally a postcard. Jianwen's donation is 'Spring' (*Chunse* 春色), BYHB 299 (30 March 1929), 3. A series of postcards donated by Jianewen are called 'A Travers les Coulisses Parisiennes, IV' (*Bali juchang houtai suojian*巴黎劇場後臺所見), see BYHB 258 (17 December 1928), 3; V, BYHB 261 (25 December 1929), 3; VI, BYHB 267 (10 January 1929), 3.

[46]BYHB 274 (26 January 1929), 3.

[47]Jizhe, 'Inaugural Words of the Volume', BYHB 251 (1 December1928), 2.

[48]Guaian 怪厂, ibid.

[49]'Exotic', as explained in *Oxford English Dictionary,* means 'introduced from abroad, not indigenous', or 'having the attraction of the strange or foreign, glamorous' (http://www.oed.com.ubproxy.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/view/Entry/66403?redirectedFrom=exotic# accessed on 30 January 2011). 'Exotism' means 'Resemblance to what is foreign; a foreign "air"' (http://www.oed.com.ubproxy.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/view/Entry/66407 accessed on 30 January 2011), while 'exoticism' means 'Exotic character; an instance of this, anything exotic' (http://www.oed.com.ubproxy.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/view/Entry/66406?redirectedFrom=exoticism#, accessed on 30 January 2011). These three entries can not be downloaded into DACHS due to copyright issues. The equivalent words in Chinese might be '*qi* 奇' in the Late Qing period while '*yiguo qingdiao* 異國情調' in the 1920s. Catherine Vance Yeh argues that '*qi* 奇' means 'the extraordinary', 'the fantastic', and 'the exotic'in her book *Shanghai Love: Courtesans, Intellectuals, and Entertainment Culture, 1850–1910* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006, 184). Heinrich Otmar Fruehauf analyses '*yiguo qingdiao* 異國情調' in the Japanese and Chinese context in *Urban Exoticism in Modern Chinese Literature, 1910–1933,* University of Chicago, 1990, Ph.D. thesis.

automatically 'exotic'. 'To be exotic' is not merely an objective description of the foreign origin, but also involves subjective feelings, imaginaries and understandings of how 'foreign' things could or should be. These features are then strengthened so as to exaggerate the differentiation between the Self and the Other as well as to create or display a foreign 'air'. Therefore, 'Western nudes', selected and reproduced in BYHB, did not only provide 'strange' spectacles, but also an 'exotic' atmosphere. This section of the paper can fix the beginning and the end point of the flow of nudes, but the in-between route still needs further investigation (which is perhaps the most difficult part of research into such flows).[50]

However, when the nudes were rearranged and recontextualised in the Chinese pictorial, when they were resolved into another cultural context, they were turned into 'selves.' In the next part of this paper, I will examine what happened in this transcultural process, first through deculturation and then neo-culturation.

Appropriating Western Nudes: Exoticism and Aesthetics

The reproduction of Western nudes (especially those taken from erotic postcards) plays an important role in the visual presentation of BYHB. The process of editing and arranging the Western nudes in BYHB can be thought about on several levels: why were they selected for the pictorial? How were they arranged on the page? How were they edited and framed, and were they still exotic and erotic for the editors and readers? What was their cultural significance? These questions are also crucial for our consideration of 'transculturation': when Western nudes as 'another culture' appear in an entirely different cultural context, how the 'Other' encounters the 'previous culture' and resolves it into a newly created culture. These questions will be discussed below. In the first part of this section, I will deal with BYHB's editing style and provide an understanding of how and why Western nudes were chosen; the second part will analyse how the Western nudes were contextualized and interpreted.

Editing: Beyond 'Bricolage'

Feng Wuyue stated repeatedly that current affairs (*shishi* 時事), common knowledge (*changshi* 常識) and arts (*yishu* 藝術) were thought to be the three central

[50]Or, perhaps it would not be so important as long as we have ascertained that an object has in fact originated elsewhere and ended up in another place.

principles that BYHB should use to select materials.[51] Accordingly, Feng designed an outline to direct the editors' work, and emphasised the function of each page:

> The most exquisite, most valuable or most news-related pictures are arranged at the upper middle on covers. On page two [we] publish news photos, satirical images, pictures of figures as well as landscapes, and short essays on current affairs. This page can be called a "dynamic page" (動的一頁). On page three [we] publish fine art works, such as famous drawings and calligraphies by renowned ancient and contemporary figures, inscriptions, sculptures and famous photography; artistic photos of theatrical performances, [stills from] movies and entertainment; photographs of ladies and children; short essays on arts. This page can be called a "static page" (靜的一頁).[52]

It is worth noting that in Feng's view, there is a difference between 'dynamic' pages (page two) and 'static' pages (page three). Although he did not interpret the differences between the two explicitly, we can see that page two involves more current events and politics, thus the content as well as genres might differ accordingly and remain flexible and dynamic; and page three encompasses various genres of the fine arts for aesthetic appreciation, meaning it is more focused and stable and less subject to change.

This editing style can be viewed and analysed from the aspect of 'bricolage,' which John Fiske adopted from Claude Lévi-Strauss in his book *Understanding Popular Culture*: [53]

> Bricolage is, according to Claude Lévi-Strauss, the everyday practice of tribal peoples who creatively combine materials and resources at hand to make objects, signs, or rituals that meet their immediate needs. It is a sort of non-scientific engineering, and is one of the most typical practices of "making do." In capitalist societies bricolage is the means by which the subordinated make their own culture out of the resources of the "other"... Bricolage is equally, if less obviously, at work in the reading of popular texts, in the construction of fantasies, and in the mingling of mass with oral culture, of cultural commodity with the practices of everyday life.[54]

[51]This slogan appeared in many articles, for example, Jizhe, 'Introductory Comments to this Volume' (*Juanshou liyan* 卷首例言), BYHB 51(1 January 1927), 2, and Bigong 筆公, 'Introductory Words on our Third Anniversary' (*San zhou liyu* 三週例語), BYHB 341 (7 July 1929), 2. One intriguing point here is that Feng mentioned in the first year that he would like to continue to pursue 'current events, arts and *science*' (my emphasis), which was the practice in his *Pictorial World* period. Yet, 'science' was replaced by 'common sense' in later days. It might be seen as a condescension or as a compromise to the market. See Editor's Note (*Bianjizhe yan*編輯者言), BYHB 20 (11 September 1926), 4; Wuyue武越, 'On Pictorials II' (*Huabao tan, zhong* 畫報談, 中), BYHB 19 (8 September 1926), 2.

[52]Editor's Note (*Bianjizhe yan* 編輯者言), BYHB 22 (18 September 1926), 4. My emphasis.

[53]My discussion of 'bricolage' continues the discussion in Zhang Yuanqing's 張元卿 article 'Dutu shidai de shenshang, dazhong duwu yu wenxue: jiedu Beiyang huabao' 讀圖時代的紳商、大衆讀物与文學: 解讀≪北洋畫報≫ (Gentry and Merchants, Popular Reading Material and Literature in the Age of Reading Images), *Tianjin shehui kexue* 4 (2002), 122–125. The author tries to analyse BYHB's editing style and historical background in spite of some misinterpretation of the materials.

[54]John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 1989), 142–143.

In this sense, 'bricolage' seems to describe the process of how different material resources are brought together that are not usually or necessarily linked to each other; or in Ortiz's sense, 'bricolage' seems to bring 'another culture' and a 'previous culture' together, yet, whether that forms a coherent body or a so-called 'consequent creation of new culture' is open to debate. If one examines the way in which images are arranged in BYHB, the pictorial is seen to endorse a 'bricolage' style by juxtaposing Western nudes together with diverse materials, such as photos of current news, movie stars, movie stills, reproduction of antique calligraphies, anecdotes, satirical images and essays. The 'bricolage' character is particularly strengthened by the attributes of erotic postcards: cheap mass products widely circulated and thus easy to get hold of serve to 'make do'. However, relatively easy accessibility does not indicate that the Western nudes will be arranged standalone without any connection to other visual materials. On the contrary, the Western nudes are integrated into BYHB's editing logic, and thus they are simultaneously interlinked to other visual materials. In the next section, I will discuss how BYHB, by practicing its stable/dynamic bricolage, rearranged and thus "neo-culturated" Western nudes.

Contextualization and Interpretation

BYHB framed the Western nudes by two means: contextualization and interpretation. The first indicates how editors edited the Western nudes, and the second explains how they framed the images for a particular understanding. Judging from the editors' note quoted above, editors' arrangements did reveal their understanding or definition of nudes explicitly. However, the Western nudes were in most cases placed on page three, which means they were perceived as 'fine art', at least from the editors' point of view. For example, there are a total of 40 images in the statistics in Table 12.1, only 3 of which are *not* on page three but page two. They are two photos of males (no. 530, 27 September 1930, 2; no. 826, 3 September, 1932, 2) and a sketch (no.830, 13 September 1932, 2). In fact, the 'page three' phenomenon is not unique to BYHB, but perhaps has a long tradition in Western popular culture extending even to this day.[55] In one article, the editor-in-chief of BYHB explained his motivation of selecting nudes:

[55]I thank Ajay Sinha for reminding me of the general 'page three' phenomena at the annual conference 2009. In this context, 'page three girl' could be used similarly as 'pin-up girl'. He especially pointed out that there was an Indian film entitled 'Page 3' directed by Madhur Bhandarkar in 2005. I notice that there is an underlying contradiction, however, because the editors of BYHB intended to make page three the static and stable art page.

> The sole aim of our decision to publish nudes in this pictorial is to introduce fine arts from all over the world, not to propagate licentiousness. [We] are confident of [our] caution in selecting materials. They are famous works from all over the world, publicly sold in European and Western countries, and they are qualified to use for reference by the domestic fine arts world. 吾報毅然刊登裸體畫片,完全為介紹世界美術起見,絕無誨淫之意,自信選材非常慎重,類皆世界名作,而為歐西各國所公然刊行發售,及足資國内美術界之借鏡者.[56]

In Feng's understanding, as long as nudes in BYHB were carefully selected from Western publications, the motivation for publishing nudes should not be doubted, and the nudes would be able to contribute positively to Chinese artistic development. Again, he highlighted the nudes as 'famous works from all over the world' (*shijie mingzuo* 世界名作), which emphasized the 'exotic' aspect of nudes. The Western nudes were considered to belong to the category of 'fine art works' and thus were arranged on page three, but how did the Western nudes exactly link with the larger context of the pictorial and how were they further affected by other images? I understand the framing of the Western nudes from two angles. Firstly, 'page three' regularly featured items from collections belonging to famous cultural figures, including renowned ancient calligraphies and genuine paintings. Displayed among them, Western nudes thus become a separate genre from valuable collections. This effect could be enhanced by the signatures of the owners or collectors around the nudes. Taking the 'page three' of BYHB 21 (15 September 1926) as an example (see Fig. 12.5), there are five images on this page, including a nude 'Tasting grapes' with the caption of 'Collected by Wuyue' (*Wuyue cang* 武越藏), a rubbing of a 'Chinese old coin' with the signature 'A rubbing collected by the owner of Tao Garden' (*Taoyuan zhuren cang ta* 韜園主人藏拓), and a painting 'Insects drawn by the actor King Pih-Yeh' (*Jin Biyan hua caochong*金碧艷畫草蟲) with the signature of *Hanyun cang* (Collected by Hanyun), and so on.[57] Phrased as one item from these collections, the nude of 'Tasting grapes' is no longer just an unveiled body, but a desired aesthetic object. In fact, by 1926 it was not thatching new for *wenren* (literati) to collect exotic foreign 'artistic pictures.' For example, Zhou Shoujuan 周瘦鵑 (1895–1968), one of the most important writers of the so-called 'Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School,' claimed that he liked 'collecting foreign pictures and artistic works especially' (*zhuanshou waiguo huapian he meishupin* 專收外國畫片和美術品) in 1922.[58] Four years later, a contributor to *Shenbao* described how collecting 'postcards of paintings' (*huihua mingxinpian*

[56]Bigong (Feng Wuyue), 'Questions Concerning Nude Images' (*Luotihua wenti* 裸體畫問題), BYHB 63 (19 February 1927), 3.

[57]The English is originally published with the images.

[58]Zhou Shoujuan 周瘦鵑, "Looking Back at the First Year of *Half Moon*" (*Banyue zhi yinian huigu* 半月之一年回顧), *Half Moon* (*Banyue* 半月) vol.2, no.8 (1922). "Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School" is a polemical term used by writers from the May Fourth Movement; for a more detailed discussion of this complex issue, see Denise Gimpel, *Lost Voices of Modernity: A Chinese Popular Fiction Magazine in Context* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); Hockx, ibid.

北洋畫報

十五年九月十五日

星期三 第二十一期

□丙寅銷夏記

□徐文長故事

□妄談

Three authors: Messrs C. A. Mei, I. C Shiao, W. Y. Chiu.

吳大澂篆書夏小正

Hieroglyphic writing panels (1 & 2) written by T. C. Wu.

金碧艷畫草蟲(其二)

Insects drawn by actor King Pih-Yen.

稻園主人藏拓

方足布之一

Chinese old coin.

葡萄仙子(法國攝影名作) 武越藏

"Tasting grapes."

(3)

Fig. 12.5 BYHB 21 (15 September 1926), 3

繪畫明信片) had become his new hobby, although he did not necessarily admit publicly that he collected erotic postcards as well.[59]

To come now to the second aspect, the Western nudes are often connected with two kinds of captions. The first kind always mentions 'beauty' (*mei* 美) or 'fine arts' (*meishu* 美術) to indicate the nude's aesthetic value. This value can also be confirmed by the fact that erotic postcards were collected by famous cultural figures. The second kind of captions often contains fragments of classical allusions, especially those from erotic Tang poems and Song lyrics.

In fact, the captions with 'beauty' (*mei*) and 'fine arts' (*meishu*) belong to a discourse that emerged more than a decade earlier. They refer to 'aesthetic education' (*meiyu* 美育), originally advocated by Cai Yuanpei蔡元培(1868–1940) in his seminal work 'Replacing religion with aesthetic education' (*Yi meiyu dai zongjiao* 以美育代宗教),[60] which was one essential idea that Feng and other editors claimed to bear in mind throughout these years. For example, BYHB concluded in 1930 that 'in our selection of materials in the last four years we have never ignored "beauty" as the basic rule,' and declared that '[our] goal in the future will be to regard perfect beauty as the end point.'[61] Nudes, regarded as the embodiment of beauty, were thus ideally selected to serve aesthetic education, although potential economic success also seemed to be part of the motivation for the editors.

The following example demonstrates how BYHB combined the discourse of aesthetic education with that of current affairs in presenting a nude. Again, BYHB used the technique of bricolaging different elements to contextualise and interpret the nudes. Figure 12.6 is a nude published in BYHB in 1927, which proves to be one of a series of erotic postcards.[62] Although the English caption reads

[59]Baoheng 保衡, "My New Entertainment: Collecting Postcards of Paintings" (*Wo de xin yule - huihua mingxinpian zhi souji* 我的新娛樂——繪畫明信片之蒐集), *Shenbao Supplement* (19 December 1926), 1.

[60]Cai Yuanpei, 'Replacing religion with aesthetic education' (*Yi meiyu dai zongjiao* 以美育代宗教), translated by Julia F. Andrews in *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature, 1893–1945*, ed. Kirk A. Denton (Stanford and California: Stanford University Press, 1996), 87. It was originally a lecture delivered in 1917 to the Shenzhou Scholarly Society (*Shenzhou xuehui* 神州學會), and then first published under the name Cai Jiemin 蔡孑民in *New Youth* (*Xin Qingnian* 新青年) vol.3, no. 6 (August 1917); reprinted in *The Selected Works of Fine Arts in the 20th Century,* vol. I (*Ershi shiji Zhongguo meishu wenxuan, Shangjuan* 二十世紀中國美術文選上卷), ed. Lang Shaojun 郎紹君 and Shui Zhongtian 水中天 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1999), 15–20. Carrie Waara discusses Cai's thought in her paper 'Ts'ai Yuan-pei's Theory of Aesthetic Education,' *Spring-Autumn Papers* 1.1 (Spring 1979), 13–30.

[61]Jizhe, 'On the Fourth Anniversary'. For more examples of 'editors's note' discussing 'beauty', see Wang Xiaoyin 王小隱, 'The Past Year' (Yinian yilai 一年以來), BYHB 101 (July 6, 1927), 2 and Jian'an 健盦, 'The Second Year' (*Di'er nian* 第二年), BYHB 102 (July 9, 1927), 3.

[62]An identical image was found online: http://storage.canalblog.com/41/07/274511/12772742.jpg (accessed on 21 January 2010). Other images from the same series include one in *Erotic French Postcards,* 2009, n.p.

"Rain threatening'

石冥
Chiu Shih-Ming

卻次
Shao Jui Peng'

□乳的威風

鶴客

不管他帶兜肚也好。穿小坎肩也好。女人只要把兩個奶壓下去。也總是不合道理的。好看不好看。先放在後。因為給人看。究竟還是第二個問題、人的生命。同子孫的生命。是第一步。

最近南方有了「天乳」運動。這雖是件小事。而也正是一件大事。中國女人的「弱不禁風」、「嬌小玲瓏」。兜肚和小坎肩。是一種特別的鐐銬。

女人有兩隻肥大的乳房。那是「天生的」。有什麼可恥。到了時候。他應當大的。又是什麼見不得人，為什麼一定要藏他起來呢。

在不知幾百年之前。民間文學就有這麼一段歌謠。看看女人的兩個奶。有多大威風。

南來的。北往的。都是一「媽媽」(北方語。乳也)頭上長的。騎馬的。坐轎的。都是「媽媽」頭上掉的。

然則這麼有功於世間的女人的奶。豈是可以常常讓他在壓迫之下生活的嗎、於是就有脫小坎肩的必要。應該像時髦人不顧纏裹脚一樣的徹底。

天乳運動

墨珠

廣東省政府下令。禁止婦女束胸。實行天乳運動。在這提高女子生活的時代。自是應時的舉動。無論怎樣。也比較「不看褲運動」來得有意義。本來在美的方面。可以增加多少的快感。衛生上也有莫大的好處。這種運動。的是該當。小衣的存廢的爭論。到現在也莫弄清楚。倒是性學博士們的一番熱心。吾們不能不說聲「辛苦」。但束胸既被取締、小衣自歸淘汰。存在不存在。已不成問題。那麼。丟開「勞什子」。還是來研究水吧。

大足運動的結果。尖尖弓鞋。便成了古董舖裏的陳設品。天乳運動的成績。自然要聯下大批束胸的小衣。如果作一番改造工夫。先行破壞。再行建設。便一變而為小褲子。小褂子。把來給寶寶們享用。既合乎「廢物利用」的原則。又免去像「進船」那樣的可憐。只供考古家的把玩。「蓄髮的砍頭」是武漢剪髮運動的現象。「剪髮的懲」是北方反剪髮的手段。不知這入乳運動。也借武力為後援否。

▷天一青年影片公司
'The Three Kingdoms''.

The beauty of the human body.
天乳之美

(8)

十六年七月三十日

Fig. 12.6 BYHB 108 (30 July 1927): 3

'The beauty of the human body,' the Chinese caption is "*tianru zhi mei* 天乳之美", which means 'the beauty of the natural breasts' and alludes to the 'Natural Breasts Movement' (*Tianru yundong* 天乳運動) advocated by Zhu Jiahua 朱家驊

in July 1927.[63] Two short essays surrounding the image endorsed the background discourse more explicitly. One is entitled “The Natural Breasts Movement” (*Tianru yundong* 天乳運動), expressing an ironic view of the movement; the other is “The Prestige of Breasts” (*Ru de weifeng* 乳的威風), supporting the movement, offering rational explanations from the perspective of health, and then interpreting the issue with a folk doggerel.[64] The relevance between the titles and content of the essays and the Chinese caption of the picture would naturally link the text and the image. Consequently, the image does not only present an exotic body spectacle to attract readers, but also illustrates the desired beauty of the “natural breasts” while being enriched by the current social discourse attached. In this way, a Western nude becomes part of the Chinese discourse, so that the exoticism offered by the erotic postcard embodies a possibility to illustrate an ideal ‘self’.

The second kind of caption shows us another possibility for framing Western nudes not only to endorse current events, but also to enrich the imaginary of classic (erotic) literature or allusion. For example, Imperial Concubine Yang Yuhuan 楊玉環 (commonly known as Yang Guifei, 719–756) was a famous beauty in Chinese history. Her love story with Emperor Xuanzong 唐玄宗 (685–762) of the Tang Dynasty was described in the long poem ‘Song of Everlasting Sorrow’ (*Chang hen ge* 長恨歌) by Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846), now a classic of Chinese literature. In the poem, a sentence describing the particular scene of Yang’s bath is extremely well known: ‘her cream-like skin is cleansed in the slippery hot spring water’ (溫泉水滑洗凝脂). This sentence has become a great imaginary for Chinese painters. Occasionally, BYHB reprinted a number of the famous ink paintings on the theme of Yang Yuhuan, such as the series ‘After a Bath’ (*Chu yu tu*出浴圖), containing erotic elements such as plump and exposed limbs etc.[65] Apart from this, BYHB did not merely reproduce ink paintings of Yang Guifei from China’s rich art history, but also selected postcards with Western nudes and arranged them together with fragments of the ‘Song of Everlasting Sorrow.’ For instance, Fig. 12.7 shows us three naked Western women are playfully bathing by a creek. Being displayed from different angles in different poses, their beautiful bodies and curves have a

[63]Zhu Jiahua (1893–1963) was named acting chairman of Canton provincial government’s standing committee and commissioner of civil affairs in 1927. Later he held office in the National Government as minister of education (1932–1933; 1944–1948), minister of communications (1932–1935), and vice president of the Examination Yuan (1941–1944). For his biography, see Howard L. Boorman ed, Biographical Dictionary of Republican China (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1967), 437–440. In July 1927, he advanced a proposal on unbinding breasts, which was called the Natural Breasts Movement. The event is still understudied and only known through Lu Xun’s article ‘Worries on Natural Breasts’ (*You tianru*憂天乳), in *Thread of Talk* (*Yusi* 語絲) 152 (8 Oct. 1927), reprinted in *Complete Works of Lu Xun: And That’s That* (魯迅全集:而已集) (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1981), 467–470.

[64]Mozhu 墨珠, ‘The Natural Breasts Movement’ (*Tianru yundong* 天乳運動) and Heke 鶴客, ‘The Prestige of Breasts’ (*Ru de weifeng* 乳的威風), BYHB 108 (30 July 1927), 3.

[65]For instance, ‘Imperial Concubine after a Bath Painted by Qiu Shizhou’ (*Qiu Shizhou hui Guifei chu yu tu* 仇十洲繪貴妃出浴圖), BYHB 201 (7 July 1928), 2; ‘Taizhen after a Bath’ (*Taizhen chu yu tu* 太真出浴圖) BYHB 1018 (30 November 1933), 3. Both paintings depict Yang’s beautiful, soft and plump body after a bath.

Fig. 12.7 BYHB 263 (29 December 1929): 3

powerful visual impact on the readers; moreover, their facial expressions of enjoyment as well as the soft transparent cloth in their hands radiate an erotic atmosphere. The same three females are found to pose slightly differently twice in exactly the same setting in a contemporary book entitled *Study on the Beauty of Naked Bodies* (*Luoti mei zhi yanjiu* 裸體美之研究, published in 1925. For one example, see Fig. 12.8), the image in BYHB can reasonably be deduced as originating from an erotic postcard.[66] The caption provided the image with an immediate interpretation, citing the famous lines 'her skin like cream is cleansed in the slippery hot spring water,' meaning it was linked to the symbolic imagery of Yang Guifei.[67] On the one

[66]Shanghai ai mei she 上海愛美社ed., *Study on the Beauty of Naked Bodies* (*Luoti mei zhi yanjiu* 裸體美之研究), Shanghai: Wenming shuju, 1925. Two images from front illustrations can be compared with Figure 12.7. Again, it shows that erotic postcards were not merely reproduced in periodicals but also in books at the given time.

[67]For the translation see Tony Barnstone, and Ping Chou, *Chinese Erotic Poems,* Everyman's Library Pocket Poets (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 69.

Fig. 12.8 *Study on the Beauty of Naked Bodies,* 1925, front illustration

hand, the caption was empowered to frame an exotic nude in the Chinese aesthetic setting, while on the other, when fragments of classical allusion were used to interpret an erotic postcard with Western nudes, the Western nudes possibly reinterpreted the poem in turn and thus enriched the Chinese erotic imaginary.

Conclusions: Reconfiguration of Western Nudes in Chinese Context

This study has examined photographic nudes in BYHB (1926–1933) and shown that the majority are Western in origin. After comparing a great volume of materials containing Western nudes, 'erotic postcards' (or 'French postcards') can be identified as an important source in BYHB. Furthermore, tracing the flow of erotic

postcards from its point of departure in Europe and at its point of arrival in China from the 1880s to the 1920s delineates the various possible trajectories of image dissemination. This flow enabled BYHB to reproduce Western nudes as exotic images. However, when the Western nudes were selected for BYHB, they were contextualized and interpreted to serve contemporary Chinese discourses in the 1920s and 1930s and to enrich the Chinese imaginary of classic (erotic) literature and allusions. I argue that the Chinese visual imaginary of the West was stimulated by a vision of the exotic 'Other', on the one hand; on the other, BYHB created a type of 'exotic Self' by means of surrounding nudes with traditional Chinese cultural elements as well as captions containing Chinese literary quotations. Imported nudes were thus empowered with a distinct Chinese cultural imaginary.

Therefore, I agree with Ortiz's understanding of 'transculturation' quoted in the introduction: from the standpoint of BYHB's editors and readers, transculturation is achieved by a three-step process of 'aculturation,' 'deculturation,' and 'neo-culturation.' The process of transculturation is actually a synthesis in the Hegelian sense and goes beyond thesis and antithesis: it might involve 'acquiring' another culture, and the *gain* but not 'loss' (or 'uprooting') of a previous culture, and in that case it would 'carry the idea of the consequent creation of a new cultural phenomenon.' Whether it is a *gain* or loss (or even *uprooting*) of the previous culture, depends on which culture is viewed as the new one and which as the old. In BYHB's case, the editors accepted 'French postcards' which were 'exotic' (a kind of new), but also *gained* 'nutrition' from Chinese culture, such as through the accompanying literary allusions. Consequently, Western nudes were recontextualised into the Chinese context, and the process of forming an 'exotic Self' endorsed the process of transculturation.

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