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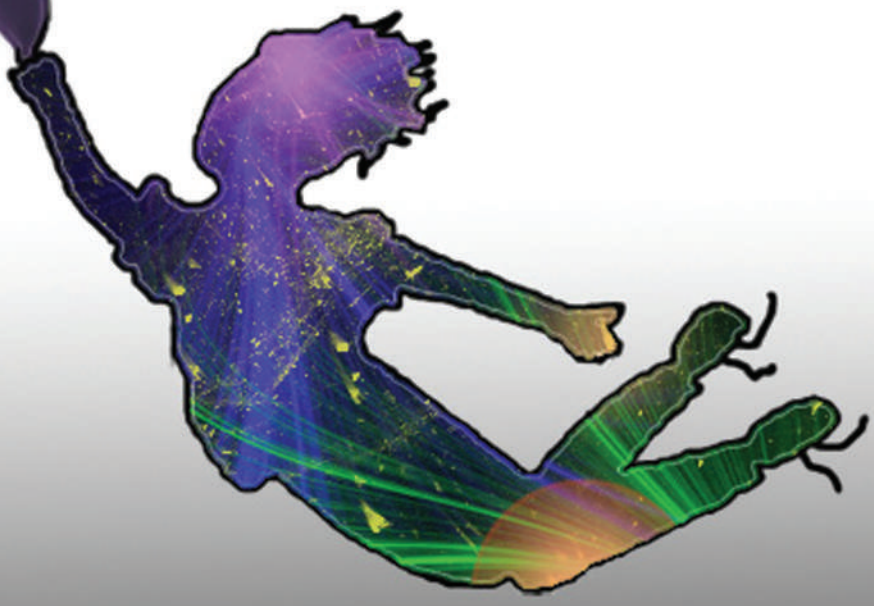

THE COVER

The bright silhouette that confronts you on the cover – a figure lifted by an amorphous, billowing cloud of sky – on the face of it, accesses the most immediately obvious aspects of this year's theme: the infinite, ineffable qualities of the word 'space'. The image tries to convey both the freedoms and restrictions of spatiality. Like the silhouette, all beings are, at once, formed and bounded by the spaces they inhabit, even as they create new spaces and limitations of their own. The cloud issuing from the figure's hands is ostensibly created by it, and yet seems unknowable both to the viewer and the figure itself. We are charged with the agency to form new spaces and identities that we straddle even as the events of our lives are charted, at least in some part, by the spaces that formed us – structures and boundaries that are, at once, arbitrary and constraining; sublime and unyielding. And yet it would not be unfair to say that we are lent a measure of freedom by the multiplicity of spaces we inhabit, and by our capacity to navigate them. For, arriving at one conception of space, inevitably, does not preclude the possibility that another space, in another time – to push the idea of multiverses beyond convention – exists: and is perhaps, in equal parts, utopian and dystopian. The silhouette, suspended in action, is but one spatial representation of this discursive dilemma.

Pia Sidhwa

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Spaces - Imagined, Maintained, and Contested

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I was first asked to join the team as the editor in-chief, I was genuinely surprised. Besides reading the articles in *Eidos*, I had honestly never paid much attention to what work went into creating the journal and so I asked one of my professors whether I should take up something that I had absolutely no idea about. In response, he said, "Take it as a challenge."
I took his advice and I must confess, a challenge it definitely has been.

Personally, having benefitted a great deal from an inter-disciplinary schooling, I know how significant it is for a variety of diverse disciplines to interact and put forth their dynamic perspectives. Thus, my editorial team set out to invite students from an array of academic backgrounds within B.A., B.M.M., B.M.S. and B.Sc., in our college.

I must first acknowledge that most professors have been very supportive of this effort, and encouraged their students to participate. Many students from other departments were puzzled over the theme of Spaces, which led our team to conduct sessions, essentially providing a few perspectives on Spaces. The session conducted by the team along with Fr. Arun de Souza proved to be extremely beneficial.

The product of our effort is reflected in our publication of an inter-disciplinary journal presented to you by the Sociology and Anthropology Department. These past five months, I admit, have been extremely unpredictable and amusing. Nonetheless, they have created a very prolific and satisfying 'space' that I intend to pursue in the future.

It is irrefutable that this performance is a team effort. An adequate acknowledgement for this journal can only begin with a thank you to our faculty at the Sociology and Anthropology Department with special reference to Professor Arun de Souza for his constant guidance as the faculty advisor for *Eidos*.

I'm extremely grateful to all our sponsors for having faith in our writers and encouraging them with generous contributions. I would particularly like to thank Natasha for being a diligent and patient Marketing Head, along with her assistants, Shruti and Uttara and the entire marketing team for being so enthusiastic.

A special expression of gratitude to all my editors: Sadia, Antara, Siddharth, and Cynthia for providing great impetus to our writers, encouraging them to think critically, and further question that which is obvious. It mustn't have been easy to keep up with four drafts of every paper. This acknowledgement would be incomplete without mentioning the significant role of my Assistant Editor, Proshant. Having stood by every decision that I made, he is one of the many reasons we have arrived close to our vision of *Eidos*.

We thank the layout head, Antara Telang, and her team for designing this journal in an extremely systematic and engaging manner and our printing partner, Minaxi enterprises.

I'm deeply thankful to Pia Sidhwa for conceptualizing and designing the cover page of our journal with inputs from Shakti Nambiar and Alexander Thomas.

The team is extremely grateful to all our writers without whom this journal would lose its substance, quite literally.

I hope this journal gets you to think about at least one issue that you hadn't questioned earlier.

Riddhi Shah
Editor-in-Chief

EDITORIAL

In the last couple of years, 'spaces' have come to acquire significance in both popular and sociological discourse. From the occupation of Wall Street by the so-called "99%", to the million-men marches in Tahrir Square, Sana, Tunis and Damascus; with indigenous people rallying against what can be seen as a hostile takeover of their lands by the state in the name of development, we are witnessing a collapse of the fundamental assumptions of normalcy of spatiality, its taken-for-granted nature, and its static-ness. Therefore, the epistemology of spaces requires a radical transformation to account for its discursive and impermanent nature. With this year's theme, 'Spaces: Imagined, Maintained and Contested', we seek to tackle a similar problematic and hope to arrive at a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of spaces.

Space, in the classical tradition of sociology, was a more or less static entity. Marx's idea of space, for instance, looked at it as a resource in the mode of production; Durkheim, on the other hand, looked at the configuration of space emanating from social organisation (or solidarities, as he put it); their focus was on temporality, structures and social actors. While spaces have been a subject matter of sociological enquiry: Weber's The City, for instance, or Simmel's works on the 'Stranger' and the 'Metropolis and the City', and the field of urban sociology developed by Park and Burgess of the Chicago School. However, most works have offered structural understanding of spatial organisation, and have remained largely silent on the discursive nature of spaces (Zieleniec, 2007).

In the 1970s, however, the conception of space altered radically. Two developments in sociology are seen as watershed in this regard: Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities and Henri Lefebvre's The Production of Space. Anderson's argument, while seen as problematic now, destabilised the assumption of the normalcy of nation-states and their spatial boundaries – which, he argued, are imaginary, and constructed by people as communities and social groups. Lefebvre, a post-Marxist theorist, situates the politics of space in the milieu of the capitalist political economy, positing arguments towards a critical understanding of the spatiality of politics and history (Elden, 1998). Following Lefebvre, authors like Fredric Jameson (1991) and David Harvey (1990) have studied the complexity of spatial organisation, especially with regard to the problematic of capitalism, with the central theme being the contestation of spaces.

It was, however, with the French philosopher and cultural critic, Michel Foucault, that the social sciences acquired a more critical, comprehensive and dynamic understanding of spatiality, power and politics. Foucault's understanding of power/knowledge, surveillance and discursive regimes (in many cases, with reference to architecture, geography and geopolitics) provided crucial insights in looking at spaces as contested terrains. Arguing against the 19th century's obsession with history and the past, Foucault suggests:

> "…the present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein."
>
> Foucault (1986), in Foucault: Space, Knowledge and Power.

With transnational migration, construction of hybrid identities, and the reconfiguration of diasporic identities, the perils of looking at spaces in one-dimensional and reductionist manner, to reiterate Lefebvre's concern, are indeed rather serious. The notion of space has shifted from the spatial grounded-ness of its essence, to terrains, spatial metaphors and even temporality. Thus, the idea of imagined spaces, or "scapes", as Arjun Appadurai (1990) would have them, have come to acquire sociological prominence.

The concept of space in general, and spatiality in particular, are, therefore enmeshed in discourses of power, imagination, contestation and negotiations. In light of these developments, the papers in this volume, in their individual capacities and collective organisation, explore diverse ideas of spaces: from abstract, mental spaces to the problematic of geopolitics and identities, critically examining the innocuous idea of personal spaces, to the intersection of class, gender and religious identities in the formulation of spatiality. With cross-disciplinary papers, that put forth radically different perspectives in the analysis of spatiality, we hope this volume of Eidos aids in expanding both the scope of research, and the extent of engagement with spaces.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY 2012-2013

Every year, the department of Sociology & Anthropology makes it a point to go beyond academics and involve its students in a plethora of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, and this year was no different. These activities under the autonomous system have been instrumental in ensuring a greater engagement with Sociology and Anthropology, on the part of the students. The Sociology Academy invited Shilpa Phadke and Shilpa Ranade, authors of the famous work 'Why Loiter? : Women And Risk On Mumbai Streets', to address the final year students pursuing the academic paper on Gender Studies. This interactive session saw the guest speakers talk about their well acclaimed work, which is based on their research collected over three years, for a project titled 'Gender and Space'. They also explained to the students, certain key ideas such as 'violence' and 'loitering' and answered questions from the students, pertaining to 'access to public space for women and the constraints faced by them', which forms the dominant theme in their work. In July 2012, the Academy also invited guest speaker Janice Lazarus to address the students of Gender Studies. She also gave her valuable insights on queer theory and gender studies.

The Sociology Academy, since the past many years, has established itself by increasing its membership and has aimed to synthesize Sociology and Anthropology with themes that are of interest to students across St. Xavier's College. The professors also make continuous efforts to incorporate discussions, film screenings, presentations and articles to supplement the lectures and make them more interactive, interesting and thought-provoking.

Along with the guest lectures, the department also organized a wide array of co-curricular activities that were targeted at enhancing knowledge, with the help of practical examples, under the banner of the Honours Programme, co-ordinated by Prof. Vinita Bhatia and Prof. Fr. M.T. Joseph.

People and the Environment conducted by Sunetro Ghosal: This 8-session lecture series centered on the 'environment'. These lectures provoked students to think critically and encouraged them to think beyond the 'perceived obvious'. It drew on several lines of thought to provide a cross-disciplinary canvas to explore ideas of the environment. An addition to the course this time was a session dedicated to the idea of 'spaces' and its relation to the environment.

Islam and Society conducted by Dr. Zeenat Shaukat Ali: This programme focused on introducing the students to the basic tenets of Islam and helped to throw light on the common misconceptions about the religion. This workshop covered a host of interesting topics such as 'Jihad', 'Muslim women and the Veil', 'Islam and Democracy' and 'The Arab Spring'. The workshop concluded with the screening of the critically acclaimed film 'Khuda Ke Liye', followed by an interactive session about the various themes depicted through the film.

Winter Seminar on Environmental Justice conducted by Janjri Jasani and Edel Monteiro: The session focused on the problematic of global climate change and the ways in which the current and the future generations could deal with the issue. This honours activity was co-facilitated with other young environmental activists across the globe and it also involved a live video exchange with students from 'Universitat des Saarlandes', Saarbrucken, Germany. The other highlighting features of this programme included an action project with a local environmental organization, guest lectures and many interactive sessions.

The Circular Ballistics of Time conducted by Spriha Gupta: This workshop dealt with examining the exegeses of 'Time' through the intricately wrought wormholes of Jorge Luis Borges' Labyrinths; traversing

the cyclical cosmologies of Heraclitus and the pre-Socratic philosophers, the cyclopedias' of Diderot, to the cyclotrons of what is classified as the contemporary. Further, this course unraveled the cyclical and the linear, persistence and ephemerality, aided by the lenses supplied by the inflatable universe of Anthropology.

Media Literacy conducted by Apoorva Gupta: This honours programme aimed at imparting some basic facts about media constructions, demystifying the glamour and fantasy and taught the students to learn the ways to authenticate the information provided to them through a vast foray of audio, visual and text messages. The participants were expected to learn 'questioning skills' and understand how to find answers for the same. Along with evaluating and analyzing the media, the students were also introduced to 'creating' media themselves.

The Annual Department Seminar in Khandala was based on the theme 'Spaces: Imagined, Maintained and Contested'. The seminar witnessed the students presenting papers that were both, theoretical as well as applied in nature. The topics covered a wide range of ideas, with the main focus being on the relation of these ideas to the concept of Space.

The Department has seen quite a few achievements this year:

Dr. (Fr.) Arun de Souza visited Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo Canada for a Collaborator's Meeting (26th – 29th January 2012) that planned for a series of international workshops titled, 'Youth Leading Environmental Change'. While in Canada, he also presented a paper "Strands in Indian Environmental Thought." This meeting led to workshops for youth being held in 8 different nations. One of these 'A Winter Workshop on Environmental Justice' was held at Xavier's College (see above). In order to sustain the momentum of this initiative, he is also exploring another possible project with the same research group that will encourage youth to link art and environmental issues.

In April 2012, he published an article titled, "Canonical Traditions and Pedagogical Practices: Sociology at the Undergraduate Level" in the Economic and Political Weekly. Dr. De Souza was the Organizer and Resource Person for a workshop on 'Ethnographic Methods in the field' for the 'Society for Promoting Participative Ecosystem Management' (SOPPECOM) on 4th May 2012.

From the 18th to the 19th of August, 2012, he also conducted a two day workshop on the sociology of religion for catholic laity at Goregaon Seminary, Mumbai. He also was appointed as the convener of Custodian's Committee.

Prof. Madhuri Raijada was appointed as the coordinator for the Women's Development Cell, St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. She was also appointed as the convener for the senior college Exam Committee. She was also elected as a committee member of the Council of International Programs (CIP) and also as a member of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC).

Dr. Sam Taraporevala gave an invited talk on the theme "Accessible ICT & Assistive Technology" at the Global Accessibility Awareness Day, a one-day conference on creating awareness about the needs of persons with disabilities in Infrastructure, Transportation, Information Technology and Assistive technology. Jointly organized by Department of Information Technology, Government of Maharashtra & Barrier Break Technologies at Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan, Mumbai.

He also presented on University and college enabling units at the Daisy Forum of India (DFI) General Body National Conference, a conference organized by the Xavier's Resource Center for Visually Challenged (XRCVC) at Lonavala.

Dr. Sam Taraporevala attended and presented at a National Seminar on the Copyright Law Amendment of 2012 organized by ILS Law College, Pune. At this seminar, Dr. Taraporevala emphasized on the amendment in the law which will help the future law students understand the social implications better.

Dr. Sam Taraporevala was also part of the keynote address along with Peter Gartenberg (MD, SAP India Subcontinent) where he spoke about how XRCVC, along with SAP, is working on building accessibility solutions for visually challenged for their employment and self-dependence. This meet was attended by senior decision makers from government organizations to discuss and deliberate how Public

Services Organizations, Defense and Utilities Service Providers can adopt the latest technologies to run their operations better and in an efficient and effective manner. This forum helped to update the audience on importance of accessibility.

He also presented a paper at the National Seminar organized by National University of Juridical Sciences (NUJS), Kolkata at their NUJS-CUSAT Conference in association with the NJUS Law Review and IPTLS, Copyright Amendments, 2012: A Fair Balance? His paper focused on the role of the social advocacy program which was spearheaded by the XRCVC and which gave the rise to the special inclusive exemption in the Copyright Act amendment for persons with disabilities.

Dr. Taraporevala also contributed a chapter – The Copyright Challenge: Legal and Social Imperatives in the book Library Services for Blind and Visually Impaired People which was edited by Dr. Priya R. Pillai and Dr. Neela J. Deshpande and published by APH Publishing Corporation. He was also elected as a committee member of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC).

Prof. Vinita Bhatia attended a program at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) on 'Interfaith Cooperation' in September 2012.

Dr. (Fr.) Joseph M.T. SVD presented a paper titled "At the Confluence of Cosmopolitanism and Identity Religion: Ambedkarite Buddhists of Maharashtra" at an international seminar Indian Cosmopolitanism and its Paradoxes, jointly organized by University of Bergen, Norway and Tata Institute of Social Sciences at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, 8th September 2011.

In April 2012, he also presented a paper titled "Conversion Movements and Mass Conversions in India: The Dynamics of Individualization and Communitarian Identities" at a Conference on Individualization through Christian Missionary Activities, Max-Weber-Kolleg für kultur- und sozialwissenschaftliche Studien, University of Erfurt, Germany.

In May 2012, he also went on faculty visit on behalf of St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, to Liverpool HOPE University, Liverpool, UK along with Dr. Vivien Amonkar and Prof. Linda Dhakul.

Publications:

M.T. Joseph (2012). Buddhists: The Political Dynamics of Conversion and Caste. In R. Robinson (ed.) Minority Studies. New Delhi: Oxford University Press: 138 – 159.

M.T. Joseph (2012). Gender Relations in the Church: Unfolding the Theme. In A. Lobo Gajiwala et al (ed.). Gender Relations in the Church: A Call to Wholeness and Equal Discipleship. New Delhi. Media House: 30 – 41.

On 1st October, 2012, Dr. Joseph M.T. bid adieu to St. Xavier's College and joined the Department of Sociology at the University of Mumbai, Kalina, Santacruz (East), Mumbai – 98, as Assistant Professor.

The department is looking forward to its academic, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities in the coming year and appreciates the enthusiastic participation of students across departments.

Sharmishtha K. Bose
Chairperson, Sociology Academy 2012-13

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A GEOGRAPHY OF MEANING: EXPLORING THE COMPLEXITY OF SPACE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

SUNETRO GHOSAL

Sunetro Ghosal is a research fellow at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences.

This essay explores the complexity of two closely interlinked but distinct concepts: space and the environment. The conceptualisation of space and its socio-political implications have been intensely debated in relation to race, class, gender and ethnicity, especially in the humanities and the social sciences (Bender, 1993; Ingold, 2000; Olwig, 1996). Extension of these debates in relation to the environment started out in geography and has since gained ground in several other theoretical frameworks like political ecology and disciplines like anthropology and human geography (Robbins, 2012). In this essay, I will first dwell on the characteristics of space and the environment, before exploring how they relate with each other.

Space is a deceptive concept. Derived from the Latin word *spatium* meaning 'room, area, distance, stretch of time' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2010), it's often conceived as a neutral physical space. For instance, the physical limits of Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) in northern Mumbai is spread across 103 sq km straddling Mumbai and Thane district (Mumbaikars for SGNP, 2012). Sure enough, our senses provide us with tangible evidence of the physicality of this space ranging from its biological and geological features to its textures and climatic variations. However, not only are there variations in the meaning construction of these sensory perceptions of space but as this essay will argue, people experience the spaces and their features differently.

Spaces are never neutral. They have a memory of the past, having been shaped by the lives and activities of those who have inhabited and used it in the past. The influence of history on space is both active and dynamic, which are in turn interpreted by the present. For instance, a piece of land that has been used for cultivation in the past will have very different biophysical, aesthetic and cultural characteristics as compared to areas that have never been or could not be used for cultivation. Thus, space is conceptually shaped and re-shaped over time with tangible physical impacts.

These physical geometries are infused with meaning and identity that people experience, which convert 'spaces' into 'places' (Tuan, 1977) that inhabit lives and mark social and cultural landscapes. Anthropologist Tim Ingold argues that these meanings are inherent in space through the past, which are discovered or 'gathered' through tasks that are performed in them (Ingold, 2000). This is an evocatively simple concept that provides a theoretical mechanism to explain how space can have very different meanings. And yet, it also provides for the complex interactions that people have with 'space'. For instance, the nature of tasks people perform in a given space is influenced by historical, cultural and social institutions for economic, political and biological outcomes. These actions not only provide meaning to the space but also continuity of knowledge and value-systems that bind specific communities together.

If spaces have meaning, those meanings are not neutral either: spaces are therefore engendered with the power dynamics that define social relations (Robbins, 2012). In other words, spaces express the political interactions and negotiations between and within communities and groups. This is evident at larger scales like cities (the political economy of Mumbai and its development for instance) or at much smaller scales (how people use common spaces like a class, public transport and infrastructure or the canteen for instance).

Spaces, like social relations, are thus subject to dynamic processes of negotiations and contestations. Thus, while space is physical, its experience and perception as a place is a social construction. These constructions, and the actions that entail from them, have a very real

impact on the political geography of the space (Bender, 1993; Olwig, 1996). For instance, seating patterns in a classroom is a physical translation of the dynamic social linkages of its different members. This is very different from the way space is negotiated in public spaces like a bus or train, where strangers use their own social maps to delineate and create temporary spatial enclaves in relation to others. However, such public spaces are also subject to certain formal and informal rules, which include or exclude certain categories of people across say gender and class (and in some cases ethnicity). Other examples of this can be seen in rural areas that depend on agriculture. Since land is the primary livelihood resource, the most productive land is often controlled by the politically influential families in the village, with others being pushed to the margins of productivity (including ease of access, soil fertility, irrigation facilities or susceptibility to natural disasters). These power dynamics are also observed in the way houses are spatially located in a village, with the important families occupying the most favoured locations. It can also be argued that ownership of the most productive land provides the resource base to appropriate greater political economy in relation to others with less productive land. Either way, the important point of relevance to our discussions is that space is infused with the power dynamics that shape how social relations are negotiated in a community.

How does a discussion on space relate to the environment? The term 'environment' is as problematic as space. Derived from Old French, environer, which referred to surrounding (Oxford English Dictionary, 2010), the term has acquired more specific meanings since it entered common usage. It is often used to refer to nature in the non-human biophysical sense or more generally to define everything around us. Each of these conceptions would have different implications on where it fits in diverse constellations of meanings and people's spatial relation with it. For instance, if the 'environment' is conceived as nature, it creates a dualism and locates it in opposition to people (or culture). This scheme implies that people and nature (and so the environment) cannot coexist. Thus, on the one hand people are logically excluded from spaces where environmental protection is a priority, say like SGNP but on the other hand, nature is regarded as being absent from cultural landscapes. In contrast, sub-disciplines in anthropology and geography tent to conceptualise the environment as inclusive of culture and nature as well as the complex political, socio-cultural and bio-physical factors through which they interact (Little, 1999).

The discussion of space and the environment assumes significance with a growing recognition of the socio-ecological impact of human actions. Furthermore, an expanding population and growing technological prowess has increased the depth of our spatial impact on the environment. The linkages between negotiations of space and the environment provide insights into the dynamics of human society and its ability to husband natural resources, especially since the environment can neither participate in political negotiations, nor can it access social mechanisms to guard its interests.

The intuitive response would be that certain human groups will need to assume the role of speaking on behalf of the environment, negotiating space for its preservation and protection from destructive practices. However, like the earlier discussion on negotiating space, the role of 'speaking for the environment' is also an act of exercising power (Latour, 2004). Just as space is negotiated between different groups and communities, so also are ideas of what constitutes the environment, and how humans relate to it. For instance, a farmer who works the land himself or herself has a specific knowledge and understanding of what constitutes the environment and people's place in it. This maybe very different from the knowledge and understanding of say a pastoralist, stock broker, IT engineer, gardener, bureaucrat, politician, conservationist and so on.

The most prominent voices that have appropriated the role of speaking for the environment are biologists, environmental activists and academics (Sick, 2009). However, neither these groups nor their conceptions of the environment are homogenous. For instance, Takacs (1996) provides a vivid account of how the idea of 'biodiversity' means very different things to a selection of biologists in the USA who claim to work with it. Similarly, Rangarajan (1996) underlines the political dynamics and distinctions in the groups that speak for conservation in India. These groups have initiated some crucial political discussions on the material impact of technological and developmental changes in human society. However, despite their claim of speaking for

the environment, these groups remain rooted in specific political standpoints and interest, which in turn have socio-economic, political and biophysical implications.

For example, it has been argued that the economic interest of people and development cannot coexist with environmental protection. As this argument assumes political hegemony for nature conservation, the meanings it attaches to specific landscapes will be imposed on specific spaces by systematically excluding other possible meanings attached to it. The most common form would be the political act of declaring specific spaces as conservation areas, with restrictions on human extraction of resources. This act has ecological and socio-cultural implications, which ripple beyond the immediate borders of the area declared as a conservation priority area. Several of these landscapes have been shaped by human intervention of several generations and its removal has an impact on its ecology (Cronon, 1995; Shahabuddin & Rangarajan, 2007). Furthermore, by implication it removes restrictions on exploitation of environmental resources outside such spaces. In addition, the conservation spaces are then opened up for non-consumptive resource extraction like tourism while restricting local access to natural resources (Guha, 2003). Thus, a specific conception of the environment places value in certain actions and spaces while devaluing others, which transform political and ecological realities. It can, thus, lead to overt social conflicts and covert resistance over the use of spaces and their cultural and political meanings (Robbins, McSweeney, Chhangani, & Rice, 2009).

Similarly, we can examine other conceptions of the environment through cultural institutions, which mediate resource extraction and their implications for the community, ecology and their politics. For instance, sacred groves are physical places with deep socio-moral meanings and institutions that place curbs on resource extraction from certain spaces (Gadgil & Vartak, 1975). While these belief systems are subject to change, their contribution to sustaining ecological and cultural integrity of spaces is significant.

Each conception of the environment is based on specific assumptions and provides specific political and ecological tools to manage natural and cultural environmental resources. These conceptions are often contested, with significant political and ecological implications. Furthermore, the voices that speak for nature, more often than not, reflect the power dynamics of the society.

As evident from the various strands of arguments examined earlier, space and the environment are both complex conceptual tools with their own intellectual traditions. However, the distinction between these two is rather blurry, especially if one assumes that the environment includes nature and culture. Space can be conceptualised as a critical dimension of the environment. The same negotiation processes that define space are also evident in how the environment id conceptualised (Robbins, 2012). Furthermore, in defining and appropriating space, natural and cultural resources are also appropriated.

The most vivid account of the spatial dimension of the environment comes from the literature on environmental justice (which focuses on issues of equity), political ecology (which focuses on the politics of the environment) and human geography (which studies how the meanings and identities of spaces are negotiated). The common thread between these frameworks is that they highlight the political nature of negotiations and discourses over the meaning and use of environmental resources, including space.

The SGNP landscape discussed earlier provides a good illustration of these different strands of thoughts. This landscape is densely populated along the periphery of the national park with a cosmopolitan mix of communities with different social constructions of the SGNP landscape and the resulting claims of its physical configurations. For instance, tribal communities resident in this landscape construct themselves as an integral part of the SGNP landscape. Other residents living in the landscape construct it as a precious natural heritage that needs to be protected 'from humans and their greed' (Ghosal, 2012). These ideas refer to the same physical space but their constructions of it are very different and often contested (Elison, 2010). This reflects different engagement with space contextualised by different political narratives.

The conceptualisations of space and the environment are deeply intertwined and deeply political, as the meanings, value and utility attributed to them vary across time and space. Thus, social factors of identity such as gender, class, caste, ethnicity etc play key roles in negotiating space, access to environment and cultural resources as well as exposure to environmental risks. In this context, conceiving space as an integral component of the environment provides a mechanism to bridge its biophysical features with the subjective meanings they acquire in human society.

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WRITTEN INTO THE CITY / WRITING THE CITY

SHILPA PHADKE

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In February 2012, I was part of an event called 'Writing the Feminist Future' organised by Zubaan Books and the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar. Scholars, teachers, writers, poets, activists all spoke passionately to a variety of concerns including the body, cities, journeys and peace. The conversations were among the most exciting I have been part of in awhile.

This piece is from my short presentation at the February event which speaks to the possibilities and ambiguities fostered by the act of writing. I reflect on the process of writing about the city specifically from my own experience of researching and writing on women's right to loiter in the city.

1. A feminist writes the city

Since I can remember I was aware that being a girl meant I was different. I wrote my first proto-feminist published piece when I was 12 years old. It was only decades later, however, as an adult that I came to the question of inhabiting my city in a female body, albeit a very privileged female body via a vacation that a woman friend and I took in the north of India travelling through Agra, Gwalior, Jhansi, Orccha and Datia. For those two weeks we planned every move carefully so as to make sure we were safe. Back home in Mumbai I realized how much I actually strategized even in my own city in order to be able to access public space.

The journey of writing gender into my city began in that moment of realization. As I wrote preliminary ideas and talked to women I commuted with on the local trains I realized that this writing meant asking some difficult questions:

What does it mean to write the city as a feminist? What is the politics of dissent in which I must be embedded? What are the politics of inclusion that I must take into account when I write? What are the groups that will claim me and for what reasons?

2. A middle-class, upper caste, heterosexual, Hindu woman is written into the City

As a person with a particular set of intersecting identities I cannot but know the city both desires my presence and fears it. I am desirable because I am a potential consumer-citizen, I often look right and speak right and even am sometimes found in the right places – malls, coffee-shops and multiplexes where the global aspirational city wants me to be, fuelling the economy with retail therapy. I am feared because I also have free will and agency and as a feminist, I might not be satisfied with the malls but demand the streets and parks as well.

How does one respond to a city that sees you as a member of a new reconstituted middle class and invites you into its privatised pleasures, suggesting implicitly that public space is for the birds?

What are the choices I am offered? What are the pleasures? Can I own a politics that acknowledges the pleasures of such neo-liberal global aspirational spaces even as I critique them and am hyper aware of their limitations. May I enjoy the malls but still want the streets and parks with a visceral sense of longing? Is it possible to have discussions on the antithetical nature of global cities which discourage people from loitering in public space in an upmarket coffee-shop? What then, are all the contradictions I live with in this context?

3. An aspiring loiterer writes the city

When we began to talk about safety to people – there was a kind of complicity – everyone assumed they knew just what we meant – this was not an idea that threatened anyone at any level. As we engaged with this idea it became increasingly clear that safety was not going to

take us anywhere radical. Attending a workshop on risk in the very edgy city of Johannesburg in 2004 was deeply transformative in offering a prism to engage with city space in a new and less constricting way. Risk provided the radical edge that safety could never have. When we began to talk of women's right to risk as opposed to petitions for safety – it put us in a completely different terrain that of rights rather than protectionism.

Loitering was the next leap of analysis and yes, faith. From the right to risk we moved to the idea that the only way women could access streets unconditionally was if all other marginal citizens could as well. That only if Dalits, lower classes, Muslims, hawkers, bar dancers, sex workers and other loiterers of different hues can loiter will a politics of loitering be meaningful.

'Why Loiter?' is the title of the book I have co-written with Sameera Khan and Shilpa Ranade. Different people including other feminists often asked us, "but why loiter?" in tones of bewilderment, their contention being that loitering is debased kind of activity that offered little hope of liberation.

Subsequently in conversations with feminist activists particularly those who work with young women we've been challenged several times on the grounds that everyone loitering includes even those 'others' (often young men) who intimidate young women and inhibit their access thus in fact restricting the access of young women.

How does one think through this without dismissing these concerns and yet without once again returning to the unworkable politics of selective exclusion.

I've begun to think through this dilemma through the prism of unfriendly bodies asking what would it mean to conceive of the city as a hostile space and still want to access it?

4. This City that is Not One

That Mumbai is a heterogeneous city is not news. The question is can we reflect on the city as a space of difference, even of unfriendly spaces and bodies that need to be negotiated? This idea is not really so radical for one might say with awful truth that many women are horribly unsafe at home, a space often of unfriendly bodies and speech and yet we don't stop women from being there – in fact we urge them to be in that very space. What if we were to cast the presence of unfriendly bodies in the city in this same light? That is, what is the real risk posed by unfriendly bodies in public space – perhaps that there will be cat calls, verbal harassment, maybe stalking, and perhaps even physical harassment. Can we choose, if we choose, to negotiate these? Is it possible for us to think of unfriendly bodies as being a hazard of public space rather than a deterrent?

When one talks to young women about the fears of sexual harassment in public space they articulate less of a fear of physical harm and more the anxiety that by continuing to access these spaces where they are sexually harassed, they are in fact courting a risk to their reputations. That their presence on streets where sexual harassment is certain reflects a certain kind of unbecoming "boldness" which indicates their unsuitability for an arranged marriage? They fear partly the young men but also the "community" who will "talk" thus cementing their reputations or more accurately lack thereof?

If we were to construct public space as more generally unfriendly, a space to be negotiated rather than be smoothly welcomed into would competing claims to public space look different? If we give up our warm and fuzzy notions of the public would young women's access to public space be built on different assumptions?

For one, we would be compelled to acknowledge that the utopia where everybody in public space likes everybody does not exist. It is unlikely to ever exist. Can we work within these limitations, even embrace them? I would like to suggest that diverse spaces populated by diverse peoples are not a law and order problem, they are very possibly part of the solution.

Loitering is not unambiguously inclusive. It needs both careful reflection and a certain irreverent attitude towards order. It needs a commitment to a certain messiness of streets and a willingness to embrace serendipity, and a belief that pleasure in the city is an important component of citizenship.

5. This City that is nevertheless Mine

Writing about Bombay for me is a little like

writing about myself – it is in many ways a profoundly narcissistic act. In fact much of my research and writing engages my own lifeworlds and so I am both participant and participant observer, roles that give me an exciting insider-outsider position that I sometimes methodologically struggle with.

Bombay/ Bambai/ Mumbai – if I must belong to a place I belong to this city. Even as I write this, I am profoundly aware that it is a deep privilege to choose to belong to my city rather than the nation. Its fractured, hierarchical, iniquitous ways shame me. Its edginess, its streets, its sheer velocity seduces me.

What does it mean to write this city of mine not with the certainty of a flaneur but with the tentativeness of a loiterer. Not as a detached observer but as someone who seeks to belong, perhaps even to stake claim. Not in solitude but as part of a disparate crowd whom I may not know and who might even make me anxious. What does it mean to inhabit a writing practice of hope?

As I write I seek to articulate a practice of a politics of justice for the most number or people and populations in my city. I write not to make statements but to ask questions? I write in the hope of sharing this journey with other feminists /loiterers/ writers? I write for the sheer pleasure of being part of conversations about the city space.

SEMINAR PAPERS

19TH AND 20TH CENTURY BANARAS: URBAN FORMS, PUBLIC SPACE ACTIVITIES RELIGION AND NEGOTIATION

AISHWARYA PRAMOD | SYBA

Narratives of Banaras as a 'Hindu' city have tended to construct chronologies of eternal existence, punctuated by instances of Muslim desecration and iconoclasm. These animated accounts of Banaras continually veer between mythic (Puranic) and historical narratives (events and dates), which are anchored in the city's built environment.

This paper focuses on the history of Banaras during the 19th and early 20th centuries, and explores the role that the economic and religious elite of Banaras played in the production and maintenance of space in the city of Banaras. The environment they constructed to revive Kashi as a pilgrimage site, along with the various public ceremonies, festivals and performances they funded in order to consolidate their position as well as propagate certain values, are described. Examining Reena Tiwari's (2010) analysis of the Ramlila as a unique production of space, infused with values and meanings for different sections of society in Banaras, it also looks at the changing levels of integration between lower and upper class values and activities, and the negotiation of identities by the lower classes. The paper shall also invoke Lefebvre's spatial triad of perceived, conceived and lived space, to better understand the 'dialectics of space'.[1]

Giving Physical Form to Legends

After the decline of the Mughal Empire, various contesting regional powers emerged in and around Banaras – the Hindu merchant families (especially the Naupatti or 'nine sharers') attracted to Banaras by trade prospects; the Gosains (martial trader-mendicants); the Nawab of Awadh, earlier a vassal of the Mughals; the Marathas; The Raja of Banaras, earlier just a tax official for the Nawab of Awadh but who acquired so much land as a zamindar that he procured the title of Raja. Sandria Freitag (1989) points out how all these powers vied for dominance, and for the Hindu elite, financing the construction of religious buildings was seen as a way to enhance one's status and standing. They also financed and patronized various public rituals, ceremonies for the same purpose.

Madhuri Desai argues that the city of Banaras was resurrected on the basis of a ritual geography specified in the *Puranas*. To secure their position as a *Hindu* (as opposed to a Muslim) religious elite, the merchants constructed a material environment of temples, *ghats* and ritual bathing tanks that were "simultaneously represented as antique in indigenous pilgrimage maps and religious literature, and as evidence of the city's timelessness in orientalist paintings, texts and memoirs" (2012: p. 24). The elite formed a religious trust called 'Kashi Tirtha Sudhar Trust' and started publishing pamphlets, maps, diagrams and other representations of the eternal spirituality of Kashi (Ibid).

Though many of the spatial practices and myths existed prior to the influence of the religious elite, it was the elite who gave the representations of space in Kashi the strength and significance they have today. They heavily influenced the way in which both residents and pilgrims imagine and appropriate the physical space of Kashi. In other words, the representations of space by the Hindu elites have had tremendous influence on the lived space of the residents; for example, Diana Eck (1984) has examined how the image of Kashi situated on the tip of Shiva's trident is now a part of the everyday experience lived space for residents and pilgrims.

The lack of ancient religious structures was explained using narratives of Muslim iconoclasm. These representations and narratives – both Puranic and secular – were often contested. Muslims (most of them lower class artisans especially weavers) challenged the narrative proposed by the Hindu elite, and supported by colonial apparatus of Islamic iconoclasm, when tangible archival evidence was produced (Dodson, 2012 : p. 38).

Lower class Hindus try to exercise control on a local level by maintaining their own local small temples. A significant example of collective ceremony sponsored by lower class Hindus in Banaras is the neighbourhood temple "shringars",[2] annual events where local people

take responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of their shrines and temples (Freitag, 1989: pp.103-107).

Representations of Space

The city of Banaras is represented as three concentric circles, increasing in sacredness, as one moves towards the centre (Vidyarthi, 1979). The map (Figure 1) below represents the sacred zones of Kashi: the outermost circle is the Panchakroshi pilgrimage circle which includes rural districts around Kashi. The pink square is the city itself and the Shiva temple inside the pink square is the *holiest* zone; the circles representing a Hindu religious cartography, not a secular one. Another important aspect of usage of space is seen in collective activities in the public sphere – collective ceremonies and performances, as well as protest. Public ceremonies are a very important part of the public arena where public opinion is formed in Banaras' religious public sphere. The patronage for various collective activities came from the royal court, mercantile families as well as the lower classes. Urban culture as expressed through collective activities in public spaces encompassed overlapping values, world views and venues and occasions for both literate elite and lower class patrons. Sometimes activities that were perceived by their sponsors as reflecting orthodox beliefs (recitation of the *Manas* and *katha*, for instance, or Ramlila performances) would eventually incorporate folk styles that had more mass appeal (Biraha folk music or folk theatre that became a prelude to *Ramkatha*). An important feature of public activities was the joint participation of Hindus as well as Muslims (mostly, lower classes weavers).

'Rama's story in Shiva's city'[4]

The famous Ramlila of Varanasi is a unique example of royal patronage intermingling with *bhakti* values, during a month-long period of transformation of the cityscape. The Varanasi Ramlila is based on the *Ramacharita Manas* – the story of Ramayana written in Hindi by Tulsidas. Initially rejected by the elites, the *Manas* came to be one of the most popular religious texts in Banaras despite the city traditionally being the abode of Shiva, not Ram (Eck, 1984; Tiwari, 2010).

The Ramlila is patronized by the Maharaja of Banaras, who named his city Ramnagar and turned it into a giant open air set. Reena Tiwari utilises Lefebvre's 'triad' to analyse the transformation from a city to theatre and then to mythic geography. There are markings on

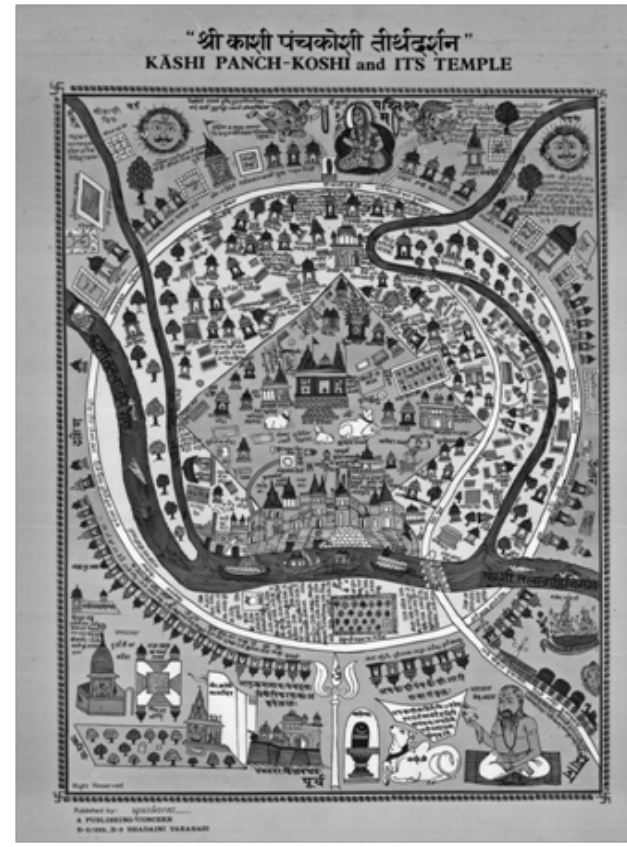

Figure 1: A 20th century pilgrimage map of Varanasi (from the collection of Jörg Gengnagel).[3]

real/ physical space as different areas of Banaras are cordoned off as 'sets'. There is also the de-construction of imaginary/textual space through mimesis, where the entire audience sings and chants the *Manas*, they themselves become the actors. Lived space is space as experienced by the performers as "transgression" from their everyday selves into their mythical roles as Ram, Bharat or Ayodhyavasis (2010: pp. 79—100).

Cosponsored by the Maharaja and the Hindu merchants, the ceremony possesses several key attributes, most notably its expression of the relationship between the government, Mahraja and the ordinary people. This is symbolized particularly by the Maharaja's mythical roles as king and as a representative of Shiva, the lord of ancient Kashi. The identification is so complete that the Maharaja is hailed as "Mahadeva". The festivities do not begin before his arrival on his elephant, and he usually

forms the spatial limits of a scene, with Rama forming the other. The boundaries blur between Rama's world and the Maharaja's (Tiwari, 2010: pp. 79—100).

Banaras' rulers' growing involvement with the Ram tradition is read by some as being due to their need to cultivate an explicitly Hindu symbol of royal legitimacy, so that they could achieve ideological and political independence from the Nawabs. In seeking to revive a Vaishnava ideal of divine kingship and harmonious but hierarchical social order, they turned not to the pastoral and erotic myths of Krishna, but to Ram – whose myths have a martial, imperial and socio-political dimension to them, with emphasis on social and political hierarchy.

However the Maharaja's association with the Ramlila and with the legend of Ram in general goes beyond a desire to revive the glory of Hinduism. Given the close relationship of the upper and lower (majority of them Muslim) classes in Banaras, the predominant role played by the Maharaja, with whom all Banarasis could identify, became essential to integrate different communities. The Maharaja's role combined with the egalitarian *bhakti* message of the *Manas* helped symbolically integrate communities. In fact, a large number of Muslims did attend the annual Ramlila (Freitag, 1989: pp. 12-15).

Conclusion

During the 1920s and 1930s, economic and political troubles loosened the strong ties between the upper class Hindu merchants and the lower class Muslims. Simultaneously, there were increased elite attempts to "sanitize" public performances of their more "offensive" elements. For example, during the Nakkatayya festival (where a demoness gets her nose cut off) participants dressed and behaved in manners otherwise deemed inappropriate, resulting in the elites' attempts to curb this "license to rowdiness" (Freitag, 1989: pp. 29-31).

These factors combined to transfer patronage from the merchants to the lower class themselves. Still, due to the very integrated nature of economic and social relationships in the city, collective protests aimed at colonial state mechanisms were staged, in which Banarasis from all walks of life participated. Hindus and Muslims in Banaras united against the colonial state, while in other parts of U.P. riots on cow protection were taking place (Freitag, 1989: pp. 203-228).

In conclusion, no characterization of Banaras can be left unproblematized, ahistorical and purely religious. This paper has thus sought to de-romanticize the eternal Hindu city and explore its variety of urban forms and cultural patterns, through the production of space. It has also taken into account the existence of a significant religious public sphere and tried to give importance to lived space, the space of lived experience, as a way to better understand the complex layers of space.

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Endnotes

1. Lefebvre's triad consists of perceived space, conceived space and lived space. The first of these takes space as physical form, real space, space that is generated and used. The second is the space of savoir (knowledge) and logic, of maps, mathematics, of space as the instrumental space of social engineers and urban planners. It refers to space as a mental construct, imagined space. The third sees space as produced and modified over time and through its use, spaces invested

with symbolism and meaning, the space of cognisance (less formal or more local forms of knowledge), space as real-and-imagined (Elden, 2004: p. 190).

2. Shringars are annual events where local people take responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of their shrines and temples. In response to (or perhaps in imitation of) elite patronage of religious events, the lower-class *mohallas* (neighbourhoods) form temporary committees, raise funds, renovate and repair temples, redecorate neighbourhood with lights and stage performances. Usually during shringars, Biraha music performers – the rustic folk music genre of the Bhojpuri region, contrasted sharply with the "refined" Hindustani classical music, which is patronized by the elite – are invited to perform in the evenings. Attendance is free to everyone. These annual events are much looked forward to and represent an attempt to stake claim over the immediate neighbourhood (Freitag, 1989: pp. 107-110).

3. "The pilgrims place the rolled map on their heads, get blessings from the priest and set out on their journey, by the end of which, they have an internalized image of the cosmogram that they are able to relate to the physical world" (Gengnagel & Michaels, 2001, as cited in Tiwari, 2010: pp. 118-119).

4. Lutgendorf, P., 1989: pp. 34—61.

SECRET SOCIETIES

SWARNABHA GHOSH | SYBSC

Secret societies have been an important part of society and have played a crucial role in the development of counterculture movements, and also, in the manipulation of information, influencing and, sometimes, controlling, the political dynamics of society. This paper seeks to study the sociological structure of secret societies, to understand the space that secret societies and underground groups create and modify around themselves. It also discusses the concept of encryption of space in, and around, secret societies – the modification of spaces, in an effort to remain secret from the public, in part or in whole. Finally, it studies how secret societies influence, change and affect the societal and political spaces of the larger society. One of the limitations of this paper is the fact that secret societies are, by nature, secret, and very little information is available for a thorough study. That apart, there is always a niggling controversy: do these societies function so efficiently? Or, is that the information available to the public is just the result of badly romanticised conjecture or popular conspiracy theory? However, one cannot deny the fact that secret organisations are a very real sociological unit, and that they do interact with larger society – the analysis of which becomes the more difficult part. Therefore, this paper utilises analogies, public information and existing sociological literature, to put forth an argument concerning the dynamism of secret organisations and the spaces they create.

Introduction

When Theodosius I declared Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire and other religions as illegal,[1] they had to go underground to protect themselves and their faith. This is but one example in the history of underground groups and secret societies, many of which have often taken refuge in secrecy, accessing the advantages it provides to maintain their autonomy and, possibly, to influence society.

Following Georg Simmel's description of secret society as an interactional unit, characterized in its total by the fact that reciprocal relations among its members are governed by the protective function of secrecy (Hazelrigg, 1969), this paper will discuss the idea of modification of spaces that a secret society occupies – referred to as encryption of space. Further on, it discusses how these secret organisations affect the larger spaces, looking specifically at political and social spaces.

The Encryption of Space

The functioning of secret and underground societies requires the creation of a separate space for the preservation of the counterculture, and the secrecy of its valuable members. To protect this, secret societies and underground groups use different techniques where they modify the space around themselves such that it is accessible only by their members. Encryption of space does not create physical boundaries – like gates, barbed fences, symbols – that block or deny people entry into restricted spaces; instead, it aims to render this space (as perceived by members of the secret organisation) inaccessible to outsiders. Encryption can be defined as the process of coding or scrambling information to make it inaccessible to anyone except those possessing special knowledge – usually referred to as a "key" which can *decode* the encrypted information.[2] For example, if a crowded market is used by a secret society to conduct an operation, the public's presence in the market is inevitable, and often, favourable; but they would not have the knowledge of the existence of the operation or the secret society, because they cannot access i.e. decode the space encrypted by the secret society in the marketplace.

Drug dealers often ascribe outlandish names to drugs (and to cops, institutions etc.) which enable them to increase their area of operation, while reducing the risk

of being caught and charged.[3] The ninjas of feudal Japan were experts in modifying the spaces around their houses and *dojos* (training schools) – such as rotating walls, sliding panels, smoke-screens – to facilitate escape and avoid detection.[4]

To incorporate the counter-culture, or the philosophy of the secret society, all members are generally given tests and tasks which help in indoctrinating the member with the same philosophy or set of beliefs. Through these series of trials and tests he/she becomes increasingly socialized into the esoteric culture and increasingly de-socialized from the exoteric culture (Tiryakian, 1972). Thus, due to their increased association with the organisation, members can comprehend the aims, objectives, the working and functioning of the secret society or underground group.

To sustain the functioning of secret organisations, encryption of space also includes modifying the thoughts, beliefs and motivations of the members. Espionage thrillers set in the palpable Cold War landscapes of Fleming, le Carré or Forsyth, for instance, beautifully illustrate this aspect of encryption – and in cases, quite literally so – in the maintenance of the secret spaces (Owen, 2006).

Secret Societies and the Larger World: social and political spaces

In the past – both, recent and the not-so-recent – there have been various secret societies that have used drastic, even violent and extra judicial methods, to achieve dominance over the social space. The dynamics of secret spaces is such that it allows for both subversive and dissenting ideologies (the anarchists in 19th century Europe; see Malatesta, 1974 [1871]), as well as covert, (non)state actors furthering political agenda, be it through cross-border terrorism, war-mongering or intimidation of political opponents (the CIA's infamous dealings in South America and Bulgaria in the 1980s; see Herman & Chomsky, 1994: pp. 125-126). The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) is an exemplary, albeit infamous, association of people (white supremacists) who wanted to propagate the interest of one section of the society over another (African-Americans, their sympathisers and supporters). The Klan challenged groups they thought were subversive to the American way of life, and caused the destruction of market places, houses or other structures owned by non-whites or their sympathisers (the burning cross, for instance). This destruction and desecration of space and property often was a very strong symbol of intolerance by a secret society towards certain kind of people, and helped them segregate the societal space (Quarles, 1999).

The effect of secret societies can perhaps be most extensively felt in the shaping of the political space. While examining Simmel's work, Lawrence E. Hazelriggs, in his Third Proposition states, about secret societies: "the greater the tendency toward political oppression and totalitarian regimentation in the larger society, the greater the tendency toward development of secret societies within the larger society" (1969: p. 327). Thus validating the fact that wherever there is political oppression, creation of secret societies is among the foremost step towards creation of a new political space.

Many secret societies often have had very strong networks of powerful individuals, who operate efficiently due to the fact that the associations, on which the networks are based, are concealed from the larger society and hence do not need to adhere to any morals or ethics of the society, nor are they answerable to the public.

Secret societies like Freemasons, Illuminati and other groups which worked secretly for certain intervals of time like the Jacobins and the Muslim Brotherhood, exerted considerable amount of influence on political space. Julian Assange's Wikileaks (as an organisation operating in a secret cyberspace of anonymity) has been able to influence, or destabilise more so, the political space in United States and the western world through its systemic revelation of sensitive and classified information to the public (Assange, 2010).

Thus, we see that secret societies create a space for dissent under the protective cloak of secrecy which allows a nascent or weak movement, or cause, to grow and become successful, avoiding much opposition and the threat of defeat. However, questions regarding their successes, or more importantly, their requirements, remain debatable, and perhaps even, contentious: especially when we consider the impediments they pose to modern (and emerging) democracies in the global south and east. With the changes occurring in contemporary societies, and in the global political-economy, the role

essayed by secret societies will also change, and so will the variables that determine the consequence of its interaction with the larger society. But the allure and fascination for secrecy, as a sociological (or romanticised, or both) idea, will be ever present in human societies, and will be a major variable in determining the dynamics of the same.

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Endnotes

1. Theodosian Code XVI.1.2 in Henry Bettenson (1943).

2. For instance, Marx and Muschert's (2008) discussion on Simmel's contribution to the sociology of secret societies acquires significant relevance to the arguments on encryption of space in this paper.

3. The HBO television series, *The Wire*, is perhaps one of the more compelling representations of drug culture, where drug dealers in street corners use names like 'pandemic', 'WMD' and 'tornado' to refer to drugs, or "po-po" for the police.

4. "Iga-ryu Ninja House and Ninja Show". Retrieved on August 25th, 2012, from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eV2JvWxBJJg.

CULTURES OF RAPE IN CREATIVE AND LITERARY SPACES

SHAKTI NAMBIAR | TYBA

Despite the strict sanctions and taboos traditionally associated with the act of rape a surprisingly minuscule amount of academic literature has been devoted to its cultural roots: specifically, what it is about our cultural narratives and traditions that allows humans, as a species, to engage in the act of rape. In this paper I would like to examine the idea that the act of rape is merely the physical manifestation of a larger culture of rape that has been woven inextricably into public space and therefore our collective consciousness through channels as innocuous as the media we consume, particularly visual and textual media. This 'rape culture' is then internalized and performed in real- world spaces.

A rape culture is system of beliefs and behaviors that propagate archetypal roles for men and women. These archetypes exist in the context of a patriarchal society that is underpinned by the rules of ownership and territory. In *Transforming a Rape Culture* this culture of rape is defined as a complex of beliefs that encourage male sexual aggression and support violence against women. The authors characterise a rape culture as a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture, they write, women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women as the norm (Buchwald, Roth & Fletcher, 2005)

If sexual violence is, as the editors of *Transforming a Rape Culture* write, 'inevitable and perceived along a continuum', then this definition slides neatly into place when considering the plethora of books, movies, plays, songs, poems and television shows that fetishize and normalize such violence. Popular culture offers up a smorgasbord of rape, almost rape, romanticized rape, 'consent- in- retrospect', and rape- but- for- the- creator rewrites of rape. A notable example of that last is the sex scene between the thirteen year old princess Daenerys and her new husband, the unknown horse lord Drogo, in the first novel of George R. R. Martin's Game of Thrones series.

The relevant passages find Daenerys sobbing and repeatedly expressing her fear and confusion as she is disrobed. Each of these events make perfect narrative sense in the book's context of a feudal culture that allows child marriage. Harder to explain but more insidious, however, is the thread of authorial apologism running through the scene, a constant refrain in seemingly throwaway asides such as *"she could sense the fierce strength in his hands, but he never hurt her"* and *"he drew her down into his lap… and cupped her face"* (Martin, 1996, p. 76) – phrases that lend a flimsy and deeply problematic 'consent' to the text.

The hand- waving of rape is not peculiar to Martin's narrative. Although traditionally and legally understood to encompass a definitively negative set of behaviors, sexual violence has nonetheless found itself represented in multiple and contradictory ways by the oeuvre of world cinema and literature. It has been made comic by such diverse authors as Shakespeare (The Taming of the Shrew) and the creators of the Penny Arcade comic strip. It has been made romantic by authors of popular young adult fiction like Stephenie Meyer (Twilight series). It has been made into an instrument of shock by crime novelist Stieg Larsson (The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo) and director Xavier Gens (The Divide). And finally, it has been made commonplace by the scores of books and films that bombard their audience with desensitized, disconnected scenes of great sexual violence.

What could explain this preoccupation with rape as a seemingly gratuitous creative device? In his article titled '*The Bigger Picture: What happens when we find 'The Line' as viewers?'* film reviewer and blogger Drew McWeeny opines that:

"(…) somewhere along the way, it was decided that the easiest way to make an audience uncomfortable was to have someone rape a character onscreen. I must see 30 films a year where somebody needs to have "something bad" happen, and the go-to impulse in almost every case is rape (…).

What scares me most about this is that the vast majority of the scenes are directed so poorly that they become, in essence, titillation, and there is something immeasurably sick about including a scene in your film that involves rape just so you can sneak a little nudity into the movie. "

Rape as titillation is by no means a new phenomenon. The slew of 'black peril' novels and travelogues written whilst much of Africa remained colonized by a white British Empire stands testament to that. Black peril novels both fetishized and reviled black men, representing a strange hybrid of rape fantasy and black phobia. In these novels, white women ventured into the wilds and exposed themselves to 'native rape', an event characterized as far worse than rape by a white man. As Lucy Valerie Graham points out in *State of Peril: Race and Rape in South African Literature* (Graham, 2012), the possibility of Englishwomen being stranded under such circumstances generated public hysteria in Britain, with newspapers registering as rape or "prostitution" the loss of cultural capital incurred when white women's wombs were wrecked beyond the boundaries of empire.

Each of these 'black peril' novels upheld the basic tenets of a rape culture: women are property, and rape is property damage. It is a reading that ascribes worth to a woman's physical autonomy only in terms of the man that owns her, be it husband or father.

In more recent times, paranormal or 'dangerous' romance aimed at girls and women has shaped a new kind of rape narrative; that of disguised rape. With 2009's Young Adult bestseller *Hush, Hush*, Becca Fitzpatrick created Patch, a hero who explicitly admits stalking and photographing Nora, the object of his affections. Although this is presented to the reader as being understandably disturbing, Nora's first person point of view swings constantly between two polarities: attraction, rooted in his physical attributes, and fear arising from his actual behaviour. This disjointed narrative serves to confuse the two for the reader as well as for Nora.

Problematic as it is, the model of romance presented in *Hush, Hush* is only the logical extension of a trope that has existed for far longer than the genre itself has. The idea of the bad boy has been around since Heathcliff let a permanent glower express his love for Wuthering Heights' Cathy. However, in recent years, particularly since the runaway success of Stephenie Meyer's Twilight saga, the trope has become an accepted stand- in for plot development, or even development of the romance itself. Fitzpatrick's Nora is not attracted to Patch for anything beyond the way he looks and the fact that he scares her; this fear being then transmuted into sexual excitement.

Hush, Hush, coming in the wake of several scathing reviews of Twilight and its romanticisation of inappropriately aggressive sexual conduct, is astonishingly self- aware. Fitzpatrick's Nora both verbally and mentally identifies Patch's behaviour as harassment. She does this throughout the novel, to various characters, all of whom laugh it off until eventually, she gives up and accepts his actions as first inevitable and then attractive. Fitzpatrick has essentially lampshaded all the problematic elements of her narrative and then proceeded to pull them apart one by one in the name of humour and/or female paranoia.

A hefty percentage of all the YA novels published read like how- to manuals for a rape culture. These socializing forms of media teach adolescents newly emerging into their sexuality that the meaning of female virtue is a rejection of female sexuality until persuaded otherwise; 'no' always meaning nothing stronger than 'later'. The parallel socialization of adolescent males likewise prescribes sexual aggressiveness—as the saying goes, faint heart never won fair lady. And so a distinction begins to be drawn in the minds of these adolescent men and women between 'just teasing' and 'real' rape. 'Real' rape becomes an amorphous, shadowy extreme: the bogeyman under the bed, the stranger in the dark alleyway. And the ordinary, testosterone fuelled men performing their masculinity by making women feel uncomfortable and unsafe in their homes, their workplaces, the public spaces they inhabit—all they're doing is teasing.

Narratives like *Hush, Hush* eroticize predatory masculinity and its counterpart of cowering, mincing femininity. Yet despite-- or perhaps *because* of that—that they are being welcomed into bestseller lists all over the world. More than anything else, it is this unquestioning acceptance of sexually problematic texts that signifies the pervasive entrenchment of the rape culture within mainstream creative spaces.

My research for this paper has pointed consistently toward rape culture being so much more than the act of rape itself. If rape is a symptom, then rape culture is the disease that drives it, creating an ambient space within which rape and rape apologism/victim blaming can all take place. A rape culture is self- perpetuating: it creates both rapists and victims through the attitudes, norms, and behaviors it fosters. It does this in many ways; the most overt being narrative media. By their nature, narratives act as both mirror and conduit for the prevailing colors of society. They are simultaneously obvious and insidious instruments of rape culture; the former, because sexually problematic content is immediately apparent to those aware of the existence of a rape culture. And the latter because narratives are so deeply entrenched in the socialization process as to become capable of perpetuating rape culture at every rung of society.

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BURSTING THE BUBBLE: PROBLEMATISING THE 'PERSONAL' IN PERSONAL SPACE.

PRACHI SAXENA | TYBA

This paper revisits the popular notion of personal space and places it in a sociological context by looking at the construction of personal space in reflexivity, along with applying ideas of dramaturgy and socialisation. It looks at personal space as not only socially constructed but also seeks to tease out a more nuanced understanding of how socialisation would work as a mental process by taking the axiom of a cognitive linguistic theory and applying it to discourse studies. This paper ultimately seeks to sensitise one to the hierarchical hangover, along with the gendered and normalised construct, which is perpetuated through the construction of one's personal space. Thus, questioning that which is assumed to be naturally 'ours'.

What is the personal?

Leonard Hofstatder: Sure, the more the merrier.
Sheldon Cooper: Wait, no. That›s a false equivalency. More does not equal merry. If there were 2000 people in this apartment right now, would we be celebrating? No, we'd be suffocating.

As usual Sheldon Cooper, the iconic character of *The Big Bang Theory*, gets to the heart of it. 'Personal space', half a century since its introduction by Edward Hall, has become a familiar household term and a largely "understood concept. The concept of one's personal space functions in a variety of areas such as situations when we would consider a crowd a party versus situations when we would 'suffocate' if the same number of people were around. Another area is that of territoriality, the space around us that we mark as 'ours', Sheldon's 'spot' on the couch is an example of fierce possessiveness we feel for things that we identify with our space. Therefore, it is not enough to reconcile the concept of personal space only to the strictly functionalist perspective it has largely been seen in. Sommer (1969) defined personal space as the "area with invisible boundaries surrounding a person's body into which intruders may not come". This definition has till now set the tone for research on personal space: it serves the basic need for protecting oneself from intruders, but as pointed out it's time we moved to other more complex understandings of personal space and the interactions it perpetuates.

The question of 'why there is discomfort' when one's personal space is intruded upon, in psychological terms seeks to look at the individual's reaction to the 'invasion' of one's personal space. It implies that the individual has agency and a self that 'feels' so because the person has a zone around him within which he is 'comfortable' or his 'self' is protected. But a sociological understanding would note that this space around oneself differs almost uniformly from culture to culture (and more so from situation to situation) and thus, would require one to look at societal processes that lead to this uniformity of perception.

The dramaturgical approach

In beginning to unravel the layers to the construction of one's idea of personal space, Erving Goffman's dramaturgical approach provides a fascinating new perspective. Goffman's work in postulating the self-as-performer is an effective foil for the argument that the 'personal space' is nothing but a construction, whose rules must be adhered to fulfil our roles. In the Goffman reader Charles Lemert and Ann Branaman further explain the role perspective as follows:

"(The) role, then, is the basic unit of socialization. *It is through roles that tasks in society are allocated and arrangements made to enforce their performance* (emphasis added)."
(1997: p. 35)

One such arrangement is the belief in 'zones' of interpersonal interaction (See Figure 1).

Thus, the variety of roles we play already have assigned these distances and the act of complying to these distances is not as much a product of maintaining our own "comfort bubble" but rather constructing or constantly modifying our bubble to meet the standards of the situationally defined role.

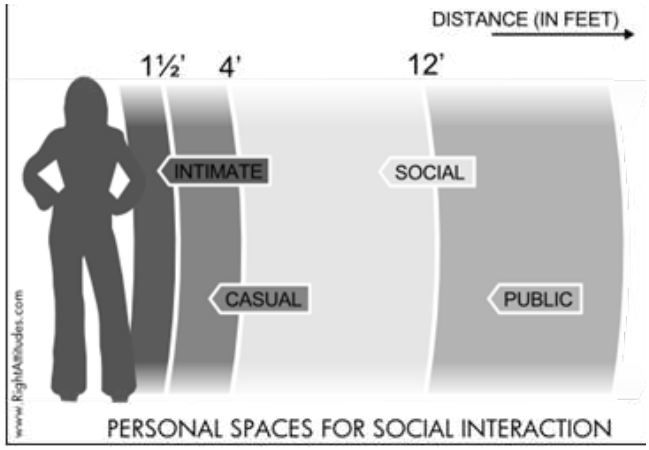

Figure 1: Zones of interpersonal interaction

Symbolic interactionism

Applying symbolic interactionism's perspective the 'self' (without defining which a role cannot be assumed) is the product of the process in which "*the individual experiences himself as (an object), not directly, but only indirectly from the particular standpoints of other members of the same social group*" (Mead, 1934: p 164). This understanding of self is termed by Mead as reflexivity**,** consisting essentially, of viewing oneself from the standpoint of the other. Thus, he further compounds the understanding of 'roles' by refuting the existence of a self as a whole outside of interactions (Ibid: pp. 136-142).

Similarly 'personal space' isn't just defined by the frame, say a 'class room', but rather the interactions among the key characters within it. One recognises a classroom not from the benches but also cues from the interpersonal interaction and how it is structured: The teacher stands facing the sitting students. But more than that, personal space cues also help you reflexively define the self. Say, a casually dressed teacher walks into a lecture room and assumes a seat rather than standing at the front of a class, it is most probable that the students wouldn't notice. Similarly, if a new teacher walks into class and stands in front of the students, even if he is dressed similarly, is smiling (thus all other nonverbal cues are similar to the students') the students are likely to identify him or her as a professor, and in relation to them, themselves as students, and thus take their seats on the benches rather than anywhere else. Both dramaturgy and symbolic interactionism's understanding of forming the self can be useful in analysing the concept of 'personal space' and how it is manipulated.

Foucault's interpretation

Foucault further problematises the extent to which these manipulations are coming from established institutions versus 'micro systems' that we interact with in daily life (Roach, 2012). Therefore, the way the principal might position his desk between himself and a defaulting student, whilst removing the very desk while interacting with a donor gives cues appropriate to his understanding of what the situation demands. But we too manipulate people in our daily lives on the basis of personal space, like hugging an irate parent. By invading our parent's personal space we are sending the cue attached to the zone invaded (thus a more intimate zone)

This invasion is also tempered by our gendered understanding of the relationships and thus we will more readily employ this decoy with our mother than fathers. Linking this back to Goffman's premise that the relation between a person and the role answers to the interactive system called 'frame' (Lemert & Branaman, 1997). Thus the 'frame' that is socially constructed is also gendered, hegemonised, and can be rendered to interpretation.

Mental Space Theory

Having problematised the existence of a personal space as an actual area around oneself that would lead to actual discomfort vis-á-vis perceived discomfort as – "this is what I should feel". It simply marks the point from which the meaning construction extends. *Truth* is not an issue – *people's understanding* is. This is the basic premise for Mental Space theory.

Robert Williams, takes the blended Mental space theory and applies it to instructional discourse by adding a third key concept of an anchored blend (Williams, 2004). An elaboration of mental space theory called 'Conceptual integration theory', describes how mental spaces are linked with one another to form integrated networks. These networks produce blended mental spaces that integrate content from diverse inputs, often in novel ways.

An example discussed by Hutchins (2005) is the cultural practice of queuing or standing in line. Say we happen upon a place where some people are standing in single file. Materially, this is an arrangement of bodies

in the spatial environment. To understand this as an instance of queuing or standing in line, we construct a blended mental space by taking into account the perceptual scene – bodies in space – and comparing it to a "cultural model", inter-subjectively shared by members of our society, appropriated by us through socialisation.

Having said that, the notion of the 'personal space' is a construction and an interpretation; the problem arises when you take these research findingsand interpretations and extrapolate them to real life. Sommer's iconic studies confirmed the observation that females in Indian culture will often be seen holding hands or kissing other females, whereas these behaviors are uncommon for males.

Foucault, in 'Friends as a way of life', problematises this abject understanding of 'normal' male behaviour against the 'abnormal' homosexual one (Roach, 2012). He points out behaviour in army camps where men are as comfortable around each other, as homosexuals are and in fact the total institution allows for such behaviour and intimacy. Here the male is as 'innately' able to interact with other males as females, but it is societal constraints and norms that guide this behaviour.

Personal space equations could also be interpreted higher status equals more personal space. The teacher-student example can also be seen from this perspective which now clearly shows that a teacher reiterates his/her 'higher' status through the act of expecting more of a distance from the other. This understanding is translated in today's everyday construction of 'appropriate' behaviour in a situation. Thus a high culture performance like opera will be seen by people who are allowed their personal space where as a rock concert dare not allow for it lest it be associated with that which it once protested against.

India in turn being characterised by the West as a culture with no notion of personal space is a false assumption - We 'shit in the fields' so we have no notion of privacy and as an extension a developed enough concept of personal space. I call it false, because Appadurai's (2004) analysis of the work of the NGO Alliance addresses this very need for privacy through exhibitions on 'shit management' where the slum dwellers speak of the embarrassment they face at having to defecate in public opposing the long held notion that poor uncouth Indian's don't have any notion of 'proper behaviour. It is time we remove the colonial optic through which we see our own culture and stop celebrating when a kind word is thrown our way such as through the dichotomous understanding where less personal space equals less civilised/developed, but is also a culture which is closer and warmer. By giving two sides one forgets to take affront at the narrowed stereotyping of one's culture. At one time, there was a status differential in who used to set the norms for personal space, but today it is a hegemony that allows the norms to propagate without any questioning of their origin. What one assumes to be 'personal' is in reality a very social construction and thus has repercussions in treatment of others. Hence, there is a need to sensitise oneself to all these facets of "personal space" and the processes that underlie it.

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CONSTRUCTION OF RELIGIOUS SPACES BEYOND THE PLACE OF WORSHIP

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This paper seeks to study how religious boundaries are not only restricted to the places of worship, but also extend to other areas in the public sphere, such as housing colonies, hospitals, and so forth. Firstly, the author examines religious symbols, and how they are understood, and how this symbolisation extends to areas beyond the places of worship; secondly, the dynamics of private and public spaces are investigated; and finally, the article looks at how these religious boundaries are strengthened and propagated, and how they affect the social and political landscape of the city of Mumbai. All of the examples used are drawn from the city of Mumbai.

Religious space

Clifford Geertz, attempting to define religion, talks about religion as a system of symbols, which motivates people to form ideas about the general order of their existence, it then promotes these ideas as facts and makes the ideas seem like reality (1973: p. 90). From this definition of religion, Geertz also talks about symbols as, "any object, act, event, quality, or relation which serves as a vehicle for a conception – the conception is the symbol's meaning" (p. 91). Thus, a symbol can be called a physical representation of a particular meaning. Therefore, objects such as prayer beads, pictures, statues, and so forth, can be called religious symbols since they come to represent a particular ideas and notions (primarily, of demarcating spaces) informed by religious discourse. For instance, popular visual culture artefacts, like calendars, with images of god (say, an old man with a long beard), or of Jesus or Virgin Mary, are construed as religious symbols.

Following the above example, popular religious symbols act as cues to invoke certain specific ideas that individuals or groups may associate with the said religion. Secular spaces (i.e. *not* spaces of worship), like hospitals, schools, and housing colonies that are owned or run by a religious group, thus, become "religious" spaces precisely because they are constructed with the use of "religious" symbols. In the event of communal riots, not only are places of worship attacked, but also areas owned or run by a religious group are targeted, because they are seen as part of the religion; the desecration of these places is seen as the symbolic desecration of the religion itself.

The public and private space

Liminality refers to the state of ambiguity between two stages, or the period of transition between two stages. However, Sharon Zukin (1993) talks about liminality specifically as the blurring of boundaries between public and private space. According to her, liminal space, which is a growing character of the contemporary city, are ambiguous and ambivalent, and slip between public use and private, between work and home, between commerce and culture. For instance, hospitals and schools which are managed or owned by religious groups are still open to the general public. With the shift in the boundaries between public and private space, there is also a shift in the way people understand and define the boundaries of public and private space. How people understand the ownership of a particular space may determine whether they are willing to open up these boundaries and make the space available to the general public. The Parsi General Hospital (Breach Candy, Mumbai), is owned and maintained by the Parsi community, and admits only Parsis. On the other hand, Saifi hospital (at Charni Road, Mumbai), which is owned and maintained by the Bohra community, is open to the general public. From this example, we can see that one community looks at the ownership of private space as 'mine' versus 'theirs' and so reacts by closing the community's space to the public – in most cases, defined by the process of "other-ing". While the other community, looks at the same space as 'ours' giving the space a collective identity and thus opening this space to the public.

Another feature that demarcates privately owned public spaces is its norms. People who own private spaces, that are made accessible to the public, have the ability to frame specific rules. Places owned by religious groups are bound to have rules that are influenced by the rules of the religion. The establishment and maintenance

of these rules will ensure the maintenance and spread of these religious boundaries. Schools which are headed by religious groups have many of the holidays based on the religious holidays in the religion. For instance, under normal circumstances, schools run by a Muslim head, will have longer holidays for Eid and shorter Diwali holidays and vice versa for Hindu schools.

Strengthening of religious boundaries

Georg Simmel talks about how all social interactions could be characterized by their relative degree of proximity and distance among and between individuals and groups (Philip, 2008). With an increase in physical nearness, there is a breakdown of stereotypes and idealizations. This breakdown is bound to be accompanied by an imbibing of similar beliefs, value systems and habits. In closely knit societies, there is an increase in physical proximity, thus the closer the agents, groups or institutions which are situated within this space, the more common properties they have. The process of the imbibing of religious and culture specific ideas may be speeded up and strengthened when the society isolates itself from the rest of society.

The Parsis in contemporary Mumbai are exemplary in this regard. The traditional Parsi colonies are a very tightly knit community. The colony itself is often self-sufficient and the members do not need to go outside the colony for reasons other than work or school. Thus, the members are in constant close contact with each other. On the other hand, the rules of maintaining this exclusion includes not allowing non-Parsis as residents and can go as far as expelling a Parsi member from the colony, if they marry a non-Parsi.

Talal Asad, building on Lev Vygotsky's study on how the development of a child's intellect is dependent on the internalization of social speech, talks about how the formation of symbols or concepts is conditioned by social relations in which the growing child is encouraged, or permitted to undertake (1993: p. 117). Thus, if the child grows up in an environment where most of the members follow a type of belief or value system, the child is most likely to imbibe the same value system once grown up.

Thus, by maintaining religious boundaries, this process is almost cyclical. Children, who are brought up in an environment where they see strict boundaries and rules being made in the name of religion, will internalize this as true. The child will monitor themselves (through their conscience, formed with the help of social interaction), and as they grow up, will learn to monitor and be monitored by others, in conformance to the general norm or value system.

Effects of boundaries

When talking about the effects of privatized public spaces, sociologists also talk about the formation of gated communities, or gated residential development, which has seen a sudden rise in the last few years. Gated communities can be described as, planned neighbourhoods that have been constructed with a boundary fence or wall, which separates them from their environs. It can be said that right of entry is controlled by those living within these communities (Bowers & Manzi, 2006). Gated communities may be seen as the voluntary segregation of people. On the other hand, ghettoization (Jafferlot, 2012) – which may be described as the gathering together of members of a community, irrespective of their social cast, class etc. in an insulated area of the city where state services are not properly maintained – is usually the result of communal riots. People are forced into ghettos since they are unsafe being in isolated pockets and prefer to live in larger groups (Ibid).

Gated communities and ghettos, both damage the processes of social participation and social cohesion, by limiting and encouraging social interaction to take place within these boundaries. There is a restriction of interdependence and mutual economic benefits that takes place as a result of social interaction.

The preservation of religion and culture by religious boundaries is particularly useful with respect to minority cultures and religions. As mentioned earlier, in closely knit religious communities there is greater chance of coming across people with similar cultural and religious ideas and beliefs Also, by having religion extend into the everyday lives of the people, there is a certain amount of influence (or, in many cases, surveillance) over the lives of the people, often by religious bodies like punchayats. They are able to monitor the way the people in the community live. The people are less likely to stray away from the religion if they are constantly reminded of it in the daily lives. Most Parsi colonies, for instance, have their own fire temples within the colony. This not only

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encourages the people to regularly visit the temples, but it also sees many religious festivals like Navroze (the Parsi new year), being celebrated as a community rather than individually. The people living in these colonies are thus encouraged – if not out rightly compelled – to keep their culture alive, by the people around them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can see that, religious boundaries outside the place of worship, although part of regular society still have religious symbolism attached to them, and this often, invariably, tends to affect people's perception towards these places. As this paper has tried to argue, religious symbolism associated with these areas will be difficult to overcome in the near future, as people still believe these boundaries to be necessary and these beliefs are passed on to the next generation. Until then these boundaries will continue to affect the way people and societies perceive, and interact with these spaces.

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ARTICLES

"WHAT I'M DRIVING HERE IS AN ENDING" THE CAR, SURVEILLANCE AND *TOP GEAR*

JOANNA DAWSON | TYBA

Sociologists talk of cyborgs and driver-cars (Dant, 2004); ordinary people talk of petrol-heads; petrol-heads talk of brake-horse powers; and governments talk of driver safety and environmental repercussions. The car is clearly something more than a mere commodity which signifies status or represents consumption. It represents space. Personal space. You are what you drive. The space of the car is enmeshed in human identity, with some researchers suggesting a linkage between an individual's psychological traits and their choice of car (Bradsher, 2000), which, *Top Gear* presenter Jeremy Clarkson, presents in a far more succinct manner than they could: "That says it all, really: *I drive a people carrier...I'm a bit of a Piddington*."[1] The space of the car, while representing personal space, interacts with public space – the road – and is subjected to an unprecedented amount of surveillance. Furthermore, governmental concerns with driver-safety lead to the surveillance of the inner, intimate space of the car, tantamount to a violation of the individual's territory; and in some ways, of selfhood.

It isn't surprising, given these several connections, that the presenters on the popular BBC TV show *Top Gear* use the car as a site of protest against what they consider to be invasive governmental action.

"I am a driving god!" Personal space and Power in the Car

The attachment individuals' form to their cars, beyond merely regarding it as their personal space, is well documented. Tim Dant (2004) explains this through the concept of the *driver-car*. The driver-car denotes a relationship formed between the driver and the car, where the car is not merely an extension of the individual's personal space but a detachable extension of the individual's self. Violations to this space are no longer simple territorial violations, but violations of the self and the regulations placed on this space, similarly, restrict the self – in the same way that *Top Gear* presenter Richard Hammond grew so attached to the Opel Kadett, fondly named 'Oliver', he purchased for the Botswana Special, that his co-presenter noted it: "It'll be like saying to him, could you cut bits off your wife?" when he was unable to strip the car's interiors.[2]

People may denote its linkage to their self by using personal "markers" (Morris, 2002), to show that the space within the car is particularly theirs. This space is no longer something within which they exist, but something which is a part of them. Writers on the subject of body language note that the more 'space' an individual occupies, the more power the individual perceives him/herself to have (Morris, 2002; Fast, 1978). Within the confines of the car, the individual is supreme and his boundary of personal space extends to the entirety of the car (and beyond, in a buffer space which prevents the car from being harmed), creating an illusion of power that the individual would not have otherwise. The car, therefore, represents possibility. It allows the individual to experience a sense of invulnerability and unassailability. It allows the individual to yell: "I am a driving god!" as Richard Hammond did, while driving a Bowler Wildcat.[3]

Although the car (a private space) is operating within a public space, the individual is beyond the reach (or temporarily believes so) of the mechanisms which regulate behaviour in public spaces (Dant, 2001) – unless there is the potential of being caught and punished for not adhering to these prescribed behaviours. To ensure that the individual continues to believe that s/he might be caught, there are a series of mechanisms put to work to convince the individual that s/he is being watched – almost always being linked to being caught and punished.

"They're lowering the pulse of real life!" **Surveillance and the car**

Foucault's idea of surveillance (1975) – wherein individuals censor their own behaviour, in accordance to the norms of the society within which they operate – best describes this fear of being constantly watched on the road; that if they fail to conform to a set of prescribed actions at the moment when they are being watched, they will be punished. In order to avoid the possibility of punishment, therefore, they self-censor. On the road, surveillance is played out in its most obvious and literal forms, but also in a highly metaphorical sense.

The speed-camera symbolizes this literal manifestation of surveillance on the road. Some speed-cameras are placed in the open, where warning signs tell individuals that a speed camera is coming; but the speed-cameras might equally be hidden in trees and bushes to prevent the individual from slowing down before reaching the camera to avoid punishment. On a metaphorical level, road signs remind people of a greater presence constantly watching them, reminding them of that which is right and that which is punishable by law, just as the Big Brother posters in *1984* remind the protagonist who runs the society within which he operates. Furthermore, the way in which a road may be structured – the use of speed bumpers, chicanes and roundabouts – constantly reminds the individual that their movements are being watched and controlled (Dant, 2001). Taxation – in particular, the congestion charge which so enrages the *Top Gear* presenters is a form of surveillance which seeks to impose controls on the *kind* of car a person can own.[4] A Peel 50, one of the smallest cars in the world, pays congestion charge unlike a hybrid Lexus 4x4, a fact which provoked Jeremy Clarkson into commenting upon the unfairness of this regulation.

These various devices represent an invasion of personal space, in a certain sense – not as much of an invasion as the beepers installed on cars to remind their drivers that they are exceeding the speed limit, but an invasion nonetheless. By controlling how the car may be used on the road, control is extended to the individual, limiting the sense of power brought about by this expansion in personal space that occurs in the car. Driving, therefore, represents a clash of powers; petrol-head versus the government. It is important to consider this clash of powers as occurring within the car, because the car, as noted before, denotes possibility. It is a space in which, for example, Jeremy Clarkson can wave a paper mask of Bill Oddie's face in front of his, while travelling by car in Japan, pretending that this means any speeding fines he may accumulate may be charged to Bill Oddie and not him – because fines are placed on the person driving the car at the time of the violation.[5]

"You'll never take me alive, coppers!" ***Top Gear*** **and government surveillance**

Nowhere else is this contestation of space taken as seriously, as it is on *Top Gear*. While the presenters (and producers, they would complain) do recognize that seatbelts are necessary for safety, they do believe that multi-tasking while driving a car does not necessarily equal the death of the driver.[6] Or that playing car sauna[7] is detrimental to their health – as the government seemed to believe by issuing a heat wave warning when the temperature went up into the thirties. These two examples represent forms of direct protest, albeit in the form of a parody of the very same scientific methods which are used to prove the government's theses that these actions are dangerous and must be regulated. This discreet form of surveillance – where the government first observes then reports that a certain behaviour is detrimental to the welfare of the individual and must therefore be ceased, is one which is reviled; the nanny-state begins to "nanny", by ensuring that whatever an individual does within the car is completely stripped of any element of danger, which is ironically what provides the very thrill of driving in the first place.

While these are not behaviours which form a part of overt surveillance, they still represent an infringement, by the government, on the agency and power of the individual in their personal space of the car. In order to disprove the government's

theses, the presenters take to the space of the car to disprove them – in the first instance by driving around their test track while zipped into a sleeping bag and while sewing a button on a shirt and in the second by remaining in the car until the temperature hits sixty-one degrees Celsius. The car, therefore, represents a space within which the theses behind these various regulations and governmental 'nanny-ing' can be challenged and disproven, empirically, mocking the very way in which the government establishes these theses.

A show about cars must naturally defend the car from its detractors, but this protest goes far deeper than a mere rallying call to petrol-heads the world over. In many ways, the sociological concept of the *driver-car*; driver and car acting in unison, each gaining meaning from the other; explains how these slights to the car become entwined with slights to the intelligence and abilities of the individual – a recurring theme on the News section in *Top Gear*. The car as a space has no meaning until the driver enters in it, but once the driver enters it, the car is symbolically part of the driver (Dant, 2004). Defending the car against regulation is symbolically, therefore, a matter of defending the individual's personal space against invasive governmental regulation and surveillance.

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THE CONQUEST OF OUTER SPACE

DRUSHTEE SHINDE | TYBA
DARSHIT SHAH | TYBA

"It is good to renew one's wonder," said the philosopher.
"Space travel has again made children of us all."
Ray Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles*

The following paper meanders through the various facets of the Outer Space – a space that has fascinated man for centuries and, in recent times, attempted to be colonized by him for reasons ranging from a kid's childhood dream to step on the moon to the capitalist need for a 'fix' of geographical expansion of capital, all creating a series of productive functions for futuristic ideas of existence and travel in Outer Space.

Man's fascination with the Outer Space has been recorded as the oldest science. Astronomy is the system of knowledge or beliefs about celestial phenomenon. Early cultures identified celestial objects as gods and spirits. Today, man looks at the celestial bodies as a space to colonize, the expansion of civilization and the elusive search for life beyond the 'milky way'. The first space exploration started during the Cold War years with the launch of the Sputnik I and II in the late 1950s. Unmanned missions brought back wonders of a space so mysterious that had intrigued mankind for generations.

Commercial Space

In the ensuing space race, large amounts of capital were invested to develop satellites for better military, security and communication channels. Capitalism cannot survive without being geographically expansionary, and the space, a part of this expansion, is now being viewed as a factor of production (Harvey, 2006) – as land on celestial bodies and a site with available and, in the future, accessible natural resources. This highlights the growing significance of its geography as being a valuable asset for investment that in the future might have high returns. Today, the telecommunication sector has penetrated the daily life of the average person, making outer space not mere capitalistic greed, but a medium for better communication and delivery channels, and through them, better market interactions. However, this shift from exploration of space to its commercialization for aiding daily activities has been seen as a regression of sorts. Despite this criticism, it remains undeniable that the commercial applications of space research are what justify the large amounts of money, received through public funds, spent on it. Till the late 1970s, the space was a matter of state control and jurisdiction but the 1967 Outer Space Law of the United Nations changed that by declaring space as "the high seas, free for use by all" (Oduntan, 2003). This move by the American President Lyndon B. Johnson was intended to curb Russian advancement in outer space during the Vietnam War. The President had borrowed from the space fund for war preparations and was uncomfortable with the shift of space power to the USSR through their acquiring of land on moon (Wasser, 2005).

Private Players for Public Access

The law, however, remains silent on investments by private entities. This is an emerging trend where capitalists invest in space expeditions or, more appropriately, space tours. Michael Tomczky, Managing Director of Wharton's Mack Center for Technological Innovation calls the opening up of space race for private players 'an exciting and welcome form of "open innovation". The May 31 successful splashdown, by PayPal co-founder Elon Musk's Space Exploration Technologies Corporation (SpaceX), of the Dragon capsule – the first private spacecraft to make a trip to the International Space Station (ISS) – was a milestone in the entry of private companies into the business of space exploration. The launch of Dragon conveyed the message that private enterprises will now be critical players comes at a time when dissidents around the globe challenge their governments' colossal budgets for space expeditions (discussed in greater detail in the section titled 'A Better Today'). Elson Musk has also said that he envisions developing aircrafts to take people to Mars.[1] Planetary Resources, a Seattle-based startup backed by wealthy

tech pioneers like Google co-founder Larry Page and former Microsoft software architect Charles Simonyi, aims to develop robotic spacecrafts to mine asteroids for rare metals like platinum.[2] Because the space remains undefined and, so far, a regulation-free zone, whether the laws of sustainable production apply to it is a contested matter.

A Better Future

Literature on outer space exploration has always theorized the outer space as an opportunity for a better world, wherein humanity might improve its conditions compared to those existing on Earth. But this narrative raises some pertinent questions: Once man begins to buy property on other planets, and in the future possibly move there, what does he carry with him – his identity, nationality, and constructed roles of gender and society? What do these constructed identities mean for the new world? With the hegemonic structures entwined around old identities, new spaces might come to be defined by the same. Tomes on the deconstruction of hegemonic discourse have explained that all identities are created to fit into systems that have existed and evolved over generations. And then the outer space might serve as humankind's hope for redemption – to recreate everything we have ever known. To quote Chuck Pahlaniuk, "We can spend our lives letting the world tell us who we are. Sane or insane. Saints or sex addicts. Heroes or victims. Letting history tell us how good or bad we are. Letting our past decide our future. Or we can decide for ourselves. And maybe it's our job to invent something better" (2002).

A Better Today

According to the official statistics released by NASA, the Federal Budget of 2011 allocated an astounding $17,005 million to NASA, which amounted to 0.53% of America's GDP.[3] The European Space Agency (ESA) which is a cluster of top European economies including Great Britain, France and Germany, allocated €4020 million.[4] The combined budgets of the top five super powers in space, including India, China and Russia, amount to a staggering $35,000 million. Instead of pinning its hope on the space as its one hope for a better future, if the governments decided to redirect their funds towards solving social and developmental issues, here's where it would leave us: 2009 UN reports suggest that over 100 million people worldwide have no access to shelter.[5] Add to this 30,000 more people as each day passes since estimates show homelessness has increased at the rate of 14% p.a. for the past 5 years. According to Polmar, Yunus, and White (2007), the estimated cost of average shelter to the poor is roughly less than $2500. At this rate, 140 million homeless people could have been provided shelter with the money governments worldwide pumped into space exploration – a giant leap towards improving conditions here, on Earth.

Humans are engaging in space wars. Missions that involve the landing of man on moon to hoist a national flag indicate the dichotomy between countries' developmental goals and their personal pursuits. On one hand there are famines and food scarcity and on the other hand 'man lands on moon' and 'water is discovered on Mars'. Every activity has as opportunity cost, calculated in terms of the next best alternative forgone. The question we leave you with is: Is the opportunity cost of space commercialization justified?

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GOVERNMENT IN THE RURAL SPACE

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The essay on The Stranger is one of the most prominent and interesting theories put forth by Georg Simmel and falls in line with his typically paradoxical thought processes where he views the so-called stranger as not only the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, but also as the person who comes today and stays tomorrow. This paper will examine the government as the stranger in the rural space and whether it has a positive or negative influence on the growth and development of the space.

Simmel emphasises that the stranger has an important relationship with the society which is simultaneously one of both spatial nearness and remoteness. The trader is the most common representation of the stranger in an economic space. Lemert (1999) has written about Simmel's Stranger:

> Throughout the history of economics, the stranger everywhere appears as the trader, or the trader as stranger. As long as economy is essentially self-sufficient, or products are exchanged within a spatially narrow group, it needs no middleman: a trader is only required for products that originate outside the group. (p. 185)

As apt as his comparison to a trader may be, Simmel's theory holds up even when one thinks of the government as the stranger who 'comes today and stays tomorrow.' The government pervades all spatial differences of the economy in an effort to supply the minimum effort needed to push that particular economy towards higher levels of growth and development. Since India's independence, the government has recognized the need to refocus its efforts on the rural spaces. Over the last few five-year plans, there has been a marked increase in the number of rural upliftment and development plans that allow the government almost free entry, and a free reign, in determining the livelihoods of the people, permitted by the policy of eminent domain. While the policies implemented are meant well, they tend to fizzle out even before they have a chance to entrench themselves completely, leaving society worse off than before – a classic example of Malthusian pessimism which deals with similar misfired directives (adapted). Malthusian theory specifically pertains to population growth as relative to the availability of resources- population grows exponentionally whereas subsistence expands arithmetically, thus requiring the population growth to be controlled through policy measures in order to restore equilibrium in the economy. These policies, aimed at the rural space as a whole, resulted in the government becoming the very sort of stranger that Simmel refers to.

Several examples of such an occurrence can be found in the policy of the Indian government since independence. One of the most successful policies implemented in recent times is the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGA) put into action in August 2005 in order to legally provide at least 100 days of unskilled employment to adult members of a rural household 'willing to do public-related work'. The objective of the programme was not poverty alleviation but increasing the purchasing power of rural households, irrespective of the poverty line. The government hoped that by creating employment, disguised unemployment though it may be, it could increase the purchasing power of the people residing in that physical space. As the employment grew, a sea change was observed in the consumption habits. Previously, sales of non-necessary consumer products in rural areas were not considered profitable since the people in those areas lived a hand-to-mouth existence. But as the NREGA scheme and its various complementary programmes grew, there was a shift in the consumption habits in the same areas. Sales of aerated drinks and chocolates soared; the greater penetration of TV and other mass media accompanied by higher rural incomes (which, in turn, were driven by agricultural growth) have increased people's propensity to consume branded and value added products in rural areas. The effect is cyclical. A similar sentiment is conveyed by David Harvey (2001) while explaining the contrasting existence of the term 'fixity' with respect to

the movement of capital. He remarks that "capitalism has to fix space (in immoveable structures of transport and communication nets, as well as in built environments of factories, roads, houses, water supplies, and other physical infrastructures) in order to overcome space (geographical boundaries of markets)". The movement of capital thus encountered is clearly visible in the unwritten implications of poverty alleviation programs of the government.

When this author visited the villages of Chhattisgarh, the first thing she noticed (and, at that time was thankful for) was the existence of several *kirana* stores selling varieties of low cost yet branded biscuits and aerated drinks – a clear indication of the transgression of market boundaries. Harvey (1982) points out that (a) capitalism could not survive without being geographically expansionary (and perpetually seeking out "spatial fixes" for its problems), and (b) that major innovations in transport and communication technologies were necessary conditions for that expansion to occur (here enters public enterprise).

The NREGA is considered a huge success in terms of nearly achieving what it set out to achieve, but it has been denounced for the lack of jobs currently, less-than-minimum wage rate, diversion of labour from traditional employers, and corruption at all levels of the programme.[1] The execution of the scheme beyond the initial burst of excitement and willingness has been dubious at best and has resulted in a major shift in the primary source of income for a household – from agriculture to now unskilled labour. The situation worsened to the extent that in July 2011, the ministry of agriculture asked for a ban on all NREGA activities during peak farming seasons.[2] The Harris-Todaro Model of Migration which states that migration (rural-urban or between industries) occurs due to wage differentials, is applicable here. The migration from agriculture to labour provided by NREGA has encouraged the labourers to ask for higher wages, one of the few positive effects of the scheme, thus reducing their rampant exploitation. While this achieved the objective of higher purchasing power parity in the hand of the rural household, it opened a new can of worms in respect to the generation of secondary poverty due to the diversion of funds to unnecessary items as consumer goods. The only seeming benefactors of such a scheme are the MNCs existing and taking over the rural space, another instance of a stranger as a trader in a community.

The point, then, that this author is trying to make with the use of the above instances is that the government is a foreign entity in a village environment – a stranger, an outsider, a source of capital and employment, a source of fear and apprehension, someone not trusted by the people they're trying to help. What India needs to learn from other developing economies, especially ones worse off than itself (a case in point in Guatemala and its recently established Community Hunger Alleviation Programs), is the utility of community programmes as an effective agency of social change and development. Recently, the previously privately-owned ration shops have been converted into cooperative enterprises where if the cooperative is found guilty of any wrongdoing, no one in the community is eligible for any form of credit; such a system holds people accountable to their own community and, as a result, works much more efficiently. State-run programmes, on the other hand, create dependency among the people. They acquire no new skill, work at minimum pay with no upward mobility, and rarely receive the promised wage. In such a situation, how is an individual expected to grow financially, emotionally or even independently?

The principle of eminent domain followed by the State, giving it complete and unquestionable ultimate ownership of land in the country, contributes significantly to the comparison of the government to Simmel's Stranger. The government, willingly or unwittingly, is advocating a form of state capitalism in place of the originally proposed welfare state; it bears testimony to the theory of capital mobility (Harvey, 2006), whether that encompasses only private or public capital is inconsequential, the impact is far too similar. Although severely critical, the evidence points to the state as having played a negative role as the stranger rather than the positive capacity which Simmel had anticipated. The Government's role in any space is debatable; however it is its inherent exogenous nature in rural space which hands the Government a severe disadvantage in terms of its execution of plans and policies in the said space. The lack of continuity (Simmel's Stranger – "here today, gone tomorrow") in the policies implemented results in losses

far outweighing their benefits.

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PHILOSOPHIES, PLEASANTRIES, AND TOILETRIES

PRTHVIR SOLANKI | FYBA

Space has long been regarded in two ways: on the one hand, at a microcosmic level, as the gaps between things which, as it were, keep them apart; on the other hand, at a macrocosmic level, as the larger container into which all things are inserted.
- Kristeva, Space in Theory.

This is a lie.

The problem with Kristeva's definition of space is in its minimalism. Sure, at its bare essence, 'space' is just that gap between you and that attractive girl, but if the world were that simple, I'd be swimming in chocolate and you'd be glaring enviously. Space doesn't just consist of that 'nothingness', but of rules, regulations, laws, social construct and a host of other things keeping you from actually going up to her and eliminating it all together. Space isn't yours nor is it mine, but all of ours and this harmonious existence leads to compromise. "If you don't dig your nose within three feet of me, I won't scratch my crotch within three feet of you." That is what space is all about.

But then there exist some spaces which allow you to stand stark naked and not be questioned, sing the chorus to 'Call Me Maybe' and not be screamed at, and cause an explosion and be the only person to die (along with the annoying neighbours. But that's okay). The confines of the loo is the Wonderland Lewis Carrol wrote so poetically about and anybody who thinks otherwise is facing major constipation troubles.

The Oxford Dictionary defines 'loo' or 'toilet' as '*a room, building, or cubicles containing a toilet or toilets*'. But it is the zesty, and (more importantly) public, Urban Dictionary which defines it in a much more interesting way, *'a good place to sit and think. Also a good place to take a plop'*. This definition gives an insight to what the common man (and not the English) thinks of the innocent toilet. Who would've thought that a room meant for defecating, cleansing the horrid innards of your system, nasty (and naughty) things, and applying soap would give impetus to the greatest of ideas and the deepest of thoughts?

Society, as mentioned earlier, consists of certain guidelines which one must follow in order to please the Society Gods. Who formed these guidelines? Society. Who formed society? Umm...society. Society is a continuous population of people living together, compensating and sacrificing a little bit of their happiness to make the world a better place. In other words, we're all actors and the world is our stage. The concept of 'dramaturgy' introduced by Erving Goffman says exactly this. We all behave according to expectations, situations, perceptions, everything but ourselves (assuming that there is a real 'self' in the first place). And the toilet breaks all of those shackles and allows you to stand on top of your commode and pelvic thrust all night long.

The toilet is a space of sanctity and peace. Richard Swedburg very explicitly states that the relationship between *thinking* and *sociology* is a tenuous and difficult one, but the toilet combines the two and allows us to delve into why it is that the sociological construct of the loo allows us to ponder and behave in a way we'd like to out in the world.

Now, let me throw you a curve-ball. Let's say you're in a dire need to urinate after drinking a little too much Sprite one afternoon and you possess (satisfactory) male genitalia. Your constant turns of the head in search for a restroom only massages your urethras and the hellish rain doesn't help either. Finally, you see a 'Public Restroom' sign over a dingy cement blob and rush in like you're running from the holocaust. You enter and you see that there are eight urinals for you to relieve yourself and there's one man using the very first one on your left. Which one would you use?

Chances are you would've picked any urinal apart from the second one to your left. The whole notion of privacy and free thinking is challenged by the 'public' prefix. Will you still perform your pelvic thrusts with

three others peeing in your immediate vicinity?

The row of urinals could easily be mistaken for a contest for power in the dark. As you approached the urinals while needing to relieve yourself, the man already peeing was at the position of power. He could pick whichever urinal he wished; the next person had to pick one away from him. Men usually do this to avoid the embarrassing situation of being seen with their pants unzipped and, more often than not, men in such situations face 'stage fright' and don't want to be judged for their delay. The more the number of men already utilising urinals, the more at the mercy of their speeds you are at. However, if you happen to be the first to a urinal with nobody around and have assumed a position of highest honour, think again. If the next man who enters willingly stands in the urinal immediately next to yours, you have been usurped and an assortment of feelings associated with *discomfort* will surge through your veins.

What the public toilet does is allow you to excrete your waste, but while keeping to the guiding principles of society and order. This is where the idea of personal space is questioned when a deeply private matter takes place in the presence of numerous others also performing their deeply private matters. The most you can do while at the urinal is whistle your favourite tune, but it still doesn't allow you to whistle the national anthem without anybody staring ludicrously at you.

The men in need however, still have the option of entering a cubicle if all the urinal spots are taken but the woman has no choice. Imagine a woman using a urinal and you'll never be able to imagine anything much ever again. In a patriarchal world, men are also given the privilege of having more than one spot to pee, while women have to take the extra effort of opening a door, closing it, settling down and then only can they sigh the typical sigh of relief, every single time.

The cubicle is a far more private space than the urinal, but it still is stuck to another 'far more private space than a urinal' (its neighbouring cubicle) and this creates a sort of anxiety in the user's head and still, that elusive public pelvic thrust remains far away. It's intriguing how we continue taking a dramaturgical stance even when in a cubicle, which is surrounded by four walls, graffiti and your fleeting thoughts, but the constant fear of someone poking their head underneath the door keeps one from accepting it as their own personal space, much like a private loo.

But here's another intriguing observation. While travelling on the Harbour line, between Sewri and Cotton Green there exists a public toilet used by the slum dwellers living nearby. It has six cubicles and is dangerously lopsided and the fear of falling over into their own mess troubles the younger users of this facility. But here's the interesting bit. None of these cubicles have doors. Yes. Every morning while coming to college, Harbour line commuters have the opportunity to watch people do the business in the early hours of the morning. But what is interesting is that these people don't seem to mind.

They live their lives out in the open as it is, so taking their underwear off in the open doesn't seem, to an external viewer, as so embarrassing either. Often you can see a man chatting with someone washing his buttocks after a fantastic sitting, but neither seems to be perturbed by the presence of an anomaly in between them. Generally, children are excused when performing their private duties on railway tracks, but here we see even the grown men indulging without any problems.

The fear of being ogled at by perverse men of the 21st century pushes women to find more secluded spots, and they often go together in a bunch. So the question of privacy is raised again. While we won't allow anybody to join us while at home, we gladly gossip while in the outdoors. This vast difference in behaviour could be more of a class phenomenon than a psychological one.

The lives of the downtrodden are out for the world to see. Sometimes it spills onto the road and sometimes onto the big screens, but this lifestyle of theirs has built an attitude of negligence in their minds. They don't care if their water is continuously running, they don't care if their family feuds are made public and they don't care if they're bathing between Dadar and Matunga. This means that the space of the loo is a highly prestigious one. Not many are fortunate enough to have this facility at their disposal. The toilet is a thinking space for elite human beings, where one can be whatever they wish to be, do whatever they wish to do, and the only one

questioning them would be their shampoo bottles. It is an almost utopian space where the human mind is free from prejudices, restrictions and regulations and is a world of many opportunities and chances. The loo is our very own Dreamatorium. So what are you waiting for? Do that pelvic thrust.

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INTELLECTUAL SPACES

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Why intellectual spaces? Ideas, paradigms in the sciences

Ideas are among the most powerful forces known to humankind – "the most resilient parasite", to invoke Nolan's *Inception*. And when they acquire potency, gain acceptance, these ideas create a spatial realm among individuals and groups, spreading across geographies and generations. This paper seeks to map out a terrain of "intellectual spaces" constructed by such ideas. Multiple factors influence as to what exactly constitutes these spaces; physically, the units of intellectual spaces are individual actors; but individual actors *are* influenced by sociological and psychological factors and, especially, ideologies. Intellectual spaces are, therefore, hierarchical and dynamical, susceptible to changes, influenced by history, politics, as well as dispositions. This paper examines how these constructed spaces interact in the realm of sciences, particularly mathematics and physics, and the changes that have disrupted and reconstituted – and continue to do so – the intellectual space of these sciences.

These intellectual spaces, with common mind-sets, are what one could call a 'school of thought'. In the sciences, there occur achievements of new knowledge, on the basis of the following two characteristics: they are unprecedented enough to gather abiding followers away from other scientific activity; and, are sufficiently open ended to leave problems for these practitioners to solve. Thomas Kuhn calls these spaces "paradigms" and defines it as "universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model platform solutions to a community of practitioners" (Kuhn, 1970: p. viii). However, Kuhn's theory provides only for contesting paradigms – wherein each scientific achievement vies for recognition. Multiple paradigms explaining a particular theme has not been commented upon. Also, the terms "universally recognized", and "for a time", are vague and contentious as to what can be called a paradigm. Science, he goes on to say, is an emergent theory, where scientific models and ideas build up upon other scientific models and ideas to create rational explanations (Ibid). For instance, most sciences emphasize and enshrine the values of objectivity, formal logic, and correct predictions.

Cores and peripheries in science: Hegemony, geopolitics and knowledge production

Science is a collection of intellectual spaces composed of facts, theories and ideas, tested upon observations, about the physical world. Some schools of thought have been well established in history, whereas others have remained obscure and unimportant on account of the history of the area, or period, due to reasons other than logical or scientific ones. While the Greeks laid down the foundations of logic and came up with axioms in geometry, several contemporary philosophies had developed alongside: the Taoist and the Buddhist philosophies of China and India, to name a few. However, these philosophies, splendidly influential to Asian lifestyle and thinking, rarely make inroads into modern scientific rigour (Kosko, 1994).

This model attributes certain areas to core or peripheral spaces. Since recorded history, cradles of civilizations have centred around areas which produced key developments in scientific research. As trade and commerce increased, the erstwhile core areas formed recognizable hierarchical structures. One can thus see a hierarchy of core and peripheral spaces stemming from interactions of history, geopolitical power-relations (like colonialism), and a shift across time.[1] These areas at the edges become defined as peripheral areas, which do not interact with each other openly; knowledge produced in peripheries gain credibility from the core area's academic institutions, peer groups, and so forth.[2] Kumju Hwang, studying the core-periphery model, argues that peripheral areas consume the knowledge that is produced within the core areas, and in turn create subsidiary knowledge, with its implementation technologies developing faster there: "The core science and technology become a Mecca of advanced scientific knowledge production and create

a labour division in scientific knowledge production" (2008: p. 105).

For example, during the so-called "dark ages" in Europe, the Arabs, as they traded, created a repository of knowledge that was being produced all over the world: the adoption of Hindu numerals by the Arabs, led to Fibonacci using them in his historical treatise on Financial Mathematics (Ferguson, 2008). Thus, the Arabs came to constitute a core area, and the other areas, which traded with them, became peripheries.

In Europe, however, the philosophy of Roger Bacon – that of observations and their analysis – came to dominate the realm of sciences (Hackett, 1997).[3] So, what happened to the ancient and medieval scholars of India, China, and Arabia? From history, we see how these regions could not compete with a post-Renaissance Europe and, later, Europe after industrial revolution. It stands to reason that the core areas of sciences shifted to Europe. New inventions, and their application to warfare, initiated by a trend of imperial colonialism, fuelled by the "discoveries" of new lands across the world, and thus also research and research opportunities; newer scholarly disciplines began to take shape. Anthropology gained currency because of the growing need of studying the native cultures of the lands the imperialists were colonizing (van Bremen *et. al.*, 2005). This influenced the scientific disciplines by introducing the inventions, philosophies, and research into these colonies, and soon, these colonies become peripheral to European imperial powers. These developments are in tandem with Hwang's definition of competent research in the "core areas": history shows that Europe at the middle of nineteenth century was the core of all scientific research. By the beginning of the 20th Century, however – and after the atomic bomb – America had also established itself as a core area, especially in physics (Hwang, 2008: p. 105).

Post WWII, however, it has been noted that concept of a single layered core and periphery was redundant.[4] With the emergence of corporate institutions and laboratories, research is now a multi-layered, increasingly internationalised effort (Belloum *et. al.*, 2011). For example, institutions like CERN (European Organisation for Nuclear Research) recruit scientists from across the world. Even though the primary research is still done in economies that can afford so, several application based innovations occur elsewhere, and it becomes a holistic collaboration with multiple, shifting relations of cores and peripheries – if, indeed, we are to retain this problematic model.

When ideas overlap, and a single phenomenon has two differing explanations in two or more schools of thought, contestations occur. Kuhn calls this the second stage of paradigm shift, and states that they occur as science uncovers more and more information (1970: pp. 49-51). As the process of science progresses with time, other observations come into the picture, and, as Kuhn says, force the scientific community to choose sides.[5] Hence, there occurs a paradigm shift.

But conflicts of science do not just have a scientific resolution: there are several aspects and viewpoints that, in the end, colour the conflict in several ways. To contextualise the above argument, the next segment would briefly sketch one historical contestation in the natural sciences: namely, theoretical physics.

Does god play dice with the universe? The deterministic versus in-deterministic universe

Before the advent of quantum mechanics, there existed the Galilean school of thought, which suggested that all experiments, if done under identical conditions, should give identical results.[6] However, in the mid-1920s, Werner Heisenberg proposed the uncertainty relation, which he derived from his famous thought experiment, that one cannot measure the position and the momentum of a given particle exactly simultaneously; that is, one cannot measure either accurately. Also, during this time, Schrodinger came up with his equation in which every particle was visualized as a wave function; Max Born interpreted this wave function to be "a plot of its probability of occurrence." This interpretation was then instituted by Heisenberg and Bohr, what is now known as the Copenhagen Interpretation of 1930 (Jammer, 1966: p. 323).

However, there exist many other interpretations: the Many-World interpretation[7] and statistical interpretation[8] are other famous interpretations of quantum mechanics. All in all, there are over 18 interpretations of quantum mechanics, all of which have the mathematical grounds of probability in common (Roland, 1999). These interpretations introduce probability as an inherent

property of natural systems, whereas the Galilean school thinks of mathematical models of natural systems as completely and thoroughly deterministic. Given the boundary conditions of a system, one can determine what will happen in some other instance; there is no chance involved.

Predictably, this caused considerable friction within the scientific community: because clearly, there cannot be room enough for two simultaneous theories that are so disparate; but no one could argue on the logical meticulousness of Heisenberg's deduction, which arguably caused Albert Einstein to retort, "God does not play dice with the Universe".[9] However, the question did not depart from the scientific discourse for very long because, as further studies revealed, though one cannot predict a particular occurrence, one could very well tell what would happen if every such individual possibility is considered together. The Schrodinger's cat thought-experiment[10] provides a simple tool for analysing the point put across in this statement: even though the individual outcome is indeterminate, the distinct possibilities can *and* will always be calculated.

Because Heisenberg does not allow measurement of position to complete accuracy, the question that creates the borderline in between determinism, as also in between several interpretations of quantum mechanics, is the problem of stating where the particle was before it was measured. There are three dispositions to this question: The realist (determinate), the orthodox (indeterminate), and the agnostic (refusal to answer). While none of these are absolutely correct, they cannot be completely refuted either (Griffiths, 1995). It depends on the disposition of the physicist, who chooses to apply an understanding; therefore, there exist schools of thought which create these intellectual spaces where research proceeds in the context of one disposition over another. It is crucial to examine all the sides of the problem, and therefore, at a given time in the world, the scientific community does *not* undergo a complete paradigm shift.[11]

Kuhn's paradigm shift might be in "progress", but one can clearly see that determinism in quantum mechanics *is* multi-paradigmatic. As one peeks into the exciting new research, one sees the fantastic array of explanations of this primary problem, by modelling Chaos theory and String theory on them, as well as fantastic new experiments concerning quantum entanglement.[12] And the results are simply fascinating.

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Endnotes

1. For example, the shift from the Arabian Scientists to the science of Baconian science in Europe in the Renaissance era illustrates this argument.

2. See, for instance, the arguments made by van Bremen and Ben Ari, discussing hegemony in anthropology in times of colonialism, as well as post-colonial core-periphery models (2005: pp. 3-39).

3. Roger Bacon's contribution to the scientific structure, in particular his own disposition, is highly questioned by modern historians (Power, 2006). But there is no doubt, that he was highly influential in the middle ages.

4. Galison and Helvy (1992) as cited in Hwang, 2008: p. 131.

5. Kuhn's thesis, however, is built on shaky ground, because several times a particular theory could only explain part of the total phenomenon. Therefore, one can choose both sides and say that either of them is valid up to a certain boundary. Also, it is not necessary that adherents of a given paradigm have a complete shift in their mindsets just because one certain observation has failed the theory: there might be enough reasons, apart from scientific ones, for them not to change their philosophy.

6. Galilean School of thought does not take into account relativistic changes of mass. All mechanics on earth are Galilean, also known as Newtonian Mechanics. However, the school of thought itself is called Galilean because of the evident ancestry to Galileo Galilee (*Galilean Relativity and Newtonian Mechanics*).

7. Formulated and formalized in 1957 by Hugh Everett. It says that wave function collapses do not occur, and the other unobserved variables get preserved in other universes, thus called the multiverse theory (Jammer, 1966: p. 374).

8. Or Ensemble interpretation, which suggests that quantum mechanical phenomenon, can only be predicted for systems consisting of numerous similar particles (Ibid: pp. 368-369).

9. As cited in Jammer (1966: p. 113).

10. A cat is encased in an airtight enclosure, with a random trigger mechanism, which launches a poisonous gas into the chamber. The trigger is activated with a nuclear decay – where there exists the probability that the atom will decay, or it would not. If the atom decays, then the cat dies; if it does not, then the cat survives. In a given radioactive sample, therefore, the cat is *either* dead or alive, not both dead *and* alive (See bibliography for *The interactive Schrodinger's Cat*).

11. Refer to the section above arguing the existence of multiple paradigms.

12. Barksdale, M. (n.d). 10 ways Quantum Mechanics can Change the World.

UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF SPACES OF FORMAL PUBLIC SCHOOLING IN MUMBAI

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Note: For the purpose of convenience, the author is going to limit the scope of this paper to understanding schools categorised as 'public' and 'aided' in the urban framework of Mumbai. A further distinction will not be made based on language (English, Marathi, Urdu medium) of schooling because in society's 'secretion' of spaces, language of communication and medium for expression is necessary to illustrate the point being elucidated here.

The Classroom Space: A Catalytic Approach to Societal Change

Pedagogical practices of classrooms across Mumbai city have been the subject of examination for most studies concerning elementary public education for multi-national corporations, local municipal governments, international aid organisations and non-profits. While outcomes of such studies reached predictable ends – investment in teacher training, curriculum development, increased incentives for urban school going children, free distribution of basic stationery, etc – a more conclusive study was undertaken by Clarke (2003), which spoke about the case of Karnataka DPEP (District Primary Education Project). The study attempted a transformation of instructional practices in primary school classrooms through a holistic programme of pedagogical reform. The strongest factor determining the success of this programme was the nature of teacher-student relationship within which, as Clarke (2003) pointed out, the most relevant was that:

> An individual's decisions and choices made are often constructed by the choices made by the community rather than by individual experience and perception. In this process an individual constructing his or her knowledge becomes less significant.

This is what Bernstein (1975) would term 'invisible pedagogy' – the inner 'readiness' and outer 'busyness' of the child (among which, the latter can be transformed into the concept of 'ready to do').

A functionalist perspective examining the role of the community the child is a member of is the single most influential factor in determining the future successful matriculation and gradual integration of the child into the larger economic system. This is a largely accepted positive outcome for the society as a whole. The deterrents to this outcome remain, even in the urban fabric of an 'international city' like Mumbai, the lack of choice otherwise. From personal prior interactions with family members and guardians of school-going children (especially in the case of the male child), the author discovered that there is an inherent understanding and appreciation for the process of formal education. However the validity of this collective claim is challenged post primary-level schooling, when children are pulled out of school in order to supplement the family income. Henri Lefebvre, the French philosopher, suggests that each society "secretes" its own space.

A question left unanswered is whether it is significant sociological forces that also contribute to this phenomenon as represented in statistical studies (of retention or school drop-out rates), but given the scope of this paper in examining the role of spaces that are contested, the author will instead delve further into the recesses of underlying processes inherent to the urban human condition – where children from a young age are inducted into ideas of duty of servitude and gratitude, of physical closeness to all family members, thus diminishing the idea of accomplishment beyond the aspirations of the immediate requirements of the family (see Kumar, 2009, for discussion).

Physical Space of the School Building: Utility, Function and Capacity

In 1970, Bernstein stated that 'schools cannot compensate for society'. Through this statement, he

succinctly expressed the view that the potential outcomes of schools should always be compared with the totality of influences in society and that, in his judgement, many of these other influences were likely to be more powerful than those of the school. Much is to be discussed about how individual schools promote achievement. In an interesting study conducted by Smith and Tomlinson (1991) titled the 'School Effect' which studied the outcomes of the type of students versus the management and quality of teaching and learning environment where it was found that familial and unsettled background and academic and classroom achievement should have a minor inverse relationship if the emphasis of the management was on a different kind of achievement. The constructed space of inter-community social interactions which can be effectively regulated further makes it clear that the school is a catalytic focal point for societal change because of its inherent conversation with the community.

This author's discussion with the teachers at New Transit Camp Municipal School and Raje Shivaji School in the self-contained space of Dharavi, revealed that the school management was determined to use the playground space for nefarious activities like 'Daru Shapath' (a form of adult entertainment involving dancers and alcohol) post schools hours. This was a particularly disturbing case wherein topmost school officials were involved in 'renting' out the playground space on the pretext of generating additional revenue. In this way, the physical space of the school is violated.

The luxury of vast physical spaces in the heart of an organic settlement like Dharavi is thus utilised at the cost of maintaining the sanctity of an educational institution. Usually, in the case of public schools maintained for the purpose of elementary education, the norm of dense proximity that characterises the rest of the urban space, negates the conventional realm of Mumbai city.

School spaces in the context of D. Harvey's & Michel Foucault's theories of space: Lessons and applications

> "Space is fundamental in any form of community life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power." (Foucault, 1986). The power-knowledge relationship is central to the understanding of the public school as a functional body of Foucauldian analysis.

For Foucault, power is understood as dispersed throughout society as a heterogeneous ensemble of strategies and techniques, an open-ended 'cluster of relations' that exist in its exercise. Thus, power is distributed through, and in the construction and application of knowledge in focal points of, arenas like school playgrounds, classrooms, etc. With educational institutions supposedly being the concentration of wealth of 'knowledge', they automatically assume positions of 'micro-terrains' of power; Harvey would further predict them as fuelled by 'contradictions and conflicts.'

David Harvey (2011), primarily known for his Marxist analysis and utilisation of the labour class as the basis of community/societal issues for most of his arguments, says that the struggles over the production and use of the built environment like educational institutions:

Compromises capital which will invest in such features and facilities if it enhances accumulation whether directly in the production process or indirectly by improving the means by which the reproduction of labour produces more efficient, willing, docile and able workers.

While this statement's point of reference is occupied by the optimisation of skilled labour, there is also an allusion to the beneficiaries of improved public educational spaces.

Conclusion

Mumbai is an amalgamation of a dense social and physical climate that works with its educational spaces at a point where the disillusion of a postmodern condition meets with the philosophical and cultural aspirations of pre-modern Indian tradition. Public formal education spaces are a function of the community's aspirations.

Apart from being the object of social conflict, space also becomes the setting for social conflict; the school, on the other hand, becomes a space for catalytic societal change – if not absolutely, then it at least has the potential to do so. It is in recognising the full capability of the classroom/school space that a state can bring to the fore the well-established theories of systemic societal change

through pedagogical practice and optimal utilisation of expended school infrastructure.

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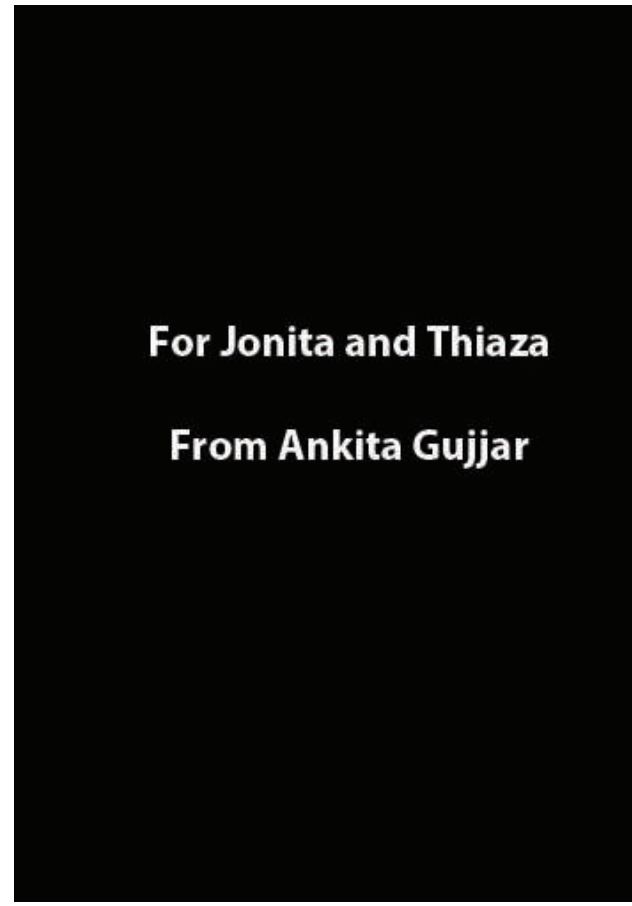

HOW TYPEFACES AND KERNING AFFECT YOUR LIFE

FABIOLA MONTEIRO | SYBA

A popular xkcd comic cleverly captures the despicable nature of bad kerning. "If you really hate someone," it says, "teach them to recognize bad kerning."

Society today thrives only with the help of suitable typefaces. For instance, the spaces we construct have words that name them, and when that name has to be put on paper (or a billboard, digital screen, etc) type is required. What helps at that point is a well-kerned typeface. Thus, this paper is not only looking at space through the geometric use of it in the placing of alphabets, but also in terms of how typefaces – well-kerned or otherwise – influence the social space we inhabit.

Kerning has been defined as the adjustment of space between pairs of letters to make them more visually appealing. It's basically the difference between: 'k e r n i n g' and 'kerning'. As is evident, this space-induced mechanism changes our perception of the word. Bad kerning goes against the visuals in your head when you try to picture a word, what you imagine a word to look like and the way you comprehend the written word.

Henry Head first proposed the concept of the body schema, a concept that I find applies to kerning too. He says it is "the combined standard, against which all subsequent changes of posture are measured before they enter consciousness." (Head, 1920) Our perception of a word is inherently programmed to pass through certain norms, most often sub-consciously. These norms are a product of enculturation. Right from kindergarten – where we learn to draw lines and write our first letters – onwards, our minds cement the ideas of how an alphabet must look, how a word must look, how words come together to form a coherent sentence; over and over, until we lose control of this sense of organisation.

Kant referred to this as reflective judgement. Reflective judgment is defined, not through conceptual frameworks but through the subject's power to produce a relationship between itself and a particular experience in the world. Kant emphasises the reflective subject's ability to generate judgments, the process of this activity becomes primary, highlighting the link between reflective thinking and aesthetic judgments. Reflective judgment therefore represents a special kind of aesthetic activity, a relationship in which the particular is subsumed to the indeterminate, yet embodied, judgment. Kant goes on to explain how the act of reflecting on nature is an 'artistic', not merely a 'schematic' or logical action. Thus, he discounts the schema Head speaks of. While the body schema might be a good platform to understand where the perception of kerning stems from, Kant's "aesthetic activity" tends to explain the actual nature of this perception.

This organisation, in terms of spacing, governs modern day society. From the icons on your desktop to the signs at your local supermarket, spacing is everywhere. Most often, it is taken for granted.

However, moving beyond the social implications of kerning to the broader field of typography as a whole is a move that is innate. Revolutionary designer Paula Scher believes, "Type is image." Type, in fact, seems to facilitate spacing and in turn, understanding. Type is everywhere. Print publications, websites, movies, advertisements and public messages – everything involves the creation or selection of a fitting typeface.

A designer essentially, takes an idea and puts a "visual voice" to it. Here is where Roland Barthes' dead author theory (Barthes, 1967) comes in. This is because the reader – obviously, as he is affected by the type – plays an equally vital role in this relationship. When it comes to design, while kerning does have its geometric properties, it ultimately comes down to intuition. The same intuition carries forth for the reader. No one sits with a geometric scale and other measurement apparatus to check for correct spacing. No, you just know – intuitively – if something is amiss or not. Bill Moggridge, another

pioneer in design, says, "Design, by definition – along with the other arts like poetry or writing – is mostly not explicit. It's mostly tacit knowledge. It has to do with people's intuitions and harnessing the subconscious part of the mind rather than just the conscious" (Moggridge, 2007).

What is interesting is the way in which we often abscond from this world of type and space that is constantly throwing itself at us. Let's take an average day. You wake up, stumbling out of bed. You're brushing your teeth, and you see the type on your tube of toothpaste. You're having breakfast and the cereal box winks at you. You're at the train station – flickering digits tell you you're late. You enter college, with its name written in Marathi script across an arch. You run to class – the professor is busy scrawling some incoherent sentence across the blackboard. In the canteen, various typefaces yell out to you from the menu boards. The notice board has a scattering of types competing for your attention. And that's just half your day. Still, most often, we don't pay attention to these blatant nuances simply because we aren't taught to. Hoefler and Frere-Jones have said, "Letters are everywhere and that's one of the things that makes typography so interesting to people these days. It is such a pervasive part of our day. You need type again and again and again to get through the day, to live your life."

It is one thing to be manipulated by the tactics used to get your attention (and money, in certain cases), but to know that type affects the way you feel – that's a whole other experience right there. From Helvetica to Times New Roman to Comic Sans, typefaces have social as well as psychological connotations to them. Jeff Glover (2010), a visual artist, says that he's always been happiest when he's been able to bring some sort of "artistic order" to otherwise un-artistic surroundings. For him, there is an actual order of how things can be arranged or grouped to tell a story, or to achieve a certain balance – or lack of. This order is primarily encountered through letter-spacing and kerning.

"Typefaces aren't merely about forms. They are about design systems. They have to do with the way things relate to one another," say typeface designers Jonathan Hoefler and Tobias Frere-Jones. The relationship between words and comprehension is a dynamic one. In a typeface, clarity is of prime importance. You need to be able to understand a word in a particular type. Type serves as the means to convey a message. It is the communicator. Type designers judge whether a type is good or not through the space between letters of a word in that type. Type evokes different responses depending on how close or far the spaces between letters are. Some typefaces are interpreted as fascist, some as democratic. Some evoke happy sentiments, some angry ones. Evidently, type facilitates social constructions.

The type chosen, the mood elicited by the type – everything is constructed in order to gain an individual's attention. Type is crucial because it is universal. Type can be traced back in history, and at every point, it aligns itself with the thoughts and ideas of that era. However, it has always faced the need for constant revival and reinvention. This is because it needs to be original to capture attention and everything original eventually becomes mundane, leading to new creation and so on and so forth.

This originality becomes even harder to come across today, because access to the tools to create typefaces is public. In the digital age that we live in today, software to handle type and design are easily available. "Because of the computer, people are really aware of typography like they've never been before. Words have meaning, and type has spirit and the combination is spectacular," Scher says. What this leads to, essentially, is a deconstruction of society. But in spite of this rich and artistic typographical culture that exists today, what continues to separate a graphic designer from the average person with a pile of software is the skill. Since it's primarily intuitive, one needs to have an eye for detail and aesthetics to create a good typeface, much like art – we may all have the paint, but not all of us can wield a brush.

Coming back to the sense of order that typography subscribes to – in the way it is built as well as the way it puts information out into the world – in spite of this order, there is no real science of typography. Grids may be used to create typefaces, measurements are necessary, geometry is a part of it – but ultimately, it is the aesthetic appeal that decrees if a typeface is good and functional.

Typefaces are very much like people. You pass them by all the time. You hate some, you love some. You will

always have a soft spot for the ones you grew up with. You learn new ideas from them. They make you feel. They let you express yourself. And no matter what, they are always going to be there, clinging on, fighting for their space.

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SPORTS AND SEXUALITY: EXAMINING HOMOSEXUALITY IN SPORTING ARENAS

VIVIEN D'COSTA | TYBA

Homosexuality within sport has been a much researched theme within gender and, specifically, masculinity studies. Male sports have been the domain of an 'alpha male' breed of men characterized largely by homophobia, misogyny and heteronormativity (Anderson and McGuire, 2010). However with more and more athletes 'coming out of the closet,' this brand of masculinity is beginning to give way to new definitions of what it means to be a male athlete. Homosexuality openly challenges the hegemonic masculinity that has always been marketed by sport culture, creating a space for the construction and enactment of new masculinities (Anderson, 2002). Ironically, the most homophobic sports tend to also be the most homoerotic ones; consider rugby, (American) football, wrestling, soccer and other contact team sports. This paper aims to examine the construction and representation of homosexuality in three key sporting spaces: the locker room, the arena and the news media, as well as attempt to examine the socialisation process that encourages homosocial behavior while simultaneously alienating homosexuality.

The Locker Room

More than a few studies prove that sport in general has never been fair ground for gay athletes; sport marginalizes homosexuality in subliminal as well as overt ways. Lucyk (2011) points out that the portrayal of gay men (in popular culture, reinforced by other media) has always been as voyeurs, preoccupied with sex, whose only purpose in engaging in sport is of pursuing their (usually heterosexual) teammates. The word gay hardly conjures up an image of an athlete in most minds. Gay is inevitably equated with effeminate behavior and an aversion to athletic activity. This sort of reductionist and stereotypical representation created a phobia among athletes of being "looked at" or sexually objectified by gay teammates as evidenced by former NBA player Tim Hardaway's incredibly homophobic comments following the-post retirement 'coming out' of another NBA star John Amaechi. Hardaway stated, "First of all, I wouldn't want him on my team. And second of all, if he was on my team, I would, you know, really distance myself from him because, uh, I don't think that's right. And you know I don't think he should be in the locker room while we're in the locker room. I wouldn't even be a part of that."[1]

This choice of words is also indicative of an attitude where homosexuality is more offensive to heterosexual athletes in certain spaces (i.e. the locker room or a basketball court) than in others (say a party or a classroom) reinforcing the concept that homosexuals in team sports are construed as complete voyeurs. Incidentally the same sort of objectification from women is not only considered harmless but also quite desirable, indicative of some of the double standards that hegemonic masculinity employs.[2]

The Arena

Foucault introduced the term heterotopia, loosely defined as a space where the norms and restrictions that plague other sites within human cultural context don't necessarily apply. Sporting arenas can be understood as an example of a Foucauldian heterotopias. Touching, hugging, kissing etc, between two males is not generally acceptable in public places like parks or the streets, yet within the arena this sort of contact is viewed in a totally different context. It is devoid of eroticism and instead is a marker of friendship and desirable sporting behaviour. However to see the sporting arena a space devoid of hegemony is questionable: imagine the media furore over a gay squeezing a teammates bottom during a match. Thus, the sporting arena marks a space rife with contestation and even discrimination, where heterosexual touching is as normal as breathing yet homosexual touching becomes a much scrutinized and analyzed affair.

David Coad (2008) uses Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's

concept of the homosocial (which she defines as "social bonds between persons of the same sex") to explain this normalised homoeroticism within sport. Sedgwick suggests that homosociality exists on the same continuum as homosexuality; yet in sport arenas there is a constant effort to separate the two with an insistence on a plausible difference between the 'platonic' and the 'homoerotic'. Pronger (1992), in his book *The Arena of Masculinity: Sports, Homosexuality and the Meaning of Sex,* expresses that this phenomenon which he calls "the homoerotic paradox" may be the product of social inequality between genders, stating "the hierarchy of gender compels men to find satisfaction in one another." Pronger implies that males exhibiting hegemonic masculinity hold more cultural and social capital than those who don't (this group can include homosexual men, women, disabled men etc.) and that sport provides a space to express their affection toward others who enact this hegemony in a supposedly non-sexual and non-erotic way. Coad's examination of former NBA superstar and American pop culture icon Dennis Rodman's first autobiography, *Bad As I Want to Be* (2000) reveals Rodman's knowledge of the homoeroticism within sport where he () notes, "Man hugs man. Man pats man on ass. Man whispers in man's ear and kisses him on the cheek." This kind of interaction however is deemed asexual and non-erotic since all athletes are already presumed to be heterosexual. According to Coad, "Rodman reminds us that a principal technique in keeping the homosocial nonsexual is to vilify homosexuality."

The construction of masculinity (at least the popular notion of masculinity) is a significant contributor to the marginalization of homosexuals in sport. Homophobia and misogyny are an indisputable part of the masculinity marketed by mainstream media and pop culture. Aggression and assertiveness dominance are prized 'values' for male athletes. When homosexual athletes enter the arena, the dominance of hegemonic masculinity is threatened because performance and success are no longer tied to the heterosexual male identity. Perhaps it is for this reason that that sporting spaces become sites for such visible marginalization of homosexuals (Anderson, 2002).

Pronger elaborates on the homoerotic paradox with his study of the ties between homosexuality and wrestling, calling wrestling the manifestation of same sex curiosity in males. He states instances of wrestlers experiencing various forms of arousal during matches and cites the example of a teenage boy who kept hoping that his constant wrestling with a friend would lead to a more concrete homosexual experience. Pronger adds that he believes wrestling is the socially sanctioned answer to homosexual urges; males who are afraid of being deemed less manly because of the homoerotic paradox indulge in wrestling masking it as "orthodox athletic combat".

The Media

The emergence of complex and manifold forms of socially sanctioned homosociality could be indicative of numerous needs among athletes including the need to express homosexuality, the need to explore it, or even the need to express affection without being termed "gay". This brings us to the third topic of discussion – the mainstream media – which relates directly to why being called gay is such an insult to heterosexuals. Even closet homosexuals often express intense ire at being the targets of speculation regarding their sexuality. The sports media is a space where homosexuals have little power over their own representation especially when compared to other media spaces like film, television and music. Within the latter fields, the coming out of many prominent personalities has changed the way they are perceived. Think of sexuality-blind casting for television and film (Neil Patrick Harris and Matt Bomer both openly gay male actors who play heterosexuals on *How I Met Your Mother* and *White Collar* respectively, as also Jake Gyllenhaal and Heath Ledger, heterosexual actors who played homosexuals in *Brokeback Mountain*)[3] and apply the same concept to sport. Representation equates to some extent of control over public perception.

Male sports remain a domain where masculinities are created, reinforced, performed, normalized and idealized. However one can hope that an increasingly positive outlook towards homosexuality will level the playing field, creating a safe space for gay athletes to challenge hegemonic and one-dimensional masculinities and promote gender equality, acceptance, and education regarding homosexuality that reduces the stereotypes regularly enacted and reinforced within played sports, sport media as well as popular culture discourse.

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THE PROMISED LAND

SARAH SHAIKH | SYBA

Space is an integral and irremovable part of any debate of ideologies concerning identity, power relations and crises. Space becomes all the more important when one talks about the concept, history and ramifications of the 'Promised Land'. This paper talks about how the physical space of Israel merged with the mythological, can have such devastating impact on humanity as seen in the lives of the Jews and the Palestinians of the region. This paper tries to analyze these issues in light of the theories of sociologists Andrea Cornwall, Martina Low, Hans Kohn and Rashid Khalidi.

Historical Background

The Promised Land as interpreted in the Bible is the holy land promised by God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel). These descendants today are the Muslims, Christians and Jews, who have been associated with the holy land for thousands of years (El-Najjar, 2003).The importance of this fact is to dispel the prevalent myth among the Christian and Jewish fundamentalists that the holy land was promised to Jews per se as followers of Judaism since most Jewish settlers undoubtedly believed that they had in some way been chosen to 'redeem the land that was promised to them, and to displace the modern equivalents of modern-day Philistines and Canaanites.

This myth has been used for more than a century now to support the establishment of Israel at the expense of the Palestinian people through the continuous immigration of the Jews from all over the world, and the continuous displacement of the Palestinian people from their own homeland.

As of now, the US had established the state of Israel in 1948 in erstwhile Palestine, and only remnants of a nominal Palestine now remains in the refugee camps of the Gaza strip and the West Bank in Israel, and the refugee camps of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

Power relations within the Promised Land

It requires no sociological genius to recognize that the land of Israel is clearly a contested space. The same land is an object of desire and ownership for two of the most diverse communities of the world. Thus, this space has been at the centre of a long list of bloody battles for more than 50 years now.

From this domain of the contested space and the resultant rat-race for authority and ownership emerges a pattern of power relationships which is at the same time empowering and crippling to the people who stay there.

This concept of power relations can be understood through Martina Low's theory of Duality of Space, which follows from the theory of structuration proposed by Anthony Giddens. The basic idea here is that individuals act as social agents, but that their actions depend on economic, social, cultural and finally spatial structures (Low: 2008). Spaces are hence the outcome of action. At the same time spaces structure action, this means that spaces can both constrain and restrain action.

This is exactly the situation in Israel, as the state of Israel grants independent citizenship and complete autonomy and freedom to the Jews residing in that land, and thus provides them with a legal, economic, cultural and social upper hand over the Palestinians who have been denied citizenship and the normal basic human rights of an individual.

Thus a much skewed pattern of power relationships is observed between the Israelis and the Palestinians in context of the Promised Land. This power relation has resulted in the increased dominance over the Palestinians, continuous manipulation of their basic rights and freedoms and this has thus been responsible for the growing disparities between the two.

This power relation has also resulted in the inaccessibility and widening of gaps. For many years now Palestinians have been excluded from entry into Jerusalem by a massive complex of walls, barriers and check-points, restricting free movement of Palestinians.

Other than this there are more than 600 internal checkpoints and earthen barriers blocking roads, according to Khalidi. However the half million Israeli settlers there can speed freely anywhere they please on their own network of the state-of-the-art "settler only" roads, parts of a diabolically planned transportation and movement control regime that makes apartheid and its pass system look like child's play.

In addition millions of Palestinians in the occupied territories have been confined for years in their home-cities, towns, villages and to their immediate surroundings. Israel has absolute and total power over all that was Mandatory Palestine prior to 1948, including control of not only of its own territories, but territories nominally under the authority of Palestine. No one enters or leaves these areas without permission.

Also the unceasing refashioning of the landscape of the Promised land by increasing expansion and consolidation, taken together with closed military zones, "green zones" and other areas reserved exclusively for the Israelis since 1967, make possible the restriction of Palestine to only a shrinking part of what remains (Khalidi: 2009).

All these power dynamics vividly express that how space is used as a tool to deepen segregation and disparities, and how the physical space of Israel has become the battle ground where skewed power relations are acted out.

Space as a Means of Providing Conflicting Identities:

One thing that is a natural successor to skewed power relationship in any society is the ensuing impact on the identities of the different people staying there.

One of the sociological understandings is that 'inherent in the idea of spaces is the imagery of "boundary" which is shaped by power relations and which ultimately helps in the shaping of identities.

There are large disparities in the way in which the common space of Israel affects the identities of the two communities. One identity is that of empowerment and recognition and the other is that of loss, displacement and disillusionment.

This is so because according to the Torah, the land of Israel is central to Judaism. Some Rabbis have declared that it is 'mitzvah' (commandment) to take possession of Israel and to stay there. Living outside of Israel is seen as unnatural for a Jew. Therefore for Jews living in Israel and claiming the land as their own is the most natural condition as they derive their complete identity from living there. Therefore this promised land of Israel does not only provide them with a nationality, but with a voice and an empowered identity.

But in extreme contradiction is the identity of the Palestinians which lies in a state of shambles and crisis. The Palestinian identity is a "stateless identity." It has been crushed each time a house has been razed, and each time a single square meter of their homeland was forcibly taken away from them. Therefore space in this context is not just metaphorical or something in the mind. Rather, it is the loss of the very physical state of Israel and the consequent wandering in search of another space to rebuild their lives again, which has robbed them of their identity.

So what remains is the absence of a consolidated national identity in the face of a separated and dismembered community whose people lie in refugee camps all over the world. As Ernest Gellner aptly points out, "the Palestinian political and cultural communities have not yet coincided in time and space" (Khalidi: 2009).

Is another Israel possible?

Andrea Cornwall (2002) refers to spaces as "organic", which emerge "out of sets of common concerns and identification" and "may come into being as a result of popular mobilization such as around identity or issue-based concerns, or may consist of spaces in which like-minded people join together in common pursuits" (Cornwall, 2002).

This theory suits the formation of the Israeli state to the T. The idea of the Israeli state was the brain-child of a few secular Zionist leaders whose primary concern was to give the Jews, scattered around the world, an independent nation, and a sense of identity, especially in the wake of their brutal Holocaust. The choice of erstwhile Palestine as the new Jewish state, as we know,

was both a historic and a religious choice.

Today Israel defines itself as a Jewish state (Kumaraswamy, 2006). The land of Israel provides the Jews with a name and identity. The fact that they believe that it is the land promised to them by God, attaches a very metaphysical significance to the very common, physical space of the land of Israel. This land is repeatedly described in the Torah as a good land and a "land flowing with milk and honey" (eg: Ex 3.8).

Apart from this Jews consider the world outside Israel as 'galut', which means living in exile or captivity. Therefore prayers for a return to Israel and Jerusalem are included in the daily prayers of the Jews.

Having understood how differently the concept of nationhood can be perceived in a land like Israel, where the idea of the nation ceases to be just the territory and becomes much more, the theory put forth by Hans Kohn seems to fit the bill perfectly. Kohn writes, "Nationalism is first and foremost a state of mind, an act of consciousness, which since the French revolution has been more and more common to mankind" (Kohn, 1944). Thus there can be no clear answers to the question of whether there can be an Israel out of Israel. In the Jewish understanding, a nation state does not only comprise of a physical space with geographical boundaries, but is also a space where distinctions between the physical and the metaphysical collapse to give rise to an identity: a recognition and a state of Israel, which can only be where it presently resides, i.e. where God supposedly promised it to be.

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WOMEN IN TRAINS: THE WOMEN'S COMPARTMENT AS FEMINISED SPACE

NOLINA MINJ | TYBA

The Bombay suburban local trains are an offshoot of the first train that ran in Asia, from Victoria Terminus to Thane, in the summer of April 1853.[1] Thereafter, since the 20th century, the trains have become an intrinsic part of the city. Today, around 80% of Bombay's citizens use public transport and the '*Bambai local*' is indeed the lifeline of the city. Songs have been sung, poetry and prose published and films too have captured and immortalized the phenomenon of commuting by these trains. The locals have thus become inseparable from the culture of Bombay.

The three north-south railway lines stretched across the city carry around 7.24 million commuters on a daily basis. This is the same space where you have 4700 passengers compressed in a 9 car rake, opposing the carrying capacity of 1700. It is believed to be the highest passenger density recorded of any urban railway system in the world.[2] Hence, during rush hours, these locals are a mesh of juxtaposed bodies. You can have your face buried in a complete stranger's armpit; have your handbag flung out at you as you alight, get your toes fractured or your clothes torn…

Observing cultural rules which are rarely unfavourable to men, Harriet Iga concludes that these gendered differentials reinforce the unequal gender power in transport as well. "Men can usually travel as they wish, by whatever means available," she writes. "However, women may be constrained by restrictions on where, how and with whom they travel" (Iga, 2002: pp. 53-54). The women's compartment's in Mumbai's local trains thus becomes the perfect space to observe the modern, urban Indian woman. It is a public space which is also private, when it comes to the male gaze. In other instances of public transport, like buses, women need to be alert in public areas in order to guard their physical boundaries. But the ladies coach is a gendered space where factors, other than gender, such as class, age, appearance, wealth, education, acquire importance. It is also mercurial in nature, as it shifts easily from kitchen to beauty parlour; shopping arcade to counselling session; and a worshipping hall to a hangout spot. An all-women compartment makes possible the meeting of women of the two different Indias. There is no re-arrangement of class just because a banker is sitting next to a nurse, but there are two-minute exchanges, passing of information, a noting of difference in diction, diet, or even a peep into the other's life.

But who is the Bombay woman who uses trains? The middle age aunty in a traditional nine-yard sari who jumps into her train, even before it completely halts? The corporate executive in formals, who is immersed in her phone? The fisher woman, trying to get to her spot at the *bazaar* on time, ignoring glares? The teenager, somehow managing to sit on the fourth seat, and watch movies on her laptop? They all compose the seemingly quintessential Bombay girl/woman, who travels by trains and is privileged, compared to her sisters in other cities and towns, where such a widely accessible and efficient (and in some instances, safety) public transport system seldom exists.

Who Belongs?

Tanushree Paul notes that "for women negotiation of the public spaces is more likely to be governed by some markers stipulated for the woman like physical look, proper decorum, non-verbal communication, proper attire and so on" (Paul, 2001, cited in Tara, 2011: p. 73).

The train as a public space is a contested one too. This is highlighted in the great divide between the 1st and 2nd class compartments. When a person boards the coach, (especially when it is not crowded) they are given a cursory glance and judged

upon whether or not they appear to be capable of affording a 1st class pass or a ticket. Almost anyone who has ever travelled by the locals has witnessed somebody or themselves being told to get off the 1st class compartment, solely based on their appearance. Studies affirm that well dressed women, who confidently enter this compartment without a ticket, are allowed to sit comfortably. Whereas, those carrying a 1st class ticket but shabbily dressed, are treated dubiously.

Thus power dynamics played out in these compartments only reflect the external situation in a capsule. They help to determine and assert the legitimacy of those who enter these spaces, and their social identity. Hence, these supposed egalitarian public spaces, run by the State, adhere to the larger framework of the capitalist hegemonic structures we live in.

In contrast, during rush hours, it is impossible to filter out the crowd. Suketu Mehta states, in *Maximum City,* how the locals are a faceless leveller of the people, where multiple hands reach out to pull you into a moving train and you are not aware of the person whom the hand belongs to (Mehta, 2004).

Another aspect of "belonging" has been brought forward in *Why Loiter? Women and Risk on Mumbai Streets,* by Shilpa Phadke, Sameera Khan and Shilpa Ranade. They argue that "transgender people and lesbian women who dress ambiguously face reactions ranging from confusion to hostility. The ladies compartment then becomes a space that can only belong to women who obviously look like women!" (2011: p. 76). This holds true of conventions that still divide people into cookie cutter moulds of male or female. The argument being, that a person belonging to, or displaying, an inexact sexual identity, experiences and responds to a distinct space differently than the accepted norm. And in this difference lies the danger of the breakdown of strongly upheld conventions.

Harassment, Violence and Safety

"In spite of separate compartments for women, local trains continue to be spaces fraught with some anxiety for women. One can find graffiti pasted or scribbled on the inner walls of trains…what they point to, is the notion that the very presence of women is perceived as sexual or as sexualizing space" (Phadke *et.al.*, 2011: p. 223). Though the compartments are segregated, access to them is not. Walking amongst a largely male dominated space, i.e., railway stations, most women agree to have heard of incidents of sexual harassment. During the rush hours, one only has to wait for the women's compartment to arrive at the station, to hear the whistling and the leering. There is also the occasional flasher in empty compartments.

And yet violence is not only perpetrated on women from the outside, women themselves often use it on other women. This violence is mostly verbal, with a touch-me-not attitude regarding space. Often there are groups of women (mostly, regular commuters) who struggle to establish their dominion in that particular space, in which they have been travelling for years. However, fights do get physically violent.

Killing Time

When one is not busy, being a hot dog in a crowded train…what is it that women do during their commute? The answer is a variety of things. From singing devotional *bhajans* in the morning, praying on sacred beads, celebrating each other's birthdays by cutting cakes and distributing vada paos, reapplying makeup or manicuring nails, browsing through jewels or toys for their children, buying and even chopping vegetables for dinner, to simply having their own personal time to read, listen to music or even watch movies etc. Groups of women are also often found sitting on the floor of the train and chatting with each other.

It is to be noted that women feel less conscious in the ladies coach than in the general compartment with men. The ladies compartment becomes a gendered space where the binary space is the men's compartment, technically referred to as general but treated by many as a wholly male domain. The private space thus created for them lets them be free of the rigors of social conventions. Leela Dube, thus, argues that:

"Women passengers reported that they can talk, sit, and laugh without being conscious of the male presence. The studies on women's access to public space attach the discourse of respectability with their presence in public space. In this discourse women moderate their behaviour in public to avoid being labelled as unrespectable. This moderation involves tone, volume of voice, along with body language." (Dube, 2001 as cited in Tara, 2011: p. 73)

The ladies compartment then becomes an escape from the male gaze, which is often internalised by women themselves which begs the question: how does the internalised male gaze influence the way women look at other women? Policing, surveillance are possible outcomes – as opposed to this seemingly pseudo-utopian space. Thus, it is possible that in this public-cum-private space women behave, act or simply exist as part of a fundamentally discrete phenomenon compared to heterogeneous spaces.

Access and control over space are also key elements in power dynamics. The Bombay local thus, an iconic symbol, means many things to the urban woman. Many women speak of the commute as a precious time, when they can be themselves, instead of enacting the roles of wives, mothers and daughters. Representing the Bombay woman in her grit, determination and passion to be the modern Indian woman, it shares her unbeatable spirit and the many worlds she carries around with her. It is thus a pertinent reflection of the Bombay woman and the times we live in.

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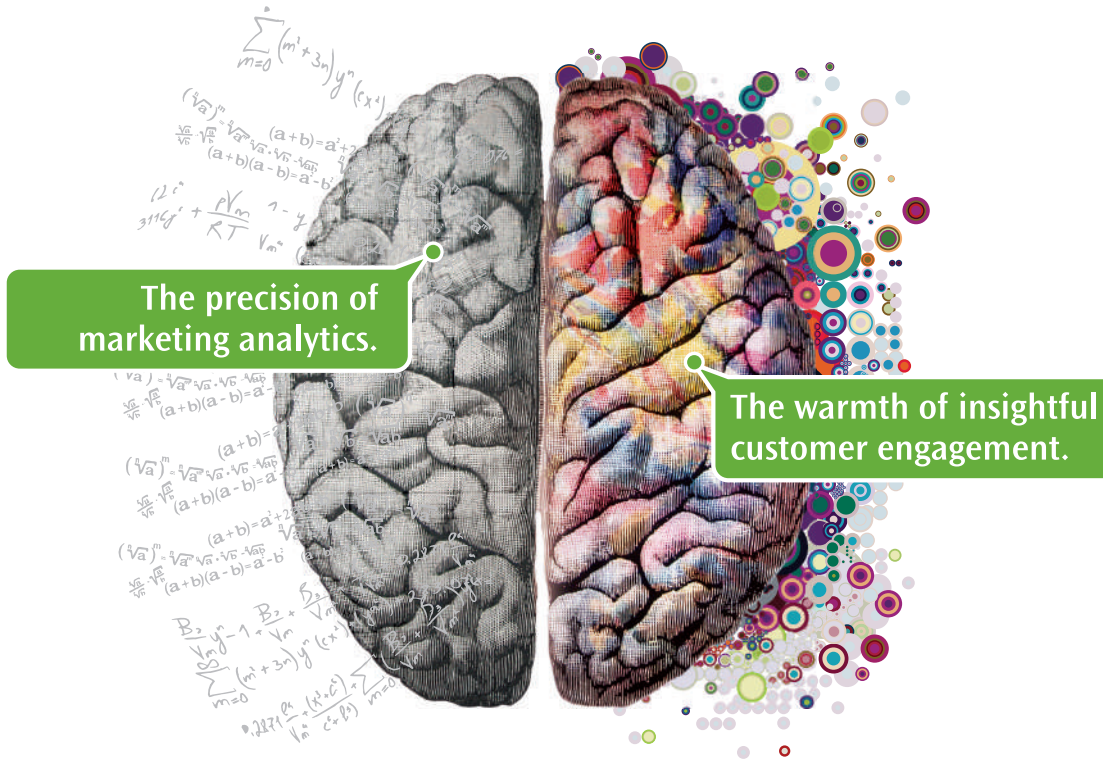

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