Manjit Bawa, The Legend, No More A Neice Reminicences by Dr. Seema Bawa



Bawa's Paintings

It is strange to be writing about Manjit Bawa in his death for as a policy I did not write on him and his art. I have always felt that I would not have a discerning perspective when it came to his art because I was so close to him, for Manjit Bawa was my uncle, my father's younger and very dear brother.

We grew up in a joint family where he usually ate his dinner with us, and played games in the evening when we, that is my sister and I, were young. Later, he grew famous and successful and took on a larger than life persona. But for us, he always had a bit of hero because my grandmother made up for her inadequacy as a story teller by relating a serial on the Exploits and Adventures of Manjit at bed time. In all these he was engaged in acts of valour, strength and downright foolhardiness that froze my grandmother's blood even years later. He never outgrew these traits and almost everyone reminisces about his great mental and physical strength. Perhaps that is the reason why we all clung to hope of his coming out of coma even after three years of the fateful stroke that struck him down on 17th December 2005. To see him

lying comatose came as a great shock to me personally because my principal grouse was that he just could not be still and sit or stay in one place, except when he was playing chess or cards, games which I have known to last for days with very little sleep.

This restlessness however is rarely seen in work of his mature phase. There is a great deal of serenity and depth in his art. Often labeled a Sufi painter, he was that and much more. There is inclusiveness in his art derived from streams Indian tradition and philosophy which were decried by so-called avante garde artists and critics as being revivalist and pretty. He was inspired in part by the miniature tradition, especially the Pahari miniatures, but also by contemporary artists such as Krishan Khanna and J. Swaminathan.

He painted Krishna surrounded by cows but also dogs, because cherished divine melody could not be confined only to cows but is accessible to all. He painted acrobats and birds, and Lakshmi standing on a lotus in pink. He painted Ravi, his son, in a pensive mood. And he painted Narasimha killing the demon who was the primeval man himself. He painted his own personal and collective anguish against the devouring mobs of 1984 riots. He painted his Bharata with a lion and also Krishna and also the Devi. This iconographic eclecticism reflected the inclusiveness of his philosophy for his Krishna was his Ranjha.

Manjit Bawa was born in Dhuri in Punjab, probably in late summer of 1941 in a place known as the Goshala. His parents moved to Delhi soon after where he was to stay for most of his life. Here his elder brother, marking his entire lack of interest in studies and inordinate love for playing pranks started taking him to art lessons at Abani Sen’s studio with him. It is here that he developed a love for the arts and went onto study art at Delhi College of Art. At college he developed a strong friendship with Jagdish De, Umesh Verma and Gokul Deambi with whom, often under his brother’s guidance and

company, he traveled all over north India. He and his elder brother took up a hotel in Dalhousie to be near the mountains and to have a running business while they pursued painting and writing. Much of his work was done in Dalhousie where he went to get away from the brouhaha of the art world.

For us he was an uncle full of laughter and mischief who flashed in and out of our lives. He sang at weddings and family get togethers. He hated my cooking and taught me how to cook a few things so that he could eat in my house. As children he would make clay toys with us and paint them in bright colours and take us to the Yamuna on his very ramshackle blue scooter. He was always good for a tenner for an extra horse ride in Dalhousie. He was an artistic genius for the world. For us he was a beloved uncle with whom we could and did argue, fight and pummel. We will all miss him for many reasons. May his soul find what it was searching for in life.

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3 Steps To Jump Start Your Career by Sharon Moist



One of the challenges most of my clients face at some point in their life is the challenge of trying to reignite their careers – especially when business is slow or they’re not getting auditions. When that happens, I take them through a

Three-Step Jumpstart Process to get them back on the road to success.

If you feel like you need to stir up your own career, then here's how to get started:

1. **Get a Clear Vision**
   The most important thing you can do, in jumpstarting your career, is to get a very clear vision of your end goal.When **Barack Obama** started working in politics, he created a very clear vision for himself, and his life, and he knew he wanted to accomplish something BIG.

   Eight years ago, however, his road to success was paved with complete and utter humiliation. With an empty bank account; his credit card rejected by the rental car company and no political clout (having just lost a congressional primary in his hometown of Chicago), Mr. Obama also failed to get a floor pass at the Democratic Convention in Los Angeles, and ended up watching the proceedings on a big screen TV in a car park, before flying home with his tail between his legs.

   Eight years later, in Denver, Colorado, Barack Obama *WAS* the Democratic Convention, and five months after that, Mr. Obama was elected to the highest office in this country: **President of the United States.**

2. **Commit to Your Vision**
   Once you have your vision, the next step on the road to success is to commit to it completely.**Walt Disney** loved animation and spent three years working on the movie ***Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.***

   Unfortunately, his $500,000 budget for the film was beyond comprehension at that time (1930's). Additionally, during filming Mr. Disney ran way over budget and needed another $500,000 to finish the

project, creating a final budget of $1,000,000 at a time when the budget for the average cartoon was $10,000.

However, Walt Disney was completely committed to finishing *Snow White*, and in order to get the additional financing he needed, he ended up presenting his project (including acting out the entire story) to a tough-minded banker, and got his loan.

The result of his commitment was a classic film, for people of all ages, which grossed $8,000,000 at a time when the price for going to the movies was 25 cents for adults and 10 cents for kids. And that was only the beginning.

3. **Take Action on Your Vision**

   The third step on your road to success is to take action on your vision, because a vision without action is only a dream.One of Britain's most well known entrepreneurs is **Sir Richard Branson**, the founder of the ***Virgin*** group of companies. His road to success started after he dropped out of school at age 15. Diagnosed with dyslexia, at age 16 Mr. Branson embarked upon his first entrepreneurial venture by publishing a student magazine, entitled *Student*.
   In December of 1999, Richard Branson became Sir Richard Branson when he was awarded a knighthood by Queen Elizabeth II, in the Queen's Millennium Honors List, for "services to entrepreneurship".

   Since that time, Richard Branson has expanded the Virgin brand to now include more than 200 entertainment, media and travel companies, thereby creating one of the most recognizable companies around the world

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Keval Arora’s Kolumn

For Whom Nobel’s Toll



Harold Pinter passed away on 24 December 2008. He was 78 and had been undergoing treatment for liver cancer. Like most Nobel prizes for Literature, the choice of the British playwright Harold Pinter has also had its share of detractors. There have been all kinds of murmurings against Pinter getting the big prize, ranging from doubts about his literary worth to snide remarks about extraneous considerations having played a role in the selection. The prize for the slyest reaction – assuming that it wasn’t the ghastly mistake it was made out to be – goes of course to the Sky Television newscaster who assumed that the breaking news about Pinter must have been to announce his demise (Pinter had taken a bad fall some days earlier) and therefore led off with an announcement that Pinter had died, before hesitating and then correcting herself to say that he had been awarded the 2005 Nobel Prize for Literature instead.

Well, to be honest, I’m not sure the word ‘instead’ was actually used, but given the bad grace with which his award has been received in some quarters, I wouldn’t be surprised if it was. It’s not difficult to figure out why Pinter’s selection has been met with churlishness. On the one hand, a

body of mainstream taste has tended to deride Pinter's theatre as just so much fluff. Pinter's departures from staple theatrical modes have often been seen as a thinning out of the fundamentals of theatre, and even as evidence of his inability to get the basics right – much in the manner of the standard joke that Picasso's cubism springs from his lack of talent at drawing like everyone else. Pinter's technique of conjuring up dramatic tension and menace out of thin air, so to speak, has often provoked the incredulous suspicion that is bestowed upon all innovations and departures from the mainstream.

In recent years, Pinter's political activism has provoked another kind of ire. The ill-tempered outburst of John Simon, an old Pinter baiter, on learning of Pinter's Nobel prize, is interesting for the disarmingly guileless manner in which it reveals the prejudice that feeds its indignation. When Simon says, "I would have gladly accorded him the Nobel for Arrogance, the Nobel for Self-Promotion, or the Nobel for Hypocrisy – spewing venom at the United States while basking in our dollars – if such Nobels existed. But the Nobel for Literature? I think not", he exposes the burr that's actually prickling his behind.

Evidently, what has got Simon's goat is not Pinter's literary worthlessness, but the fact that the Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to someone who has indefatigably campaigned against American and British adventurism in Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq, and has therefore shown himself to be of the 'enemy camp'. Evidently, Simon's tirade typifies the brand of opinion which wants artists to confine themselves to their work and desist from engaging in any form of activism, especially that which pits them against the weight of majoritarian opinion. (Perhaps this is why Arundhati Roy continues to raise the hackles of professional dabblers in that hallowed literary form, the Letters to the Editor.) And, evidently, Simon believes that he who pays pipers has the moral, nay spiritual, sanction to call the shots along with

the tunes.

Nah, I shouldn't trash letters to editors. For, how else could I have gleaned that lovely nugget of information, contributed by a reader to the *Guardian*, concerning "the sullen, deafening silence from Downing Street about the new British Nobel Laureate, Harold Pinter?" The British government's wariness in celebrating the achievement of a countryman simply because of his vocal (and forgivably intemperate) criticism of state policy is just the kind of silence that would be familiar to Pinter, given the evocative treatment of silence in his plays. Of a piece with such silencing is an article lauding Pinter's Nobel achievement that has been carried in the latest issue of *Britain Today*, a news magazine produced by the British High Commission in India. Unsurprisingly, it makes absolutely no mention of Pinter's outspoken criticism of British foreign policy, a criticism that he has stuck to despite constant mockery and ridicule. How else can one read the title of that article, "Master of Silence", except as a desperate act of wish-fulfilment!

Is one over-emphasising Pinter's political stance as a factor in his getting the award and in the reactions to it? I don't think so – and not simply because others have commented that the Swedish Nobel committee may have been inclined to favour a writer who has voiced his anti-war sentiments in no uncertain terms (Pinter has famously denounced Bush as a "mass murderer" and dismissed Blair as "that deluded idiot"), given the fact that the Swedish people too were extremely vocal in their anti-Iraq war protests. If this sounds like a slur on the literary credentials of Harold Pinter, it is interesting to see him make the same connection, albeit in a less whining tone: "Why they've given me this prize I don't know. … But I suspect that they must have taken my political activities into consideration since my political engagement is very much part of my work. It's interwoven into many of my plays." That this is a man speaking with a modesty characteristic of the

greatest writers is par for the course. But, it is unusual to find a writer who values his political conscience as much if not more than his writing, especially as even readers are often uncomfortable with such privileging.

It's not as if Pinter needed the sympathy of political fraction. His credentials as a writer are justification enough for the Nobel award. He isn't the writer of whom no one's heard, as some previous Nobel awardees have been. Not when his plays are widely translated and performed in other languages; not when they pop up regularly in drama syllabi of Literature Departments; and certainly not when 'Pinteresque' is now staple lit-crit jargon for a patented blend of mundane but oblique dialogue, brooding silences and ineffable unease, all floating gingerly on a bed of sudden incongruity. (Anyway, what does the label "unheard-of author" mean? Surely, nothing more than the writer's works having not been translated (yet) into English, and therefore being unfamiliar to the international publishing scene….)

Pinter is now 75 years old, with a long writing and performance career of considerable range and distinction. He has acted on stage, film, television and radio. He has written nearly thirty plays since 1957, and has innumerable drama sketches, poems and prose published in several volumes. He has directed over 25 productions of his own and others' plays, adapted novels for the stage (notably Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*) and for film (for instance, Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and Kafka's *The Trial*), adapted his plays for radio and television, written over 20 screenplays (*The Servant* and *The Go-Between*, both directed by Joseph Losey, being two delightful instances), and is now so immersed in speaking out on political matters that earlier this year he spoke of not writing any more plays in order to focus his energy on such issues.

Initially, things didn't look promising; Pinter didn't burst in on the scene in the manner of other path-breaking

dramatists. The 1956 commercial and critical success of Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, notwithstanding its combative indecorum, had suggested that British audiences were tiring of conventional fare, but Pinter's first plays in 1957-58 (*The Room*, *The Dumb Waiter* and *The Birthday Party*) were received with bewilderment and hostility. (That this could happen despite the praise showered on the English premiere of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in 1955 is curious, given the several affinities that have subsequently been noted between Beckett's and Pinter's theatrical worlds.) It wasn't until 1960 that Pinter had his first success with *The Caretaker*. From then on, plays such as *The Homecoming* (1964),*Landscape* and *Silence* (1967 & 1968), *No Man's Land* (1974) and *Betrayal* (1978)established Pinter's reputation as a unique voice in contemporary theatre. To such an extent that *The Dumb Waiter*, along with Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story*, soon became an absolute must-do for budding thespians in college theatre societies.

Pinter's plays revolve typically around contestations for territory. Conflicts, sparked off by intrusions into a closed space by an outside force, are conducted with a strange mix of ferocity and dulled detachment. His characters and their dialogues are rarely explicated through conventional excavations of motivation and memory, and often viciousness and pain lurk submerged beneath an evasive surface composed of guilt, uncertainty, everyday phrases and restless silences. The 'facts' on which these contestations are pegged are usually unreliable, for there is little that is either 'true or false' in Pinteresque space.

The unnamed tension of these plays are located in such a claustrophobic, inter-personal space that Pinter's writing has been criticized for turning its back upon the political, an impression that was confirmed when Martin Esslin included Pinter in his seminal study, *The Theatre of the Absurd.* However, the later plays – such as *One for the Road* (1984),

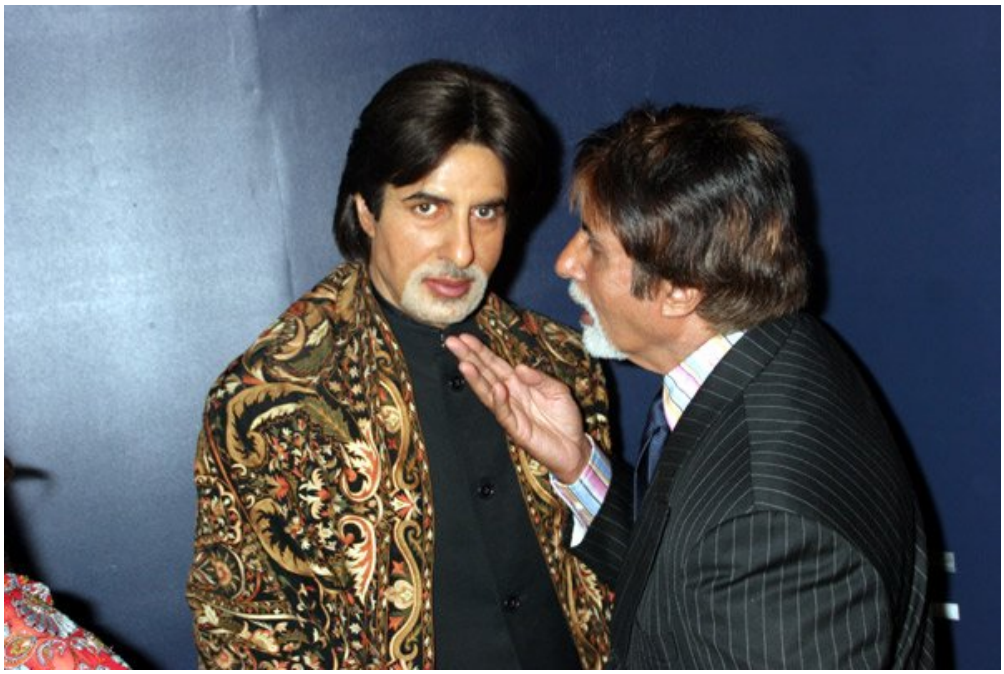
Mountain Language(1988) and *Ashes to Ashes* (1996) – are more distinctly political. But, here too authoritarian structures of repression and torture are evoked rather than articulated, and filter through spare exchanges between oppressor and victim, and the slippages of memory and knowledge. Perhaps, this phase of Pinter's writing is less a 'shift' from his early work than an extension of earlier preoccupations into a wider territory.

Though the Nobel citation – Pinter's plays "uncover the precipice under everyday prattle and*force entry into oppression's closed rooms*" (my italics) – celebrates the dramatist as much as it does the political activist, the writer himself draws sufficient distinction between his preoccupations as an artist and as a "political intelligence" to not let the achievements of one absolve him of the responsibility enjoined upon the other. He recently had this to say of the road he's travelled: "In 1958, I wrote, 'there are no hard distinctions between what is real and what is unreal…. A thing is not necessarily either true or false; it can be both true and false.' I believe that these assertions . . . do still apply to the exploration of reality through art. So as a writer I stand by them but as a citizen I cannot. As a citizen I must ask: What is true? What is false?"

In an interview some years ago, Pinter had rued the bane of British intellectual life being the mockery directed at artists who take a stand on political issues, and had warned, "Well, I don't intend to simply go away and write my plays and be a good boy. I intend to remain an independent and political intelligence in my own right." What lovelier spectacle can there be than this – of a dramatist, who goes on to win the Nobel Prize, acknowledging that conscientious citizenship is a more urgent cry than any artistic calling?

This article was published earlier in FIRST CITY (Dec 2006) after Pinter was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature

A Self-Inflicted Contradiction in the Indian Secularism





On 20th January 2008, a Mufti from Dehradun mosque issued a *fatwa* against Salman Khan for getting a wax statue of himself

installed at Madame Tussauds. It is one of the main London tourist attractions where wax statues of the famous and the rich of the world are installed. So far Amitabh Bachchan, Aishwarya Rai and Shah Rukh Khan are the only other Indians who have been given this recognition.

Not only is this a harassment of an Indian citizen who has done nothing wrong as regards this matter (actually the installation of Salman Khan's statue at Madame Tussauds reflects the growing recognition of the Indian cinema at the international level), it is a challenge to the State of India. The phenomenon of the Red Mosque is not confined to Islamabad or Pakistan only, there are many Red Mosques in India as well.

Before that, the farce that has been played in the theatre called the state of West Bengal in relation to Taslima Nasreen lays bare the fact that India has lost its soul and identity. The provincial government run by a communist party – that claims to follow Marx, who said *"religion is the opium of the people"* – caves in to Muslim obscurantism and communalism, and expels a progressive, feminist and secular Bengali writer from Kolkata.

To top it all, on 19th January 2008 the State Minorities Commission of Maharashtra sent a letter to the Central Government asking for the refusal of a visa to Taslima Nasreen and Booker Prize winning author Salman Rushdie as "they have hurt the feelings of the Muslim community." Calling the writers "anti-social elements", the Chairman of the Commission, Mohammed Naseem Siddiqui, wrote: "We do not want them to stay in India and create law and order problems."

Mr Siddiqui also said that action should be taken against painter MF Hussain for painting Hindu Gods and Goddesses in the nude.

The violent protests against Taslima Nasreen in Kolkata were

organised by a Muslim group called the All India Minority Forum, and have been spearheaded by a political party based in Hyderabad, the MIM. Its leader, Asaduddin Owaisi, has been visiting various television studios and saying that Taslima Nasreen should not be allowed to stay in India because she is not an Indian citizen, but a Bangladeshi citizen.

Now, one does need to remember that Pakistan was demanded by the likes of Mr Owaisi (the MIM even fought against the State of Hyderabad joining India). There are many people living as Indian citizens now who supported the demand for Pakistan. On the other hand, there were people – some of them Muslims – on the other side of the border who felt Indian and were opposed to the creation of Pakistan. While most of the Hindus came to India, some Hindus did not, and the Muslims obviously could not. It did not mean that every Muslim living in the territory forming Pakistan was supportive of the new State. But they had no choice. And the statehood of Pakistan, and thereby Pakistani and then Bangladeshi citizenship, was imposed on them and the remaining Hindus there. Otherwise, those people in Pakistan and Bangladesh have always remained Indian. Through my business I have met quite a few Muslims from Pakistan who have said they call themselves Indian and they believe the Partition was wrong. At the BBC, I received letters from Pakistan written in Hindi under Muslim names. They may not have Indian passports and they may not be living in the Republic of India, but India is their spiritual home and they are Indians in their hearts. Taslima Nasreen, out of tune with the Mullahs who want to establish an Islamic State in Bangladesh, is one of them. As we all know, in Pakistan and Bangladesh, Hindus have never been given equal citizenship rights. The establishments in those countries look at them as agents of India. After the demolition of the so-called Babri Masjid in India, the attacks on the Hindus in Bangladesh (and Pakistan) by Muslim mobs were in fact (spiritually) attacks on India. Rather than being a silent spectator of the atrocities committed on the Hindus by fanatic

Muslim mobs in Bangladesh, Taslima Nasreen recorded those atrocities in her book 'Lajja', and exposed the Bangladesh government who claimed that all minorities are safe in their borders. Whether Indian or not, Taslima Nasreen has done a great service to Indians and India. And India should be grateful to this lady, and it is incumbent on India to give her every possible support – not just a visa and citizenship.

Mr Owaisi might have got an Indian passport, but his intellectual and political sympathies are not with India – they are with the Islamic fundamentalists of Bangladesh (and other countries). He wants Taslima Nasreen to be expelled to Bangladesh so that his soul-mates dominating there can devour her and kill her in the name of Islam, which he finds a trifle difficult to do in mainland India.

The question is why India is in such a situation that it's finding it hard to protect one of its friends, let alone honour her. The answer lies in the Indian leaders' wrong response to the Partition. India has committed a fundamental mistake in deciding its own character after the bifurcation of its land.

Right from Gandhi and Nehru to Buddhadev Bhattacharya, Indian political leaders have never been able to understand the Muslim psyche in general and deal with it properly. It was not just Iqbal and Jinnah who wanted a separate state, Muslims all over the country supported the demand for Pakistan with near unanimity. In March 1946 elections, the Muslim League received 86.6% of Muslim votes and won all the 30 seats reserved for Muslims in the Central Assembly (Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India: 1885-1947*, MacMillan, 1984) on a policy of creating an independent state of Pakistan, with an implied threat of secession if this was not granted. And yet, the Indian leaders were thinking that they may be able to win over the Muslims and stop the division of the country. While Jinnah was stated to be declaring,**"We shall have India divided or we shall have India destroyed"** (Margaret Bourke-White,

Halfway to Freedom: A Report on the New India. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1949) and the armed Muslim mobs were definitely observing Direct Action Day (16th August 1946) by attacking the Hindu communities in Kolkata, the Indian National Congress was thinking that the partition of the country may be avoided. Even after the state of Pakistan coming into existence and being recognised and propped up by the international imperial powers, Gandhi was hoping that he may be able to persuade Jinnah to dismantle the statehood of Pakistan! What a naïve thing to think!

Demoralised with the success of the Muslim League in turning the brightest hour of India – *when it achieved independence after centuries of colonisation* – into its darkest hour, the Indian leaders were confused and confounded. Seeing India bleed in front of their eyes, they were overwhelmed. And then they were being led by "great" Gandhi who went on threatening the other Indian leaders with hunger strike till death if his irrational and illogical ideas were not accepted. Gandhi went on telling the Hindus and Sikhs in the newly created Pakistan to stay there, and, of course, telling the Muslims in India not to go to Pakistan. With such a call, Gandhi was denying the coming into existence of the State of Pakistan. Did Gandhi expect his call to go down well with the supporters of the Pakistan Movement who "struggled" for decades and made "sacrifices" for the creation of Pakistan – an exclusive State for Muslims! They were breathing a sigh of relief that at last their struggle has fructified and were rejoicing the moment! They could not bear the thought of non-Muslims still living in *their* land! *Any infidel living in Pakistan – the land of the pure – was a self-contradiction in terms!* No wonder, in the pursuit of their dream, they reacted with even more violence. Because of the unrealistic behaviour of the Indian leaders at the time, Pakistanis even today accuse Indians of not accepting the separate existence of Pakistan. So, had the Indian leaders accepted the reality of the Partition and adopted a rational approach towards it, there

might not have been that much bloodshed. The migration of populations could have been controlled and civilised (as much as possible under the circumstances). Arrangements should have been made to get Hindus, Sikhs and Christians out of Pakistan. Of course, no violence against prospective Pakistani citizens should have been allowed, but all those who supported the creation of Pakistan should have been respectfully escorted out of India.

But the Indian National Congress was living in a state of denial. The Indian leaders were out of their depth and did not know what to do.

There was a person called Chaudhari Khaliquzzaman. He was one of the prominent leaders of the All India Muslim League, spearheading the Pakistan Movement. On 23rd March 1940, at its Lahoresession, under the chairmanship of Jinnah, the Muslim League adopted a resolution, known as the Pakistan Resolution. The Resolution read as follows:

"No constitutional plan would be workable or acceptable to the Muslims unless geographical contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary. That the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign … That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in the units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights of the minorities, with their consultation. Arrangements thus should be made for the security of Muslims where they were in a minority."

This resolution was moved in by A. K. Fazlul Huq, the then Chief Minister of Bengal, and was seconded by Chaudhari Khaliquzzaman. In 1941 it became part of the Muslim League's

constitution. Throughout the period of the Pakistan Movement, Chaudhari Khaliquzzaman remained one of the prominent lieutenants of Jinnah.

However, after the creation of Pakistan, Chaudhari Khaliquzzaman was sitting in the Constituent Assembly of India! And, he even took the oath of allegiance to India! Yet, no one asked Chaudhari Khaliquzzaman what he was doing in the Constituent Assembly of *India*, after believing all his life that "No constitutional plan would be workable or acceptable to the Muslims… (except Pakistan)" (Pakistan Resolution – as quoted above).

Now, the Constituent Assembly of India believed very strongly that the separate electorates devised by the British rulers laid the foundation of the Partition. Yet, within two weeks of the creation of Pakistan, on 27th August 1947, during the discussion on minorities' rights, Chaudhari Khaliquzzaman, accompanied by another of his colleagues from the Muslim League, was again demanding separate electorate for Muslims! Sardar Patel, who was presiding the session, said:

"Well, when Pakistan was conceded, at least it was assumed that there would be one nation in the rest of India – the 80 per cent India – and there would be no attempt to talk of two nations here also. …I have no intention to speak on this, but when the Mover of this amendment (demanding the separate electorate for Muslims) talked such a long time and it was supported by the Leader (Chaudhari Khaliquzzaman), then I felt that there is something wrong again still is this land…"

Yes, there was still something wrong in the remaining India. Despite Sardar Patel, and the rest of the Assembly members, appealing to the Muslim League members to withdraw the amendment, and pass the constitutional provisions relating to minorities unanimously in a show of unity, Chaudhari Khaliquzzaman and his colleague did not budge to accept the provisions drafted and adopted unanimously by the Minority

Rights committee. Pleading for separate electorate for the Muslims, Chaudhari Khaliquzzaman had said that there was no need for suspicion towards Muslims. Of course, there was no room left for suspicions. Given the character of the Muslim League, Sardar Patel and other Indian leaders should have been **certain** that the people like Chaudhari Khaliquzzaman were staying in India to see if they could play the politics of Hindu-Muslim divide again. But Sardar Patel and other members of the assembly could not see that.

After failing in his attempt to start the process of Muslim separatism all over again in the remainingIndia, Chaudhari Khaliquzzaman soon left for Pakistan, and Jinnah appointed him the Chief Organizer of the Pakistan Muslim League.

Chaudhari Khaliquzzaman left, but many still stayed to hurt India from Inside! From Shahabuddin to Owaisi, there is a long line of Islamic fundamentalists who want to have a parallel State within the State of India.

Some people believe had India been declared a Hindu State, we would not have had these problems. As argued by this writer in another article in details in a previous issue of India Link, that would have been the biggest blunder India could have committed. It would have been like jumping from the frying pan into the fire. However, the form of secularism India has adopted was also not responsive to the reality and the history. The response to the carving of an Islamic State called Pakistan out of India wasn't limited to only two options – declaring India a free for all secular state, or becoming a Hindu State. There was a third alternative – **India should have been declared a Secular State *sans* Islam.** The realistic, rational and right response to the Muslim League's "success" was that political Islam should have been outlawed in India as Nazism has been outlawed in Germany since 1945. There should have been constitutional provisions on the lines of Article 24 of the German constitution and Article 9 of the Japanese constitution barring political Islam from the

public sphere for ever. Those who tore India apart should have been treated as the enemies of India, and should have been disarmed within the boundary of India the way the Axis powers were disarmed at the conclusion of the Second World War. Like Hitler, those who perpetrated a holocaust on India in pursuit of their Fascist agenda to achieve "the land of the pure" based on racial and ethnic cleansing and caused unprecedented bloodshed in the history of India (and mankind) should have been made to pay for their crimes against humanity. It is right for India to be secular, but it needed to be ensured that ugly Muslim separatism never rears its head again in India. It needed to be made clear – through constitution – that Islamic parties have no right to exist in the State of India. The Muslim League, the MIM, etc. should be outlawed totally and completely. There should be no place for Shahabuddins and Owaisis in the political sphere of India. Religion should be strictly a matter of personal faith for Muslims. Of course, it was India's duty to protect those who opposed the creation of Pakistan, and treat them equally. But, if anyone was craving for Islamic or Muslim politics, they should be straightaway arrested and deported to Pakistan – as was done in the case of the MIM president and Razakar leader Qasim Rizwi in 1948. Adding 'AI' before their names doesn't make these parties Indian. Their basic philosophy remains as anti-secular, anti-democratic and anti-India as ever. The recent behaviour of the MIM proves that. In a secular and democratic society, Salman Rushdie and Taslima Nasreen have as much right to express themselves as Mr Owaisi. But Islamic politicians will never accept that. Because the Indian leaders did not handle the Partition logically, the enemy is living within.

In fact, it's not just what happened to India during the Partition. Even otherwise, Islam is incompatible with secularism. The fight between Islam and Secularist forces in different Muslim countries precisely proves this point. The biggest danger the Islamists see is not from Christianity or

Hinduism – they are sure one day they would be able to show *the light of the true God* to these lost souls – but from Secularism. And, they're not wrong. Secularism based on rational and liberal thinking is the biggest threat to Islam. Vice versa is true in the same way. The biggest threat to secularism is Islam. The secularists in Turkey might have succeeded in nipping the Islamist tendencies in the bud, but many Muslim countries, such as Algeria, have gone through a lot of painful time. That's why the moderate Pakistani politicians dread Islamists so much!

Secularism and democracy cannot survive if the tendencies that have been inimical to those ideas are allowed to live within their spheres. By allowing Islamic groups and parties to grow in its body, the State of India is facilitating its own destruction. As exemplified in Taslima Nasreen's case, the enemies of India are demanding the expulsion of an Indian (if not an Indian, definitely a friend of India) from India, by claiming India to be theirs! This is the travesty of secularism! Actually the travesty of the logic of history!

Some people would say what about the Hindu parties? Well, it has to be said at the outset, violence, or threat of violence from any quarter to a piece of art or writing, is unacceptable. So, the activists of Bajrang Dal or VHP indulging in violence should be treated as criminals and nothing else. Had Mr Siddiqui not been a Muslim bigot himself, it was quite plain to see that it is not Salman Rushdie, or Taslima Nasreen or MF Hussain who are creating law and order problems. It is some hooligans who have been rioting in the name of "religious sentiments". Such people have no place in a civilised society.

Now, coming to the Hindu parties in the main, firstly Hinduism cannot be equated with Islam or Christianity in the context of India. Hinduism is the bond between different parts of India. Orissa and Gujarat, Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh feel as one country and are together in one State because they share the

Hindu culture. If there is no Hindu culture, these geographically distant lands and linguistically and racially different people would have nothing in common and the State of India would not exist. The singular factor that is responsible for the existence of India is that of the Hindu culture. So, the Hindu parties in India have to be looked at in the same way as the Christian parties in Europe – somewhat immature and a bit of nuisance. But the Hindu parties do represent the gut feelings of Indians. Their influence is benign and their existence is no danger to India, unlike the Islamic parties that have proved to be anti-India. Secondly, secularism and the so-called Hinduism are perfectly compatible. A person like me who doesn't believe in God, and has participated in cultural activities that would have been viewed as 'blasphemous' in other cultures, is seen by other Hindus as a normal Hindu. It can be said with a high probability that Hinduism is the most secular religion in the world. And it is definite that Hinduism cannot survive without secularism. And, it is because of the secular psyche of Hindus that India is a secular country. How many Muslim-dominated or Christian dominated countries are as secular as India! Even in the UK, the Queen is the Head and Protector of the Christian faith and gives a special message to British citizens on Christmas Day. We cannot imagine even the BJP, which many people call a Hindu party, demanding that the President of India should act as the Protector of Hinduism and should deliver a special message to the people of India on the day of Diwali! Actually, Indian secularism – *Sarva Dharma Sambhav* (equal respect for all religions) – is a part of Hinduism itself. An attack on secularism would be an attack on Hinduism. So, there cannot be a danger to Indian secularism from the Hindu parties. And lastly, the most important difference is that the Hindu parties did not demand a separate State for the Hindus, nor have they been given a separate State. While Islamic parties demanded a separate State for Muslims, and they have been given a separate State. So, while one has to bear Hindu, Sikh and Christian parties,

there is no justification to accept Islamic politics in the residual India. If someone believes in Islamic politics, they are welcome to Pakistan! That territory is reserved for them!

The views expressed by the author are personal.

Project Half Widows, in partnership with IAWRT and APDP – Info by Iffat Fatima, Filmmaker



The project **"Half Widows"** is a three year media project. Which began in 2006. The project is a partnership between International Association of Women in Radio and Television(IAWRT), a forum for personal contact and professional development among women broadcasters worldwide and the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP) Kashmir. APDP is an association of the relatives of the victims of **Enforced Disappearances**, campaigning collectively to seek justice and to get information on the whereabouts of

the missing members of their families. The project conceived and executed by Iffat Fatima is supported by FOKUS, a Norwegian based organisation which by supporting project based cooperation between Nowegian and their partner organisations in the south, aims to contribute to the improvement of economic, social and political status of women world wide.

The project is about the struggle of the family members of the disappeared persons in Kashmir.who have spent vast sums of money, time, resources and energy in a legal system that has systematically failed to provide justice to the victims. Enforced disappearance is not recognized as a crime under Indian law. Specifically the project is about women whose husbands have disappeared and are missing in the more than decade old violence in Kashmir. These women known as **half widows** in Kashmir, are living in a state of limbo, suspended in a space where they lead a life of uncertainity and anxiety. There is no closure for them to pick up the threads of their lives and move on. Being young and vulnerable they are under the pressure of their family and society to stay within the framework of marriage and conform to a marital status, while as the reality is that they are without husbands. Their lives are torn apart and their status undefined, subject to Islamic legal procedures which are ambiguous and determined by local interpretations.

APDP was founded in 1994 by Parveena Ahangar whose 17-year-old son was abducted and never heard of again In 1994. Parveena filed a habeas corpus petition in the Srinagar High Court. With the help of human rights activists and lawyers more and more petitions continued to be filed. More and more family members got together, went to court together, held demonstrations together. Thus began a movement, a collective struggle formalized as APDP. The testimonies of the members of APDP and the documentation of cases of disappeared persons in Kashmir indicate that the practice of enforced disappearance is widespread and systematic. Almost 8000 people are thought

to have disappeared, some as young as 13 or 14 years old. A large number of disappearance cases remain undocumented for various reasons, including fear of reprisal allegedly by the security forces.

Media Documentation

The media project seeks to document the personal experiences of these women and the stories which emerge from these experiences through the production of a documentary film. The documentary film will explore issues of memory , violence and healing and be a space for women whose voice is buried in the larger political and militaristic discourse to narrate their experiences with violence from their own perspectives. Besides a video documentary the project also includes 3 to 4 short video magazines which highlight immediate concerns and problems confronted by women as theystruggle to get legal assistance and information about their family members who are missing.

However the larger objective of the project is to assist and support the APDP effort to launch a long term self sustaining information and advocacy campaign against “Disappearances” and to build awareness about its impact on women Community level participation and networking is an important component of the campaign. The process of documentation, dissemination and distribution is being undertaken through a consultative process with APDP members, a network of organisations, activists, academics and practitioners. Through workshops, and conferences APDP members are trained to acquire long term organisational and media skills to be able to carry on the advocacy campaign independently. The project raises important issues of human rights, peace and justice confronting other countries as well. It will generate material that has international resonance as well as relevance and will urge policy makers and those who wield power to address the concerns of human rights , democracy and justice.

Source: IAWRT, Iffat Fatima

Desire and Repetition: The miniaturisation of the Hindi film song by Shikha Jhingan



Scene from Shikha Jhingan's 'Born to Sing'

Let us examine the contemporary popular Hindi film songs and their circulation through the convergence of new media technologies. How has the emergence of global television and digital music changed the aesthetics, the cultural codes and the formal structure of the Hindi film song by mobilizing new circuits for the consumption of popular music? In fact, the use of repetition and heightened codes of visuality have perhaps given new forms of identity to a large number of young girls on 'realty shows' based on popular film music.

In recent times, one big change in the structure of the song has been the use of a 'hook line' as a repetitive structure. This clever use of the hook line allows the song as a musical category to evoke a discernible response from the body. Popular songs like Nach Baliye (*Bunty Aur Babli*), Dhoom Machale Dhoom (*Dhoom*), Mauja hi Mauja (*Jab We Met*) rely on the

repetition of words or cluster of words and rhythmic patterns that is described as the hook line of the song. This metonymical formulation completely undermines the conventional structure of the film song thus opening up the song for an ‘afterlife’ for its circulation in the global circuits of value and exchange. The repetitive use of the hook line through television promos and trailers, reality shows, award nights, ring tones and advertisements of mobile phones and telecom service providers, leads to obfuscation of the original song and its emotional appeal. In this new formulation the film song not only gets unhinged from the narrative of the film but is primarily meant to evoke a response from a dancing body.

In analysing Reality Television and talent shows based on music, one would like to draw attention to the democratisation where it is possible to have greater access to these technologies not just as consumers but in recreation of the musical mode. What is interesting here is that the accent here is not just on being a good singer but a great performer. The mobilization of a unique voice along with a great performance, an energetic dancing body, go into this new form of dispersal. The creation of a certain persona, with the help of props, dress, hats, belts, gestures and other visual signs create the uniqueness of each singer. So music is providing a basis for the creation of an identity. The emphasis is on showcasing ‘your own voice’ in sharp contrast to the earlier phase of remixes and cover versions which relied entirely on imitation or the recreation of an ‘affect’. What is even more interesting is that there is a blurring of boundaries between music and dance, between the singer and the listener, between rehearsal and performance between sound and music and between voice and sound.

Shikha Jhingan, an IAWRT member, is a Professor in Media at Lady Sri Ram College, New Delhi

Gates, Walls and the Loss of Common Ground by Joya John



Triveni: No Meeings – Just Eat Pay n Go!



‘Khud’ A Former Rehearsal Space



Locked out – no short cut to NSD

We live in a world that has become increasingly paranoid about security. Terror is, however, also a ruse by which public space is being taken away from the public. The private security guard, underpaid and overworked, now monitors our entry into public spaces. Unknowingly he has become an agent of a new surveillance. He is trained to recognize the insider from the outsider. The identity card has become the new passport. A number of public spaces have slowly become off limits. The porous boundaries of spaces have now ceased to exist. Gates have closed citing security risks where earlier they were open.

The gate that divides the two largest post graduate women's hostels in Delhi University was closed citing thefts. The gate was earlier open from 9pm at night till 6 am in the morning allowing personal and cultural interaction between students. Often it is the very materiality of newly renovated spaces which has made the congregation of people impossible. The garden around the Vivekanand Statue, in the Arts Faculty, Delhi University is one such example. In the past this garden embodied dissent, it was a place where people congregated, sat and discussed while the imposing statue of Vivekanand looked on. When the garden was replaced by concrete, the same space has become a barren landscape, too hot to spend time in, perhaps adding new meanings to the taciturnity of the statue that looks on. Where concrete didn't work a garden did. The Shaheed Bhagat Singh Park, near ITO, has been enclosed. The

park’s proximity to all the major newspaper houses is probably one reason.

The aesthetic of new spaces is the *nature* that the metropolis now boasts of. Like the serenity of nature that reinforces that all is right with the world, we now look to our sanitized worlds to reinforce our new prosperity. The swish, hip interiors of public spaces, along with new gadgets for scrutinizing who enters, have a way of enforcing etiquette of social congregation. We congregate in cafes with music too loud to carry on any conversation and the old places of community warn us that meetings are no longer permissible

(For old frequenters of the Triveni Canteen, which was the hub for cultural groups to meet and discuss, the notice banning meetings and discussions comes as some surprise. It has become increasingly difficult to find places to perform and rehearse for free. Inside Bahawalpur House precincts of The National School of Drama, the popular depression known as the *‘Khud’* has been filled up and perhaps by accident, or more likely by design, is now a dump for *malba*)

The writing on the wall both literally and metaphorically, in Delhi, is clear that someone wants its walls to speak the language that endorses the new world. Wall writing has become impossible. Within a night the walls are sanitized with a fresh coat of paint. For example, in Delhi University, there are now select places for putting up posters. Ironically they are called “Walls of Democracy”. Our public walls speak to us. Who decides what gets said through them? A blank red brick wall tells us there are no stories to tell. An “ugly” wall talks to us, offends us, appeals to us and asks us to take positions.

The new public spaces are built on a new exclusivity. As soon as the old dhaba is replaced by a swanky new café, the prices on the menu go up. Renovation and up gradation in every public facility like a library or a hostel has necessarily meant

beefing up security and exclusivity. Often enough, our demands for privacy or unhindered access to what we *pay for* has ensured that those less fortunate cannot access the same space. We are now spending less time with those whose ugliness might offend us. We don't need to see them anymore. The polished, glass surfaces of the new spaces are our new futures. Futures with no memory of the past, of community and of dissent.

Joya John is a lecturer in the English department, Gargi College.

Fourth Asian Women's Film Festival 2008 showcased "Insights and Aspirations of Women" by Jai Chandiram



Madhushree Dutta's 'Scribbles on Akka'



Anupama Sriniwasan's 'Everyday'

Inaugurating the two-day Fourth IAWRT Asian Women's Film Festival in New Delhi, Dr Vatsyayan, Chairperson of the India International Centre Asia Project said that the observance of the International Women's Day had both 'deep positive and negative messages' since it drew attention to the inequities among the genders even as it had the avowed objective of empowerment. She added that the documentary had the ripeness to highlight various important issues as it had the capacity to cheer and to disturb.

Eminent film critic and historian Aruna Vasudev, who is also founder President of the Network for Promotion of Asian Cinema (NETPAC), wondered whether the pronouncements made by political leaders on International Women's Day were mere lip service. She stressed the power of cinema to inspire people to make a change in society.

In her message read out on the occasion, Jocelyne Josiah of UNESCO said women still remained highly under-represented in all fields and this was of great concern to UNESCO. She called upon the media to let women handle the editorial content of the media on the International Women's Day tomorrow, a project that UNESCO has been supporting for the last eight years.

The International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT) has been organizing this Festival for the past four years. The aim was to celebrate the vision of women through film. The festival reflects how women film makers explore

reflect, negotiate, resist and document self , family religion ,political, social, cultural, environment. The IAWRT is presently concentrating on two projects, under the broad theme 'Violence and Women'. One project was on "Enforced Disappearances" and the struggle of Kashmiri women for human rights and the second on 'Trafficking of Women in Nepal , India and Bangladesh'.

Around 25 films from five countries were screened in the festival being held in collaboration with the IIC Asia Project and UNESCO on the theme 'Insights and Aspirations'. They included features documentaries and animation films from UK, Japan, Pakistan, and the United States besides India.

The festival featured, "Mortality TV and the Loving Jehad by Paromita Vohra. The film looks outside the Breaking News and covers the complex dynamics of fear of love, scrutiny and control of women's mobility and sexuality and the feudal mindsets. "Lakshmi and Me" by Nishtha Jain explores her changing relationship with Lakshmi her part-time maid, "Word Within The Word" by Rajula Shah in her film shows how Kabir, the mystic poet resonates with ordinary lives today. Madhushree Dutta in her film "Scribbles on Akka" looks at the bhakti and rebellion of the 12th century poet Mahadevi Aka. Chandra Siddan enquires into her first marriage when she was a child and many more films that inspire.

Haruyo Kato captures her mother who is dying of cancer in her film . A film that that inspires as it challenges the ravages of the disease

Each screening was well attended by students from local media institutes and colleges .

The distinguished filmmaker Paromita Vohra revealed her approach to filmmaking , she said she opened up many windows so people can go in and out without being judgmental. Academics/ professionals spoke about their concerns in popular

music culture and struggles in human rights . Truly an inspiring fare . Other filmmakers shared their experiences and discussed the emerging trends in documentaries.

Some of the underlying questions during the festival examined whether women are creating a new language of filmmaking, which reflects, and explores new politics of filmmaking, and how women are widening the frame for issues concerning women.

Overall, recognizing the critical need for a forum that can sustain the form of documentary as well as women's contribution to this unique form, the festival showcased documentary films created by women, covering a range of genres and expressive styles.

The author is Managing Trustee at IAWRT.

JANAM Commemorates Safdar's Martyrdom Day



Jan Natya Manch (Janam) remembers **Safdar Hashmi** on 1st January every year by performing in Sahibabad at the very same place,

where he was assassinated on January 1, 1989 by goons of the ruling party. This year too the event was remembered .as a mark of defiance to the perpeturates of the crime. Moloyshree, Safdar's Widow, Sudhanwa Deshpande along with Janam's actors performed *Sangharsh He Hai Rastaa* in a packed Ambedkar Park. The street play performances were interspersed with revolutionary songs Sung by Janam actors and composed by Kajol Ghosh. The event was supported by CITU whose volunteers controlled the massive crowds and provided background support. CPM leader Brinda Karat, a former Janam activist, was also present on the occasion. The audience was very enthusiastic and cheered all the way. Sudhanwa's hilarious rendition of George Bush dressed as Uncle Sam in *One Two Ka Four* was greeted by guffaws from the audience. The play highlighted India's weak foreign policy while negotiating the Nucleardeal with USA and other related issues, Delhi Young Artists Forum did a street play *Dilli Door Hai* on the forthcoming Commonwealth games and it's impact on unorganized sector workers of the National Capital Region of Delhi

Janam also organized a ***Gadar Mela*** to commemorate the **Indian Sepoy Mutiny** when in 1857 Indian soldiers killed their British officers and tried to expel the British from India. The format of a typical Diwali Mela was used to educate the visitors about this important event. Janam volunteers cooked the food themselves. The food stalls had rare delicacies like *Shakargandi ke Khire, Bajre key Tikki, Sattu ka Paan, Tapioca* and what not. There were games for children which included, Quiz Programs, Jigsaw and Crossword puzzles. There were kids events like Fancy Dress Parade. The Sahmat Exhibition was used to enlighten the young audience about the hard won independence.