

Sarai.txt^{2.1}



Photo: Monica Narula

PARADIGM SHIFT ■ TECTONIC SHIFT ■ SHIFTING SANDS ■ SHIFTING PATH ■ SHIFTING COURSE ■ LATE SHIFT ■
NIGHT SHIFT ■ MAKE SHIFT ■ GRAVEYARD SHIFT ■ SWING SHIFT ■ CIRCADIAN SHIFT ■ TAUTOMERIC SHIFT ■
SHIFT IN EMPHASIS ■ DOWN SHIFT ■ UP SHIFT ■ STICK SHIFT ■ GREAT VOWEL SHIFT ■ SHIFTING LANGUAGES
■ LANGUAGE SHIFT ■ SHIFTING BLAME ■ SHIFTING BURDEN ■ FUNCTIONAL SHIFT ■ POPULATION SHIFT ■
SHIFTY-EYED ■ EINSTEIN SHIFT ■ ZERO PHASE SHIFT MIRROR ■ SHIFT CLICKING ■ RED SHIFT ■ SHIFTING
GEARS ■ SHAPE SHIFTING ■ SHIFTING TARGET ■ SHIFTING BOUNDARIES ■ SHIFT THE SCENE ■ SHIFTING CENTER
■ SHIFTLESS ■ SHIFT OFF ■ EVER-SHIFTING ■ SHIFTING CULTIVATION ■ PERCEPTUAL SHIFT ■ TIME-SHIFTING

■ When Names are Swept Away

Notes from the Diary of a City Researcher
13-01-05

I am reading an excellent and insightful article by Jane Caplan on, among other things, the politics of naming and identity. In the wake of the Tsunami catastrophe, some of the issues raised were unfortunately very timely. Some ideas that I have gleaned from the essay...

Since the 11th century BC, administrators around the world have been devising ways and means to deal with the question of how to re-identify someone as the same person he was once known to be. How can one re-individuate a person from others like him?

Solutions came, but they were few and far between. They came as edicts, decrees, laws, ordinances, administrative ramblings and diktats of the sovereign.

Regimes were set in place to mark populations – first at birth, then at marriage and at death – till finally every social transaction that an individual undertook during the course of his/her lifetime, became an instance for enumeration.

Laws were formulated to assign a name to a particular person. For instance, 16th century France had laws which allowed a person to assume names only from a given set, and restrictions were in place to disallow citizens to be named Jesus or Babeline or Lassalline, etc.

Shifting, moving populations were made immobile by criminalising movement across, and within, territories. Identity was made the primary and legitimate token for every 'citizen' to have a justifiable existence.

But what happens when these tokens suddenly disappear? Say, due to a natural calamity such as the Tsunami?

The recent Tsunami disaster has left hundreds of thousands of people stranded in the Andaman and Nicobar islands. The biggest problem for these people is yet to come – the loss of identity documents. As the ocean spat out and sucked in water, it took away with it everything they ever had, including their identity papers – ration cards, birth certificates, certificates of marriage and death.

What happens when your 'tokens of trust' – your voter ID card, driving licence, passport, ration card and property documents – disappear? And the bank that contained trust deeds and LIC papers is literally, and figuratively, swept away?

Who are you, then, in the eyes of the state? How does the state cope with this? Does the state have a system in place to deal with a calamity such as this, when the entire bureaucratic machinery is paralysed by a systemic failure?

Taha

taha@sarai.net

Taha Mehmood is a researcher with the Information Society project with Sarai-CSDS

Subject: My Mobile Phone Provider Thinks I am a Tsunami Victim

To: reader-list@sarai.net

From: paul.keller@paul@waag.org

I received my monthly bill from my mobile phone provider, Orange Netherlands. Getting a monthly phone bill is nothing special; but one which informs you that you are a Tsunami victim, and therefore credited with 42.05 Euro for, "extra phone expenses related to the Tsunami", is strange. Especially if you were on a Jet Airways flight from Bombay to Delhi, when the Tsunami ravaged the coasts of India and Sri Lanka.

It is no secret that mobile phone providers record the location data a mobile phone generates, but under Dutch law, this data cannot be used for anything other than invoicing purposes. Moreover, as far as I can remember, I did not generate any data at all during the time the Tsunami struck, as I replaced my Orange sim-card with an Airtel Indi- branded one, and switched back to Orange only on the 11 January 2005. I am not comfortable with my phone company using this (non) data to shower its timely benevolence! Not to mention, during the Tsunami I was in Delhi which, thanks to its inland location and altitude, is probably even less Tsunami-affected than Amsterdam. It is not difficult to imagine the mechanics behind this situation. The public relations geniuses at Orange saw, in the Tsunami, an opportunity to build a personal relationship with their customers. They asked their data-mining department for a list of all customers travelling to south Asia when the Tsunami struck. The data-miners also procured a CNN info-graphic showing the Tsunami-affected

countries, ran queries based on this information, and arrived at a list of 'Tsunami victims'. This information went back to the marketing department, and here the amount of money available as contingency funds was divided by the number of 'victims'. The billing department accordingly credited each 'victim' with the resulting amount. How should I explain that if I ever wish to avail of such a facility, I will buy a travel insurance policy?

I called them and enquired why I was a beneficiary, when I was in Delhi the whole time; only to be told, "Well, that is in the same region, isn't it?"

best,

Paul

<http://mail.sarai.net/pipermail/reader-list/2005-February/005021.html>

Subject: Distress Definitions: Falling between the Lines

To: reader-list@sarai.net

From: clifton d' rozario<clifton@altlawforum.org>

From the 28 December 2004 onwards, a group of us have been helping with relief work in the Tsunami-affected villages of Nagapattinam (Tamil Nadu) and Karaikal (Pondicherry).

One of the major problems that can be identified is the limited scope of the 'affected person' definition by the state. The attempt to define 'affected persons' has been an extremely problematic exercise, and there is much confusion over who is 'primarily affected', 'secondarily affected' and 'not affected'.

While the initial approach was based on the lives lost and property damaged, it was later rectified to a certain extent with the recognition of petty traders, farmers, landless agricultural labourers, etc., as 'livelihood affected persons'. The government in its orders has, until now, adopted a property owner-centric policy while addressing livelihood issues in its rehabilitation packages, and has only recognised those who own boats and go out to sea, as well as those who own and operate small shops in the villages. In terms of the farming community, which owns agricultural lands that were inundated by seawater, surveys have been carried out by the revenue departments of various districts to assess the extent of inundation and the degree of salination. Post the assessment, a government order was issued to provide relief to farmers who have lost standing crops.

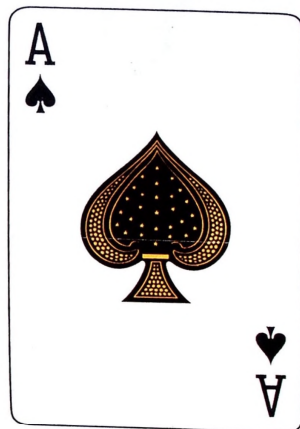
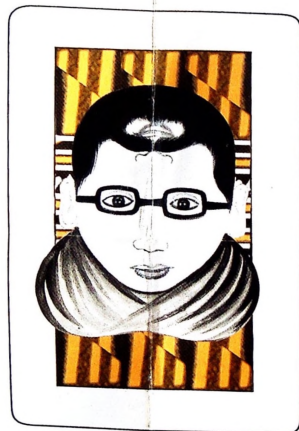
This categorisation of 'livelihood affected' has meant that in formulation of rehabilitation packages, the people of the fishing and farming communities that do not own boats, nets or lands, generally remain ignored. It has also meant that the government has prioritised the needs of the fisher boat-owning community, to the detriment of landless labourers. In Karaikal, fisher-people have received 60 kg of rice, while landless agricultural labourers have received only 5 kg. This is inexplicable, since both categories of people have lost their livelihoods to the Tsunami – the fisherman having lost his boat/nets and thus the ability to fish, while the landless agricultural labourer has lost his/her work on lands, since these have been salinated. This differential treatment has resulted in the landless facing serious food crisis.

However, the issue is not one of property/asset ownership alone. A majority of the landless are dalits, and most vulnerable to facing severe food crisis. What seems like an issue of class in purely economic terms becomes extremely complicated when located in a situation of entrenched social hierarchy, where the poorest are also the community most vulnerable to violence and discrimination by socially dominant castes. Caste-based discrimination is exacerbated by the assumption on the part of government agencies of communities being 'homogenous'. Fishing communities comprise of three main castes – the Meenavar community (Most Backward Caste), dalits (Scheduled Caste) and Pazhankudi Makkal (Scheduled Tribe). While the Meenavars own boats, the others are engaged in ancillary manual tasks. Therefore while relief is 'caste-blind', this presumption leads to severe inequities in relief disbursement. Even within the fisher-people, dalits have been excluded from relief efforts.

Finally, within the 'affected persons' category, district authorities seem to have prioritised and counter-posed the interests of those who have lost their kith and kin against people who have lost their livelihood, to the detriment of the latter.

Excerpted and adapted from 'Relief and Rehabilitation of Tsunami-Affected Persons in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry' and 'Exclusion of Dalits and Adivasis in the Time of Tsunami: The Case for an Inclusive Relief and Rehabilitation Policy', by Uvaraj, Niruj, Arvind, Revathi, Nitin, Deepu and Clifton. The full text of the reports can be accessed at: <http://mail.sarai.net/pipermail/reader-list/2005-February/004978.html>, and <http://mail.sarai.net/pipermail/reader-list/2005-February/004979.html>

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY



NOT JUST TIME PASS

■ Dear Anonymous,

A lot of the texts and ideas presented in the *Sarai.txt* issues are based on the work of a number of researchers at Sarai, researchers associated with Sarai, students associated with Sarai and the network of Sarai independent research fellows. Together they form an intricate web of knowledge producers.

This web is woven by diverse practices – making daily diaries of notes, posting on lists, maintaining blogs, conversing with people in the neighbourhood, locality and the city, recording and transcribing interviews, listening to and recording sounds of the city, making and circulating broadsheets, playing with images, making graphic strips, meeting other researchers in one's own and different cities. This also includes making archival collections of footage, posters, stickers, booklets, cassette covers, maps, documents, newspaper clippings, photographs and images. The city is soaked in and recreated in different ways, through the intersections of these practices and experiences, and questions gathered from them.

Our imagination of who a researcher is, deepens through this diversity. The researcher no longer remains someone who has an outsider's perspective to the realities she or he begins an engagement with. Research becomes a part of everyday living, arising from the lived and seeping into it. For instance, among these researchers is a young woman who stays at home, busy in her household responsibilities and relationships. Every week she sets up tasks for herself. One of the notations in her daily diary is, "This week I will make a list of words used in the house. If I were to remove the words used most often, in a definitional sense, for what is allowed in this dwelling, what would the house become?" Her research questions emerge from her lived experience, and because she is imbricated in it in a specific way, she produces questions around her. And as she is part of the diversity of practices of the network, she can access and experiment with different expressive registers, and forms of circulation.

In the process of making this broadsheet, we become attuned to this diversity of practices and nodes.

However, this density is not available to us when we begin to imagine the public of the broadsheet – about you, who are reading this publication. This is a question about the relationship of the public of the broadsheet, with the broadsheet – what does our public do with the broadsheet? What is the environment which this broadsheet becomes part of, with you? What are the social relations amidst which it finds itself, once it reaches you?

When we begin thinking about these questions, we are confronted by a sparseness. We have very few terms available to us for thinking about our public. 'Recipient', 'user', 'end-user', 'viewer', 'reader', 'consumer' of this work, are some of these terms. With these, our challenge becomes even more urgent, because it sharpens the lines between the creator and the reader.

How can we think outside the dichotomy of provider and receiver, and so, think beyond and question an authorial conception of creativity and a passive conception of users? The challenge is also to move away from thinking of works as 'property', to thinking about the properties of works, which can perhaps be best understood through the category of circulation – the networks through which they inhabit and pass through different contexts, inflecting these contexts and being inflected by them.

And so we solicit your help, dear anonymous, in thinking through the metaphors which can be applied to you, which we can call you by. We hope, our dear anon, that through correspondence and conversations with us, you will help us deepen and work through these questions.

Looking forward,
The Broadsheet Collective

We would like to acknowledge a number of contexts which have hosted many of the questions we are grappling with, and have expressed in this letter. Among them are the meeting of Sarai Student Fellows (17-19 August, 2004), and the 'Contested Commons, Trespassing Publics' conference organised by Sarai-CSDS and the Alternative Law Forum (6-8 January, 2005). We are particularly indebted to Peter Jaszi for his provocation about the need to critically evolve metaphors applied to the recipient of a work. The full text of his lecture may be accessed at: http://www.sarai.net/events/ip_conf/day02_audio/jaszi.mp3

■ Seeing with 'Cardboard Days'*

Time Code 00:08:28 A middle-aged man stands in front of a magazine stand, a child clutched to his shirtless belly. His smile is friendly. Next to him, a woman with a ponytail looks around and chats. Her hand rests gently on the handle of her trolley. They look into the quiet distance. Behind them the magazines are colourful, arranged in a square grid.

TC 00:08:50 A white train waits for passengers. The crowded platform is restless. As many trolleys as people. A man indicates the time left before departure. He checks all passes. Bodies move along the train, searching for place to move into with their trolleys. A patient young man in checked pants sits at the train window, watching the proceedings.

TC 00:10:29 A woman in a white shirt leans comfortably against the door of the train. Talks animatedly. Neatly folded papers shift between her hands. A man, his body bent towards her, listens closely with pursed lips. The city landscape recedes away from them.

TC 00:02:09 It's late evening. A thick stream of people crosses an intersection. Office-goers returning home. A man with a black leather paper holder under his right arm, walks briskly. A pot-bellied man with a tattoo on his arm squeezes through the crowd. Two shoulders graze.

TC 00:02:11 Night has fallen. Few pedestrians. A young woman in high heels walks past. The headlights of cars even out all colour. People emerge as silhouettes. A man in his late twenties pushes a trolley. The trolley. Neatly piled cardboard sheets. A huge black sack on top. A few dark bags hang from the handle bars. Two wheels. His white shoes keep pace with them. He disappears behind a dark pillar with a white poster. Traffic lights blink-red, green. The city halts and moves on.

TC 00:26:11 A woman waiting at a bus stop eyes the stout, brown-haired co-traveller suspiciously. Moments of waiting turn endless.

TC 00:02:24 A young man stuffs a white sack, as tall as he is. Behind him stands a department store, its glass walls encased in iron grills. A blue trashcan shines in the white light from the store. The gaze of a passer-by in a yellow shirt fixes on the steady, lifting motions of the young man. He pays no attention. The man in the yellow shirt moves on. A black sticker on yellow tiles behind them announces, 'EMERGENCY'.

TC 00:31:25 The weighing machine calibrates-16.2, 16.6...The numbers move haltingly and then come to a stop. Collections made from the refuse of different streets in the city are measured.

Who are these figures who reach the city after sunset, roaming the streets after dark, loading their empty trolleys with cardboard from the garbage on the street? There must be a word they can all be described by. In Buenos Aires they are called 'Cartoneros', or Cardboard Collectors – people who make their livelihood from the daily waste of the city.

Debates rage in the city: How can this new form of labour be thought of with dignity? Who does rubbish belong to in our society? Thrown out of homes, is it private property? Left out in the streets, is it the property of the city? Can it belong to whoever claims it? Who can take rubbish from off the streets?

**Días de Carton/Cardboard Days* (2003, 51 mins.) dir. Veronica Souto, Argentina. Type: Documentary. Language: Spanish

This text was written after a discussion following the screening of the film at Sarai. Sarai hosts a film screening every Friday.

See: <http://www.sarai.net/calendar/calendar.htm>

We wish to thank Breakthrough for providing a copy of the film. www.breakthrough.tv

■ A Man, with His Notes, in the City

He would cut a curious figure anywhere – black pants and shirt, white jacket cut in the Nehru style but longer, wearing dark glasses even inside a small, moderately lit room. But sitting just outside the make-up room, with people flitting in and out, he doesn't strike me as odd at all.

We are sitting inside a two-room studio where he is shooting for his next album. He is a singer, who became an instant hit with his song *Janaaza Mera Uthne se Pehle Mehendi Mat Lagana Tum*, in 2002. "Video albums can't be made without the singer. People buy music albums for the singer everywhere – in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, and even Kashmir," he smiles. "These are places where my albums do well. In Delhi, they are popular in different places – Uttam Nagar, Shakarpur, etc."

It has been a long journey for this singer, whose voice is an everyday companion to bus and truck drivers, among others who make long journeys through different landscapes, in their lives. Mohammed Niyaz spent his childhood in Sitapur near Lucknow, listening to and singing behind Rafi and Talat Mahmood songs. Today, 'sad songs' are his specialty. "When I first came to the industry, they said, 'Beta, don't copy, develop your own style'. I don't copy them, but take their support. Everyone does – whether in *bhajans*, or in film songs."

Niyaz came to Delhi at the age of twenty, in search of work. "I worked as an accountant for twelve years. Were it not for this job, I would never have been a singer," he muses. But singing was his destiny. "Many of my friends ran away from home to come here, but I wanted to take my time." This time came with his father's illness and, being the eldest son, responsibility for the family. An avid listener of old film songs, he participated in the late evening and Sunday singing competitions organised in and around his locality. "Posters were put up all over. The entry fee ranged between Rs. 10 and Rs. 50. I participated again and again because I always won a position."

Then came his big break. "There was a competition on a larger scale than the ones I had been participating in, called *Yaad-e-Rafi*. I sang *Nain Lar Gaye Re...* and won." One of the judges was a producer in a music company. "He said I should consider joining the industry. There was no looking back." Niyaz's childhood hobby led him to a perchance local talent hunt. Today, beside the cassettes he has collected over the years, lie his own three albums.

The beginning was rough. He started doing the rounds of companies, gave auditions. Initially, he was turned away. "They said there was no market for a voice like mine." Then in 1997 Altaf Raja's *Tum to Thehre Pardesi* became a super hit. He recalls, "The industry was looking for singers who could sing sad songs. I went back to one of the small companies, called Jai, and said, 'I sing like Altaf.' " His first album was created. But he had to wait a year before it was released.

What does Niyaz think about this industry, which he followed as a fan, and then made his way into, from being an unwanted stranger, to promoting himself through a likeness of voice with a known name, to becoming a hit himself? His reply is of a person who recognises that destiny is not what one person makes alone, and only for himself, "If *Janaaza Mera...* had not been a hit, no one would have asked about me. People who were with me then, today say, '*Niyaz mere saath gata tha*', and get a break."

I take my leave from Niyaz, as he resumes shooting. On the way home I stop at a CD burning shop, where disks are created with the customer's selection of songs. It is the marriage season. A boy comes and presents the shop owner with a list of 'sad songs', extracts a promise of delivery by evening, and leaves. I raise my eyebrows quizzically. The shopkeeper explains knowingly and in a matter-of-fact manner, "It's a gift for the girl who's getting married. Probably his heartthrob." I wonder, as I make my way towards home, if singing songs to himself, in quiet moments, this is not another singer in the making.

Bhagwati Prasad

bhagwati@sarai.net

Bhagwati is a researcher with the Publics and Practices in the History of the Present project in Sarai-CSDS.



Photo: Monica Narula

Genderchanger:

A small device or adaptor that changes the 'sex' of cables.

A plug with pins is male and one with holes, female. For a connection, the pins fit into the holes. A genderchanger has two sides with holes, or two sides with pins. This makes a connection between any port and cable a possibility. A genderchanger makes the 'gender' of the plugs irrelevant. Genderchangers are most commonly used to extend the length of a cable, by connecting two cables together, or simply to change the gender of a cable to the gender you need.

<http://www.genderchangers.org>

http://www.ramelectronics.net/html/gender_changers.html

■ Improbable Imaginings of Improbable Spaces

'Improbable' means 'unlikely' – but also 'marvellous' and 'tall', as in a 'tall tale'... A tall tale speaks of an imagined and, sometimes, marvellous world. Imaginings are points of departure for building something marvellous.

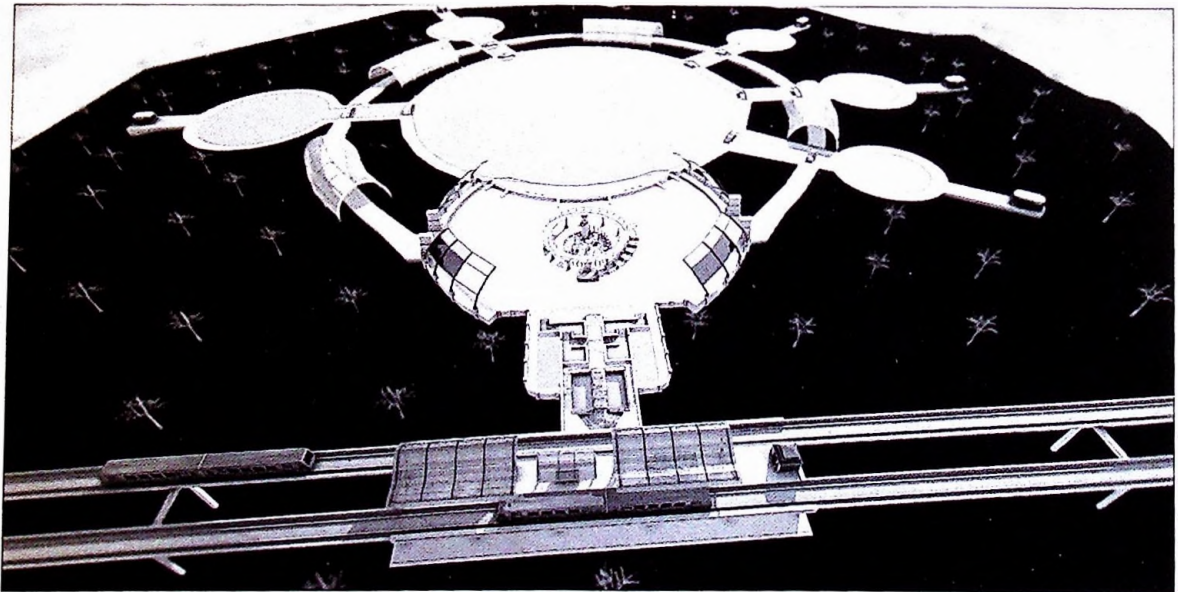
For the past two years I have collaborated with Justice Now, a human rights organisation, in documenting conversations with women prisoners, and publishing them on the Internet. The title of this project refers to the improbable, and the monumental.

Traditionally, monuments are associated with the 'monolithic' and mono-vocal – a uniform and authoritative representation. But a monument might be re-imagined as a 'repository', or archive for information, objects and memories, which produce a multi-vocal representation of social truths.

ImprobableVoices.net is the first publication resulting from our collaboration. The website is a monument-repository of prisoners' descriptions of the experience of incarceration, and their proposals for a monument to the end of prisons.

Visits to the prison require adherence to invasive search and surveillance procedures. I am registered and searched on entry. I am allowed to bring in only a clear plastic bag with an ink pen, identification, a blank legal pad and mini-disc recorder. The recorder must be approved in advance. The serial number is registered, and the device inspected on entry and exit. Only sealed discs are allowed.

After our interviews, the women are subjected to strip search and visual cavity searches, that may be performed by male guards. Each of the participants, however, has asked to have their full name associated with their statements online, despite the possibility of retaliation by the authorities. Each participant has a powerful story to tell. And a powerful imagination of alternative 'monuments' in a prison-free world.



Beatrice-Smith Dyer's description of a monument-park:

"When you walk in, you would see tall beautiful statues of women – Muslim women, Christian women and Jewish women, gay women, young women and old women. They would be surrounding a pond, holding out their hands, with water flowing out of their fingertips... There would be no wall saying who the women were that had passed, but you would know. You could find an area to sit in, with trees and swings hanging from the trees.

"Around the area would be a control panel. The control panel could do what ever you wanted – you could have soft light or no light, play any music you wanted, you could change the ambient temperature. You could go down to another area with taller grass and deer, with enough privacy, so that if you wanted to sit with your lost love and just talk to her, you could."

Excerpted and adapted from Sharon Daniel's presentation at the 'Contested Commons, Trespassing Publics' conference organised by Sarai-CSDS and the Alternative Law Forum, in collaboration with the Public Service Broadcasting Trust, (6-8 January 2005, New Delhi). An audio file of Sharon's presentation can be accessed at: http://www.sarai.net/events/ip_conf/day03_audio/stream08-morning.mp3

More information about the Improbable Voices project is available at: www.improbablevoices.net

Spaces

No Thoroughfare

It has been raining today, and the colours of the evening seem deeper. The yellow light of the street lamp is twinkling through the rain drops. Clothes left out to dry on the clothesline got drenched in the downpour today. Someone is preparing dinner in a cooker, its whistle echoing in the street. A plastic bag flails, stuck between a railing and the wire running over it. It's trying to loosen itself from out of their grip. The breeze is cool and moist today.

The house in front of me is known as the 'corner house'. There is always a cot in front of its main door. A pack of cards, *bidis*, matches, *hukka* and a newspaper are lying on the cot. They are all wet because of the rain. But there is no sign of anyone today.

I am the gate on street no. 6 in the colony. I'm made of iron, and painted black. A board hangs on me, saying 'NO THOROUGHFARE'. The board is not heavy, but the words painted on it are a heavy weight that I carry.

The other gate is much better off than I am. It is at the other end of the same lane, and is also painted black. We look alike. But on it hangs a different board. That board lists all the houses on this street, and directions to get to each of them. The other gate has a big and a small entrance through it. The small entrance is always open, and the big entrance always shut. This gate looks quite happy. It is I who am unfortunate because of this board that hangs on me.

It's just that very few people pass through me, now. I try and cheer myself up by watching all the hustle and bustle in the lane in the evening. Many people step out, and pass through the street at that time, talking over the din of sounds. Children yell and squeal as they run, chasing and catching each other. Other children play hide and seek. There is the sound of television from different homes.

This board didn't always hang on me. There was an incident in the colony, after which it was placed on me. But I'm not very sure about what this incident was. Before the board, people would take short cuts into the lane through me, pass by with their two-wheelers. Because of this board, they don't any more. But then, like I said, I'm not sure if this is the only reason. If you have a clue about what the reasons could be, please do tell me.

Dakshinpuri Lab

cybermohalla@sarai.net

Cybermohalla project of Ankur+Sarai-CSDS

The stranger is not the person who comes today and goes tomorrow, but the person who comes today and stays tomorrow. He is, so to speak, the potential wanderer. Although he has not moved on, he has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going...

George Simmel

http://www.google.co.in/search?q=cache:RmK_xYSsOWgJ:www.blackwellpublishing.com/pdf/women.pdf+simmel%27s+strangers&hl=en

Access

■ Why Do You Travel?

It seems to me that in the 1970s, oral history was at the frontier of history. Not for any particular merit, in and of itself, but because it happened to have a particular function of helping to take a large territory of history towards what might be called micro-history – towards daily life and material culture, towards a relationship with anthropology and folklore. Oral history added subjectivity to history through 'voice'. Today, filmic sources, including moving image sources, are in a similar situation for what concerns history – in the sense that they too promise to add something new, to enlarge the territory of the historian. What is this 'something new'? One element could be emotion.

Let me turn to my own experience. I interviewed the working class, for the first time, in the mid-1970s. In the '80s, I interviewed women who had been feminists in the 1970s. We were looking at who were the subjects of social change. The categories that guided us, conceptually and politically, were class, gender and age. In the '60s, in the context of a political defeat of the radical left, a whole generation was trying to transform politics into culture, and social history into cultural history.

What became very clear, slowly, was that something was lacking in this complicity. It had a sense of assumed universality. It lacked the realisation, that in fact we are particular beings. When I interviewed the workers, or the women, it was assumed that they were the subjects of universal history, that they were going to be the ones to change the world as a whole...it was West-centric, it was Euro-centric, it was the assumption that they were still at the forefront of social change.

Then, in the '90s, I began work on two projects. The first, a project in 1999 with cross-over women, concomitant with warring Kosovo. I did some of the interviews in camps in Italy, where Rom Kosovo women were refugees. The second was a project with women migrants from Hungary and Bulgaria, to Italy and Holland. During the course of these conversations, I felt something had changed in the position between the relationship of the self, and the other.

The interviews with the Rom Kosovo women struck me the most. These women spoke of their experience in terms completely different from those that the existing literature was attributing to them. Existing literature assumed that Rom people are nomadic. How did they start their narratives? By saying, "My house was burnt, I was thrown out of my house...I wish I could go back..." They had a house. They were not nomadic at all! These women's narrations were completely different from most narrations I had ever heard. They were not narrations with a beginning...they were associations – free associations.

When speaking of their reasons for migration, the women said, "Why do you call us migrants? Migrants were those who were obliged to go because they were poor. We are travelling." And of course some of them have had to work. I mean they are domestic servants, some of them are translators...many of them from Bulgaria work as dancers, some of them might also be involved in prostitution. But love keeps emerging as a motif for migration. They say, "I travel for love...I decided to follow my husband," or, "I just went for a short time and I fell in love and I decided to stay." In this, the subject is changing. The subject presents herself as one for whom love is a primary motive. And then, interestingly, they mentioned the complications that state regulations and the European Union regulations create against love.

For instance, in the Netherlands, when a person who is not from the European Union wants to marry somebody who is, they have to produce something that proves they are in love. Try to imagine this...it's not easy...I have seen dossiers with letters from the parents saying, "We are sure they are in love." Or, there are love letters. A love letter is an incredible document to be used for this...this made me think...the state of the Netherlands and the European Union as an institutional organisation are taking love as a marker of subjectivity. Of course they are using it repressively. But this is nonetheless redefining the position of the subject.



■ Traces, Imprints, Flows...

What is that imprint whose source we cannot trace?

Writing is an imprint upon the world. For this trace to be 'real', however, it cannot remain imprisoned only on the paper, or screen, of the writer, to be read by her eyes alone. And so the writer publishes – her books travel to far corners of the world, they are translated into many tongues, and become, she hopes, part of our common imaginations. In this story, however, we are never far from the writer.

How then do we think of the act of writing, and putting texts into circulation, in spaces (such as the Internet) where we do not know the writer through any of the markers we are accustomed to? We do not know her name, we do not know if she is a 'she' or a 'he', or masquerading as one or the other. We do not know which part of the world she comes from, or where she is going. What would be that imprint, whose source we cannot trace?

Adapted from the Independent Fellowship research proposal and postings of Nitoo Das. Her project is titled 'Hypertextual Poetry: The Poetry of MSN Poetry Communities'. river_side1@hotmail.com

What is it that flows create?

Joshua Gonsalves is nervous. Bombay is a big city, and he's never been more than twenty miles from Mapsa. Everything is different here – people, food, the air. Things will have to be learned quickly. Luckily for him, Jonathan Pinto's letter-writing formats, available at the corner bookstore, list ways in which a house may be acquired, jobs found, relationships with relatives back home maintained. Marie Fernandez's book of recipes is also useful – ingredients easily available back home, but hard to find in Bombay's busy markets, can be replaced with local substitutes which taste almost as good as the real thing.

People travel – leave home and go to new places. The motivation and destination of this journey is not always of their choosing. Transitions are eased, however, by the knowledges put in circulation by those who came before, for those who arrive now, and those arriving tomorrow. And by reading advertisements for houses and jobs, singing in church with hymnbooks in the local language, reading novels and stories which evoke the journey they have just made, strangers to a city enter its subjectivity. What is it that flows create?

Adapted from the Independent Fellowship research proposal and postings of Rochelle Pinto. Her project is titled 'Manuel in the City: A Semi-Fictionalised Illustrated Book on the Arrival and Absorption of Goan Migrants to Mumbai'. rochellepinto@yahoo.com

What is lost when flows ebb?

Mir Baqar Ali, the last famous *dastango* of India, died in 1928. *Dastangoyee* is an oral storytelling form, popular in the central and northern regions of South Asia from the 11th century onwards. The stories revolve around the travels of Amir Hamza, the Prophet's uncle. *Dastans* are recited at street corners and *chowks*, crowded bazaars, on the steps of mosques, during fairs and occasions of celebration.

Baqar Ali was a superlative performer. Tall and regal as a king, small and frail as an old woman, he held his listeners spellbound by the ability to transform his diminutive frame into the character he was playing. This was no ordinary feat, given the 'theatre' of his art.

In order that *dastangoyee* would not be lost, in 1905 Munshi Nawal Kishore hired three writer-narrators to compose a multi-volume edition of the *Dastan* of Amir Hamza. The edition was immensely popular and went into several reprints, well into the 20th century. *Dastangoyee* also influenced other narrative forms: early Hindi and Urdu novels borrowed heavily from its narrative structure, *dastan* conventions influenced Urdu theatre and the Hindi film industry. From the 1920s onwards however, *dastangoyee* began to wane, and by the mid 1940s it was all but forgotten.

Why did the stories start to fade? Perhaps because the spaces for narration changed, perhaps they circulated in so many 'versions' that the 'original' was forgotten, perhaps sometimes things slip out of circulation. What is lost when flows ebb?

Excerpted and adapted from the Independent Fellowship research proposal of Mahmood U.R. Farooqui. His project is titled 'Dastangoyee: The Culture of Storytelling in Urdu'. mahmoodfarooqui@yahoo.com

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