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5 YEAR PLAN



Literary Companion

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www.5yearplan.org

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5 Year Plan: Literary Companion



of 1000

Introduction

Welcome Reader,

This book is intended to provide background for some of the ideas at play within the 5 Year Plan project. The project first and foremost was born from the desire to make a work of Art, unique in character and materiality. The inspiration came from the artworks printed onto the side of sling bags called jholas that are commonly made by Gandhi ashram collectives throughout India. The cloth they are made from, called khadi, is made from hand-spun cotton thread woven on hand-looms, a cloth with deep resonance in India. Until recently, everything I knew about Gandhi was learned from the jholas I use. The artworks on them have a casual unscripted beauty; they are instructive of Gandhian ideas of non-violent humanity and service to society. I consider these works an authentic form of counter-industrial pop art, worthy of collection and study.

To make a book in appreciation of artwork produced in a Gandhi Ashram environment, you must include the elements of its inspiration. Khadi was the backbone of Gandhi's vision, a means of subsistence for the poorest of the poor.

The spinning and weaving process itself also had deep spiritual resonance for Gandhi, in its potential to turn the mind to non-violence and compassion. A book of such artworks should contain the medium of the message and therefore be printed onto khadi.

Seva (service) is one of the guiding principals of Gandhi-ji's program of Swadeshi (self-sufficiency). To honor the intentions of the Gandhian artists who inspired the 5 Year Plan project, it was essential that it be a seva/ service. 5 Year Plan is an artwork as social architecture. There is no separation between those serving and those served; it is not charity. Each person involved has contributed their art, their work and intelligence to make the project what it is. Our method is to encourage cooperation between artists, village producers of khadi cloth, art lovers, consumers and relief workers in the field such as Doctors Without Borders (MSF). All participants have responded to their compassion, the artists and writers who contributed, the volunteers of Gandhi Ashrams who cleared every obstacle; the printers, patrons, and gallerists, the people on the streets — every single step of the way has been guided by their compassion.

The artists in the 5 Year Plan all in one way or another have a sincere affinity to the project. And all of them understood the project in their own way. Much of the work is by anonymous artists whose production is for the marketplace, they may not perceive what they do as art. There is an astonishing range of perceptions as to the nature of art, particularly in this poly-cultural context.

The 5 Year Plan project is timely for many reasons, particularly environmentally and economically. The opening of India's markets to cheap foreign synthetics has had a devastating effect on the village industries which produce khadi and other goods. Ironically, the very plastic bags which have largely replaced the jhola in the home are being declared illegal in many states in India due to the harm they do to the environment. Jhola bags are a sustainable answer: they are practical and beautiful, and they reduce the need for plastic bags. They are also soft to the touch, and a pleasure to use. The irregularities in the threads speak of true hand labor, from the cotton bole to the charka spinning wheel to the loom. Purchasing khadi supports village families. You can learn all this just by using jholas and appreciating them as they are.

Here's some background on the khadi that the 5 Year Plan is printed on. It was woven by the people of the Manav Seva Samiti Khanjarpur Ashram in Modinagar (UP) India.

All the thread for the book was spun by hand and then woven on hand-loom. Each meter of khadi requires about 1500 meters of thread. It takes a person about a day and a half to spin 1500 meters of thread.

In total we needed 1400 meters of khadi. This means we needed 2,100,000 meters of thread, requiring 2100 days of spinning.

A weaver can do about 8 meters in a day. This means that we provided 175 days of work to the weavers of the ashram.

In total, just to make the cloth for the book, we created almost 2300 days of work. The weavers and spinners for their part produce a fabric of real character and beauty.

Mr Handa of Gandhi Hindustani Sahitya Sabha Ashram in Delhi, took me under his wing to make this project happen. He himself and his wife Bina have dedicated the last 30 years of their

lives in total service to the poor. Mr Handa would like me to point out that when you purchase khadi you help the poorest villager in the world to maintain self-sufficiency.

In closing I must thank the artists and poets and scholars who contributed work, humbling me with their generosity. In the Literary Companion, which you hold, you will find a selection of writings by Mahatma Gandhi that are as relevant now as the day they were written, 5 dreams of Allen Ginsberg, "Baba's Got A Brand New Bag" by Andy Rotman, sermons by Reverend Billy Talon, brilliant poetry by Lee Ann Brown, Louise Landes Levi, Gloria Williams, India Radfar, Greta Byrum, Shiv Mirabito, Jeff Key, and Mrs Bina Handa. A piece by Peter Lambert Wilson, and an excerpt from Arundhati Roy's "Walking with Comrades" (OUTLOOK magazine March 29, 2010).

I would particularly like to thank Prof. Andy Rotman of Smith College for his insights and encouragement, and for his contribution of 3 of the artworks in the 5 Year Plan khadi book. Also my deepest gratitude to Mr and Mrs Handa who believes in the project and removed every obstacle,

facilitating work with Gandhi Ashram collectives. Thanks also to Gurpreet Sidhu and Orijit Sen of People Tree Collective for sheltering me in their workshop, introducing me to brilliant people and guiding by example.

Thanks to Nandita Devraj collaborator and friend, Rudraksh Printers, Jaipur. Thanks also to Raymond Foye, Brooklyn Artists Alliance, Hudson (Feature Inc), John Studer, Krista Friebaum + Zoe Turnbull, Shari Cavin (Cavin-Morris Gallery), Ingrid Dinter, Minhazz Majumdar (minhazzmajumdar.org), Peter Hale (Allen Ginsberg Estate), The People of India, Maria and John Sinift, Steven Warner, Raul Vincent Enriquez, and most especially dearly Marguerite Byrum without whom I am nothing.

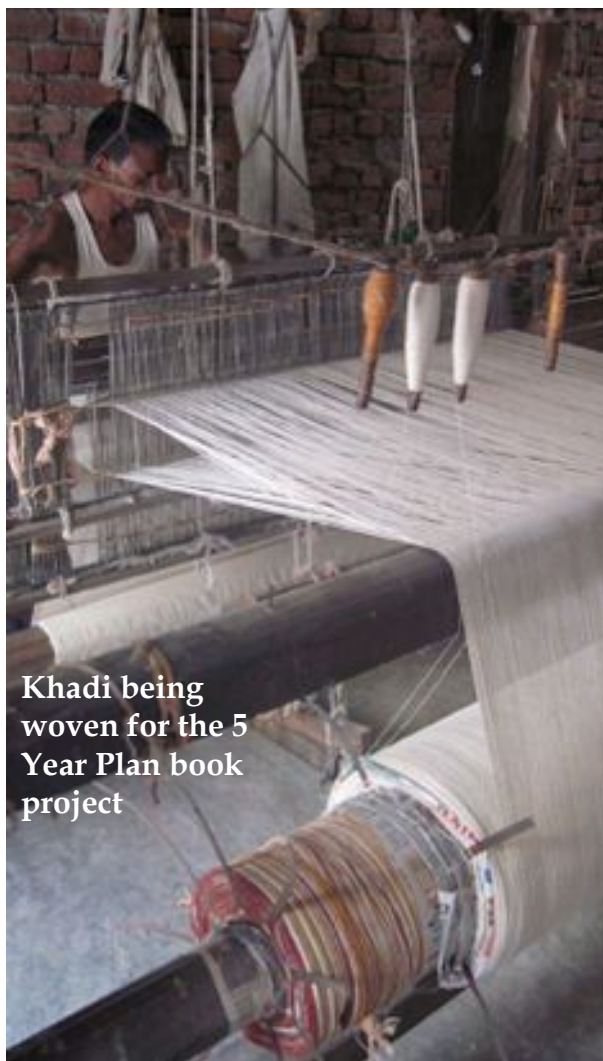
— Aaron Sinift, Editor

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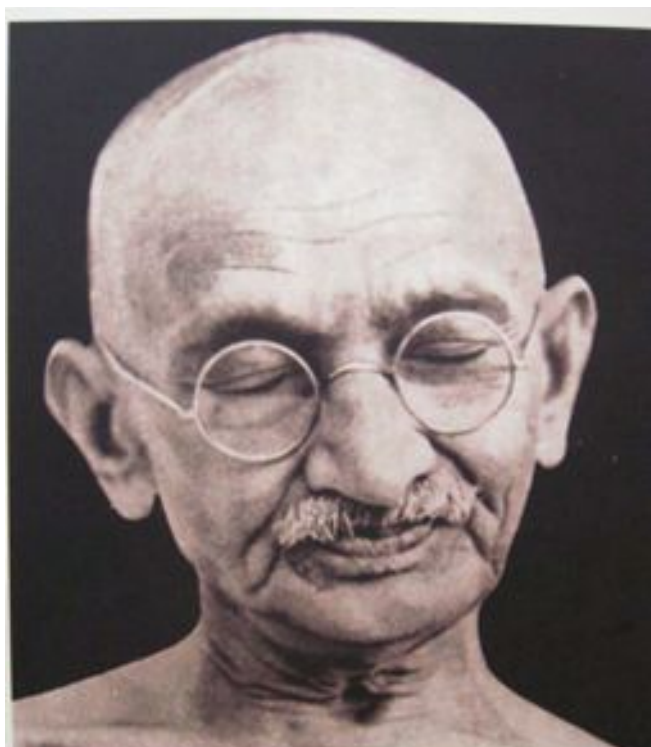
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**Khadi being
woven for the 5
Year Plan book
project**



Selections from *Village Industries* by M.K. Gandhi

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CHAPTER I

WHY THE VILLAGE INDUSTRIES MOVEMENT

I have no doubt in my mind that we add to the national wealth if we help the small-scale industries. I have no doubt also that true Swadeshi consists in encouraging and reviving these home industries. That alone can help the dumb millions. It also provides an outlet for the creative faculties and resourcefulness of the people. It can also usefully employ hundreds of youths in the country who are in need of employment. It may harness all the energy that at present runs to waste. I do not want anyone of those who are engaged in more remunerative occupations to leave them and take to the minor industries. Just as I did with regard to the spinning wheel, I would ask only those who suffer from unemployment and penury to take to some of these industries and add a little to their slender resources.

Cent Per Cent Swadeshi, p. 5, Edn. 1958

The idea behind the village industries scheme is that we should look to the villages for the supply of our daily needs and that, when we find that some needs are not so supplied, we should see whether with a little trouble and organization, they cannot be profitably supplied by the villagers. In estimating the profit, we should think of the villager, not of ourselves. It may be that, in the initial stages, we might have to pay a little more than the ordinary price and get an inferior article in the bargain.

Things will improve, if we will interest ourselves in the supplier of our needs and insist on his doing better and take the trouble of helping to do better.

Harijan, 23-11-1934, p. 324

This is a constructive, not a destructive, programme. The big industries can never, they don't hope to, overtake the unemployed millions. Their aim is primarily to make money for the few owners, never the direct one of finding employment for the unemployed millions. The organizers of Khadi and other village industries don't hope in the near future to affect the big industries. They may hope to bring a ray of light into the dark dungeons, mis-called cottages, of the villagers. . . . They are designed to *well utilize* the leisure hours of the idle millions.

In this there is *no* war against the misuse and abuse of machinery, i.e. its use to the detriment of the millions. Dead machinery must not be pitted against the millions of living machines represented by the villagers scattered in the seven hundred thousand villages of India. Machinery to be well used has to help and ease human effort. The present use of machinery tends more and more to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few in total disregard of millions of men and women whose bread is snatched by it out of their mouths. The movement represented by the A.I.S.A. and the A.I.V.I.A. has been conceived so as to minimize the evil wrought by the craze for amassing large fortunes through the use of dead tools in order to avoid having to deal with very sensitive human tools.

Harijan, 14-9-1935

I would say that if the village perishes, India will perish too. It will be no more India. Her own mission in the world will get lost. The revival of the village is possible only when it is no more exploited. Industrialization on a mass scale will necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the villagers as the problems of competition and marketing come in. Therefore, we have to concentrate on the village being self-contained, manufacturing mainly for use. Provided this character of the village industry is maintained, there would be no objection to villagers using even the modern machines and tools that they can make and can afford to use. Only they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others.

Harijan, 29-8-1936, p. 226

There is no doubt in my mind that in a country like ours, teeming with millions of unemployed, something is needed to keep their hands and feet engaged in order that they may earn an honest living. It is for them that Khadi and cottage industries are needed. It is clear to me as daylight that they are badly needed at the present moment. What the future has in store for them, I do not know, nor do I care to know. . . . These little things add substantially to the income of the poor villagers. If you can ensure them three annas instead of the three pice that they get today, they will think they have won Swaraj. That is what Khadi is trying to do for the spinners today.

Harijan, 2-1-1937

The conception underlying both the Nai Talim and the village industries programme, including

Khaddar, was rooted in the same thing, viz., concern for the dignity and status of the village unit as against the big cities and of the individual against the machine. The concern was further augmented by the fact that India lives not in a handful of her big cities but in her 7,00,000 villages. The problem was of re-establishment of justice between the town and the village. As it was, the balance was heavily tipped in favour of the former to the disadvantage of the latter.

Harijan, 25-8-1946

CHAPTER 2

CAUSES OF DECLINE OF VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

We eat mill-ground flour, and even the poor villager walks with a head-load of half a maund grain to have it ground in the nearest flour mill. Do you know that in spite of the plenty of food-stuffs we produce we import wheat from outside and we eat the 'superfine' flour from Australia? We will not use our hand-ground flour, and the poor villager also foolishly copies us. We thus turn wealth into waste, nectar into poison. For whole meal is the proper meal. Mill-ground flour is vitaminless flour, mill-ground flour kept for days is not only vitaminless, but poison. But we will not exert ourselves to produce flour which we must eat fresh every day, and will pay for less nutritious things and purchase ill-health in the bargain. This is not any abstruse economic truth, it is a fact, which is daily happening before our eyes. The same is the

case with rice and *gur* and oil. We will eat rice, polished of its substance, and eat less nutritious sugar and pay more for it than more nutritious *gur*. We have suffered the village oilman to be driven to extinction and we eat adulterated oils. We idolize the cow, but kill her by slow degrees. We eat honey and kill the honey-bee, with the result that honey is such a rare commodity today that it is only available to a 'Mahatma' like me or to those who must have it from the physician as a vehicle for the drugs he prescribes. If we took the trouble of learning scientific and harmless bee-keeping, we should get it cheaper and our children would get out of it all the carbo-hydrates they need. In all our dietetics, we mistake the shadow for the substance, preferring bone-white sugar to rich brown *gur* and pale white bread to rich brown bran-bread.

We are said to be a nation of daily bathers. That we are, to be sure, but we are none the better for it. For we bathe with unclean water, we foul our tanks and rivers with filth and use that water for drinking and bath. We lawyers and degree-holders and doctors will not learn the elementary principles of sanitation and hygiene. We have not yet devised the most economic method of disposal of our evacuations and we turn our open healthy spaces into breeding grounds of disease.

I implore you to throw off your inertia, to bestir yourselves to study these elementary facts and live more rational lives and learn how to turn waste into wealth. I have told you simple truths which we would soon realize and act up to if we threw off the inertia of ages. But we have shunned body-labour

to the detriment of our brains, and thus rest content with the irrational ways of diet and living. Let us pull ourselves together and resolve to make our bodies and brains more active.

Harijan, 11-5-1935

Any country that exposes itself to unlimited foreign competition can be reduced to starvation and therefore, subjection if the foreigners desire it. This is known as peaceful penetration. One has to go only a step further to understand that the result would be the same as between hand-made goods and those made by power-driven machinery. We are seeing the process going on before our eyes. Little flour mills are ousting the *chakki*, oil mills the village *ghani*, rice mills the village *dhenki*, sugar mills the village *gur-pans*, etc. This displacement of village labour is impoverishing the villagers and enriching the moneyed men. If the process continues sufficiently long, the villagers will be destroyed without any further effort. No Chengis Khan could devise a more ingenious or more profitable method of destroying these villages. And the tragedy of it all is that the villagers are unconsciously but none the less surely contributing to their own destruction. To complete the tale of their woe, let the reader know that even cultivation has ceased to be profitable. For some crops, the villager does not cover even the cost of seed.

Harijan, 20-6-1936

DANGERS OF MECHANIZATION

Mechanization is good when the hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required for the work, as is the case in India. . . . The problem with us is not how to find leisure for the teeming millions inhabiting our villages. The problem is how to utilize their idle hours, which are equal to the working days of six months in the year. Strange as it may appear, every mill generally is a menace to the villagers. I have not worked out the figures, but I am quite safe in saying that every mill-hand does the work of at least ten labourers doing the same work in their villages. In other words, he earns more than he did in his village at the expense of ten fellow-villagers. Thus spinning and weaving mills have deprived the villagers of a substantial means of livelihood. It is no answer in reply to say that they turn out cheaper, better cloth, if they do so at all. For, if they have displaced thousands of workers, the cheapest mill cloth is dearer than the dearest Khadi woven in the villages. Coal is not dear for the coal miner who can use it there and then nor is Khadi dear for the villager who manufactures his own Khadi. But if the cloth manufactured in mills displaces village hands, rice mills and flour mills not only displace thousands of poor women workers, but damage the health of the whole population in the bargain. Where people have no objection to taking flesh diet

and can afford it, white flour and polished rice may do no harm, but in India, where millions can get no flesh diet even where they have no objection to eating it, if they can get it, it is sinful to deprive them of nutritious and vital elements contained in whole wheat meal and unpolished rice. It is time medical men and others combined to instruct the people on the danger attendant upon the use of white flour and polished rice. . . .

Hence the function of the All-India Village Industries Association must, in my opinion be to encourage the existing industries and to revive, where it is possible and desirable, the dying or dead industries of villages according to the village methods, i.e., the villages working in their own cottages as may have done from times immemorial. These simple methods can be considerably improved as they have been in hand-ginning, hand-carding, hand-spinning and hand-weaving.

A critic objects that the ancient plan is purely individualistic and can never bring about corporate effort. This view appears to me to be very superficial. Though articles may be manufactured by villagers in their cottages, they can be pooled together and profits divided. The villagers may work under supervision and according to plan. The raw material may be supplied from common stock. If the will to co-operative effort is created, there is surely ample opportunity for co-operation, division of labour, saving of time and efficiency of work. All these things are today being done by the All-India Spinners' Association in over 5,000 villages.

Harijan, 16-11-1934

When production and consumption both become localized, the temptation to speed up production, indefinitely and at any price, disappears. All the endless difficulties and problems that our present-day economic system presents, too, would then come to an end. Take a concrete instance. England today is the cloth shop of the world. It, therefore, needs to hold a world in bondage to secure its market. But under the change that I have envisaged, she would limit her production to the actual needs of her 45 millions of population. When that need is satisfied, the production would necessarily stop. It won't be continued for the sake of bringing in more gold irrespective of the needs of a people and at the risk of their impoverishment. There would be no unnatural accumulation of hoards in the pockets of the few, and want in the midst of plenty in regard to the rest, as is happening today, for instance, in America. America is today able to hold the world in fee by selling all kinds of trinkets, or by selling her unrivalled skill, which she has a right to do. She has reached the acme of mass production, and yet she has not been able to abolish unemployment or want. There are still thousands, perhaps millions of people in America who live in misery, inspite of the phenomenal riches of the few. The whole of the American nation is not benefited by this mass production.

Harijan, 2-11-1934, p. 302

Well, now the economics and civilization of a country where the pressure of population on land is greatest are and must be different from those of a country where the pressure is least. Sparsely populated, America may have need of machinery. India may not

need it at all. Where there are millions upon millions of units of idle labour, it is no use thinking of labour-saving devices. If someone devised a machine which saved us the trouble of using our hands to eat, eating would cease to be a pleasure, it would become a torture. The reason of our poverty is the extinction of our industries and our consequent unemployment. Some years ago India's agricultural population was said to be 70 per cent. Today it is said to be 90 per cent. It does not mean that 90 per cent are agriculturists, but that instead of 70 per cent who depended on land, 90 per cent are now driven to depend on land. In other words, whereas there were industries and crafts enough to feed the 20 per cent some time ago, these are no longer there and the people have thus been thrown on land. They thus steal their living, not because they want to, but because there is no more land.

Harijan, 11-5-1935

I have no partiality for return to the primitive method of grinding and husking for the sake of them. I suggest the return, because there is no other way of giving employment to the millions of villagers who are living in idleness. In my opinion, village uplift is impossible, unless we solve the pressing economic distress. Therefore, to induce the villagers to utilize their idle hours is in itself solid uplift work.

Harijan, 30-11-1934

REHABILITATION OF VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

We may profess to gratuitously help textile, sugar and rice mills and, respectively, kill the village spinning wheel, the handloom and their product, Khadi, the village cane crusher and its product, the vitamin-laden and nourishing *gur* or molasses and the hand-pounder and its product, unpolished rice, whose pericarp, which holds the vitamins, is left intact by these pounders. Our clear duty is, therefore, to investigate the possibility of keeping in existence the village wheel, the village crusher and the village pounder, and, by advertising their products, discovering their qualities, ascertaining the condition of the workers and the number displaced by the power-driven machinery and discovering the methods of improving them, whilst retaining their village character, to enable them to stand the competition of the mills. How terribly and criminally we have neglected them! Here, there is no antagonism to the textile or the sugar or the rice mills. Their products must be preferred to the corresponding foreign products. If they were in danger of extinction from foreign competition they should receive the needed support. But they stand in no such need. They are flourishing in spite of foreign competition. What is needed is protection of the village crafts and the workers behind them from the crushing competition of the power-driven machinery, whether it is worked in India or in foreign lands. It may be that Khadi, *gur* and unpolished rice have no intrinsic quality and that

they should die. But, except for Khadi, not the slightest effort has been made, so far as I am aware, to know anything about the fate of the tens of thousands of villagers who were earning their livelihood through crushing cane and pounding rice. Surely, there is in this work enough for an army of patriots. The reader will say, 'But this is very difficult work.' I admit. But it is most important and equally interesting. I claim that this is true, fruitful and cent per cent Swadeshi!

Harijan, 10-8-1934

In a nutshell, of the things we use, we should restrict our purchases to the articles which villages manufacture. Their manufactures may be crude. We must try to induce them to improve their workmanship, and not dismiss them because foreign articles or even articles produced in cities, that is, big factories, are superior. In other words, we should evoke the artistic talent of the villager. In this manner, shall we repay somewhat the debt we owe to them. We need not be frightened by the thought whether we shall ever succeed in such an effort. Within our own times, we can recall instances, where we have not been baffled by the difficulty of our tasks when we have known that they were essential for this nation's progress. If, therefore, we as individuals believe that revivification of India's villages is a necessity of our existence, if we believe that thereby only can we root out untouchability and feel one with all, no matter to what community or religion they may belong, we must mentally go back to the villages and treat them as our pattern, instead of putting the city life before them for imitation. If this is the correct

attitude, then, naturally, we begin with ourselves and thus use, say, hand-made paper instead of mill-made, use village reed, whenever possible, instead of the fountainpen or the penholder, ink made in the villages instead of the big factories, etc. I can multiply instances of this nature. There is hardly anything of daily use in the home, which the villagers have not made before and cannot make even now. If we perform the mental trick and fix our gaze upon them, we immediately put millions of rupees into the pockets of the villagers, whereas at the present moment we are exploiting the villagers without making any return worth the name. It is time we arrested the progress of the tragedy. To me, the campaign against untouchability has begun to imply ever so much more than the eradication of the ceremonial untouchability of those who are labelled untouchables. For the city-dweller, the villages have become untouchable. He does not know them, he will not live in them, and if he finds himself in a village, he will want to reproduce the city life there. This would be tolerable, if we could bring into being cities which would accommodate 30 crores of human beings. This is much more impossible than the one of reviving the village industries and stopping the progressive poverty, which is due as much to enforced unemployment as to any other cause.

Harijan, 30-11-1934

These (i.e. village industries other than Khadi) stand on a different footing from Khadi. There is not much scope for voluntary labour in them. Each industry will take the labour of only a certain number of hands. These industries come in as a handmaid to

Khadi. They cannot exist without Khadi, and Khadi will be robbed of its dignity without them. Village economy cannot be complete without the essential village industries such as hand-grinding, hand-pounding, soap-making, paper-making, match-making, tanning, oil-pressing etc. Congressmen can interest themselves in these and, if they are villagers or will settle down in villages, they will give these industries a new life and a new dress. All should make it a point of honour to use only village articles whenever and wherever available. Given the demand, there is no doubt that most of our wants can be supplied from our villages. When we have become village-minded, we will not want imitations of the West or machine-made products, but we will develop a true national taste in keeping with the vision of a new India in which pauperism, starvation and idleness will be unknown.

Constructive Programme, Edn. 1948, p. 14-5

CHAPTER 5

DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY

My difficulties are two. One is whether it is possible to sell hand-made articles as cheaply as machine-made ones. The second is that out of the articles that have been enumerated in the scheme there is hardly any except Khadi which can become universal. They will not, in a large measure, be consumed locally and so will have to be sold in the cities. This is as it should be. The villagers should develop such a high degree of skill that articles prepared by them should command a ready market outside. When our villages

are fully developed there will be no dearth in them of men with a high degree of skill and artistic talent. There will be village poets, village artists, village architects, linguists and research workers. In short there will be nothing in life worth having which will not be had in the villages. Today the villages are dung heaps. Tomorrow they will be like tiny gardens of Eden where dwell highly intelligent folk whom no one can deceive or exploit.

The reconstruction of the villages along these lines should begin right now. That might necessitate some modification of the scheme. The reconstruction of the villages should not be organized on a temporary but permanent basis.

My second difficulty is that in the scheme under question, craft and education have been divorced from each other. Craft, art, health and education should all be integrated into one scheme. Nai Talim is a beautiful blend of all the four and covers the whole education of the individual from the time of conception to the moment of death. Therefore, I would not divide village uplift work into watertight compartments from the very beginning but undertake an activity which will combine all four. Instead of regarding craft and industry as different from education, I will regard the former as the medium for the latter. Nai Talim ought to be integrated into the scheme.

Harijan, 10-11-1946

"Begin with Yourself"

Correspondents have been writing, and friends have been seeing me, to ask me how to begin the village industries work and what to do first.

The obvious answer is, "Begin with yourself and do first that which is easiest for you to do."

This answer, however, does not satisfy the enquirers. Let me, therefore, be more explicit.

Each person can examine all the articles of food, clothing and other things that he uses from day to day and replace foreign makes or city makes, by those produced by the villagers in their homes or fields with the simple inexpensive tools they can easily handle and mend. This replacement will be itself, an education of great value and a solid beginning. The next step will be opened out to him of itself. For instance, say, the beginner has been hitherto using a tooth-brush made in a Bombay factory. He wants to replace it with a village brush. He is advised to use a *babul* twig. If he has weak teeth or is toothless, he has to crush one end of it, with a rounded stone or a hammer, on a hard surface. The other end he slits with a knife and uses the halves as tongue-scrapers. He will find these brushes to be cheaper and much cleaner than the very unhygienic factory-made tooth-brush. The city-made tooth-powder he naturally replaces with equal parts of clean, finely-ground, wood-charcoal and clean salt. He will replace mill-cloth with village-spun Khadi, and mill-husked rice with hand-husked, unpolished rice, and white sugar with village-made *gur*. These I have taken merely as samples already mentioned in these columns. I have mentioned them again to deal with the difficulties that have been mentioned by those who have been discussing the question with me.

Harijan, 25-1-1935

Gandhi; the only solution for the modern world

by Vijay Kumar Handa

Gandhi to me was not only a human, but also a way of life to be lived. It is surprising that we are facing today what he had foreseen at the earliest stage of his philosophical development when he pleaded for decentralization of the economy which the people did accept.

The people's representatives in government went ahead with industrialization which resulted in centralization of the economy. Not only small and backward (poor) countries but also the rich and most advanced countries are facing the problems of centralized economies.

For example, the people are leaving the villages and rushing to the cities which are getting thickly populated not only by industries but unemployed poor hoping for work. From here start the problems, more population needs electricity, water, space to live, while the disparity between poor and rich people leads the younger generation toward vices of thieves and dacoits to become rich overnight.

As the industrial machines are growing, our lives are also becoming mechanical. Everybody is so busy and tense that they have no time for others. It results that the rate of suicide is increasing also in the most advanced countries. Why so?

Even though they have all facilities of life, they are committing suicide societally and environmentally.

The only solution for solving these problems is Gandhi's slogan "Back to the villages, and increase cottage industries". Gandhi foresaw our situation and his pleas were heard by the people but ignored by the government.

The law and order position in the whole world is deteriorating due to increased centralization. The governments of all countries are worried about the new problem of terrorism which is also increasing day by day.

Now all of us have to think whether we should follow the same path. Even if we have lots of money we are in great tension. We should live a carefree and peaceful life, if we want to live in peace the only solution is to follow Gandhi's example.

Mr Handa and Mrs Bina Handa serve the poor at
Gandhi Hindustani Sahatiya Sevha, New Delhi

Two Dreams of Jack Kerouac

by Allen Ginsberg

KEROUAC 'S LABORS

Woke 8:45 embracing Kerouac in dream — We had travelled together thru various countries and war landscapes, Chechnya, Russia, Prague, London, Lower East Side with miraculous encounters with cops & presidents, musicians & aroused youth gangs, radio broadcasts, airplane rides together, & we're now home in his house — I said "Jesus Christ how will I remember all that happened?" He sat in his kitchen chair stolid and healthy as I prepared to leave.

"Well take it easy" I bid farewell — "you've already done so much you don't have to strain to live, you should stay around on earth till old age maybe 80 or 90 years you've got you can go to — You don't have to work so hard, you're already immortal in your work, but you're valuable to the world, just the example of persistence & patience — you don't have to write a book every six months, every year a production, you can take your time, rest, maybe one small volume every decade from now on, just a record of a few flowers of thought over the ten year cycles — that should be easy, it would write itself. That way you can survive without strain."

Jack sat in kitchen, calm & patient in clean white & blue horizontally striped shirt, collar unbuttoned, resting — I held him round, said I was

going — “When will we see each other again?” I worried, happy he was on earth for another few decades.

1/11/95 Wednesday

THE VAST VALLEY OF THE WORLD

A visionary dream, barely remembered, returned in full landscape as I lay in bed with churchbells pounding out metallic clang of 7am balmy winter morn —

I’d been travelling with Kerouac for decades, now I was tired & wanted to go home, & Kerouac headed alone down the valley deeper into the farm belt to continue thru America till he got home along his road — which led down into the valley floor along the fields, while I trudged upland toward my house in the city too tired to continue the public hejira.

Kerouac meanwhile was still expostulating his American Vision and his apologia for the 1990’s transformation of U.S. into a narrow minded province of Multinational Powers —

“Look we still own this vast landscape, we still dwell in the Valley of the World, the Valley of the Lord, now it’s only a Shadow of the Lord still visible but it’s our own Lord Forgotten, our physical fields & space, our stars our winter sun our moons our own bodies our imperishable heaven & earth I still traverse make ye no mistake deny me no Denys —

Poetry America was born before us & will live after us — and would’ve been visible for every eye to see but for the scientists of poetry & sociologists of Academy measuring the vast mind with monkey calipers & teaspoons of ink —

They took the Romance of the Road & built tunnels & superhighways & set robot cars in motion & airplanes so distant in the clouds you would'nt know if you were crashing in Bardo Ecstasy or just flying to Chicago on a boring business trip with a roomfull of yuppies with laptops measuring the hunger of the crowds below in negro cities watching detectives crash cars on television to sell you a puppet full of glass armor eyeglasses, snooze suits, hermetic closets & after dinner mints.

Meanwhile the vast fields beckon the open skies look down & yawn full of Angels & God sits watching us traverse the crossroads by Jimmie's little vast farm wherein Grecia & Asia sit in the backyard while the kitten plays with the fishbowl on the kitchen window –

So these Academy Daddies did their job on my literature & now if anyone can read can read it's only box tops on the videoscreen or laptop cardgames to sell you insurance while you sit home with your head in the fireplace & your feet in the basement laundry machine, washmachine & dryer to you Mr. Fuddy, I'm home in our Deathless Valley I'll tell you top that!"

So Kerouac raved & prophecied & continued down his path thru the farm fields cursing the Academics who distorted his vision of America in the world – I trudged uphill marveling at his energy & enthusiasm and devotional madness as I resolved to get back to my home for a little more sleep before saying another word.

1/14/95, 7 A.M.

The Book of Good & Evil

by Allen Ginsberg

Walking street, London, Paris, views, grand mansards, Crystal Palace, Heaven & Earth movie, vast 19th Century City.

By a park square, I pass a gang of school kids playing with a lizard, I come up close to them on the grassy nook between the pavement and a black painted iron fencing around the mossy park, one boy explodes a turtle, putting a firecracker up its anus.

Kids, boys and girls in Catholic school uniforms run away up the steps into their school. I follow up the sandstone porch thru an oaken double door. Corridors & classrooms, several levels, a high refectory gym thru the French door on right. "Who did it?" I ask boldly, an unabashed elder going to snitch on the kid culprit who tortured the turtle. Brown robed monks up on the stairways look down, indifferent or perplexed by me, an intrusive stranger. No response.

Dismayed, I turn to leave, but a little aristocrat girl offers, "Sir, if you wish to know, it was Higgins, in Fine Arts & Crafts." What? She's pale & fine featured. "Who?" she repeats, "Higgins in Fine Arts."

I walk away, through the door onto the street, pavements, British black sleek shiny high taxis, trol-

lycars, mossy curbsides.

An elderly monk follows me out talking
“Come to a party, you may not guess it, I slightly
know Dudjom Rinpoche.” He looks like an old
friend of Auden, slightly stocky whitening hair,
pockmarked face.

He takes me to a nearby park and after we’d
come to rest stop at open tavern, ancient pub or
amusement arcade, maneuvers me aside into a
woodshed & shows me a deluxe antique volume of
illuminations. He opens the book, a series of pic-
tures:

First plate, humans battling tangled in a lizard-
like mass of meat. They courtsey, then stiffen, curl,
attack each other in vicious combat, then uncurl and
bow to a golden shining radiating hat-like animate
saucer-object flying down on the grassy ground.

Second plate: Insects battling tangled in hu-
manoid mass of meat, they rise together & form
into one rigid horrific-faced creature, then untangle
into scattered insect bits running off in different
directions.

Third plate: Animals in peaceable kingdom,
lions, lambs, snakes, does, antlered deer, doves,
pterodactyls & dinosaurs. Posed together, they
suddenly stiffen erect with hatred, & battling turn
into mechano meat. Then they relax to peace-
able kingdom order again and bow down before

a Buddha Ati-chain crown lying on the ground, shimmering like a tiny flying saucer which has flown down and circled round, resting still like a Boddhisattva crown on the grass green forest floor.

Fourth plate: A mass of birds, eagles, sparrows, condors & hawks roosted in symmetric order. Then they turn round on their perches, wheel on each other with beaks & claws, form a tableau vivant of reptilian aggression assembled into the shape of a single animal satanic visage — Then the visage disintegrates & again the birds roost peacefully before the same electric shining radiating small dinnerplate-like light-as-air flying saucer descending with its crown-mount semi-circle above the center.

Now a younger monk comes to escort me away down the street, handsome, I'm flattered at his attention. He puts his hand on my right ass, I ask, "Do you know why I came into your school?"

"Rather."

"Are you gay?"

"I don't know." I put my hand on his, we walk forward together, close and friendly, warm.

"Come in here" — We reenter the back door of school. Huge Piranesi wooden steps and rails, his hand presses me harder forward on ass, I step

into the parochial school building.

There's a Monk guard at the door, which closes. Am I led into a trap? Oaken corridor & bars, silent monks on stairways. A monkish prison retreat?

"Hospitality, report to headquarters" a loud-speaker echoes.

Will I see that head monk again? Who are they? I try to back up but there's a bar behind my knees — another monk below the landing is pressing me behind my back! I'm in a barred cell!

"Wow! I'm a prisoner. Now I'll have time to meditate!"

"You will?" a voice asks. I wake, Birds singing.

Oxford, Miss. April
19, 1987, 8:55am



RadhaKrishna illustration by Vijay age 6

(Mira, translated fr. Braja Bhasa)

O Rana

I go to Ghirdhara
I'm lost in the love
for Ghirdhara

Our marriage is old
Our marriage is
from the past

To me it doesn't matter
That we were married
in a dream,

O mother, Dinnatha wed me
in
my
dream

Mira Bai 1498-1550
translated by Louise Landes Levi



Jhola bag image, Varanasi U.P. , contemporary

**Baba's Got a Brand New Bag:
Indian Jute Bags and Exotic Others**
by Andy Rotman, Smith College

While walking in the main bazaar in Bodh Gaya, Bihar in January 2002, I saw a jute shopping bag hanging in a bag-sellers shop that caught my attention. Imprinted on this bag was an image, in lurid colors, of two planes crashing into the World Trade Center. Behind this bag were two other jute bags, both featuring fuzzy bears with tails like pompoms, much like images on greeting cards. The first featured a smiling brown bear wearing a cap and holding a ball in his hands, with the caption "Lat [sic] us Play with the Ball." The second featured two green bears, one smiling broadly and the other looking slightly coy, hugging each other over a heart, inside of which is inscribed the words "You are Nice." When I queried the bag seller whether he found it strange that such incongruous images were grouped together, he was baffled by my question. Though I rephrased and clarified my question, the bag seller, and the small crowd of merchants and customers who gathered around us on the street, were incredulous. As they repeated, again and again, these images were not different in any fundamental or special way; they were "the same" (ek hi) or even "exactly the same" (ek dam ek hi).

A similar scene occurred in a bazaar in an affluent section of Pune, in Maharashtra, in October 2002. In front of a shop selling bags, t-shirts, and pants was an oversized jute bag, the largest I've seen, with an image, in red, green, and purple, of a plane crashing into one of the twin towers with a second plane on its way. On the road below are cartoonish schematics of cars and buses, but the focus is clearly the large green plane crashing into the World Trade Center, the ensuing flames, and the rising smoke. The caption, inscribed beneath the first plane, reads:

WORLD TRADE CENTER

DESTROY • 11th SEP. 2001

When I queried the owner of the shop as to the "meaning" (matlab) of the image on the bag, he was baffled by my question, just as the vendor and others in Bodh Gaya had been. "It doesn't have any meaning," he said. "But there must be some reason that people buy one bag and not another bag?" I asked. "Yes," he answered, grudgingly, "but this bag doesn't have any meaning."

The following day, when I returned, the World Trade Center bag, which I had purchased, had been replaced by a jute bag that featured the title of the extraordinarily popular television show *Kaun Banega Crorepati* ("Who will Become a Millionaire"), with the word *crorepati* ("millionaire") emblazoned in large letters diagonally across the bag. In the background, "Star Plus," the popular

television station that featured the show, and its logo are repeated in a wallpapering effect. When I asked the owner of the shop about this bag, and, in particular, how it differed from the World Trade Center bag, he brushed aside my question. "Both are the same," he said, and he held out his hands with his palms up in a gesture that indicated both his helplessness in answering my question and my foolishness in asking it.

It was in response to these episodes that I began to research the visual world of Indian jute bags, how the images on these bags are "the same," as my informants insisted, and the larger work these bags do as social objects. To this end, I have spoken with a wide variety of people involved in the jute bag industry – designers, manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, footpath vendors, and consumers – regarding the meaning and function of the graphics on these bags, as well as the ways that these graphics are contested sites in the formation of identity. I have also had the opportunity to watch my informants' answers change over time. Since I began this project, much has changed in India, with Chinese synthetics overtaking jute, multinational brands saturating the marketplace, and new media fomenting desire for ever-changing objects. What began as an ethnography has turned, in part, into an historical study, as old ways of thinking and being have been quickly superseded. In what follows, how-

ever, I will offer a few insights into the shifts that have occurred in the bazaar's visual regimes, and how the bazaar has been a battlefield — though, at times a force field as well — in the construction of new Indian consumers.

THE OLD VISUAL REGIME: KNOWING IS HALF-UNDERSTANDING

Jute bags with images and text silk-screened upon them have long been a common sight in Indian bazaars, trains, and bus stations. While an estimated 90% of these bags are gift-wala, adorned with promotional logos and given away by businesses as a form of advertising, the remaining 10% are calu-wala, “crappy” bags bearing some form of commodity image and sold in the bazaar for roughly 50 cents. The images that adorn bags in the latter category might be read as kitsch, for there is a predominance of affect-laden icons of cuteness and nostalgia accompanied by text in English, but bag vendors and their customers routinely resist such a reading.

During my fieldwork in Banaras in 2003, in fact, vendors and customers resisted ANY reading of the calu bags. To read those bags in the conventional sense of the term was to misread them as well as to misunderstand the visual economy in which they operated. All of my informants agreed that the graphics imprinted on the bags had no “meaning” (matlab). These included the

street vendors who hawked jute bags from positions along the main road near the Ganga; the wholesalers of jute bags who sold their goods in bulk from one of the bazaars in the old city; and the shopkeepers who sold a variety of bags in a mostly middle-class neighborhood.

•STREET VENDORS

Though the street vendors I spoke with were eager to praise the merits of the jute bags they sold, they were hesitant to interpret the images and text emblazoned upon them. Repeatedly I was told that the graphics didn't mean anything, even in cases when the meaning seemed clear. For example, I assumed that "OSCAR: A BEAUTIFUL MIND" referred to the Russell Crowe film that won four Oscar awards and "US-64" referred to the infamous failed mutual fund that was bailed out by the government. I guessed that the man pictured in the latter was lunging after the fund, and his money invested in it, though both proved elusive, outside the purview of his spectacles and beyond his grasp. Yet my attempts at reading the images were met with bewilderment by vendors and customers alike.

I was told that people didn't buy bags because of their graphics. People bought bags because of their perceived quality and durability. This was also borne out by my observations. In choosing a bag, customers would test the strength of the

jute and the handle, which was made of bamboo or plastic, but they rarely examined the graphics closely. When I did question a customer as to why she was buying a particular bag, the answer invariably concerned practicality not aesthetics. Questions about the particular meaning of an image or a bit of text were met with incredulity. It was as though the graphics on the bags were somehow unreadable, if not invisible.

•WHOLESALE

In one of the wholesale bazaars in Banaras, I had a conversation with a vendor of jute bags that was very helpful in explaining how the graphics on these bags were valued. The proprietor of the shop explained to me that one company produced bags of four different “qualities.” The best quality was called “Rangeela,” after the popular film from 1995 with Aamir Khan and Urmila Matondkar. The second best quality was called “Reebok.” The next best was called “Jurassic,” as in Jurassic Park, and the cheapest quality had no specific name. I asked him first about the Rangeela bag, and what accounted for its popularity, but there was some confusion. While I wanted to know what about having the name “Rangeela” — or, in this case, the more unconventional spelling “Rongila” — imprinted on the side of a bag made that bag more popular among buyers, he insisted that “Rangeela” referred to the quality of the bag,

not the image or text emblazoned on it. That the “Rangeela” bag still had Rongila or some form of the name printed on the bag was, according to him, something of an historical accident. What was printed on these bags usually changed every few months, he explained, but in this case it didn’t.

While the Reebok bag likewise had “Reebok” printed on it, the Jurassic bag changed graphics. Three designs on Jurassic bags were now available, though none of them had “Jurassic” or any image or text associated with the film printed on them. At that time, only one of those bags was in stock: what appears to be an eagle, in yellow, pink, and green, hovering over the earth, though the giant land mass featured is indistinct.

Another wholesaler explained to me that most jute bags in Banaras came from Calcutta, where the jute was processed, the plastic liner applied, the handles attached, and the designs imprinted. Yet even as one of the main wholesalers of jute bag for eastern Uttar Pradesh, he could only purchase bags by handle design – bamboo or plastic – or whether or not they had a zipper or a pocket. He had no control over the graphics that would be imprinted on the bags he ordered, nor did he particularly care. New shipments of bags came every fifteen days, with the graphics changing regularly, and he had no idea how these graphics were chosen or what they were sup-

posed to signify. Bags needed printing just like they needed handles, but printing itself was of no importance. As he remarked, “Printing ka koi nahiim hotaa.”

• RETAILERS

In a conversation with a retailer of jute bags named Amitabh, I remarked that no one — not street vendors, customers, or wholesalers — ever seemed to pay attention to the graphics on jute bags, even though the graphics were made up of recognizable images, such as burning planes and cuddly bears, and recognizable phrases, such as simple tag lines in English. Like my other informants, he too said that he never paid attention to these graphics, and his good friend who was listening in concurred. So I asked them, since nobody seems to notice the graphics on jute bags, if they could, what graphics would they put on jute bags to make them more desirable to customers. The friend explained that he would put the name of their neighborhood in Hindi on the bag — in this case, Dal Mandi — to appeal to local pride. But Amitabh disagreed. He explained that the bags needed graphics, but the graphics weren’t meant to be understood. Presumably if they were understood, they would be less desirable. But, I countered, I could often grasp the “meaning” of the images and the text. I could often understand them. Then he said, “There isn’t any meaning to

be grasped. If you can understand the printing on a bag then you didn't understand it." I had once again been accused, though with more precision than before, of seeing something that wasn't meant to be seen, of reading something that wasn't meant to be read.

Amitabh's critique can perhaps be better understood by considering, for a moment, Abelam art in Lowland New Guinea. Anthony Forge describes how Abelam painters do not distinguish figurative and abstract elements in their work. Even when figuration is "apparently" present in their painting, as in the likenesses of men's faces, these painters vigorously deny any figurative intent or figurative content to their work. "Two-dimensional painting for the Abelam," Forge (1973: 177) explains, "is a closed system having no immediate reference outside itself." And within this system, "graphic elements modified by colour, carry the meaning. The meaning is not that a painting or carving is a picture or representation of anything in the natural or spirit world, rather it is about the relationship between things" (1973: 189). As Diane Losche (1995: 59) explains, "To ask what a sign means is irrelevant to the Abelam Asking the Abelam what this particular design means is akin to asking 'What does your refrigerator mean?' or, to reverse the issue, 'What does your painting do?' For the Abelam this separation between meaning and function is an inappropri-

ate basis on which to ask a question.”

Now this isn't to say that the graphics on jute bags were meaningless to their Indian audience. The words and images that they contain were recognizable, as most of my informants would claim, and they did constitute a system of meaning. But the power of these graphics was generated by their words and images being slightly incomprehensible: recognizable but not fully readable. It was through this discursive disjunction that these graphics generated their allure, or as my informants would say, their “exotic” or “foreign” quality. To the brand-trained eye of western consumers such as myself, the bags seemed, to use Jean-François Lyotard's distinction, mostly discursive and barely figural, but to the producers and consumers in the bazaar, the opposite was the case. The graphics were not texts to be read or images to be decoded; they were icons that testified to a highly affective awareness of a globalized commercial world. To own such an icon was to have bought into a world of westernized consumer culture and to begin to possess the cultural capital, if not financial capital, of participants in that economic field.

•EXPORTERS

This intended discursive disjunction of the graphics on Indian jute bags can be put into context by considering the graphics found on bags

designed specifically for export. In Delhi, in 2003, exporters sold two kinds of canvas tote bags — nothing in jute was available. Some bags had images of gods accompanied by text in Sanskrit, such as a graphic of Shiva with the benediction *om namah shivaaya*. Other bags featured reprinted advertisements, such as one for Nisha Sarees.

Various exporters told me that such “god-bags” were designed exclusively for tourists and were never purchased by locals. Yet the text accompanying these images was always in Devanagari and never in Roman script. When I asked one importer why these texts weren’t printed in translation — for example, “Praise to Shiva!” — he told me that this was necessary so the bag would be “real” (*aslii*), though he did agree that the bag was also “fake” (*naklii*).

Advertisements for particular companies, such as Nisha Sarees, occupied the gray zone between real and fake. While such a graphic was originally an advertisement functioning within a local economy, the same graphic on a bag intended for use in a foreign economy is less an advertisement than an icon. To understand the graphic on the Nisha Sarees bag as a local advertisement, even if one grasps the meaning of the image and text in that context, was not to understand it. That meaning had been displaced.

• TRANSNATIONAL AFFECT

So, to return to my initial question, how were bags depicting planes crashing into the World Trade Center, fuzzy bears in a variety of poses, and television game show logos all the same? While these graphics seemed to reference disparate social and political spheres, my sense is that, like Abelan art, they actually existed within a rather closed system. All of these graphics used images and texts with claims to cosmopolitanism, in an effort to mark and evoke a transnational sentimentality closely connected with commerce and consumption. But the visual economy within which they function is of local construction. Within this system, these graphics resist reading and interpretation — for they exist below a certain threshold of observability. Nevertheless, they do function as icons that testify to a highly affective awareness of a globalized commercial world.

These graphics are also alike in that they function within a marketplace in which the distinction between “real” and “fake” signs has become increasingly moot. Though everyone I spoke with in the bazaar recognized that there were real and fake commercial goods for sale there, such as real and fake Levi jeans or Nike jackets, the graphics on the bags function within a visual economy that doesn’t simply assign value and prestige to the real and dismiss the fake. The status associated with the bags involves the graphics functioning less as advertisements than as icons — as with

the Nisha Sarees bag in the United States – and the iconic power of the so-called real and fake on the bags both serve to show what my informants would call “fashion.” Within this context, fashion means displaying an artifact that bears witness to one’s awareness and highly emotional connection to various products of a westernized – and, in particular, Americanized – consumer culture.

The dimension of affect in this construction of fashion is crucial. It isn’t enough just to be aware of westernized consumer culture; one must also buy into it, and this is done as much in the realm of affect as in the realm of commerce. It is an emotional purchase, if not a financial one, though the emotional investment will likely lead to future financial investments in products of that culture. This visual economy, however, excludes more traditional forms of sentimentality common in Banaras, noted by terms such as *bhaavukataa*. For example, jute bags sold at the Khadi Bhavan bearing images of Gandhi are, I was told, definitely not cool. The sentiment toward such products that is fashionable in the bazaar might be summed up by a graphic on one of the bags: NO POLITICS PLEASE.

THE NEW VISUAL REGIME: VALUE-ADDED COMMODITIES AND A NEW ENGLISH

By 2006, the visual regime that I just described had transformed. In the interim, India had fur-

ther opened its markets and increasingly reduced government controls on foreign trade and investment. For the world of graphics imprinted on jute bags, this led to two noteworthy transformations: the first concerns brand names and commodity images, and the second concerns the status of English.

The English word “brand” and the idea of branding had now both entered the language and consciousness of the bazaar, though not all the graphics on bags represented brands. Perusing his stock of school bags, Amitabh, still a bag retailer, explained to me that Popeye, Harry Potter, Scooby Doo, and Pokemon were brands. Yet when I asked about his other bags, which were inscribed, respectively, with “Diesel,” “Armani,” “Polo,” and “Adidas,” he explained that these were “styles” not “brands.” The manufacturer of the Diesel bag was Donex, and the manufacturer of the Adidas bag was Mayur, but neither, according to Amitabh, was a brand. So, I asked, within his world of merchandise what constituted a brand? “Brands,” he explained, “are really films and shows you see on television.” Yet Amitabh was upset that customers would now come to his shop asking for brands, and evaluate bags by their printing and not the quality of their construction. In response to this disturbing trend, Amitabh had begun manufacturing his own line of bags. They come in a variety of sizes, and each

is made from strong, green canvas and bears no printing, branding, or logos. Though Amitabh thinks they offer a great “value,” they don’t sell particularly well. Nevertheless, Amitabh still makes them and stocks them because he believes that brands “have no meaning.” “Brand ka koi matlab nahiim,” he said, with a bit of righteous indignation. In 2003 I was told that the graphics on the bags had no meaning; now I was told that brands had no meaning.

Much to Amitabh’s consternation, however, it was clear that the words imprinted on bags had become meaningful, and that understanding the graphics on bags, as well as their appeal, required that these words were read and understood. Even the barely educated bag vendors on the street could, for the most part, read the English slogans imprinted on the bags they sold and recognize their significance. In the old visual regime, the half-comprehensible English and colorful images on the bags signified a world of hyper-affect connected with being “hip,” for lack of a better term, to a global commercial world. The otherness and exoticism of English allowed one to access this powerful emotional realm, for this “hipness” was conceived as being outside the confines of the bazaar and of Hindi. In the new visual regime, however, English is no longer exotic in the half-understood way it was previously. As one of the street vendors explained to me, “the words are

meant to be read,” a seemingly obvious remark, though it was exactly what I had been cautioned against three years earlier. People bought the ESPN and NIKE bags, he explained, because they recognized the names from television. Along with this reconfiguration of English has been a reconfiguration of the affect that English invokes. As the bazaar has domesticated English – or, perhaps, been domesticated by it – the exotic allure that the English words on bags used to invoke has faded.

•VALUE-DEPRIVED JUTE

In the last five years, there has been a drastic decrease in the number of jute bags for sale in the market. Though there are a variety of factors that help account for this decrease, the one that my informants mentioned most frequently was that jute bags were simply *calu*, or “crappy.” While the bag vendors on the street, for example, were aware that Harry Potter was a good brand, they were also aware that the value of a brand could be offset if it were associated with something bad. The street vendors thought of jute as a cheap product, and they associated it with an impoverished workforce in West Bengal and Bangladesh. There is, in fact, much academic writing about the long history of disenfranchisement among the subcontinent’s jute workers (e.g., Fernandes 1997; Ghosh 2001; Goswami 1991; Sen 1999;

Stewart 1998). Moreover, calu bags are so-called because they use very low-quality jute, often the very same material used for making bags to store grain. When I asked various street vendors whether there was any graphic or brand that could make a jute bag cool, they invariably said, “No.” Jute was clearly in need of rebranding.

Yet jute bags have been under attack for more than being uncool. Many bag manufacturers have begun to forego jute, instead making use of synthetic material from China, which is 60% cheaper. A majority of stores in North India now use this material for their promotional bags, and owing to its cheap price, the number of gift bags in the bazaar has increased dramatically. Though this synthetic material doesn’t hold up to rugged use, and definitely falls apart in the rain – as I know from personal experience – it does serve as a cost-effective form of advertising. Conversely, jute bags don’t seem to be cool enough or cheap enough to interest many in the bazaar.

JUTE ANSWERS BACK

During a trip to Bodh Gaya, Bihar in January 2007, I wandered through the bazaar looking for bags. As I expected, most were made from imported Chinese synthetics or recycled nylon, generally from cement sacks. But there were a few bags made of jute. In one shop, I found three jute bags, each with an identical picture of a sail-

boat, yet one also had the slogan “Jute is Biodegradable.” I showed the bag to the shopkeeper and to a variety of customers in the bazaar, but no one knew or even recognized the word “biodegradable.” It is an English word with no obvious Hindi equivalent. It was as though a savvy bag designer was trying out a new idea: take a graphic already in circulation and add a tag line that appeals to the eco-friendly market in an attempt to attract environmentally conscientious consumers. It was unclear, however, if the ploy had met with any success besides getting me to buy another jute bag.

The following week I traveled to Calcutta, home of the jute industry, in the hope of finding out more about my eco-friendly bag and the designers who created such graphics. As I wandered through the city and its markets, I was surprised to see no jute bags at all. Even in the jute bazaar on Cotton Street, I found only a few jute bags for sale, though I did learn that “Jute is Biodegradable” is the jute industry’s official slogan. I was, however, directed to Belghoria, a northern suburb of Calcutta, where roughly 15,000 people are involved in the bag-making industry, and where an estimated 90% of calu bags in India are manufactured.

In Belghoria, I met with designers, distributors, and laborers in the calu bag market. My conversations with Bishwanath, a successful bag

designer and distributor, were particularly instructive. In response to my question about the changing designs on calu bags, he explained that his designs weren't that calculated: "Any design that comes from your heart will do." When asked about the predominance of English and seemingly foreign images, he remarked, "Everyone can read English. It's the fashion." And then, "America to dada hai!" America is India's big brother, he explained, but it's also the mafia don who controls the market. Considering this, he continued, why shouldn't the images on the bags feature English words and American images? Nevertheless, there were almost no jute bags were for sale in the Belghoria bazaar, and I counted only a few of them among the shoppers and commuters in town. Even in Belghoria, jute bags were dying out, and neither Bishwanath nor his workers were sure how to market them successfully to the local population.

The only place in Calcutta that I saw jute bags for sale, and customers actually buying them, was on the sidewalk in front of the Oberoi Hotel, one of Calcutta's poshest destinations. The jute bags for sale, however, were neither calu nor gift. They were bags designed for export to be sold to eco-friendly consumers abroad. The proprietor, Abdul, explained to me that he used to sell calu bags, but the market for them had disappeared. Among the most popular items he now sold

were two promotional bags of nearly identical construction intended for grocery stores in the UK, Sainsbury and Tesco. The former capitalizes on its biodegradable pedigree: "It's not just our Sainsbury's SO organic food that's good for the environment, our jute bags are too." The Tesco bag is more enigmatic and less grammatical: "Every little helps," and features a meandering row of red ladybugs. Though the Tesco bag contains a beguiling text with little or no connection to its image of ladybugs, it was nevertheless the current bestseller at Abdul's streetside shop. None of the customers whom I questioned claimed to understand the English text on either bag, nor were any of them considering purchasing a jute bag because it was good for the environment. When I asked them about the appeal of the bags, they invariably mentioned that the Tesco bag was "pretty," pointing to the ladybugs, and "foreign."

As in the old visual regime, here too graphics were not texts to be read or images to be decoded; instead, they were a kind of affect-laden icon, much like the reprinted advertisement for Nisha Sarees. But how did a foreign, jute grocery bag function within the local economy in Calcutta? I wasn't sure, but when I walked along the bazaar in front of the Oberoi Hotel empty-handed I was barely noticed by the numerous touts and vendors. When I carried the Tesco bag, however, I was recognized as a foreigner and beseeched in

English to buy things.

THE NEW EXOTIC

These days in Banaras the most popular bags for sale in the bazaar are not made from jute, feature almost no text, and don't capitalize on multinational brands. These bags are designed and produced in Delhi, from cotton, and their main appeal seems to derive from their large, colorful graphics. Though the beguiling jute bags of the old visual regime are now more rare, these bags preserve a similar sense of the exotic, an appealing foreign world that is slightly incomprehensible.

On one bag, we see a charming, seaside town, and in the middle of the image, the appropriately named "Seaside Café." In the background, there are boats and a lighthouse, and in the foreground, a man walking his dog. Yet in the lower left hand corner there is a horse pulling a man in an old-fashioned buggy and then, more mysteriously, a decorated Christmas tree on a stand. Christmas and its icons are popular in the bazaar. In fact, the best-selling bag in the bazaar features the text "Happy Holidays" along the top and bottom, and "Let it snow" on both sides. In the middle is an assortment of smiling snowmen with carrots for noses and a colorful assortment of hats, scarves, and jackets. No one I interviewed in the bazaar had ever seen a snowman or a seaside café, not

even on television. As one of the street vendors explained, “The images are beautiful, but they don’t have any meaning” — *un ka koi matlab nahiim*. Once again I was cautioned not to read too much into the graphics. This all sounded very familiar.

One bag in particular seemed to offer a commentary on the “meaning” of the two bags I just described. In this bag, as in the Seaside Cafe bag, we see horses and people in the lower left corner, but the configuration is peculiar. There are four horses, though only one of them has a rider, and behind them is a sleigh with two inhabitants. There is, however, no snow. The trees have no leaves, so perhaps it is winter, but the fields that abut the road and stretch off in the distant are verdant green—hardly ideal sleighing conditions. This odd assemblage is apparently traveling to the large house up ahead, next to which is another lighthouse. There is, however, no body of water. So why use a sleigh to travel on a dirt road in order to get to a lighthouse that is landlocked?

In response to that rhetorical question, I am reminded of the words of caution I was offered years earlier: “If you can understand the printing on a bag, then you didn’t understand it.” So what, then, is this new exotic? In the old visual regime, there was a tension between image and text, between affect-laden designs and English slogans, which produced a pleasurable frisson

of emotion. In the new visual regime, image and text combine more seamlessly, with commodity images and pithy English captions indexing brands. In this visual world however, there is a disjunction, as in the old visual regime, but it happens between images within a graphic, not between images and text.

REFLECTIONS: TWO ODDITIES AND A ONE ANECDOTE

In my fieldwork in Banaras in 2009, I was repeatedly told that branded goods are the best quality products; that they are exclusively foreign; and that they are only available in shopping malls. This set of beliefs has manifested in multiple oddities, such as a craze to buy foreign goods that is the very antithesis of the swadeshi movement of a century ago and a craze to apply brand labels onto seemingly everything for sale in the bazaar, even though everyone knows that branded goods aren't for sale in the bazaar. Even Amitabh now puts brand labels on some of his bags.

Yet, the inception of brands in India, and the faith that they have so quickly engendered, raises questions for me about the ways that religion has been mobilized to configure India's new marketplace. Brand loyalty, one shopkeeper in the bazaar explained, is this generation's bhakti – their devotion, their faith. Recent work, in fact, has

shown that viewers have the same neurological response to strong brands that they do to religious icons (Lindstrom 2008). Brand loyalty and bhakti are neurological twins, likewise Nike the goddess and Nike the swoosh.

With that said, I will leave you an anecdote. Earlier this year I had a conversation with a successful silk merchant in Banaras. He lamented that it seemed that one day all of India would turn into one big mall and that everything would be branded — except, of course, the gods. “But can’t a god be a brand?” I asked. Everyone recognizes the Hanuman image from the Sankat Mochan Temple, with his tilted head and gentle smile. The image is everywhere in the bazaar, on posters and postcards, statues and paintings. “Couldn’t the temple copyright that image,” I asked, “and charge licensing fees if people wanted to use it?” “No, no, no,” he said. “They wouldn’t do that.” But neither of us were very sure.

Perhaps bhakti will be the next generation’s brand loyalty.

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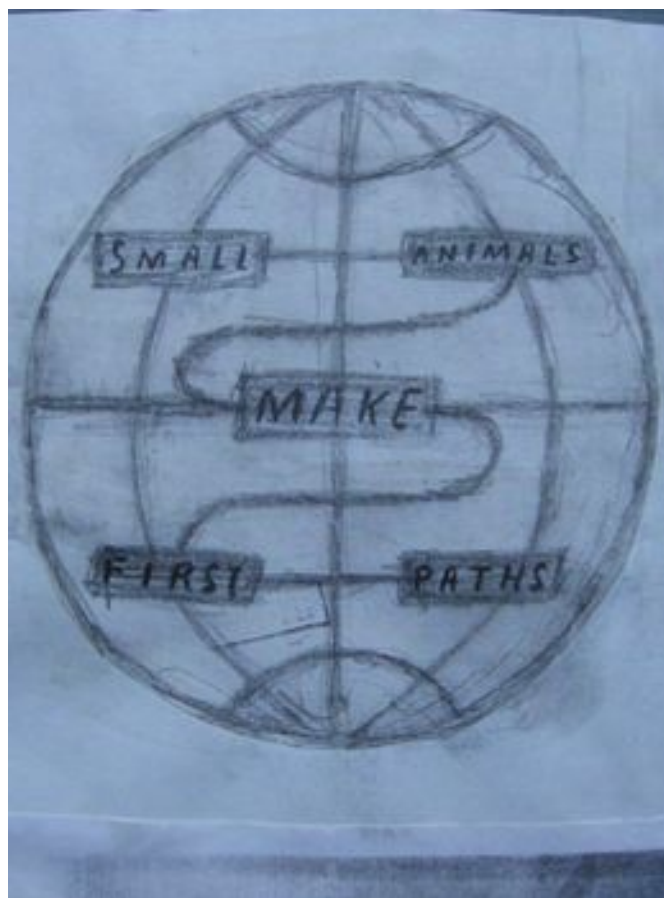
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David Dunlap

THE READER WILL PLEASE RISE

It is now time in our service for the recitation of "Can You Believe This?"

Sing this all on one note, with the high-pitched resolved anguish of Episcopalian sad-sack Christianity. At the dash near the end of the line, take a breath, then sing the last part of the phrase also on that same note.

Ready?

We believe in the God that people who don't believe in
God—believe in.

We believe in shopping the way that people who never
shop—do their shopping.

We believe that Convenience—is not convenient.

We believe that supermodels are—state terrorism.

We believe that to stop crime you don't have to—kill
your city.

We believe that you didn't have to squeeze me but you
did, but you did—but you did.

We believe that if a sweatshop worker finds out that
one morning of Michael Eisner's income would
feed her family for ten lifetimes, then Eisner is
already closer than he realizes to being—forced to
share.

Take one big breath and say it fast:

We believe in the return of the indy bookstore, mom-
and-pop apothecaries, small vendors, sex workers,
and stoops with open containers that have liquid

content of all kinds and where you might have to stop and weather the feeling that you are wasting time and find yourself telling a story or—being told a howler that you might have to retell with your own adornments and expurgations.

The reader will be seated.
Children! Can you believe this?



Reverend Billy

A history of sand
done in sand



in the rippling and turning of the
crocus, the yellow stamen, and the
loss of the stamen loosens the petals
which fall in turn
the cloth billows, inspired
just that
a thin whisp of language
carefully worded
a curl of smoke
enveloping the crocus
ko-ro-co-se

I was a word with water behind it
but I couldn't read the water
I was an inscription upon it
a meaningful flower
of no color
upon it

I went to sleep on top of the mountain
and I woke up underneath the mountain
Someone had turned the page.
There had been flowers that were just like
pink leaves. very delicate.
there had been enough light for everyone.
Now, all the words I don't know,
Invisibility
the inside of a mountainside
the place I go to
no light, only words
absolutely particular.
The soil is wild, uncommon to trees
I am in a place of burial and no birth
in silence the cycle has broken its circle
in green darkness,
the thick imagined leaves lay down
I am in search of life in these conditions,
for the places where things get undone



More women farmers in purple dresses
were planting small things in the garden
A baby was born
I agreed to come here
out there is life, or the
true mountain
here where the heart beats
is only here
at the mouth of the night.
brambles gather at the entrance
birds holler as darkness falls, one last time
and beyond that, callous silence,
nothing but hideous stillness.
and then, the atmosphere of earth,
thick and mortal
damp
forestless
mind.



We will sleep for you
we will fall into place
into rooms of meaning
collecting fragments,

those roses
from the depths
of your language
get darker,

and we know below
the fragmented night.

—India Radfar

History Of The Jewish Socialist Party In America

by Allen Ginsberg

In meeting hall, a small room or foyer of private house downstairs on street storefront level — we're inside — me, and my friend, a square FBI agent who is arresting us all, but wants more information so doesn't take us in but lets us continue our activity, which is all internal regulation of the party which now has very few members anyway, being, as the FBI boy knows to his chagrin, much more concerned with psychic regulation of the idealism of its members than any activity relating to the US Govt — in fact we are completely unconcerned with the US Govt, and far from spying on it we welcome spies to our midst in the hope they be converted and learn something about us — since the internal structure of the party is a mystery still unresolved even to us — a fact which embarrasses the FBI fellow further since he guesses our general crazy goodwill and devotion to some mysterious politics of complete integrity, so extreme that the policy of the party is really dedicated to discovering what the policy is and who the leaders really are — we being willing to share the info with anyone even the US Govt — with complete faith that with such an open policy no harm can befall anyone, even jail or execution is further opportunity for

study, revelation, or martyrdom to the Mystery of Idealistic Socialism and a further chapter of the Jewish S. Party's profound activity in America — no less profound because limited to a small group which pursue the basic study, for the intensity of their dedication.

Thus we are having a meeting in the foyer — as Aunt Rose's tho smaller 1930 — & the FBI man, with tie askew & coat over arm, sweating in summer heat, pistol in one hand & other on telephone, is undecided what to do, so I advise him, after a nervous walk in the plaza, to trust us & wait awhile till something definite develops. He seems to agree, nodding his head, tho worried we'll all escape, vanish, and he'll lose his job & be fired by his intemperate boss a cruel Faggot named J. Edgar Hoover.

The subject of tonite's meeting was announced by President Berg last week to be a speech — manifesto of policy — by an old & trusted member Dr. Hershman — who arrived earlier very disturbed, took over the meeting — and announced — The Subject of my Announcement will be the Follows — please take note and understand why I am announcing it so that anybody who does not wish to be further implicated may leave the room: Why I killed President Berg and Member Hoffman.» This throws everybody into turmoil — there are only 5 or 6 members & all realize they will be held as accomplices — but

maybe he had good reason, so why leave & betray his mad trust? — It's an apocalyptic party full of necessary mistakes. The FBI man is thrown into a crisis of nerves. He is ready to telephone to arrest us all, but wants to hear why they killed Berg & Hoffman — But also afraid he might be implicated, since he too is (tho spy) a member of this small Socialist Party which long ago agreed to be mutually responsible & share all guilt. If the FBI man waits he might wind up in jail with all of us, if he don't wait he'll never fulfill his mission to find out what the Mystery of the Party is and arrest us on basic evidence of conspiracy — Arrest now for mere murder means little but regular cop crime to the FBI not a political triumph. I advise him to hold his horses and stick with us, we all want to find out.

Horowitz is in the chair, talking furiously: "Comrades, Berg was a traitor to the Party, he wanted to end the Party & had legal power to dissolve it — I realized the danger, so did he, he invited me to address you on the subject & he also invited me to take

A.G.

the necessary action on the subject — an action which hadn't occurred before because a similar situation had not arisen.

“And here is the can of Napthaline with which I killed him — gagged him & poisoned his soda water with it, & made him drink, and his co-conspirator Hoffman — I'm going to burn the Evidence — in the Fireplace right now — He opens the (Ether type) Napthaline can in the floor of fireplace & lights it — it burns & gives off dull blue flame & great fumes of weird gas — everybody coughs — I sniff & realize you can get high on it, so I want to stick around & not call firemen or cops-

“Let it burn” we all yell — the FBI man rushes outside but I rush him back in — Smell it & get high maybe we'll all get the Answer that way. Don't give up the Ship.

The girls are nearly fainting, the can is burning in the fireplace, fumes dizzy us, one girl faints in chair, her Jewish girlfriend rubs her hands & fans her, the FBI man is sweating, Horowitz is sniffing furiously — the room is in turmoil — we will all be arrested for murder — “Destroy the Evidence & let's get high» shouts the killer — on this scene of evident excitement, a new chapter of the history of Jewish socialism nears its end & the Dream concludes prematurely.

—1961



In 1931, Gandhi met the king at Buckingham Palace wearing his trademark dhoti. Asked if he felt underdressed he was quoted as saying that his host “had enough for both of us”.

**by Lee Ann Brown & Bernadette Mayer
in collaboration**

(You'll Be Hearing From Me)

I am the decider my four year old
and Bush said simultaneously shouldn't
we speak red table Japanese as long
as the light lasts we could
imitate each other's Valentines

I am the Coca Cola my young Daughter
& president thicket said at once didn't
you talk vermilion armoire then
when crepuscular-ness extended beyond
our aping every driveway of the other
of her phonemes, eh?

It's yam day, I'm Cock of the Walk, my wonder
full present day sets sights on Poydras Street as
you speak in magenta letter's ready din
winning eventide's telescopic
monkeying with the space time continuum
of our snow school dome

On beet night, you're lemur of the lane, your awe
partial past night ogles Onomatopeia Overlook as

over Europe's diurnal saturnalia discs

over Europe's diurnal saturnalia discs

70

Cherry Blossom
Murakami
Sunday

Lee Ann Tony Miranda infinity sign

Miranda in a
 pink bouncy
 air chair
photographed in cherry
blossom action

DJ Oil

Long hair
 Girl DJ in

 bug glasses
with 60s petals
+ brown orange and yellow
patterned kimono

LOUD MUSIC

Cherry Blossom teen
 Laughing, sez

“I’ll kick yr
ass
you dirty
snowflake.”

Brooklyn Botanical

Distillation of sense
sents,
sensibilities

inside

hemlock:

“what she said!”

“Ow! Bam!”

Dude, like, nice ludic
SPERM
Lasso!

Down the cherry corridor

“Mas Tranquilo”

Get down on the grass and
Shut up

Didn't we
do this
already?

I wanna
Put someone
in a
naptime headlock

“Who's yr Daddy
and what does he do?”

“I summon
1000 puppets!”

pass out roses

— Lee Ann Brown

The Midnight Walk

Crunky sneaky music like with black hats tilted
anonymously over

I'm going over
To the dark side
The minor keys

The black clothes

That won't show wear
And won't poison me
With their ivory snow
Spray n wash conundrum
Headaches
Black clothes
With a flash of color

Destino means destiny also travel destination

One of my favorite books: Travel with Children

— Lee Ann Brown





Marguerite Byrum



What we wear

In self-portraits the envelope of skin
seems loosed from shadow. The
eye holes of the mask letting more
dark. On the other hand, you're bright
pieces bending but I understand painting
as inversion. Costumes
what the sun eats through.
At first vestment but now
sign, says you are here:
I know it.

A couple of times, though, I went
and found everything set
and empty: cell phone charging, radio
playing Antiworld, windows lit blank.
Hollow. After that I look for
manifest color. Meaning
when time falls away

where you are.

—Marguerite Byrum

Once

Cosmic boy met
the hangman's
beautiful daughter.
"I don't care who
your pa is," he said,
& kissed her, turned,
walked alone up the gang
plank. Cracked cassette
tapes warbled
out of ancient speakers
over there, she
knew, while here
the steam whistle
shrieked at 9, 12,
1, 5 & the city, empty
of him, felt
empty. Wire-sitters
screeched down,
twittered. They
weren't talking
to her.
Are you
lonely? A
little. Empty
mostly. Waiting.
A coin press for
shadows, a 40-year

wink, a reed for
the winds to blow
through, a silent
trumpet of the heavens, picturing
of another hemisphere, a more
winding time, prayer-
flags bearing bright
messages against a blue-
blue-yellow light-
show, turrets
of ancient white minarets,
a series of black shadows
held together by a strand of shadow
string, telling.

—Marguerite Byrum

THE READER WILL PLEASE KNEEL

The congregation will read the following words in a prayerful, soft-spoken way.

Dear Lord,

We can't believe that bombing is called security.

We can't believe that monopoly is called democracy.

We can't believe that gasoline prices are called foreign policy.

The reader will please rise to a half-crouch, like an ape who has been watching reruns of *Friends* but upon whom a special anger is dawning:

We can't believe that racism is called crime fighting!

We can't believe that sweatshops are called efficiency!

We can't believe that a mall is called the neighborhood!

The reader will now leave the church with an anger rising within that has the long-range implacability of a revolutionary. Now go to the office of a commercial politician (Hillary Clinton's office is over on Broadway just above Times Square) and shout the following words, while retaining a nonabusive solidarity with the receptionist:

We can't believe that advertising is called free speech!

We can't believe that love is called for sale!

We can't believe that you think there are two political parties!

We can't believe that you repeat the word "democracy" like it's a liturgical chant from a lost religion!

The reader will now drop this book and speak directly to the president of the United States. How? Perhaps you could sky-write over his parade. Or, whisper into the ear of his daughter at Burning Man. Or—sew a small tape recorder into his pillow.

George! Psst! Patriotism is not called shopping.

Got that? Patriotism is not called shopping.

Or better yet. George! Psst! This is God, George.

I AM NOT THE MARKET.

—Reverend Billy



Gloria Williams

B Complex

Bush Beastie Buddies Bullshit
Bankster's, Broker's Braggadocio
Baghdad Butchered By Bank Bosses
Bush Buoyed
Bloomberg Blessed
Bombastic Bad Business
Bingeing Buyer's Blood
Bloated Bubble Begun By Banks, By Brokers
Bubbling Bucks Billions Benefit Bankers
Buyers Believed Brokers Biddings
Bought Buildings
Bought Biforcated Bullshit
Block By Block
Buyers Beware
Bankers, Brokers Befriended By Bush
Buyers Bubble Bomb Blitzed
Bamboozled
Bedeviled By Bush's Blind Bosses Bolstering
Bubble Burst Blast Buttonholes Buyers
Banker's Blunder Bundling Backfires
Buyer's Buildings Bounced
Buyers Bankruptcy Bum-rushed

Buyers Betrayed
Bullied By Banks
Buyers Blamed
But, Blight Begun By Bill, By Bush Buddies
 Banking Bosses
But, Bizarrely Bozo Bankers Believed, Brokers
 Believed
Buyers Befuddled, Bereft, Broke Beyond Belief
Buyers Behold Bail-out Benefits Banking Business
 Blockheads
Banker's Brides, Beau's Buy Boffo Big Bling
Brokers Build Bulwarks By Bermuda
Buyers Bludgeoned, Bled, Bequeathed Band-Aids
Bad Blood
Bankers, Brokers Buddies Begin 'Bama Blaming
 Broadcasts
Buyers Busy Boldly Bazooka Blasting Bricks
Basta
Bee populations are suffering, unable to maintain
their cooperative hives due to a combination of
human created environmental and industrial
factors. This may lead to detrimental affects with
world-wide consequences.

—Gloria Williams



Gloria Williams

Shopping To Death

Day after Thanksgiving Day

Giving over to buying all day

Black Friday

Final sale

Special deals

Layaway

Discounted

One day deals

Mark down

Incredibly low

Shopping mobs chanted "Push the doors in, push
the doors in..."

They pressed against the glass doors

Pushing, wild-eyed, shopping gassed, storming past

Human-chain links broken

Unfortunately, the nice young man who opened the
gates of hell

Shoppers swelled by stomping down on some thing
not for sale

Trapped in their mad race, crushed under mobs feet,
 death trampled
Mr. Damour is down
Toppled to the floor
Prices are down and out with his life
Walls of the marts hold the stuff of shopper's dreams
Mr. Damour is down
Stomped underground
Dead at 6:03AM
No one is responsible
Difficult to distinguish individuals from raging
 mob in surveillance videos
Shopping not stopping after death
Store reopened at 1PM and was packed within
 minutes
Day's receipts were accounted for

—Gloria Williams

TWO-MINUTE RADIO SERMON: SPONSORED GRANDMOTHER

We interrupt our regular programming for another moral advisory. I am Reverend Billy.

I was preaching outside the Times Square Disney Store—"Can't you see, children? We are suffering from consumer narcosis! We're turning into product-dizzy ghouls!"—when I was startled to see my grandmother walking up to me. She looked me in the eye and said, "I love you, Billy, brought to you by Nike sportswear."

"Oh, no!" I cried. "Grandma, you've been taken over—they've got you!"

And my grandmother patiently said, "Billy, we've had wonderful memories. I've watched you grow up from just knee-high, what a thing to watch, sponsored by your local Coca-Cola bottler. Billy, why don't you take a break from your preaching? Let's go have a sandwich, brought to you by Ralph Lauren Polo."

But I was sullen. "I'm so sorry, Grandma, I'm sorry that I don't have a sponsor. I haven't really grown up yet, I guess. My emotions are so . . . unendorsed. I'm working on it, though, Grandma. Will you give me some time?"

And she said, "Oh, I forgive you honey, I'll wait for you forever, and so will Toyota. Toyota—you've got what we want!"

This is Reverend Billy. God help me.



David Dunlap

The Orgasmic Nations-
bonded in infinity — I saw
the sharks & elephants, in mock
eloquence, the sunlight in a
jungle
of
tears/

The monarch butterfly/
complains to the swan who
widowed, sought
no more than sequential evidence/ of
a
radical
dawn/

Separating/
our longing, fr. the delicate
heartbeat/ that
consumed
it/

In finite
winter/ the strange
dichotomy of/ yr.
midnight

fruit/

Reflecting
the orgasmic moment/ the wave
of
appearance/

The wave of bliss, the wave,
of my approach
to
you/

My dying & my death/ consumed

— Louise Landes Levi

ROBBERS follow VAJRAPANI

did the master really go/ w. his entourage
of devas dakinis & naga spirits? & will I go - to

which island of pleasure & discontent? again,
did the master safely land among UFO's & still
more thieves, less violent, perhaps

& did you steal fr. my heart, that which
was most true & most potent or can you not take

what you can not see

Is the master here, among Bourgonvillae
& Becare, is he here, in the power of the wind
to transform & purify, is he here, in my heart's
longing to see inward & lightly & to harm

NO ONE

is there no one to harm & no one the harmer
is there only forgiveness & the purity /as I remember

that soon I must leave, one death, then another, burn-
ing sunlight, So. of the Border & in my mind
of
inborn

BLISS

Isla Margarita, VE.
10.2.2010

— Louise Landes Levi

Benares Ecologue

by Peter Lamborn Wilson

Benares Ecologue

Urban Pastoralism is no oxymoron in Benares. In 1970 Bro. James & I lived on a houseboat moored at a minor upstream ghat. Every dawn a fat brahmin w/ bullhorn coached a dozen would-be Arjunas with huge twirling Indian clubs & oiled torsos, waking us to another otiose holy day of lying on our undulant roof counting 12 different species of birds of prey as halfburnt corpses floated past us toward heaven or Calcutta. Up the stone stairs past tiny cell crammed with abandoned widows in white saris chanting RamRamRam to the S. Indian one-table vegetarian restaurant for breakfast—ricecakes w/ sugar & ghee—or lunch—ricecakes w/ curried veg. A few chillams with the babas at eventide—worm-eaten one-rupee paperbacks by candlelight.

Another dawn—laundresses at work “breaking stones w/ yr clothes”—ancient black dhows w/ red lateen sails arrive from the opposite desolate shore w/ cargos of sand. We used to eat at the cafe patronized by the sand-diggers, very low caste—chapattis & dhal for 50 pice. Ganja bhang & opium were legal & vended from green government shops w/ barred windows. Bhang icecream from green

goodhumor men. Local Kali temple drums & bells – devil worship!
Narrow alleyways lit by night w/ oil lamps of tiny hole-in-wall
shops. No electricity. Shiva himself commands the faithful to take
bhang in Benares. Moslems in charge of the silk trade – we hang
around drinking milky masala chai getting eye-drunk on embroidered
opalescent gold wedding saris with descendants of Kabir in their
dim emporiums perfumed w/ extreme attar of roses.

Another day at the ghat. Every afternoon a dozen tank sized water
buffalo charge mindlessly down mud slope into sacred river goaded
by shiny brown boys to submerge in bliss each day new like black
rubber submarines of Yama Lord of Death. Holy upanishadic white
brahma bulls garlanded w/ marigolds, horns red w/ henna, block
intersections & steal vegetables. Satanic goats loom up out of the
dark. Vedic pastoral economy permeates/ percolates the City
fresh curds

clotted cream bedtime milk w/ thick skin

snowwhite sweets drowned in ghee

& cardamon

iced milk w/ flower syrups – yoghurt

swirled w/ ice bhang & rosewater.

India equals Arcadia. Cows speak
to our spiritual DNA. Moo is

OM backwards.

Hinduism has preserved our very own lost

occidental polytheism. Kali = Astarte

Boy Krishna = Orpheus Shiva = Dionysus

Zeus = Brahma Vishnu = Apollo

Saraswati = the Muses

etc.

all one vast pastoral culture from

Tocharia to

Celtic Atlantis. The Cow our Mother.

Indra rescues the cows. The waters flow.

The gods drink Soma & get all hallucinogenic.

Rig Veda describes it as goldgreen

or ruddy – strained thru a golden fleece

& mixed w/ milk – exactly like the

bhang lassi

at the Dairy Bar in Chandi Chowk.

Mornings

we take rickshaw to leafy suburb where old Theosophical Society

occupies crumbling Anglo-Indian villa w/ veranda & vulture-slow

ceiling fans – browse on wormholed 1920s red Ganesh & Co. treatises

on Tantra & Pantheistic Monism in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi – free

tea from kindly old librarian ladies – permission to nap on the

lawn in the shade of tropical trees & English flowers.

Another night of goggle-eyed astronomy

in our cradlerocking victorian-mughal

houseboat

on the river that flows from the top of

Shiva's head

like a gusher of moonbeams as he smokes

chillams prepared for him by Magna Mater

Cybele

seated on their tigerskin in the monsoonish

Himalayas

melt-off of ice lingams blue as sperm

Ganja = ganja

with flesheating sleek freshwater dolphins

sporting in its kundalini skull dark waters

snouts bristling w/ tiny teeth.

Peter Lamborn Wilson

from "EC(O)LOGUES: A NEO-PASTORALIST MANIFESTO"

published by Station Hill Press in

Barrytown, NY, in 2010.

Sleeping Around

One year when i was visiting Kathmandu

when I was young, brash, adventurous & stupid

I decided to sleep around at the power

places of the Kathmandu Valley

Sleeping outside at the Baudhanath stupa

some Tibetans thought I was a beggar

& threw coins on my blanket

Sleeping in one of the small stone temples at Pashupatinath

the abode of Shiva as lord of animals

with my head on a lingam near the foggy Bagmati river

some unknown yogis cuddled up near-

Sleeping outside by the burning grounds beside

the Vishnumati river below Bijeshwari temple

I read The Life of Marpa all night & waited

for the hungry ghosts to devour my ego-

I tried to sleep in the forest next to Swayambhu stupa

but the Bhutanese monks persuaded me to sleep on the floor of

the oil lamp lit shrine room in their gompas-

The next night sleeping outside on grassy Manjushri hill

next to a small stupa a baby monkey

pulled my hair to awake me at dawn-

Finally sleeping on top of the Shiva temple pagoda
pyramid in Durbar Square (which looks exactly like the
tall Mayan pyramids of Palenque or Teotihuacan)
where 108 steps up is the platform where homeless
Nepalis sleep around the rarely used Shiva Ling temple
I watched the rickshaw wallahs glide around until 3am
& then all was quiet in Kathmandu
we curled up on some straw in the chilly air & then realized
that the hungry ghosts are everywhere without & within
turning over fitfully the rest of the long cold night
I arose before dawn & scratched my neck uncontrollably
as the hungry fleas bit my neck & drew my blood
into their eager stomachs-
but they were probably my mother or lovers in a past life
anyways-
enjoy hungry ghosts enjoy!

—Shiv Mirabito

Everyday Auspicious Procession

seven water bearing goddesses
each with two full round amphorae
of cool clear water from the depths of the black well
each with one on her shoulder
and one on her hip
tree nymphs striking an ancient twice bent pose
each head covered with soft cloth
of green and rust
swathed around behind
leaving mahogany midriffs bared
each stands around the spring
each bends and washes her delicate feet
seductively
after offering oblations to unseen nature spirits
each refills her round pot
and proceeds slowly away
leaving in a languid line
without smiling
into the heat of the day

—Shiv Mirabito

Amma NaomiJi

The carpet factory built a bridge
 across the stream to her house
 where she once crossed on a fallen log
Her tiny eyes are bright and hopeful
 and surrounded by deep wrinkles
 that echo the ancient Nepali Himalaya
And tears have run down her valleys
 like the Kalikandhaki and Shri Bagma
But at this time she is shanti
Above her small swaddled head
 in an orange clay niche
 rests a large quartz crystal linga
 splattered with red and orange offerings
 surrounded by tiny yellow flowers
She sighs deeply
 inhaling on a Yak brand cigarette
 through her clenched fist
 looking off into the distance-
 The distant future
At this time she is shanti

—Shiv Mirabito

Passion's Hearts

My friend Marcus Erikson made a sculpture out of the first dead Iraqi he saw.
Passion's Heart is inspired by the sculpture and begins with a quote by Marcus.

PASSION'S HEARTS

"All that sadness just lingers.
It just hovers there."
He goes in first
and is not afraid.
He's been here before
but not me.
Some trees stand
and some still fall.
The courtyard of this public garden is empty
today
Save for us.
And now only me
since my brave has gone into the surgery place.
Now holds only coddling figs
and abandoned art
and me.
Standing in a mine field of botanical hearts
Strewn 'round about my wary feet
And I know not to move
And I do not move
But stare at a thousand Iraqi flies

Traveled all this way to feed on passion's hearts
and realize my fears.
And I will not move from fear, for fear
And I do not want to see what I know I am about
to see.
The flies black cloud rises as the marine welder
surgeon
Emerges for the cave with the dead man in his
arms
Or half of him
And I am even less prepared than I thought.
Deep inside my gut the echo rips through
Of that sixteen years old explosion
That took the life of the thing
And sucked the air from the air
And nothing yet has returned to grow.
Please don't make me look.
And God said, "Look at my beautiful child."
Now it's left to me to bring the rest
And I will
For love of the brave and for my own healing too
Or not.
The legs, permanently cocked and appropriately
supine
But for these four minutes
Of paul baring these ball bearings
And four legs is not enough for running me far
enough away
From where I've never been.
I've know the silent or at least quiet reverence ap-

propriate to the dead
And I practice it now
No less than if metal were meat.
It is right that I should do so
And I do
Even though doing what is right is at the very
bottom of my list right now
And yes, that is a lie
But if wishing it wasn't would make it true,
God and Satan's gospel it would be.
I'll sit for an impromptu eulogy
And let but not make feeling.
All is quiet
All is reverent
Mature sadness and not contrived.
We join the other congregants for daily proces-
sion into the sun
All come together at last where drivers are want-
ed.
Inside our rented hearse
We are three brothers.
One sings.
One cries.
One is silent.
Which does which I'll let you decide.

—Jeff Key



A lady spinning thread in Modinagar (U.P.)

Swadeshi

Let my body be *swadeshi*
let my heart be *swadeshi*
when I die
let my shroud be *swadeshi*

What is made by hand
and comes from here,
what is full of love,
this is *swadeshi*

Distribute the power
and capitolism is diminished
then the village will be self sufficient
this is *swadeshi*

Man is one who
understands another man's pain
and defends humanity
he is *swadeshi*

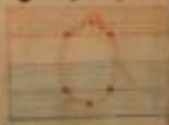
Whether mountains fall or storms break
even if death be on one's head
keep sight of the goal
That is *swadeshi*

—Mrs Bina Handa

By Swal
lowing a
nd Spit
ting out
I was



able to
DISAPPEAR



T O F O R G E T
E V E R Y T H I
N G A S S T R A
N G E A S D A T
E S A N D P L A
C E S

T O W A G E R
T H A T N O T
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A N G E B U T
S O M E I N S
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P U L S E

T O B U I L D
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J O U R N E
Y S

T O R E F U S E
M O V I N G F O
R W A R D O N L
Y T O R E M E M
B E R

75

Franck Andre Jamme, these tablets are extracts from
"New Exercises" Wave Books, 2008.

“Walking with the Comrades” **by Arundhati Roy**

(exerpt) OUTLOOK magazine March 29, 2010
(complete article www.outlookindia.com)

Last month, quietly, unannounced, Arundhati Roy decided to visit the forbidding and forbidden precincts of Central India’s Dandakaranya Forests, home to a melange of tribespeople many of whom have taken up arms to protect their people against state-backed marauders and exploiters. She recorded in considerable detail the first face-to-face journalistic “encounter” with armed guerillas, their families and comrades, for which she combed the forests for weeks at personal risk. This essay was pulished on Friday in Delhi’s Outlook magazine. Arundhati Roy made the pictures in this 20,000 word essay available exclusively to Dawn.com

The terse, typewritten note slipped under my door in a sealed envelope confirmed my appointment with India’s Gravest Internal Security Threat. I’d been waiting for months to hear from them.

I had to be at the Ma Danteshwari mandir in Dantewara, Chhattisgarh, at any of four given times on two given days. That was to take care of bad weather, puntures, blockades, transport strikes and sheer bad luck. The note said: “Writer

should have camera, tika and coconut. Meeter will have cap, Hindi Outlook magazine and bananas. Password: Namashkar Guruji.”

Namashkar Guruji. I wondered whether the Meeter and Greeter would be expecting a man. And whether I should get myself a moustache.

There are many ways to describe Dantewara. It's an oxymoron. It's a border town smack in the heart of India. It's the epicenter of a war. It's an upside down, inside out town.

In Dantewara the police wear plain clothes and the rebels wear uniforms. The jail-superintendent is in jail. The prisoners are free (three hundred of them escaped from the old town jail two years ago). Women who have been raped are in police custody. The rapists give speeches in the bazaar.

Across the Indravati river, in the area controlled by the Maoists, is the place the police call 'Pakistan'. There the villages are empty, but the forest is full of people. Children who ought to be in school, run wild. In the lovely forest villages, the concrete school buildings have either been blown up and lie in a heap, or they're full of policemen. The deadly war that's unfolding in the jungle, is a war that the Government of India is both proud and shy of.

Operation Green Hunt has been proclaimed as well as denied. P. Chidambaram, India's Home Minister (and CEO of the war) says it does not exist, that it's a media creation. And yet substantial funds have been allocated to it and tens of thousands of troops are being mobilized for it. Though the theatre of war is in the jungles of Central India, it will have serious consequences for us all.

If ghosts are the lingering spirits of someone, or something that has ceased to exist, then perhaps the new four-lane highway crashing through the forest is the opposite of a ghost. Perhaps it is the harbinger of what is still to come.

The antagonists in the forest are disparate and unequal in almost every way. On one side is a massive paramilitary force armed with the money, the firepower, the media, and the hubris of an emerging Superpower.

On the other, ordinary villagers armed with traditional weapons, backed by a superbly organized, hugely motivated Maoist guerilla fighting force with an extraordinary and violent history of armed rebellion. The Maoists and the paramilitary are old adversaries and have fought older avatars of each other several times before: Telengana in the '50s, West Bengal, Bihar,

Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh in the late '60s and '70s, and then again in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Maharashtra from the '80s all the way through to the present.

They are familiar with each other's tactics, and have studied each other's combat manuals closely. Each time, it seemed as though the Maoists (or their previous avatars) had been not just defeated, but literally, physically exterminated. Each time they have reemerged, more organized, more determined and more influential than ever. Today once again the insurrection has spread through the mineral-rich forests of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, and West Bengal—homeland to millions of India's tribal people, dreamland to the corporate world.

It's easier on the liberal conscience to believe that the war in the forests is a war between the Government of India and the Maoists, who call elections a sham, Parliament a pigsty and have openly declared their intention to overthrow the Indian State. It's convenient to forget that tribal people in Central India have a history of resistance that pre-dates Mao by centuries. (That's a truism of course. If they didn't, they wouldn't exist.) The Ho, the Oraon, the Kols, the Santhals, the Mundas and the Gonds have all rebelled several times, against the British,

against zamindars and moneylenders. The rebellions were cruelly crushed, many thousands killed, but the people were never conquered. Even after Independence, tribal people were at the heart of the first uprising that could be described as Maoist, in Naxalbari village in West Bengal (where the word Naxalite – now used interchangeably with ‘Maoist’ – originates). Since then Naxalite politics has been inextricably entwined with tribal uprisings, which says as much about the tribals as it does about Naxalites.

This legacy of rebellion has left behind a furious people who have been deliberately isolated and marginalized by the Indian Government. The Indian Constitution, the moral underpinning of Indian democracy, was adopted by Parliament in 1950. It was a tragic day for tribal people. The Constitution ratified colonial policy and made the State custodian of tribal homelands. Overnight, it turned the entire tribal population into squatters on their own land. It denied them their traditional rights to forest produce, it criminalized a whole way of life. In exchange for the right to vote it snatched away their right to livelihood and dignity.

Having dispossessed them and pushed them into a downward spiral of indigence, in a cruel sleight of hand, the Government began to use their own

penury against them. Each time it needed to displace a large population – for dams, irrigation projects, mines – it talked of “bringing tribals into the mainstream” or of giving them “the fruits of modern development”. Of the tens of millions of internally displaced people (more than 30 million by big dams alone), refugees of India’s ‘progress’, the great majority are tribal people. When the Government begins to talk of tribal welfare, it’s time to worry.

The most recent expression of concern has come from the Home Minister P. Chidambaram who says he doesn’t want tribal people living in ‘museum cultures’. The well-being of tribal people didn’t seem to be such a priority during his career as a corporate lawyer, representing the interests of several major mining companies. So it might be an idea to enquire into the basis for his new anxiety.

Over the past five years or so, the Governments of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal have signed hundreds of MOUs with corporate houses, worth several billion dollars, all of them secret, for steel plants, sponge-iron factories, power plants, aluminum refineries, dams and mines. In order for the MOUs to translate into real money, tribal people must be moved.

Therefore, this war.

When a country that calls itself a democracy openly declares war within its borders, what does that war look like? Does the resistance stand a chance? Should it? Who are the Maoists? Are they just violent nihilists foisting an out-dated ideology on tribal people, goading them into a hopeless insurrection? What lessons have they learned from their past experience? Is armed struggle intrinsically undemocratic? Is the Sandwich Theory – of ‘ordinary’ tribals being caught in the crossfire between the State and the Maoists – an accurate one? Are ‘Maoists’ and ‘Tribals’ two entirely discrete categories as is being made out? Do their interests converge? Have they learned anything from each other? Have they changed each other?

The day before I left, my mother called sounding sleepy. “I’ve been thinking,” she said, with a mother’s weird instinct, “what this country needs is revolution.”

An article on the internet says that Israel’s Mossad is training 30 high-ranking Indian police officers in the techniques of targeted assassinations, to render the Maoist organization “headless”. There’s talk in the press about the new hardware that has been bought from Israel:

Laser range finders, thermal imaging equipment and unmanned drones so popular with the US army. Perfect weapons to use against the poor.

The drive from Raipur to Dantewara takes about ten hours through areas known to be 'Maoist-infested.' These are not careless words. 'Infest/infestation' implies disease/pests. Diseases must be cured. Pests must be exterminated. Maoists must be wiped out. In these creeping, innocuous ways the language of genocide has entered our vocabulary.

To protect the highway security forces have 'secured' a narrow bandwidth of forest on either side. Further in, it's the raj of the 'Dada log.' The Brothers. The Comrades.

On the outskirts of Raipur, a massive billboard advertises Vedanta (the company our Home Minister once worked with) Cancer hospital. In Orissa, where it is mining bauxite, Vedanta is financing a University. In these creeping, innocuous ways mining corporations enter our imaginations: the Gentle Giants who Really Care. It's called CSR, Corporate Social Responsibility. It allows mining companies to be like the legendary actor and former Chief Minister, NTR who liked to play all the parts in Telugu mythologicals – the good guys and the bad guys, all at once, in the

same movie. This CSR masks the outrageous economics that underpins the mining sector in India. For example, according to the recent Lokayukta Report for Karnataka, for every tonne of iron ore mined by a private company the Government gets a royalty of Rs 27 and the mining company makes Rs 5000. In the bauxite and aluminum sector the figures are even worse. We're talking about daylight robbery to the tune of billions of dollars. Enough to buy elections, governments, judges, newspapers, TV channels, NGOs and aid agencies. What's the occasional cancer hospital here or there?

I don't remember seeing Vedanta's name on the long list of MOUs signed by the Chhattisgarh government. But I'm twisted enough to suspect that if there's a cancer hospital, there must be a flat-topped bauxite mountain somewhere.

We pass Kanker, famous for its Counter Terrorism & Jungle Warfare Training School run by Brigadier B K Ponwar, Rumpelstiltskin of this war, charged with the task of turning corrupt, sloppy policemen (straw) into jungle commandos (gold). "Fight a guerilla like a guerilla", the motto of the warfare training school, is painted on the rocks.

The men are taught to run, slither, jump on and

off air-borne helicopters, ride horses (for some reason), eat snakes and live off the jungle. The Brigadier takes great pride in training street dogs to fight 'terrorists.' Eight hundred policemen graduate from the Warfare Training School every six weeks. Twenty similar schools are being planned all over India. The police force is gradually being turned into an army. (In Kashmir it's the other way around. The army is being turned into a bloated, administrative, police force.) Upside down. Inside out. Either way, the Enemy is the People.

It's late. Jagdalpur is asleep, except for the many hoardings of Rahul Gandhi asking people to join the Youth Congress. He's been to Bastar twice in recent months but hasn't said anything much about the war. It's probably too messy for the Peoples' Prince to meddle in at this point. His media managers must have put their foot down. The fact that the Salwa Judum (Purification Hunt) – the dreaded, government sponsored vigilante group responsible for rapes, killings, burning down villages and driving hundreds of thousands of people from their homes – is led by Mahendra Karma, a Congress MLA, doesn't get much play in the carefully orchestrated publicity around Rahul Gandhi.

I arrived at the Ma Danteshwari mandir well in

time for my appointment (first day, first show). I had my camera, my small coconut and a powdery red tika on my forehead. I wondered if someone was watching me and having a laugh. Within minutes a young boy approached me. He had a cap and a backpack schoolbag. Chipped red nail-polish on his fingernails. No Hindi Outlook, no bananas. "Are you the one who's going in?" he asked me. No Namashkar Guruji. I didn't know what to say. He took out a soggy note from his pocket and handed it to me. It said "Outlook nahi mila." (Couldn't find Outlook)

"And the bananas?"

"I ate them", he said, "I got hungry."

He really was a security threat.

His backpack said Charlie Brown—Not your ordinary blockhead. He said his name was Mangtu. I soon learned that Dandakaranya, the forest I was about to enter, was full of people who had many names and fluid identities. It was like balm to me, that idea. How lovely not to be stuck with yourself, to become someone else for a while.

*(read the rest of this article at: www.outlookindia.com;
"Walking with the Comrades")*

Please Don't Eat The Mountains

We want to save our lives. There is one thing we must do. The thing we must do is consume less. We must cut our consumption in half, and learn to live that way, and then halve it again. Some of us have started already. Earth-a-lujah!

We will spend years learning what 'consuming less' means. If we teach ourselves how — then it will begin like remedial reading, opening our eyes and ears, slowing down. If the de-consum-ing is forced on us by the global economy and its eco-cidal collapse, then store hours were the sad hours that we lived.

As each layer of consumption is peeled away, there will be new emotions, different economies, new ideas of beauty. That triumphal Enlightenment that put us at the center of history — that discredited life will come back at us with a vengeance. Corporations will argue that convenience is the same thing as freedom. Big religions will say that deadly myths of prosperity are eternal life. Governments will state flatly — they already have — that those who stop shopping are unpatriotic.

We are shopping our way out of the recession! — crows the New York Times. The lead article last Sunday: "But We Need The Oil." Could

the Gray Lady lull us back to American middle-class consuming as our highest calling. Since the recession began two years ago, the environment has dropped to 20th among our concerns. But the earth is not a separate “issue.” It is not on a list.

Life on earth is talking to us. The oil and ash and tsunamis and mudslides and tornados - these are massive memos from the life that preceded us. The asthma and cancers in the families under the strip-mined mountains, they have the moaning, distorted cry of the earth in their bodies. Don't hide this. Make it your lead story. One-third of the energy we consume is dirty coal. The smooth light in our rooms divides us from the murder of the mountains, but you cannot divide the earth from itself. This becomes clear when we consume less.

Got some free time? Let's stop eating the earth alive. We must consume less of the earth that's butchered into pieces and pushed toward us in flashy boxes. When we reach and grab for that product, we could — if we wanted to — feel a very old recoil in our hand. There are resistance songs ringing in the blood of the dumbest consumer. Check out the very generous return policy when you BUY LOCAL. You're consuming less power. And people are around you are effortlessly smiling!

Of course it is possible that it is all too late. I have a daughter now so I'm hoping for the best. If we do consume less, will the earth notice and give us some more... life? Things will never be the same, and we were never the main point. I know that. But I believe that the mountains we warred against and shopped into the ground will know when their killers change.

—Reverend Billy

Biographies

FRANCK ANDRÉ JAMME has published sixteen books of poems and fragments since 1981, as well as numerous illustrated books. He has been praised by Henri Michaux, René Char and Steve Lacy and translated by John Ashbery. He is also a specialist and curator of contemporary Indian tantric, brut and tribal arts. He lives in Paris and Burgundy.

DONALD BAECHLER, a painter and sculptor, was born in 1956 in Hartford, CT. He attended art schools in New York and in Frankfurt, Germany. Since 1980 Baechler has exhibited his works internationally both in galleries and museums, and his works are in the permanent collections of numerous museums, foundations, and major corporate and private collections. Since 1986 Baechler has served as editor in chief of Ajax Press, a small publisher of art books and fanzines. In 1994 Baechler was elected to the Board of Governors of the Skowhegan School, and over the years he has taught and lectured at Universities and Art Schools worldwide. Baechler is represented in the US by Cheim and Read Gallery in New York, and in Europe by Thaddaeus Ropac Gallery, Paris and Salzburg.

SARNATH BANERJEE studied Biochemistry and later received an MA in Image and communica-

tion from Goldsmiths College. He wrote graphic novels, 'Corridor' and 'Barn Owl's wondrous Capers', on the scandals of 18th century Calcutta, both published by Penguin India, and Denoel, France. He has received several awards such as the MacArthur fellowship, Indian foundation for Arts, Egide bursary in Paris. He has been a fellow of the Institute of Advanced studies, Budapest and is currently a fellow of the Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart. Sarnath Banerjee runs Phantomville books that exclusively publish graphic novels. He has also participated at The Sao Paulo bienal, Arco in Madrid and Frieze in London, Mori Museum, Tokyo.

ROBYN BEECHE (b.1945) Sydney has been residing in Vrindavan, north India documenting the culture of a region known as Vraj (a place where cows roam) since 1992 for the archive of Sri Caitanya Prema Samsthana. She is involved with ecological projects for the preservation of heritage, river Jamuna and solid waste management in the town. She directed 'Holi — a festival of colour' in 1989 and published Celebrating Krishna in 2001 and the Arts & Crafts of India in 1992. Previously throughout the 80s she specialized in fashion and beauty photography in London working with Zandra Rhodes and Andrew Logan. Contact: rbeeche@gmail.com

REVEREND BILLY (BILL TALEN) A student of the writers Charles Gaines and Kurt Vonnegut, Bill Talen has staged experimental plays, published essays and poems in Philadelphia, New York and California. alen moved to New York City in 1994, where the experimental preacher began his career with the other sidewalk preachers on Times Square. Specializing in exorcisms of sweatshop companies, and opposing the Disneyfication of the neighborhood, he set up his portable pulpit at the door of the Mouse. The preacher was soon accompanied by singers, and began staging whole “Worships” in the tradition of ritual-based interactive plays of the day

LEE ANN BROWN is Associate Professor of English at St. John’s University in New York City. A poet and filmmaker, her books include *Polyverse* and *The Sleep That Changed Everything*. She is also the founding editor of Tender Buttons press, and The French Broad Institute (of Time & the River), a space for multimedia poetic performance in the NC mountains.

GRETA BYRUM is an urban planner, poet, and co-founder of dBfoundation, dedicated to creating and fostering ephemeral edifices and intangible structures (dBfoundation.org). She is an Appalachian Trail 2000-miler, but she loves city living, especially in NYC!

FRANCESCO CLEMENTE (born 1952, Naples) He is self taught and studied architecture in 1970 at the University of Rome. Since 1982 he has spent his time between Italy, New York City and Madras (now Chennai) in India, where he collaborates with local artists. In 1986, he created the Hanuman Books series with Raymond Foye which is a collection of 48 miniature handmade books featuring American and European poets and philosophers printed in Madras. Retrospectives have been organized by the Sezon Museum of Art in Tokyo (1994) and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (1999).

JOHNNY COYNE: I was born in Fairbanks Alaska, and at the age of two my father moved the family down to the lower 48. In a relentless quest for better employment, he dragged us from coast to coast. My earliest memories are of airports and highways. Somewhere between stops I began drawing. Now I have a graduate degree in sculpture and I live in Iowa City where I'm actually making a living as an artist and a hard working slacker. I travel whenever I can.

The Five Year Plan has been produced by **NANDITA AND TARUN DEVRAJ**, of **RUDRAKSH**, Jaipur India. Rudraksh is a printing and manufacturing unit, specializing in design using regular as well as organic, plant based dyes, for boutique printed

and embroidered clothing. Its vision is to send an environmental message via printed textile and handmade paper. Tarun Devraj passed away on November 28th, 2009. His belief in the Five year plan has been executed by his partner and wife Nandita Masand Devraj. With her experience of over 20 years in the industry, the company aims to keep his dream alive aspiring to continue the exceptional work that he excelled in.

Born in 1965 in Montréal, **JULIE DOUCET** obtains in 1987 a Printing Arts diploma at the Université du Québec à Montréal. Around the same time, she began her Dirty Plotte serie as a mini-comic and eventually won Best New Talent at the 1991 Harvey Awards. Doucet then drew comics and moved around a lot. Until 1999, when she decided to explore other forms of art : etching, silkscreen printing, collage and writing. She currently lives in Montréal and works on animation films

DAVID DUNLAP

When I feel sad I pull out my Bic, four-color, ball point pen. Using black, I make a dot, often one-quarter inch in diameter. This seems to soothe me. Then I feel out my sadness. Then I draw toward my sadness using all the colors. I do not stop until I am flooded with Well Being.

THE ARTIST ESTEBAN (AKA: STEVEN WARNER)

Esteban set up and guided the design of the 5 Year Plan website. Esteban worked for 30 years as a Chocolatier, Graphics Designer, entrepreneur, and webmaster. 10 years ago he returned to painting, focusing on the art of watercolor male nudes from life. Most recently has returned to earlier forms, creating non-objective abstract paintings, as well as oil portraits on canvas. He continues to assist artists with interfacing with the internet, designing, and tweaking websites. (<http://artofesteban.com>; estebandraws@mac.com).

KRISTA FREIBAUM AND ZOE TURNBULL, SERIOUS BUSINESS PR. Krista and Zoe are boutique, new-media PR consultants providing the fashion, art, media and technology industries with digital content strategy and story ideas that create global conversation online.

JANE GILMOR is an intermedia artist and professor at Mount Mercy University in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Her work is included in Lucy Lippard's *Overlay*, Broude and Gerrard's *The Power of Feminist Art*, and *Love's Pioneer Feminists: Women Who Changed America*. Awards include two NEA fellowships, a 2004 Fulbright in Portugal, and residencies in Ireland, Italy, and the U.K. She is represented in the collections of The Bemis Foundation, The Los Angeles County Museum of

Art, The Des Moines Art Center, and The Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. In 2009 she had a solo exhibition at Long Island University in Brooklyn. <http://janegilmor.com>

Visionary poet **ALLEN GINSBERG**'s signal poem "Howl" overcame censorship to become one of the most widely read poems of the 20th century. Accentral figure to the Beat literary movement, his exploration of eastern religions, vociferous antiwar activism & defense of psychedelics & marijuana during the 60s placed him central to that decade's counterculture. A co-founder of the Kerouac School of Poetics at the Naropa University, the first accredited Buddhist college in the Western world, he became a member the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and was Distinguished Professor at Brooklyn College. He continued to write prolifically & teach throughout the world till his death in 1997.

TAMARA GONZALES b.1959 Madera, California. Lives and works in Brooklyn and Walton, N.Y. Her paintings and installations play with Day-of-the-Dead, porn-mask weird Grand street Brooklyn found-toy imagery, among other things. She has shown at PS1, the:artist:network, and most recently, Party Expo. Currently she is collaborating with poet Jerome Sala on Prom Queen, a chapbook to be released in fall 2010. When not

in the studio she teaches yoga classes at Abyhasa and walks her dog Bear. Correspondence may be sent to durgatam@gmail.com

JAMES GREEN

Born: Landover, Maryland 1965

Education: self-taught

Currently lives and works in D.C.

Contact: jsgreen65@gmail.com

VIJAY KUMAR HANDA Born on 2nd October 1942 at Shekhupura in undivided India, now Pakistan. Education: Finished law graduation and went for law practice but it did not impress me so I left it. Now: Started work for humanity in 1974 on the line shown by Gandhi. From 1977 onward with my wife Bina Handa we are working with Gandhi Hindustani Sahitya Sabha (1 Jawahallal Nehru Marg, New Delhi 2) for enhancing the spinning in the capitol and nearby places by teaching and by demonstration. We are also trying to expand Gandhian thought by working with students. I taught charka to Geraldine James for her acting in "Gandhi" film.

MRS. BINA HANDA Born 16 August 1947 immediately after Independence Day (15/8/47) and born into Independent India. Education: She did her BA from Kamal Nehru College/Delhi University and honored as best all around student of

the year. She did her MA in hindi and from Agra University and immediately got jobs with Defense Ministry as a translator and hindi teacher in Delhi Milk Scheme School. She did not join either job and started her career for service to humanity in 1969 on the inspiration of Baba Lal Singh who trained her for spreading spinning and other Gandhian activities in different colleges in Delhi. In 1973 when Khaka Sahib Kalilkar, the founder of Gandhi Hindustani Sahitya Sabha showed his wish to start spinning in his institution to Baba Lal Singh, Bina was deputed to take this responsibility and she joined Gandhi Hindustani Sahitya Sabha for spreading spinning and Gandhian thought among the the different schools and other parts of Delhi. Since then she's working there with her husband. Moreover she also taught charka to Ben Kingsly who acted as Gandhi in the film by Richard Attenborough. Since the last 10 years they teach charka at the Gandhi Week festival at the American Embassy School.

MEAGAN ILEANA began stitching while living in the Himalayas with her family at the age of three and has been lucky enough to continue to travel extensively around the world, living in India for over four years. Most recently she returned to India to gather inspiration and explore Indian handmade textiles and embroidery. She has made a home in the beautiful hills of Southern Indiana

in a wonderful community where she is learning the delights of organic gardening and urban homesteading. Meagan feels that art is the only way for her to express her appreciation of life's beauty.

JEFF KEY is a writer, actor, activist and Iraq War veteran. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Theatre from the University of Alabama.

Jeff wrote the critically acclaimed one-man performance piece, *The Eyes of Babylon*. He established The Mehadi Foundation, a non-profit to help the veterans of this war, and supports philanthropic efforts in Iraq to help Iraqi civilians.

Jeff Key is the subject of a Showtime documentary entitled *Semper Fi: One Marine's Journey* that aired first on that network in June 2007. He married Adam Nelson on August 4, 2007. They live in Salt Lake City.

www.MehadiFoundation.org;

www.SemperFiTheMovie.com

www.TheEyesOfBabylon.com

Intense and quiet, **PUSHPA KUMARI** grew up in her maternal grandparent's home, surrounded by beautiful Madhubani paintings made by her grandmother, Maha Sundari Devi, one of the foremost Madhubani painters of India. What makes Pushpa special is that though she is rooted in her centuries old tradition, she has incorporated not only con-

temporary ideas and treatment, but also, an artistic intensity, an aesthetic ideal that is truly her own. In Pushpa's words, to move forward, one has to often sacrifice something precious, one form of Shakti (energy) has to be played out to be replaced by another. In American Pushpa's work can be seen at Cavin-Morris Gallery; NYC (212) 226-3768

LOUISE LANDES LEVI: NYC 1944 - formal education-Univ. of Calif. Berkeley & Mills College, then National Center for Performing Art, Bombay-in depth study Indian music & old text informal education-the garden, the street, the chance encounter. 3 years in India - Translations fr. Rene Daumal: RASA, Essays on Indian Aesthetics, Mira Bai: SWEET ON MY LIPS, The Love Poems of Mira Bai & Henri Michaux: Selected Poetry 1927-1972. Recent titles: Tower 2/TARA, The Book L, Banana Baby, Don't Fuck w. The Airlines, Avenue A & Ninth Street, CHORMA & Guru Punk - online at Arthur, Big Bridge Unlikely Stories & in poetry journals Ecstatic Peace, Tygerburning, Wild Flowers - on postcards & broadsides, most recently THE DEEP DIAMOND, printed, in Nepal, on hand made Lotaka paper.Poet & performer. Samaya JA JA

MELISSA LOCKWOOD, Brooklyn, New York. Melissa Lockwood is an interdisciplinary artist. She has an MFA in Performance Art from the

University of Iowa. Melissa works in performance, video, drawing, painting, photography and fashion design. Melissa Has traveled internationally showing her Performance, Video and Fashion Works. Currently she has a line of garments made from salvaged fabrics. Her work is often involved with environmental issues, having worked with the Yes Men, Green Peace making group actions and her line of clothing is an example of up-cycled fabrics. Artist Portfolio: <http://melissalockwood-artistportfolio.iqtest-nyc.com> Fashion Site: <http://www.iqtest-nyc.com> melissalockwood27@hotmail.com

CHRIS MARTIN lives & works in Brooklyn, New York, represented at Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York. He's a real artist's artist and real human being

SHIV MIRABITO is a Tantric Buddhist-Hindu yogi, anthropologist, archivist, artist, photographer & poet who began writing as a teenager while living at Allen Ginsberg's Cherry Valley poetry commune. He is the editor & founder of the small co-operative press Shivastan Publishing which craftprints limited edition chapbooks & broadsides on handmade paper in Kathmandu and he now divides his time between Woodstock New York, India & Nepal.

YOKO ONO is a multi-media artist who constantly challenges the traditional boundaries of art, known for her groundbreaking conceptual and performance pieces, experimental films and music. Yoko's creative influence and prolific artistic output continues to inspire new generations. In 2009, she was the recipient of the prestigious Golden Lion Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Venice Biennale.

Reflecting on her reputation for being outrageous, Yoko smiles and says, "I do have to rely on my own judgement, although to some people my judgement seems a little out of sync. I have my own rhythm and my own timing, and that's simply how it is."

INDIA RADFAR, poet (India Poem, the desire to meet with the beautiful, Breathe, and Position & Relation), indiaradfar@usa.net

MONISHA RAJA grew up in India. She moved to the States and began her career in Fashion while pursuing painting. She primarily works figuratively in watercolours and gouache.

Her current series of Yantra and Mandala paintings are inspired by Indian and Tibetan tantric art. Monisha studies Thangka painting with Tibetan Master, Pema Rinzin. When not painting, she can be found teaching yoga and designing

shoes. Monisha lives in New York City.

ANDY ROTMAN is Associate Professor of Religion at Smith College. His research concerns the ways in which seeing and what is seen in South Asia function as part of social history and material culture. This interest is apparent in his research on Indian Buddhism, South Asian media, and the north Indian bazaar. He recently published *Divine Stories* (2008), the first part of a two-part translation of the *Divyavadana*, one of the most important collections of ancient Buddhist narratives. His second book, *Thus Have I Seen: Visualizing Faith in Early Indian Buddhism* (2008), considers the construction of faith as a visual practice in Buddhism, and how seeing and faith function as part of overlapping visual and moral systems.

GURPREET KAUR SIDHU. In 1991, Gurpreet co-founded a design and crafts development and marketing network based in New Delhi, India. It was conceived as a space within which free interactions could take place between artists, craftspeople, environmentalists and designers to creatively address the re-vitalisation of India's tremendous wealth of artisanal skills as well as to promote the sustainable use of natural resources. The ideas and experimentations that followed were the seed that grew to become the 'People Tree'. Today, as the director of People Tree,

www.peopletreeonline.com. Gurpreet carries its spirit across time and space – directing the present, preserving the past and envisioning the future.

Gurpreet lives and works in New Delhi, pursues a passion for photography, and is a member of the advisory board of the Sambhavna Trust, a Bhopal gas-disaster survivors initiative, as well as of Toxics Link, an organization working on toxic chemicals research, monitoring and awareness issues. Gurpreet regularly conducts art and ecology workshops with schools and college students in Delhi.

ORIJIT SEN. Orijit is a graphic artist, trained at the National Institute of Design, India. He works in diverse media on print, textile and exhibition design projects. He has produced a number of works of graphic fiction and magazine and book illustration, including *The River Of Stories* (1994) – considered by many to be India's first graphic novel. He is one of the founders of People Tree – a pioneering centre for art and ecology. His current projects include *Carnama* - an animation film, and Panj Paani - a large-scale narrative mural for the prestigious Khalsa Heritage Museum project in Punjab. He currently lives in New Delhi with his wife Gurpreet Sidhu and daughter Pakhi.

AARON SINIFT was born and raised in Iowa and now lives in NYC. Formal education: University of Iowa and Boston University. Informal education has come from listening and extensive travel throughout the world, especially in India. He is the instigator of 5 Year Plan, husband of Greta Byrum and will spend the rest of his life making art.

ERIN STACK holds a MFA in Painting from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a MA in Counseling Psychology from Leslie University. Originally an abstract painter, Erin's art now focuses on raising environmental consciousness and cultivating ethical and creative community. In 2006, Erin founded the Green Artists League (GAL) an interdisciplinary collective of eco-artists who create public art addressing the global environmental crisis. Viewing art and community as vehicles for transformation, GAL is both an art-making collaborative and a forum for contemporary artists to explore the relationship of art and ethics in an era of ecological degradation.
www.greenartistsleague.org
www.erinstack@comcast.net

JOHN STUDER: As an AmeriCorps alum, a musician and an MBA, John has a special interest in contributing left-brain energy to projects that involve the arts, social justice, and sustainability. Helping with the 5 Year Plan has allowed him the opportunity to witness all of these elements come together in

one beautiful collaboration. John currently lives in Brooklyn, and can be found crunching numbers for a digital agency in SoHo, or playing drums in Woodsy Pride.

TIM WEHRLE. If I don't create anything, I become a dying fugitive on the loose. Born in Burlington Iowa 1978. I have no particular place to be, but hopefully soon I will be married and comfortable making art in my backyard and taking long naps in a hammock. I like to sleep. I need lots of it. I can say I probably slept through 70 percent of my life. Sleep allows make to construct ideas, stories, patterns that I note down. then use later in my drawings and paintings. I have been in several exhibitions throughout my art career. Most of them in NYC. I'm not writing them down. I like one on one conversations. Come visit me.

GLORIA WILLIAMS is a Brooklyn, NY born visual artist, poet, writer, and vocalist for the music group Kanipchen-Fit (www.myspace.com/kanipchenfit). In 2010 her first collection of poems and poem-stories, "Pent-Up" was published (Delicatessen). Her poetry has also been published in BlazeVOX (2010), the former E-publication Bent Pin Quarterly (2007), and literary magazines A Gathering of the Tribes #11, #6 and LUNGFULL! #3, Interview magazine, and Aloud, Nuyorican Poets Anthology (Henry Holt). She has read and performed her work at

KGB Bar, Galapagos Art Space, The Bowery Poetry Club, St. Marks Poetry Project, NY Open Center, Blue Stockings Bookstore, The Nuyorican Poets Cafe, ABC No Rio, The Drawing Center, and venues outside the US. She has written for Harlem World magazine (2003 online interviews with NYC artists) and for the former www.PlanetAuthority.com site (1998-2000) for Earthly Matters a monthly column of interviews, social commentary, writer' and visual artist' resource information.

PETER LAMBORN WILSON studied at Columbia University, he traveled extensively in North Africa, India and Asia, and settled in Iran for nearly ten years, undertaking voluminous reading of Islam heretical texts and studying the historical and mystical dimensions of Sufism, studying with many of the century's great Sufi masters. He returned to the United States in the 1980s and began a series of bi-weekly radio broadcasts known as the 'Moorish Orthodox Radio Crusade' on WBAI. He is a member of the Autonomedia collective, and author of dozens of books of poetry, literary and cultural criticism. *EC(O)LOGUES: A NEO-PASTORALIST MANIFESTO* is being published by Station Hill Press in Barrytown, NY, in 2010

THANK YOU!

The 5 Year Plan Project would not have been possible without the generous participation and support of these People and Institutions.

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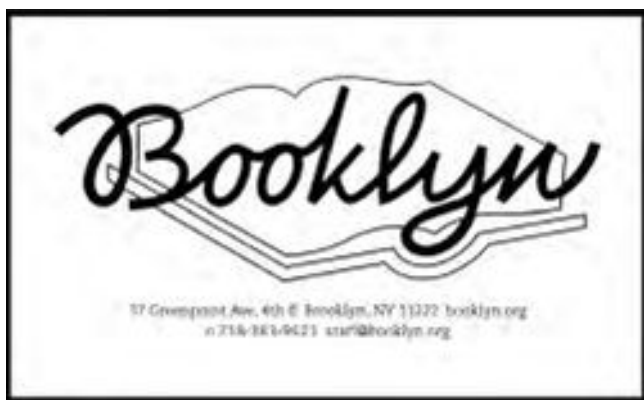
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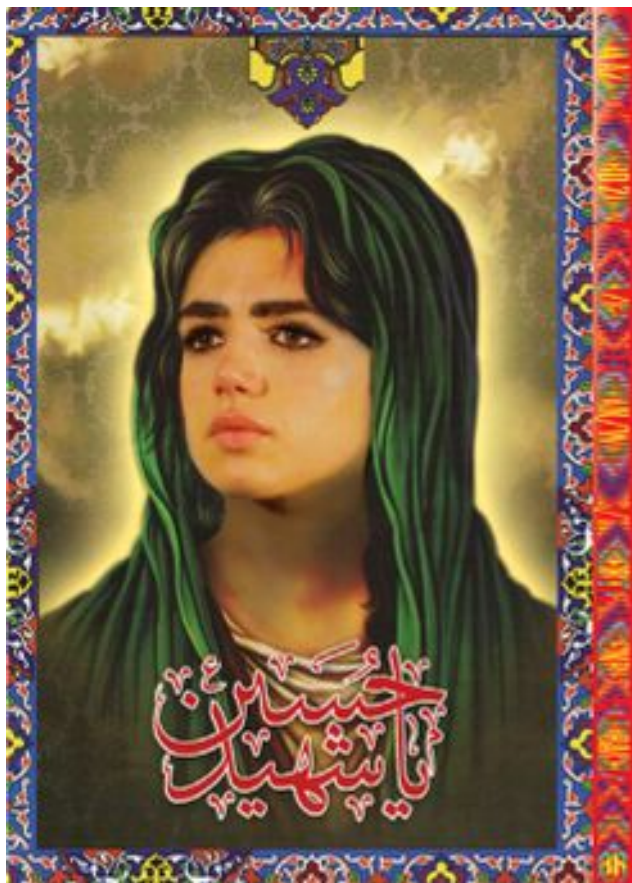
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