

# **Bharat Rang Mahotsav'16**

## **Synopsis of six plays performed at Bharat Rang Mahotsav'16**

### **The Mother of a Traitor**

It was performed in Dollu Kunitha Form. It is one of the popular folk forms of Karnataka. It is generally played during festivals and fairs that take place in the name of respected regional Gods. It is a form of Drum dance where large drums are adorned with colored cloths and hung around the neck of men. The songs used in this dance usually have religious and battle fervour. The main emphasis is on quick and light movements of the feet and legs. It is a short story revolving around the concept of motherhood. The whole region is afraid of a traitor and his group for their menace due to which the life of people has got stuck with the malevolent blackness of their cry. The mother of traitor wanders around the walls of cit in quest of hers son's existence and witness a woman kneeling down in front of her son's corps. The woman says, "May he be accursed and the womb that bore him!" The mother meets her son and her son started expressing pride on his desks. Dealing with the conflict of love for her son on one side and country on the other, she finally kills her son, who is resting on her breasts.

### **The Transparent Trap**

It was a non verbal play. The body language of the actors used was fantastic. Plastic is an important part of our lives. We, humans have used it in almost each and everything except the edible stuff. But we do used it in packing of edible stuff. We used plastic daily because of it's extreme user friendly character. It is one of the prime reasons for global warming and has killed many aquatic, terrestrial and amphibian species. One of us invented it and now all of us use it.

extensively. A material which was invented for betterment and become the killer of humanity itself. This hazardous entity is destroying, choking and trapping all over. This play tries to search for solutions to find way out of plastic trap.

### **Tar aaya**

It is based on introduction of tar roads to a small village in Mysore. The tar roads bring division of opinion between the youth and the more rigid elders of the village, seen as clash of modernity and traditional values. But interestingly, it is the village elders who are in favour of modernity while the young youth fights to keep it at bay. From a simple narrative, the story plunges into diverse issues of caste , religion and the role of women in rural society. The story refuses to submit to traditional defined roles and creates newer perspective of each issue. The nature of the story is inspirational even though it is grounded in reality. Though the ending is quite tragic as in the fight between urbanization and corruption, an innocent child is killed in the molten tar.

### **Dopehri**

Dopehri is set in the streets of Lucknow where sits the haveli of an old lonely woman, Amma Bi. He brings to us her story, stringing us through the emotions and nuances of these characters and the milieu of an old Lucknow. It transports us through Amma Bi's journey from loneliness to self discovery. It is based on the novella written by Pankaj Kapur and now rendered by him on stage, with the help of lights and music.

### **Nyayapriya**

An underground progressive gathering arrangements to kill a British Collector in provincial India. Tej Pratap, a criminal living in Canada, comes and joins the gathering. Shekhar, prevalently called Mastana in the gathering, on seeing kids riding in the British authority's carriage, does not toss the bomb as anticipated the learned day. There is warmed contention in the gathering as a result of this. Damyanti, a

senior individual from the gathering, is infatuated with Shekhar. The gathering pioneer Baldev arrangements to toss the bomb two days after the fact. Shekhar is captured after the passing of the Collector. A watchfulness officer tries to purchase off Shekhar in the jail. English gatherer's significant other and Pandit Trivedi visit Shekhar in the jail with the goal that he apologizes. Shekhar is hanged to death. Upon the arrival of the hanging Damyanti, profoundly lamented, chooses to toss the following bomb and endure a comparative destiny.

### **Land where the Life is Good**

Land Where Life Is Good discusses the different personalities that are concealed in the covers of a solitary character called 'Indian'. It tries to take a gander at the disarray that this activity of digestion for nationhood has made in the brains of the present era, particularly with regards to Nagaland. Does there exists a performance personality of a man or would we say we are today the result of numerous characters? What is bona fide – the old or the new? What are the bits of character that we clutched and why do we relinquish different bits? These are a portion of the inquiries that roused this generation. This is an endeavor to address these inquiries through the voyage of a youthful Naga kid – Tako, his unwavering pooch and his mystical performer companion Nogazenba. At no time do we attempt to answer the inquiries raised, on the grounds that for every person, the answers are distinctive.

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## **Raja Bundela – From Reel Life**

# to Real Life

## Raja Bundela – From Reel Life to Real Life

—Manohar Khushalani

The Indian democracy is replete with examples of film actors and actresses making it big in politics. Shatrughan Sinha, Vinod Khanna, Rajesh Khanna, Shabana Azmi, M.G. Ramachandran, M. Karunanidhi, Jaya Pradha, N.T. Rama Rao, Nargis and Sunil

Dutt are just a few examples. The ready-made vehicle of mass media gives them instant visibility. The attributes that the performers recreate, for the characters they represent on stage or screen are taken to be their own rather than of the person they portray. This also gives them a popularity that a politician would take ears to garner. The latest to cross the threshold from theatrics to politics is NSD pass-out Raja Bundela, actor, director, producer of the small screen and recently of the big screen as well. **Bundela is now contesting the Lok Sabha elections on a Congress ticket from Jhansi.**



The two films that Bundela has produced, Pratha and Kisne Bharmaya Mere Lakhan Ko, were shot in an area of UP/MP known as Bundelkhand – even the stories were of this land. The fifty episode TV serial, Mujhe Chand Chahiye, which he made for Zee TV, was also made totally in the same belt – Jhansi, Lalitpur, Urjha. Although his name is Raja he is not the Raja of Bundelkhand as some people confuse him to be. However he

derives his name from the region that he hails from. The fact that he chooses themes of this region demonstrate his love for his roots, despite the fact that he left for Mumbai years ago. Bundela was recently also elected the president of **Bundelkhand Mukti Morcha**, a post he took over from Shanker Lal Mehrotra. The main grouse of the Morcha is that even though a State reorganisation committee, constituted in 1955 recommended the formation of an Independent Bundelkhand State it was never formed due to electoral calculations of the then ruling party. If constituted the state would have an area of 1,60,000 square kilometres and would boast of a population of over three crores. According to Bundela both UP and MP admit that the region is most backward but because the linguistic region has been broken up between two states, insufficient funds were being invested in the region. Raja denies that he has political aspirations. It was Shanker Lal Mehrotra who asked him to visit Bundelkhand and see what they were doing. He went for fun sake, out of curiosity. But after reaching there he realised that there was a need to create awareness amongst people. He claims that he was very reluctant to take on a post but told them that he was willing to do any work assigned to him. His commitment was for the cause, not for any organization. In any case he had been going there every month over the last seven to eight years. But the Morcha felt that he would be even more involved if he took on some responsibility. That made sense to him. Back in Mumbai he has been garnering support from other artists such as Ashutosh Rana and Jaininder Jain who hail from the region. According to him even Amitabh Bachhan belongs to Bundelkhand. The Republic Day parade held just two days ago, perhaps for the first time, showed young dancers and danseuses in red green dhotis and Lahengas pirouetting to the beats of mridang and manjira, demonstrating the steps of the vibrant Raee dance, a folk form of Bundelkhand. An acknowledgement of the fact that the region is coming into focus and the hoarse cries of the people of that belt are perhaps getting noticed.

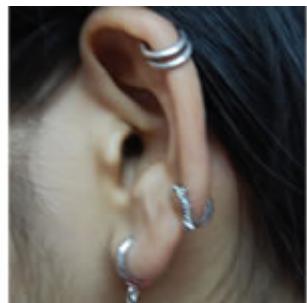
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# Acoustic spaces of a Delhi Neighborhood

**Acoustic spaces of a Delhi Neighborhood**

by

**Joya John**



When we think of solitude we associate it with silence. It is in the sounds that we generate that our sociability is located. Voices, speech and other sounds linked with living indicate so much about people. Generating sound is an extension of our socially constituted selves. Luxury is the ability to choose the kind and extent of sounds we hear. It is however a luxury few can exercise in a metropolis. For some the cacophony of other sounds is comforting, the confirmation of community. For others sounds can be 'invasive', 'crude' or just simply 'noise'. Sounds demarcate the public from the private spaces.

My neighborhood is a plethora of sounds and voices. Its middle class status effortlessly strides the uncomfortable gap between the westernized university student tenant and the more conservative Punjabi families, who lease out houses for rent. Houses climb up to four storeys and sounds carry easily from one home to the other. Brawls break out between families over

parking place, children's fights taken up by over anxious parents and the highly contentious issue of where garbage gets thrown. Late evenings are often marred by violence behind closed doors. High pitched voices and shrill screams indicate a marital dispute that assumes catastrophic proportions, sometimes in full view of neighbors. Fake walkouts are staged, while neighbors intervene piously and send women back into the same hell. Loud crying often gives a moral vantage point to the battered wife and generates some embarrassment for the erring husband. The violence abates for sometime until one day- the shrill cry of the woman -and the same cycle begins again.

Indra Vihar also has pretensions to religious fervor. The temple priest commands respect. In the festive season families compete with each other to organize bhajans that can be heard on loudspeakers. Intra familial rivalries are temporarily put aside and the dholak takes precedence. Sound functions to establish a community of listeners all governed by the nucleus of the temple. Religious ceremonies blend into political affiliations, when the local magnates organize a charity function with loud music. For the elderly woman, early evenings are spent in the temple, singing songs of the licentious frolicking of Krishna- A contradiction that nobody seems to notice or mind. Outside the temple, groups of young men listen to music loudly on their cell phones, furtively eyeing young women students, like modern day avatars of Krishna. Bollywood kitsch competes with Enrique singing mournfully somewhere close by.

On Saturdays a wandering ascetic winds way his through the neighborhood, asking for alms to propitiate the vengeful god Shani. Added to this is the plaintive sound of the beggar woman, who pretends to be blind but can be seen counting her earnings in the neighborhood park later in the day. Vegetable vendors have each cultivated a distinct sound to alert potential buyers of their arrival. Hard bargains are driven

over the prices of each item between them and the women of the colony. Both lambaste the government and the escalating prices.

Morning is the time for women. Relatively free from the demands of children and husbands, they chat loudly, cajole babies to eat and gossip. As evening approaches they are heard less. The sounds of the returning male folk takes precedence. Ribald jokes along with a generous splattering of swear words can be heard. Words are said with abandon, in front of women or total strangers.

On the other side of noise are those who are the 'outsiders'.

Qualises drive in nosily honking to alert young college students call centre employees, of their arrival. A boisterous party, with drunken students, invites censure from the neighborhood. People gather outside, tempers flare up and often someone has the sense to call the police. Racist undercurrents come out in the open. Loud pronouncements are made on "chinky" students and their rampant immorality. Assumptions about their wealth however make them the most profitable tenants.

This neighborhood has drawn a sharp line between sanctioned and unsanctioned noise. The decision of who makes noise and who doesn't is sometimes challenged however most of the time it is let be. In the meanwhile people get on with the daily processes of living, talking behind paper thin walls, while others listen in, voluntarily or involuntarily.

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# The Role of MEDIA in Prejudicing Fair Trial (Manohar Khushalani)

## EDITORIAL

### Arushi – Hemraj Murder Case

#### The Role of Media in Prejudicing Fair Trial – A case study



(L to R) Arushi – Victim | Hemraj – Victim | Nupur – Mother | Dr.Talwar – Father | Krishna – Compounder

Please Note the Title of this piece has the names of both victims. Most media have called it the Arushi Murder case – as if the life of a domestic help is of little consequence. In some (rare) cases words such as murderer had been appended to the suspects. We are not a News Magazine so the merits of the case are not part of our purview but Media is definitely one of our concerns. The Sensationalisation of the unfortunate

murder of Arushi and Hemraj has raised certain issues on Media's role in encroaching upon the rights of the individuals to receive fair treatment. On their rights to privacy – and the right of every accused to be considered innocent until he/she is conclusively proved to be guilty.

While the media is also a watchdog for ensuring fair trial and justice, must it not exercise self control and self censorship to ensure the dignity of the affected persons? Of course there are legal provisions when it comes to contempt. A Court report prejudicing fair trial may be of various forms. It is contempt if a newspaper report deters a person from giving witness in a court; if the report offers threats or is written in abusive language compelling a party to discontinue the court proceedings; and if the report discusses the merits of a case pending in court.

At present the case is not subjudice and therefore no such laws inhibit the media, that is why one feels some self censorship is required.

Most court journalism students must have studied the Dr. Samuel Sheppard case. By coincidence that gentleman too was a doctor. In the United States, in the famous Sheppard Case (1966) the judgment pronounced by a court was reversed twelve years later on the ground of prejudicial publicity.

Facts of the case were that Dr. Samuel Sheppard had served nearly ten years on his conviction of a charge of murdering his wife. Later in 1966 the court held that due to virulent publicity and a "carnival atmosphere" a fair trial was not possible. The US media persons were warned that trials were not like elections, to be won through public meetings radio, and newspapers. The media was also asked to show the increasingly prevalent

habit of making unfair and prejudicial comments on pending trials.

Dr. Samuel Sheppard case, as reported in Plain Dealer, Cleveland, U.S.A. (17th November, 1966) gives an account of the reporter's experience of the proceedings in the courtroom:

Dr. Samuel Sheppard was found not guilty last night. in the 1954 slaying of his first wife MariiIyn.

Sheppard gleefully slammed his hand down on the trial table after Common Pleas Judge Russel J. Talty read the verdict

Sheppard had to be restrained in his joy by Defence Counsel F. Lee Bailey and co-Defence ~ Russel A. Seeman.

"""Sit down!" ordered Bailey, Sheppard sat down and burst into tears. A woman in the back – screamed, "Thank God"!

Other women could be heard screaming in the corridor outside the second-floor courtroom •• the Cuyahoga County Criminal Courts Building.

Sheppard ' s second wife, Aiane, covered her face and sobbed..softly. She was sitting in the Second row of the seats in the smalI courtroom jammed with nearly 60 spectators, 27 of them reporters.

As the jury was dismissed, Sheppard broke for the. rear of the courtroom, thrusting a sheriff's deputy aside "I'm going to see my wife", he said.

He leaned off the bar rail and embraced his wife, she threw her arms around him. "Oh, baby", he sobbed. "Oh, baby".

Leaping and pushing his way through the crowd that had amassed in the corridor, the former osteopathic neurosurgeon shouted, "He's my man!" and clasped the stocky Bailey around !he neck.

Bailey, who had worked to have Sheppard freed in 1964 on a writ of habeas corpus, looked on and beamed. This was the moment he had waited for – for 1,827 days, he had told the jury, ever since he became interested in the celebrated

Sheppard case in 1961

Marilyn Sheppard, 31, died with more than 25 bone deep wounds in her head. She was four months pregnant with her second child.

Asleep in the next room was the Sheppard's 7-year-old son, Chip, now a 19-year old freshman at Boston University. He testified in the current trial that he never awakened the night or morning of the murder.

Sheppard told authorities in 1954 that he was attacked and knocked out twice by one or more unknown assailants when he rushed to the rescue of his wife and later when he pursued a shadowy form to the beach behind the Lake Road home.

Sheppard was found guilty of second degree murder in 1954 after a 65-days trial, Sheppard served nearly ten years before he was released from prison on \$10,000 bail by a U.S. district court in 1964.

The United States Supreme Court's attack on prejudicial publicity has had its effect on the coverage of the mass media in most cases, since.

In Britain in the Michael Fagan case (1983), The Sunday Times was fined by the court because the paper published certain particulars about the accused when the trial was pending. The case was related to Michael Fagan who was alleged to have intruded into the Queen's bedroom.

In another English case, R.V.S. Thomson Newspapers (1968) it was held that to publish a criminals antecedents, during the pendency court proceedings, against him; is contempt. There are definite reasons why trial by newspaper is prohibited: A trial by newspapers may influence the minds of witnesses. It may also compel a party to withdraw the suit It may prejudice public mind against somebody who might later turn out to be innocent.

Let us not forget that in the present case a small girl has lost her right to live – a father has lost his daughter – a mother has lost her daughter – a father is accused of killing his own progeny – a domestic help who has lost his life also must have a family in Nepal – an employee is accused of killing his employers daughter – so many others are alleged to be involved. In the eyes of law all are innocent until proved guilty.

The media's role is of course to ensure that investigations remain on course to the extent that it does not prejudice public mind. But questions one must ask: Is it fair for a TV soap to use the story as fodder for its script writers? Does it prejudice public mind even if the producer claims that all characters are fictitious and any resemblance to a real person a figment of viewer's imagination? Has our reporting been fair to people affected by the tragedy? Has it ensured the personal dignity of the innocent? Because we still don't know who is guilty and who is innocent.

Manohar Khushalani

27th June, 2008

Footnote: Opinion makers and decision makers read StageBuzz. One day after the above editorial was published some newspapers changed the nomenclature of their headline by calling it an Arushi-Hemraj case in place of Arushi only Murder Case. Hemraj's existence was recognised as a victim. Also atleast one major National newspaper brought out an empathy article for the accused. Finally the dentist has been allowed to mourn his daughter as an aggrieved father and not as a killer.

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# Islam, Aesthetics and Postcolonialism

## Book Mark

### Book Review and Book Launch Coverage

By

Divya Raina



A well-attended panel discussion at the India International Centre Annexe held last month (December 23, 2008) more than made up for my disappointment at the sudden cancellation (on Eid) of a public lecture at the same venue in the same month. The occasion was the launch of Professor Javed Majeed's book, *Muhammad Iqbal: Islam, Aesthetics and Postcolonialism*, published by Routledge. Professor Majeed was in town for the occasion along with his wife, Swarna Aiyar, who is a historian in her own right. A good omen that Professor Majeed referred to about the book's launch was that on their trip to Agra the previous day, their guide to the Taj Mahal was, coincidentally, also called Muhammad Iqbal!

Javed Majeed is Professor of Postcolonial Studies at Queen Mary, University of London, and his book is the first in the Routledge series "Pathfinders". The series editor, Dilip M. Menon, who introduced the author and flagged off the proceedings, explained how the series is planned to reflect India's intellectual, literary, artistic and cultural traditions. They are aimed at the general reader as well as those who have an academic interest in the subject.

In his brief address and introduction to the book, Professor Majeed quoted historian Romila Thapar's statement about the "tyranny of labels" and how stereotyping of the kind that exists in today's context is particularly dangerous and how

this study in particular provides a complex and detailed account of Iqbal so that it is no longer possible to appropriate him into any one political agenda.

In fact, the book aims to show how Iqbal combined a variety of positions in his texts, and how the tensions between these positions were kept in play in his poetry. Further, the book attempts to reveal how the style in which Iqbal's poems imagine an Islamic community, both globally and within South Asia, distinguish the nature of that community. It identifies how Iqbal used and inverted Persian and Urdu aesthetic traditions to imagine a global Muslim community and an Islamicised postcolonial identity. Apparently, it was through complex inversions and appropriations of tradition that Iqbal created what the author calls "harmoniously dissonant verse" in which the relationships between an innovative individual selfhood and a reconstructed Islam were figured.

Apart from the author those who also spoke on the occasion were Professor Alok Rai from the Department of History and Professor Farhat Hasan from the Department of History, both of Delhi University. Shammi Mamik, Publisher, Routledge India, proposed a vote of thanks and with a couple of questions from the audience, the evening came to an end.

Details about the book:

Name of the book : **Mohammad Iqbal:Islam, Aesthetics and Postcolonialism**

Name of the author : **Javed Majeed**

Name of the Publisher: **Routledge**

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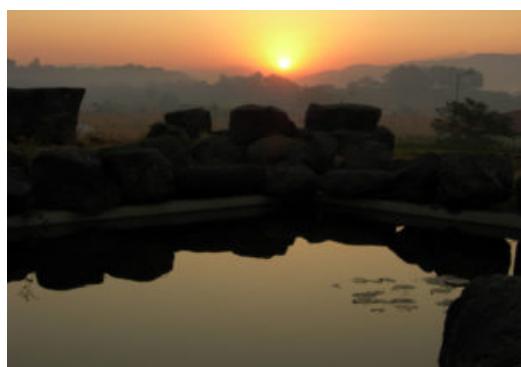
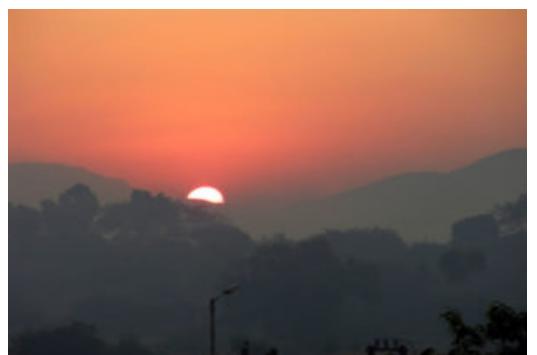
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# **PhotoSwami Album**

## **PhotoSwami Album**

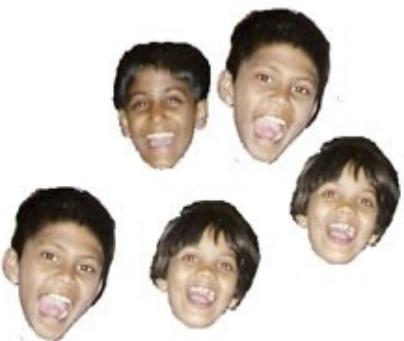
Rare pictures from remote places in India by a roving  
who loves Nature





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## GuFFaWs



## GuFFaWs

The doctor was lecturing a class on sex. He asked, "Do you know what the first oral contraceptive was?" A coed said, "No". The doctor said, "Exactly!"

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A man with a winking problem is applying for a position as a sales representative for a large firm. The interviewer looks over his papers and says, "This is phenomenal. You've graduated from the best schools; your recommendations are wonderful, and your experience is unparalleled.

"Normally, we'd hire you without a second thought. However, a sales representative has a highly visible position, and we're afraid that your constant winking will scare off potential customers. I'm sorry...we can't hire you."

"But wait," he said. "If I take two aspirin, I'll stop winking!"

"Really? Great! Show me!"

So the applicant reaches into his jacket pocket and begins pulling out all sorts of condoms: red condoms, blue condoms, ribbed condoms, flavored condoms; finally, at the bottom, he finds a packet of aspirin. He tears it open, swallows the pills, and stops winking.

"Well," said the interviewer, "that's all well and good, but this is a respectable company, and we will not have our employees womanizing all over, the country!"

"Womanizing? What do you mean? I'm a happily married man!"

"Well then, how do you explain all these condoms?"

"Oh, that," he sighed. "Have you ever walked into a pharmacy, winking, and asked for aspirin?"

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Once upon a time ago in a distant land, there was a King. A daughter he had and when she came of age, he decided to find the princess a husband. He decided that his son in law to be had to be a brave and courageous man. So one morning, all the young men in the kingdom were summoned by the lake which was brimming with crocodiles. The then King

declared. "The first man courageous enough to swim across this dangerous lake shall have the princess' hand in marriage!" Much to the dismay of the King everyone seemed reluctant. "Is there no brave lad in the whole kingdom?" even as the King queried, there was a splash and the crowd cheered. A young man was seen swimming across the lake, warding off the crocodiles. When he reached the other shore, the King rushed to meet the flushed youth. "You are indeed a rightful suitor for my daughter! Your bravery will make you a fitting king and I will shower you with riches!" "I don't want any of that" The young man replied. "Then what do you want pray tell?" The King asked, rather surprised. "I just want to push the coward who pushed me instead of jumping in himself."

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**Moron's open letter to Bill Gates** Subject: Problems with my new computer

Dear Mr. Bill Gates,

We have bought a computer for our home and we have found some problems, which I want to bring to your esteemed notice.

1. There is a button 'START' but there is no 'STOP' button. We request you to check this out.
2. We find there is 'RUN' in the menu. One of my friends clicked 'RUN' he ran all the way to Amritsar and continues to run! So, we request you to urgently provide a 'SIT' command, so that we can get him to sit down.
3. One doubt is whether any 're-scooter' is available in system? I find only 'RE-CYCLE', but I own a scooter at my home.
4. There is 'FIND' button but it is not working properly. My wife lost the door key and we tried a lot trace the key with this 'FIND' button, but was unable to trace. Please rectify this problem.
5. My child learnt 'Microsoft word' now he wants to learn 'Microsoft sentence', so when you will provide that?
6. I bought computer, CPU, mouse and keyboard, but there is only

one icon which shows 'MY Computer': when you will provide the remaining items? I assure you they all belong to me

7. It is surprising that windows says 'MY Pictures' but there is not even a single Picture of mine. So when will you keep my photo in that.
8. There is 'MICROSOFT OFFICE' what about 'MICROSOFT HOME' since I use the PC at home only.
9. You provided 'My Recent Documents'. When you will provide 'My Past Documents'?
10. You provide 'My Network Places'. For God sake please do not provide 'My Secret Places'. I do not want to let my wife know where I go after my office hours.

One personal questions.. Why is it that your name is Gates but you are selling WINDOWS?

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A little boy went into a drug store, reached for a soda carton and pulled it over to the telephone. He climbed onto the carton so that he could reach the buttons on the phone and proceeded to punch in ten-digits (phone numbers).

The store-owner observed and listened to the conversation:

Boy: 'Lady, Can you give me the job of cutting your lawn?

Woman: (at the other end of the phone line): 'I already have someone to cut my lawn.'

Boy: 'Lady, I will cut your lawn for half the price of the person who cuts your lawn now.'

Woman: I'm very satisfied with the person who is presently cutting my lawn.

Boy: (with more perseverance): 'I'll even sweep your curb and your sidewalk, so on Sunday you will have the prettiest lawn in all of Palm beach, Florida.'

Woman: No, thank you.

With a smile on his face, the little boy replaced the receiver.

The store-owner, who was listening to all this, walked over to the boy.

Store Owner: 'Son... I like your attitude; I like that positive spirit and would like to offer you a job.'

Boy: 'No thanks'.

Store Owner: But you were really pleading for one.

Boy: No Sir, I was just checking my performance at the job I already have. I am the one who is working for that lady, I was talking to!'

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Son (while filling up a form): "Dad, what should I write for mother tongue?"

Red Indian Father: "Forked!"

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Santa : People consider me to be GOD

Banta : How do you know??

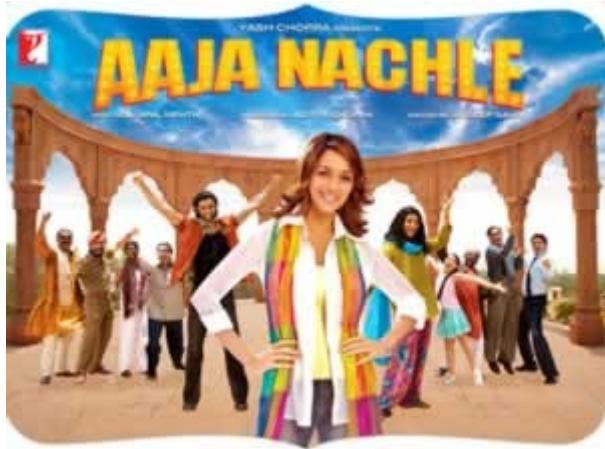
Santa : When I went to the Park today, everybody said, Oh GOD! You are here again.

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# **Dancing Away the Big Bad Wolf**

**Dancing Away the Big Bad Wolf:  
Culture as a Site of Resistance to Big Capital**

**Joya John**



I recently saw Madhuri Dixit's comeback film *Aaja Nachle*. However before you tell me that it is a little too late for a film review, I must clarify this not a film review. For those of you who have not seen the film a quick overview of the plot is necessary to see where my argument will lead.

Madhuri Dixit, or Diya as her character is called, returns from New York to the town of Shamli to revive a dance theatre called Ajanta, embodied in a performance space, that is to be mowed down to build a mall. Diya, strikes a deal with the rather flamboyant M.P. of the town played by Akshay Khanna, that in two months if she is able to stage a successful performance enacted by performers from Shamli itself, the M.P. will have to reconsider the proposal of building a mall. It is an uphill task, for Diya as she struggles with local goons and a motley crew of actors with no experience of performance or dance. The local businessman, played by Irfan Khan who has a vested interest in seeing the mall built tries to jeopardize the performance by buying off the local magnate, who was initially supporting the project, and also spreading vicious rumors about Diya's past (Diya had eloped with a American journalist leaving her parents to bear the social stigma). Needless to say the project is a success, the performance of *Laila Majnu* by the group is a roaring success and the destruction of Ajanta is temporarily halted.

Art and Culture is often the site where this conflict between public resources and private interest, or small enterprise versus big capital is fought out. There are equivalents of it in Hollywood. The film, *Sister Act*, starring Whoopi Goldberg, portrays a state school the

only hope for black children from the ghettos, on the brink of closure. A 'successful' performance by the school choir helps to stall attempts to close down the school. What nobody notices in the bargain is the pressure on schools to show themselves as performing assets to continue getting funds from the government. The film *When Harry met Sally*, portrays a small community based bookstore threatened by the opening up of a multimillion chain of bookstores. The USP of the small bookstore owned, by Meg Ryan, is its personalized customer care as opposed to the impersonality of the big chain. It however cannot compete with the magnitude of books and choices the big chain can provide at a less price. Here the romantic entanglement of Meg Ryan who runs the small bookstore and Tom Hanks the CEO of the chain provides a resolution to the conflict between small enterprise and big business capital. Big Capital (Tom Hanks) learns that it has to have a heart while doing business and it has much to learn from the expertise of the small bookstore. Meg Ryan's bookstore however does close down, while the values it epitomizes get transferred to that of that the big chain. So the big chain wins out in the end anyway.

While these attempts reflect a certain subliminal awareness of a conflict between the public and private interests the resolutions that these films suggest remain inadequate. Often enough the critique of private, commercial interest seems to spring from assumptions of its crassness. Ajanta theatre is art for art's sake, the *sanskriti* of Shamli, while the mall is only grimy commerce. Pitting a rarefied field of culture versus commerce is a risk. These oppositions are one that commerce and private interest would only be too comfortable with because this opposition de-links art from the processes of survival and livelihood. After all, an employee in a mall doesn't need to be an accomplished dancer and performer to make a living. What stakes does a potential, uncultured, employee of a mall have in the preservation of an Ajanta?

**The problem with *Aaja Nachle* lies in the circumscribed role it gives to art. While Shamli risks losing a public space because of the vested interests of business and local politicians the troupe struggles to stage a performance of *Laila Majnu*. The distance of Ajanta, from the**

hub of the city, is replayed in the remoteness of its theme, deliberately shorn of any topicality. The alienation and decrepitude that Ajanta faces, and which becomes a rationale for its destruction, perhaps springs from its deliberate eschewing of a more politically sharpened content. While Laila and Majnu meet their tragic fates a teary eyed Shamli, is temporarily united by art. However romance cannot take away the fact that someday someone in Shamli will still want to use public land to build a plush mall.

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## Paul Leonard Newman – in Memoriam

*Paul Leonard Newman – in Memoriam*

by

Naveen K. Gupta



Paul Newman from Exodus Trailer

Paul Leonard Newman was more than an American actor, film director, entrepreneur, humanitarian and race car driver, he

was as my kid brother lamented, "a part of our childhood". As a philanthropist , his donations had exceeded US\$220 million, by 2007.

On September 26, 2008, Newman died as per his wish at home in Westport, Connecticut, of complications arising from lung cancer. He was born in Shaker Heights, Ohio, the son of Theresa and Arthur Samuel Newman, owner of a sporting goods store. His father was Jewish and his mother practiced Christian Science. Newman showed an early interest in the theater, which his mother encouraged. At the age of seven, he made his acting debut, playing the court jester in a school production of Robin Hood. Graduating from Shaker Heights High School in 1943, he briefly attended Ohio University in Athens, Ohio.

Newman served in the Navy in World War II and hoped to be accepted for pilot training, but this failed when it was discovered he was color blind. He was sent instead to boot camp and then on to further training as a radioman and gunner. After the war, he completed his degree at Kenyon College, graduating in 1949. Newman later studied acting at Yale University and under Lee Strasberg at the Actors' Studio in New York City. Newman made his Broadway theater debut in the original production of William Inge's Picnic, with Kim Stanley. His first movie was 'The Silver Chalice,' (1954), followed by acclaimed roles in 'Somebody Up There Likes Me,' (1956), as boxer Rocky Graziano; 'Cat on a Hot Tin Roof,' (1958), opposite Elizabeth Taylor.

Newman successfully made the transition from 1950s cinema to that of the 1960s and 1970s. His was a rebel that translated well to a subsequent generation. Newman starred in 'Exodus' (1960), 'The Hustler' (1961), 'Hud' (1963), 'Harper' (1966), 'Hombre' (1967), 'Cool Hand Luke' (1967), 'The Towering Inferno' (1974), 'Slap Shot' (1977) and 'The Verdict' (1982). He teamed with fellow actor Robert Redford and director George Roy Hill for 'Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid' (1969) and 'The Sting' (1973).

He appeared with his wife, Joanne Woodward, in 10 feature films from 'The Long, Hot Summer,' (1958) to 'Mr. and Mrs. Bridge.' (1990). In addition to starring in and directing 'Harry & Son,' Newman also directed four feature films in which he did not act starring Woodward.

His last screen appearance was as a flawed mob boss in the 2002 film 'Road to Perdition,' opposite Tom Hanks, although he continued to provide voice in Disney/Pixar's 'Cars'. He won the prestigious Le Mans in 1979 himself, a year after he had lost his only 28-year-old son Scott to drug overdose.



**Paul Newman at an announcement for a new 'Hole in the Wall Camp', in Carnation, Washington in 2007.**

With writer A.E. Hotchner, Newman founded Newman's Own, a line of food products, in 1982. The brand started with salad dressing, and has expanded to include pasta sauce, lemonade, popcorn, salsa, and wine, among other things. Newman established a policy that all proceeds from the sale of Newman's Own products, after taxes, would be donated to charity, the franchise has been a source of \$200 million in donations.

He founded 'Hole in the Wall Gang Camp,' a residential summer camp for seriously ill children, first time in Connecticut. There are now several such camps in USA, Ireland, France and Israel. The camp serves 13,000 children every year, free of charge. Paul Newman was nominated nine times from 1958 to

2002, for Academy Award in a leading role or supporting role and yet the Academy gave him the clear nod in 1986 for his role in 'The color of Money' only! He was awarded the Oscar as an honorary award in 1985 for his many compelling performances, and then as Jean Hersholt Humanitarian award in 1994 for his charity work. Maybe because Paul Newman was always there year after year keeping us enchanted, by those sparkling blue eyes. But then as his best friend for decades, the other half of the legendary duo, Robert Redford probably sums up the kind of man that Paul Newman was; "This was a man who lived a life that really meant something and will for some time to come," Robert Redford said about his late friend and co-star, Paul Newman.



**Robert Redford and Paul Newman in the 1969 film "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," directed by George Roy Hill.**

You will be missed Mr. Newman by everyone, whose part of childhood you were! – Naveen K. Gupta.

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## **Singh is King – A review by**

# Manohar Khushalani

**No Jokinng!  
Singh is Singinng All The Way to The Bank!!  
A review by Manohar Khushalani**



(L) **Kinng** tomfolling with the Mummies in Egypt

(R) **Katrina Kaif** sizzling in Kinng

Don't be fooled by the voices of protest from some of the elders of the Sikh community. If reactions of the younger audiences (even amongst the Sikhs) is anything to go by the Kids seem to love it. On the first day of the show the hall was packed with Sikhs. Initially the elders were trying to suppress their reactions because they did not know whether they should enjoy the film or look at it disapprovingly. But when they saw the young ones jumping like jelly beans in their seats they soon joined in. Yes the film has points of discomfort for the conservative lot but the intent of the producers does not appear to be vicious and therefore they ultimately tend to look the other way.

Akshay Kumar and Katrina Kaif starrer **Singh is Kinng** had a record opening in theatres across the country on Friday. The collections totalled to Rs 8 crores on day one and the weekend collections are

projected to be anywhere between Rs28 to Rs 30 crores. Modest projections for the first week collections of *Singh is Kinng* is put at Rs 45 crores, which could be a new box office record. The highest first week collections for a Hindi film till date is for the Shah Rukh Khan Deepika Padukone starrer ***Om Shanti Om*** which earned Rs 37 crores.

Before the movie was released, it was reported that the Sikh community in Khar, Mumbai was very pleased with the portrayal of the Sikhs in the film. Vipul Shah, the producer of the film, was felicitated at the Khar Gurdwara on June 18, 2008. He said, "Our intention was to portray the community in the right way and I am glad that we have managed to achieve it" However, some members of the Sikh community had expressed their displeasure over the portrayal of Sikhs in the movie. The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), announced that it was up to the audience to decide whether they want to watch the film or not

On August 1, 2008, the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) sought a ban on the movie, saying that it 'ridiculed' the Sikh community. It wrote a letter to Sheila Dikshit, the chief minister of Delhi, asking her to ban the movie. The main objection raised was that the film promos showed Akshay Kumar's character sporting a trimmed beard, which some orthodox Sikhs found offensive. Akshay Kumar and Vipul Shah had a 50-minute discussion with the DSGMC authorities, in which they explained the positive message behind the film. The DSGMC members requested twelve changes, which the filmmakers complied with. Akshay Kumar also said that the film was aimed at portraying "how strong and brave Sikh community is." As a result of the discussion, DSGMC gave a clean chit to the movie on August 7, 2008. However, on the same day (August 7), the radical Sikh organization Damdami Taksal asked its followers to protest against the movie. The first show of the movie in NM Cinema Hall of Amritsar on August 8, 2008 was disrupted by some sikh protesters, who vandalized the hall and damaged property

There were some voices of support for the film, as well, when a former member of the minority commission (a sikh) came on a television

channel and advised the community not to nit pick since the film is not about religion and only about entertainment.

Well that is what this racy blockbuster is all about – entertainment. One is amused about some of the reviews from the highbrow critics. Some of them criticize the film for lack of logic in the story line. In an out and out comedy one has to leave ones brains behind and participate in the ludicrousness of the events. The film is slick and all the three main characters portrayed by Akshay Kumar, Katrina Kaif and Neha Dhupia look very hep and stylish. The editing is neat and musical numbers a plenty. Look at the breathtaking list of song numbers : *Singh Is Kinng*, *Jee Karda Labh Janjua*, *Bas Ek Kinng Mika Singh*, *Bhootni ke*, *Teri Ore Rahat*, *Fateh Ali Khan*, *Talli Hua Neeraj Shridhar*, *Bas Ek Kinng*, *Bhootni Ke*, *Talli Hua*, *Jee Karda*, *Teri Ore*, *Bhootni Ke*. The music was composed by Pritam. The song “Singh Is Kinng” was composed by U.K Bhangra band RDB. The soundtrack was launched officially at the IIFA Awards in Bangkok on June 8, 2008. Akshay Kumar and RDB performed two songs, *Singh Is Kinng* at the IIFA Awards.

About 75% of the movie was shot in Australia, around the Gold Coast region and Brisbane using an Australian production team. The film released on August 8, 2008. with Akshay Kumar as Happy Singh, Katrina Kaif as Sonia, Ranvir Shorey as Puneet, Javed Jaffrey as Mika Singh & Puneet's Father, Kiron Kher as Rose Lady, Neha Dhupia as Julie, Kamal Chopra as Guruji, Yashpal Sharma (actor) as Pankaj Udaas, Om Puri as Rangeela, Kirsten Parent as herself, Sonu Sood as Lucky Singh, Eli Bernstein as Disco Dancer, Peter Coates as the pilot, James Foster as another pilot, Sudhanshu Pandey as Raftaar and Ashish Singhal in a cameo role. The Film is Directed by Anees Bazmee and Produced by Vipul Amrutlal Shah.

The opening scene sets the film on to a racy pace with the clumsy Happy Singh chasing a chicken all over the village setting up a chain of destructive events and setting the small community into a state of total chaos. The amazing stunts were choreographed by Allan Amin who also stage managed numerous other such catastrophic events with well synchronized chain reactions. Perhaps the most hilarious scene was

the one in which the former, now paralysed king, is buffeted around on a wheel chair.

The verbal humour has the typical earthy Punjabi touch to it. Bollywood now has the highest number of floating population of Punjabi actors and the directors had no difficulty in tracing out the actors with an authentic Punj accent. In any case the Punjabi community is one of the most happy go lucky variety and the script writer drew heavily from the *Punj* sense of humour.

Everything about the film is geared to make it a commercial success. The locations in Australia and Egypt gave it the touristy look as well, including a full fledged song sequence amongst the pyramids (How did they get permission to shoot there?) The costumes are also have the most modern styling. How come one is not talking about the flaws – if you look at it logically, yes there were many. The film was slightly disjointed at places as well, however the breakneck pace doesn't let you ponder on the flaws. In any case – no – I am not ashamed to admit that I enjoyed the film because I saw it with a young audience and (remember?) I HAD LEFT MY BRAINS BEHIND – so I couldn't pick them!