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CAREERS OF THE COPY:  
TRAVELING REPLICAS IN COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL INDIA

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It is a common refrain of our times that we are living in the age of the copy.<sup>1</sup> The notion of this age stretches backwards in time to different nodal points in modernity when new technologies of reproduction invested the duplicate with the full powers of substituting the original, and allowed it a mobility and circulation that gave it a life far in excess of its authorizing source. But it also keeps hurtling towards a present that is connoted by the unruliness and ungovernability of the copy, in the way it tends to completely extricate itself from its referent, subvert its authority and become a sign only of itself. A capacity for limitless proliferation, ingenious improvisations and transplantation in different settings becomes the contemporary hallmarks of the copy. My paper focuses on architectural replicas and recreations, and on the kinds of travels they embark on in India's colonial and contemporary histories. In keeping with the theme of this conference, I will treat the monumental replica as a central entity that has sustained, over time, the popular imaginaries of the disciplines of archaeology and anthropology, and has served as the grounds on which professional knowledges came to be configured within new public domains of display and spectatorship. I will also use the divergent forms, claims and aspirations of these fabrications as a way of marking out their post-colonial careers from their colonial pasts – distinguishing the popular from the official, the regional from the national, the local from the global trends of replications.

### A tale of two replicas

Let me begin with two cameos from the present – with the making of replicas of two of India's most celebrated archaeological monuments in different parts of the globe, that have elicited sharply contrasting responses from the national media and government. The stage is set for the opening, in the one case, of a model of the Sanchi Stupa in the Henan province of central China, 16 km. from the ancient Buddhist monastic site of Luoyang; in the other case, of a remake of the Taj Mahal in a projected amusement park complex at Sonargaon, 30 km outside Dhaka in Bangladesh. (Figures 1, 2) While the one replica is being held up as the gift and pride of the Indian nation, as a symbol of official cultural exchange and diplomatic goodwill,<sup>2</sup> the other has left the Indian Embassy in Bangladesh fuming at both the audacity of the copy and the crassness of the remake.<sup>3</sup> The distinction,



Fig. 1- A model of the Sanchi Stupa at Lyoyang, China, 2008, Photograph, Courtesy: Ashis Chakrabarty



Fig. 2- A copy of the Taj Mahal under construction at Sonargaon, Dhaka, 2008

it has been pointed out, is between a markedly ‘official’ and a flagrantly ‘unofficial’ construction, between one sanctioned by India’s ancient civilizational history and modern scholarly and architectural expertise, and one propelled mainly by the needs of popular tourism and mass spectatorship. But let us consider more closely what authorizes and enables these different orders of replicas, in their conceptions and intentions, in the specificities of their locations and in their positioning vis-a-vis the Indian originals.

The building of a full-scale model of the Sanchi Stupa on site, at Luoyang, has been a joint project of the Indian and Chinese governments, first conceived of during a China visit of Indian Prime Minister, Vajpayee, in June 2003, and implemented since 2006 under the close supervision of a committee at New Delhi headed by the scholar-bureaucrat, Dr. Kapila Vatsyana.<sup>4</sup> This new shrine, the official documents emphasize, is not intended to be an exact replica of the Sanchi Stupa. It is the product of a design of a

modern architectural firm of New Delhi<sup>5</sup> that had to meet the approval of the committee and was modified by Dr. Vatsayana from a historical and aesthetic perspective. (Figure 3) Likewise, the image of the Buddha placed inside the *stupa* (a copy of a sculpture of a Dhyani Buddha from Sarnath) is a similar modern fabrication, produced by another Delhi-based professional firm, called Icons India. (Figure 4) There are many improvisations that have gone into reproducing a slice of India's ancient Buddhist art and religion in distant China. The material that has been used for the building is pink Dholpur stone transported from Rajasthan - a loose approximation of the buff sandstone of the original structure at Sanchi – a stone now widely used for all contemporary look-alikes of north Indian temples that have come up in various parts of India. The workmen assigned to the task were drawn from a pool of skilled personnel from Rajasthan and Orissa who are able to faithfully replicate the architectural designs and carvings of *stupa* gateways and temple walls in keeping with the steady demands for such current refabrications.<sup>6</sup> The *stupa* dome, a funerary monument, built in the past as a solid brick and stone encasement of the corporeal relics of Buddha and his disciples, is made to accommodate here an interior hall in the style of the latter-day form of Buddhist *viharas* (monastic residences) and *chaityas* (congregation halls). And gracing this hall is an example of a Buddha image of the classical 'Gupta school' from the 5<sup>th</sup> century Buddhist site of Sarnath, post-dating by several centuries the original *stupa* and gateway structures at



Fig. 3-The Sanchi Stupa at Lyoyang, China, designed by the New Delhi architectural firm of M/s Akshaya Jain and Raka Chakravorty, Photograph, Courtesy: Ashis Chakrabarty



Fig. 4-A copy of a Sarnath Buddha sculpture inside the Sanchi Stupa structure at Lyoyang, China, fabricated by a New Delhi firm, Icons India, Photograph, Courtesy: Ashis Chakrabarty

Sanchi that go back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE (where Buddhism exists in its earliest aniconic phase, devoid of any anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha).<sup>7</sup> All of these changes may be read as creative licenses, which do not deviate from the broad ambit of India's ancient Buddhist history and do not detract from the overall religious sanctity of this transported monument.

As against the original *stupa* structures at Sanchi, that had to be salvaged from years of pilferage and spoliation to undergo a laborious reassemblage and conservation, a century ago, under the Director-General of Indian archaeology, John Marshall,<sup>8</sup> (Figures 5, 6) the Luoyang remake stands unabashedly whole and new. Strategically erected at the site of the now-extinct Baima Si (White Horse) temple, the oldest Buddhist monastery on Chinese soil dating back to the 1st century CE (where the legend goes that two Indian Buddhist monks arrived on white horses carrying the sacred texts), it is intended to commemorate the coming of Buddhism from India to China.



Fig. 5 - Restoration of the Great Dome, Sanchi, c. 1882 - Photograph by Lala Deen Dayal, Courtesy: The British Library



Fig. 6 - View of the Great *Stupa* after its full restoration under Sir John Marshall, 1918–19, Courtesy: Alkazi Collection of Photography

And its wholeness is also offset by the neighbouring ruins of Buddhist grottoes and decapitated rock-hewn Buddhas of Luoyang, and made to contrast this “other sad history” of the past ravage and neglect of China’s own archaeological treasures.<sup>9</sup> (Figure 7, 8) In an internationally showcased China, India’s Sanchi Stupa will take its place amidst a cluster of replica monasteries – among them, an already built Thai monastery - in its mission of developing Luoyang into a new centre of world Buddhist pilgrimage. (Figure 9)



Fig. 7 - The Buddhist grottoes with rock-hewn sculptures at Lyoyang, China, Photograph, Courtesy: Ashis Chakrabarty

Fig. 8 - Decaying and defaced sculptures inside the Buddhist grottoes at Lyoyang, Photograph, Courtesy: Ashis Chakrabarty

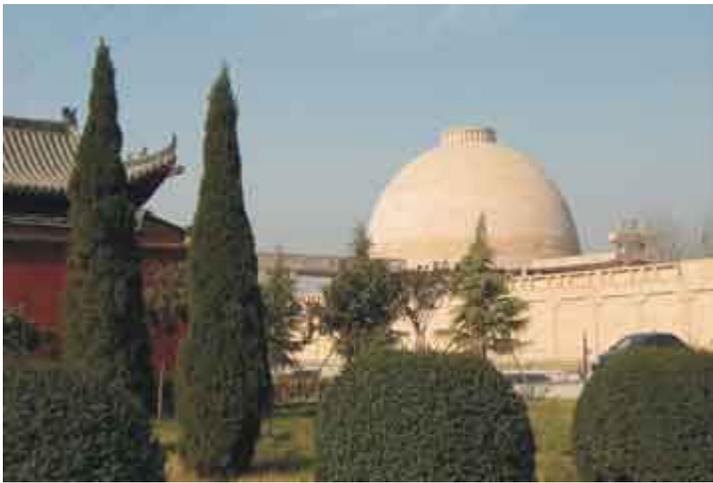


Fig. 9 - The new centre of world Buddhist pilgrimage at Lyoyang, Photograph, Courtesy: Ashis Chakrabarty

Were there similar compulsions at work in claiming for Bangladesh, in the name of Islam, India's most iconic Mughal monument? On the contrary, the prime concerns here were those of popular tourism and entertainment. A film producer and director, Ahsanullah Moni, had as his model the Ramoji Rao film city that he had seen in Hyderabad, when he acquired 15 *bighas* (5 acres) of land to build a mega amusement park at Sonargaon outside Dhaka - and decided to transplant at the heart of this park India's world-famous "Monument to Love", one that he had visited several times at Agra since 1980.<sup>10</sup> (Figures 10, 11)



Fig. 10 - Bangladeshi film director and producer, Ahsnaullah Moni, with his Taj Mahal replica, 2008, Photograph, Courtesy: NDTV



Fig. 11 - The Taj Mahal structures under construction at Sonargaon, Dhaka, 2008

In a world where the Taj Mahal is available for all to own as image and copy, Ahsanullah's daring lay in building a near life-size permanent structure to rival the original, to provide all ordinary Bangladeshis who cannot afford a trip to India with their own Taj Mahal. It is instructive to see how the making of this monumental replica narrates its case on a double register of earnestness and excesses. No less than the Sanchi Stupa at Lyoyang, the Sonargaon Taj Mahal is founded on the same premium on its fidelity to the original, on Ahsanullah's claims to have spent 28 years closely "studying" the Taj before he began constructing a faithful replica in 2004.<sup>11</sup> Most crucial to the credentials of his Taj Mahal is the sheer extravagance of funds and materials invested in it. Involving a staggering sum of 200 crore Bangladeshi *takas* (the equivalent of \$58 million), it has been built with marble tiles and granite imported from Italy, with 350 pounds of bronze used for its dome, and 172 diamonds brought in from Belgium to stud the dome and minarets and make them glitter in the light. Coloured mosaic decoration

were also fabricated on imported Chinese tiles to ornament the white structure.<sup>12</sup> While one group of Chinese workers assisted in the on-site stone cladding work for the Lyoyang Stupa, another group supplied the decorated tiles for Bangladesh's Taj Mahal. Materials and skills from all over the globe have been freely assimilated to make this a true product of its time – a copy that can boast of replicating the original, even as every physical aspect of its production pushes it further and further away from the master structure.

For Ahsanullah, as for the one million and more people who thronged to see this replica on the first day of the opening of the still-to-be-finished complex on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2008,<sup>13</sup> there are no incongruities between the claims and licenses of the copy. Ahsanullah can, therefore, take as much pride in the avowed exactitude of his Taj replica as in his plans transporting a few dolphins all the way from Florida to feature among the other attraction of this Sonargaon amusement park. And, the laying out of a landscaped Mughal garden around the monument can be seen as having full concordance with the sparkling fountain that visitors encounter inside this Taj Mahal. (Figure 12)



Fig. 12 - The lay-out of gardens and fountains at the Sonargaon Taj Mahal complex

The mausoleum stands hollowed out and converted into an object of pure spectacle and display, freed of the need to reproduce in its interior fake models of the tombstones of Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan, which would have involved a different order of transgression of a historical and sacred site. A fountain inside the Bangladeshi Taj Mahal, it could be argued, appears no more of an aberration to the streams of local visitors coming to view this new “Wonder of the World” in their country than a model of the meditating Buddha of Sarnath inside the Chinese Sanchi Stupa will, to the tourists and Buddhist devotees who will congregate at this reconsecrated Buddhist site at Luoyang.

Yet, from the point of view of the Indian state, the official sanction of one replica pointedly sets it apart from the purported illegitimacy of the other. What is it about the Taj Mahal copy that has caused such Indian national displeasure and indignation? The answer can be found in the way this replica audaciously bypasses the authority of the nation and unapologetically exceeds the norms and boundaries of duplication. But such an answer itself leaves wide open the question of who decides the permissibility of the copy, who adjudicates on its authenticity, and what governs its rights and limits. The irony of the situation lies in the initial outrage of the Indian High Commission of Bangladesh about the alleged breach of copyright in the production of a Taj replica, and its subsequent dismissal of the production as such a poor copy that it failed to pose any threat to the original.<sup>14</sup> Inauthenticity became, in this case, the best guarantee for the survival and autonomous life of the copy.

Taking the cue from these contemporary cases, this paper gestures towards a diverse history of traveling monuments and simulated sites that takes us from India's colonial past into her post-colonial present. The idea is lay out different "chronotopes"<sup>15</sup> of replica productions, to look at the shifting production processes that go into their making, and the kinds of powers and prerogatives, liberties and licenses that they enjoy in changing temporal and spatial settings. The coming of age of the traveling replica coincided in the middle years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the age of the "world exhibitions" in England, France and the USA, where the exhibitions served as a key visual apparatus for the staging of Western imperial hegemony and its representational powers over the monuments, cultures and peoples of the non-Western world. The "world exhibitions" are now a well-known and widely studied field: where the scholarship ranges from a theorization of the new technologies of vision, reproduction and display that exemplified the triumphant force of Western modernity to close analyses of the imperial political economies and cultural discourses that supported these exhibitionary complexes.<sup>16</sup> Against this context, the next section of the paper briefly charts some of the simulated travels in time and space through which an archaeological and anthropological imagination of the Indian empire came to circulate across temporary and permanent display sites in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century London.

## Colonial travels

### *Of dioramas and plaster casts*

Let me track this story with the examples of traveling images and copies of the same two archaeological monuments with which I began. It was only to be expected that the legendary Taj Mahal would feature repeatedly in the outpour of painted, engraved and photographed images that issued from all the “picturesque” journeys that European painters and photographers undertook into the heart of the Indian empire. The pictorial image would evolve out of a tight grid of inter-citations: thus we see a visage of the Taj Mahal flanked by its minarets and the adjacent mosque, seen from across boats and boatsmen on the Jamuna, moving from the aquatint engravings of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century into the earliest photograph of the monument, taken around 1860 by the traveling war photographer, Felice Beato.<sup>17</sup> (Figures 13, 14)



Fig. 13 - “The Taj Mahal at Agra”, painted by Charles Ramus Forrest, engraved by Thomas Sutherland (aquatint engraving, 1824)

Fig. 14 - The Taj Mahal seen across the Yamuna, Photograph by Felice Beato, 1858-59



In the decade that preceded the photograph, we find the “sublime” and “picturesque” effects of the scenic image also being carried over into the new technology of the moving diorama in an amphitheatre in London.

Subjecting life-size painted scenes on cloth to filtered regulations of light in a darkened room, these early dioramas helped to create the three-dimensional illusion of physically inhabitable settings. Such dioramas mediated the passage from the pictorial to the photographic image, advancing the techniques of illusionist oil painting and print-making, while anticipating the fundamental lighting devices of the first years of photography.<sup>18</sup> There was also another kind of mediation involved – one more crucial for my case – in the staging of the “Diorama of the Ganges” at an amphitheatre at the Portland Gallery, London, in 1850, where the first part opened with a panorama of the city of Calcutta, and a trip southwards to Orissa, to the “Town of Juggernaut” (Puri) and the Black Pagoda (Konarak), and the second part presented a journey from the “Sacred City of Benaras” upstream through north India to end with a grand view of the Taj Mahal at Agra.<sup>19</sup> (Figure 15) This production had grown out of the detailed sketches of India’s ancient monuments made by James Fergusson, the pioneering surveyor and scholar of Indian architecture, during his first and only travels across India at the end of the 1830s. Even as the first-hand knowledge and images gleaned from this foundational journey would lead to the many scholarly compendiums on Indian architecture that Fergusson

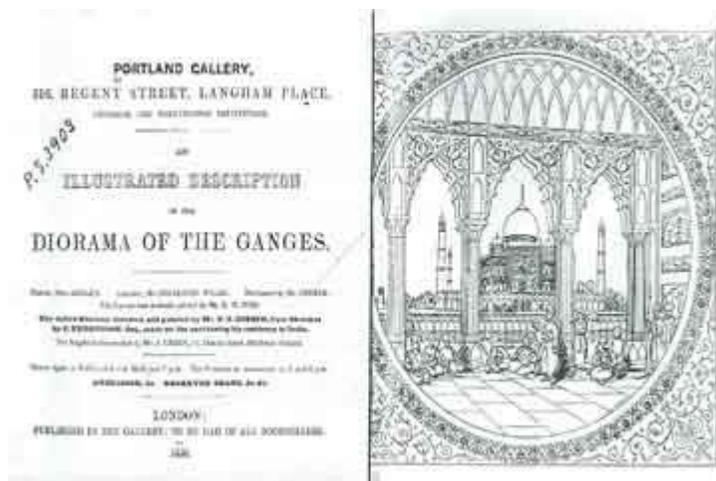


Fig. 15 - Cover Page of the booklet, *Diorama of the Ganges*, London: Portland gallery, 1850

began to write in England during the 1860s and 70s, the lithographer, T.C.Dibdin, who converted Fergusson’s sketches into coloured plates for his book, *Picturesque Illustrations of Ancient Architecture in Hindosthan* (London: Hogarth, 1848), used the same visuals to create a simulation of travel through India in the “Diorama of the Ganges”. This marks out an

early moment in colonial history when the monument in its status as circulating copy is not only transported from the distant exotic East to a London theatre. It is propelled from the narrow domain of professional expertise into the ambit of a popular spectacle, with the demands of the latter dramatically preceding the incubation of the disciplinary field.<sup>20</sup>

In the years that followed, the professional worlds of museums, exhibitions and scholarship would closely come together in bringing into being a different order of architectural replicas. This shift is interestingly presaged by a change in the very meaning of the term 'diorama'. As the older style of lighted illusionist images came to be superseded by the technologies of stereoscopy and photography, the term 'diorama' came to connote three-dimensional tableaux of casts and models set up against painted backdrops. Featuring both life-size and miniaturized models of monuments and human figures - of India's historic sites, industrial arts, village life, trades, castes and communities - this new genre of dioramas became crucial in the reproduction of the empire's archaeological past and ethnographic present in the spaces of museums and exhibitions. Of particular importance were the architectural plaster casts. Laboriously wrought from original structures, replicating all the details of their decorations and sculptures, these casts became a critical ingredient of museum collection and scholarly documentation, selectively supplementing the accumulation of a comprehensive photographic archive on India's monumental heritage.<sup>21</sup>

It was as a full-size plaster cast that the eastern gateway of the Sanchi Stupa made its spectacular entry into London in the summer of 1870, when it went on display in the new designed Architectural Courts of the South Kensington Museum.<sup>22</sup> In a photograph of 1872, we see the gateway installed amidst other architectural facades from India, 33 feet high, looming towards the sky-light of the arched ceiling, dwarfing the other cast of a corbelled pillar from the Diwani-i-Khas building of Fatehpur Sikri, (Figure 16) rivalling in its antiquity and artistry the casts of famous Western objects like the Trajan column from Imperial Rome or Michelangelo's David from Renaissance Florence in the adjoining courts. The formation of these grand Architectural Courts at South Kensington had been facilitated by a pan-European imperial monarchical convention, signed during the Paris International Exhibition of 1867, in which fifteen reigning princes agreed to promote the reproduction (through casts, electrotypes and photographs) of art and

architectural works from all over the world for museums in Europe. The knowledge of such monuments, it was believed, was “essential to the progress of art”, and with the advance in reproductive technologies, that cause could now be fulfilled in Europe “without the slightest damage to the originals”.<sup>23</sup> The colony in India offered a wealth of ancient artistic traditions for the elucidation of the West, with the Sanchi gateway now proclaiming as much the antiquity of that tradition as the magnitude of the empire that had taken charge of its discovery and dissemination.



Fig. 16 - Plaster-cast of the Eastern Gateway of the Sanchi Stupa in the Architectural Court of the South Kensington Museum, London, c. 1872–3, Photograph, Courtesy: The Canadian Centre for Architecture. (CCA) Montreal

This replica however had to wade its way out of a more scandalous history of imperial aggrandizement. It was a matter of immense fortune for Sanchi that what came to eventually travel was only this marvel of a physical replica and not the original gateways. Through the 1850s and 60s, the Begums of Bhopal (the rulers of the princely state in whose custody the monument stood) had been under constant pressure, first from British archaeologists and political agents, and then from the French Consul General in India, to make a “gift” of the Stupa’s gateways to Queen Victoria or to Emperor Napoleon III.<sup>24</sup> The Western museum, it was believed, was where they would stand best conserved and displayed. While Alexander Cunningham, writing his monograph on the site in 1854, wanted two of the gateways transported to the British Museum to be part of a “Hall of Indian Antiquities”, the French authorities wished to have them installed at the

Paris International Exhibition of 1867. A growing imperial drive toward *in situ* conservation luckily intervened to keep the two standing gateways where they were, and reconstruct the two that had fallen on site, pushing the labour and expenses from the work of dismantling and shipment of the original structures to the production of a mammoth cast.<sup>25</sup>

In one of the most elaborate cast-making operations of the period, a cargo containing 28 tonnes of plaster of paris and gelatine was shipped from London to Calcutta and moved across land by bullock cart to the site, where over four months Indian artisans worked under British guidance to produce a perfect facsimile of the eastern gateway in around fifty parts. Packed in the tins in which they were moulded, the many parts of the Sanchi gateway were then shipped back to England, where the piece were reassembled to make up the whole edifice. And it was from this master replica that further copies of the Sanchi gateway were moulded at the South Kensington Museum for exhibitions in Paris and Berlin.<sup>26</sup> Supervising the entire project on site was Lt. Henry Hardy Cole of the Royal Engineers, son of Sir Henry Cole, Superintendent of the South Kensington Museum. (Figure 17) Trained in London in different techniques of plaster-cast modelling, Cole was then functioning in India as a key agent in the procuring of drawings, photographs and casts of Indian architecture for his father's museum, preceding his own appointment in 1880 to a new office of the Curator of Ancient monuments in India.



Fig. 17 - Another site of cast-making operations under the supervision of H.H.Cole, at the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque complex, Delhi, c.1870, Photograph, Courtesy: CCA, Montreal

*Of artware courts and exhibition pavilions*

Such phenomenal movements of materials, objects and skills to and fro from the outposts of India to the metropolis would evolve in the following years into a vast, organizational regime around the institution of the colonial exhibitions. The replicating cast of the great gateway of Sanchi becomes the period's best example of the traveling monument, as it moves between museum and exhibition sites in London, and between London and other continental venues. (Figure 18) The exhibitions would also generate another kind of architectural models, a new variety of remakes and mixed ensembles that issued forth from Indian rulers and the traditional craftspersons of their states, needless to say, through the intermediary coordinating authority of the colonial administrators and exhibition commissioners. Transported to the display venues at great labour and cost,



these fabricated structures, like the Sanchi cast, would circulate between different exhibition sites and move from these temporary pavilions to the permanent spaces of museum collections - even as the new genre of experimental exhibition architecture left their lasting mark on the redesigned cityscapes of late 19<sup>th</sup> century London, Paris or Calcutta. With the Indian empire offering itself as an invaluable repository, not just of historic

Fig. 18 - Cast of the "Great Gateway of Sanchi" as the most imposing exhibit in the galleries of the London International Exhibition of 1871 – *Graphic*, May 6, 1871

architecture but also of living traditions of ornamental design and artisanal skills (especially expertise in masonry and stone, wood and metal carvings), what becomes important to note is the sheer volume of traditional architectural ensembles that came out of India into the milieu of these exhibitions, inflecting at every stage the modernist architecture of the exhibition pavilions with a thick Oriental, decorative aesthetic. The point I would also like to emphasize is the way these exhibition productions extricate themselves from the burden of exact replication of archaeological monuments (as with

the plaster cast taken off the physical body of the original) to generate a new corpus of loose remakes and remixes, while never foregoing the aura of authenticity of the regions and cultures they were made to represent. Made out of durable and non-durable material (ranging from wood and stone to plaster of Paris and papier-mache), these architectural fabrications now impart to the portable replica with its own independent status and career.

To illustrate this point, let me cite the instance of the well-known ‘Gwalior Gateway’ that came up under the patronage of the Maharaja Scindia, not, as was clearly stated, as a copy of any single structure or “a conventionalized entrance” but as “an eclectic piece” of work, designed by Major J.B.Keith, Curator of Monuments of Central India, where he put to work “2000 starving artisans skilled in the old Gwalior art of stone-carving”, blending various architectural designs from the porticoes and pillared balconies of the Gwalior Fort.<sup>27</sup> First traveling to Calcutta for the International Exhibition of 1883-84, the dismantled gateway next left for London as 200 packages of carved stone, to be reassembled for the pavilions of the Colonial and Indian exhibition, at the end of which it came into the galleries of the South Kensington Museum. (Figure 19) A similar spectacular ensemble was the wooden gateway presented by the Maharaja of Jaipur which was set up at the entrance to the entire cluster of Indian Artware Courts at the 1886 exhibition. Carved by the Shekhavati carpenters of Rajasthan, and built to the scale, elevation and designs laid out by the two main colonial art administrators in the state of Jaipur, of the region, Major Hendley and Colonel Jacob, this entrance gateway would feature a ‘Nahbat Khana (a music pavilion, complete with models of musicians playing different instruments), alongside all the royal emblems and imperial honours of the Jaipur ruling clan, even as it was made to stand in for the best “Saracenic architectural design of upper India and Rajputana”.<sup>28</sup>



Fig. 19 - The Gwalior Gateway, at the Calcutta International Exhibition, 1883 and at the Indian Palace courtyard of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, London, 1886

If gateways from India were most readily in demand with the Commissioners of these imperial exhibitions, so was another variety of exhibition productions: a series of richly carved, ornamental screens that would enclose the Artware Courts of different regions. (Example, Figure 20) Each of these was produced from the region itself as the authentic work of its local stone and wood carvers under the munificence of native patrons and the defining grid of European design and construction guidance. And each could again take the liberty of many free blends and amalgamations. To represent the main architectural styles, decorative designs and craftsmanship of a region was the order of the day. Let us look at an example of one such Artware Court – the Central Indian Court at the Calcutta International Exhibition of 1882-83 (Figure 21) – to see the kinds of mixed assemblages of the arts and crafts of the region within which these screens would be inserted. A carved stone screen from Gwalior jostles for attention with a cast of a Mauryan pillar from Sanchi, a spread of furniture, textiles, ornamental bric-a-brac, framed paintings and photographs of the region's architecture, and even a human exhibit of a liveried attendant.<sup>29</sup>



Fig. 20 - Ornamental Screens marking out Artware courts of different regions of India, at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, London, 1886 – *Illustrated London News*, June 17, 1886



Fig. 21- The Central Indian Artware Court, at the Calcutta International Exhibition, 1883, Photograph, Courtesy: CCA, Montreal

For particular importance for this paper is the instance of another such Artware court at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London in 1886 – that of the North-Western provinces and Oudh – where the ornamental screen reproduced, in separate parts, samples of 19<sup>th</sup> Lucknow Nawabi architecture and copies of the trellised stone and marble screens of the Mughal buildings of Fatehpur Sikri and Agra, and inserted within these, as its main attraction, a pair of original marble arches, inlaid with precious stones, that were transported here from the Agra Fort. Discovered as buried objects in the course of an excavation at the Agra Fort, these restored arches stood here as ‘archaeological treasures’ of the highest worth, their value enhanced even further for the viewers by their projected similarity in period and style to “the world famed Taj”. Presenting these as “a unique and faithful illustration of the architectural character of the celebrated Taj Mahal’, the exhibition catalogue wrote that their connection with this monument was “so intimate that *they may be accepted as a fragment of the mausoleum itself*“.<sup>30</sup>

Such strategic impersonations were at the heart of modernity's new worlds of illusions and spectacles. What was at stake was less the task of exact duplication, more that of illustration and representation – less the mirage of the real, than the ability of the traveling object to stand in for the original. In rounding off this section on colonial travels, let me use the never-jading appeal of the legendary Taj Mahal to jump forward from the Artware Courts of the 1886 exhibition to the India Pavilion at the British Empire Exhibition that was held at the newly-constructed Wembley stadium in London in 1924. The Wembley event comes to us suffused with all the arrogance and excesses of the late empire. Supposedly a Taj Mahal look-alike, the extravagance of the India Pavilion was in keeping with India's long-acclaimed status as the greatest of imperial dependencies. It was only to be expected that, of all the pavilions that laid out Britain's "empire overseas", the most stately and resplendent was this palatial white building with rows of minarets and a central dome.<sup>31</sup> The Indian pavilions at these exhibitions had always thrived as part bazaars and part displays of India's arts and manufactures, architecture and ethnography. At Wembley, the interior of the pavilion housed the biggest of these bazaars on the model of Chandni Chowk of old Delhi, selling the best of goods and merchandise from all over India, with the bazaar street leading to a sit-down restaurant and a theatre of performing jugglers, acrobats and snake-charmers. And fully in keeping with this spirit of Orientalist fantasy, the exterior structure, set off against a lake, would be transformed at night through flood-lighting into "a veritable fairy palace" of Mughal India.<sup>32</sup> (Figure 22)



Fig. 22 - The India Pavilion at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, London, 1924 – Featured on the cover of *Illustrated London News*, 1924

What I wish to underline is the way a reference to the Taj Mahal came to thickly engulf this fantasy-land at Wembley, refusing to be dislodged from the popular imagination despite the disclaimers of those who knew better. While in the press and in popular parlance the India Pavilion was constantly invoked as a replica of the Taj, writers of the exhibition catalogues and guide tried hard to dispel “the ghost of the Wembley Taj Mahal”. The style of architecture chosen for this pavilion, it was explained, was broadly and loosely “Moghul”: if the dome and minarets carried a whiff of resemblance with the Taj Mahal, there were a mix of features and designs here that were drawn from various other Mughal buildings like Akbar’s tomb at Sikandra, the Pearl Mosque at Agra, the Jama Masjid at Delhi and the Golden Mosque at Lahore.<sup>33</sup> What was also emphasized

was that this composite Mughal ensemble was a product, not of the hereditary masons and carvers of India, but of the architectural firm of Messrs. White, Allom & Co. of London. (Figure 23) It was sign of the times that such an effective blend of Mughal styles no longer required the authenticating touch of Indian master builders and Indian



Fig. 23 - The India Pavilion under construction at the Wembley Exhibition “White City”, 1923-24

architectural authorities – that such expertise could now be locally generated by a modern building firm in London, without deviating from the history and tradition it sought to represent. A final clinching point was made by this English writer about the non-permissibility of fabricating a full replica of the Taj Mahal. “The Taj Mahal, he reminded his readers, “is a tomb and a religious building, and *to reproduce in its entirety would give offence to Indian sentiment*, though it is quite permissible to select certain parts of such buildings to make up a composite whole”.<sup>34</sup>

The case of the Wembley pavilion – its misrecognition as the image of the Taj as much as its corrective positioning as representatively Mughal without in any way being

the Taj – propels us in many ways into the muddled histories of the present. It raises at this sensitive moment of British-Indian imperial history the vexed question of the rights of reproduction of an entire monument and legitimacy of the transportable copy – questions that resonate across the contemporary history of the making of a Bangladeshi Taj Mahal. It touches on the even more fraught issue of the replica involving a violation of the religious sanctity of the original monument, and an offence to the sentiments of the community of believers who have a different claim on the site. For the Taj Mahal, there would never be any easy co-existence between its historic life as a mausoleum and its modern status as a secular tourist monument. Reservations voiced in the imperial capital in the 1920s about the propriety of simulating an exact model of the mausoleum in the hedonistic space of an exhibition and of converting its interior into bazaars, theatres and restaurants, gets transferred into the present-day outrage of the Indian nation about Bangladesh’s so-called breach of copyright in copying a monument that belongs uniquely to India. In each instance, what comes to the aid of the copy are paradoxically that many differences and departures that separate it from its referent. The assertions of the Wembley exhibition authorities about not duplicating the Taj Mahal clashes outright with the Bangladeshi impresario’s insistence of collapsing the identity of his remake with the historic Taj, even as he pitches it into a new time zone of mass entertainment. But what we can pull out as common to both the cases is a concession (grudging or otherwise) that one nation’s monuments can be reassembled and rehashed in other distant locales, that these fabrications can be assembled at will through local and international mobilizations of materials and skills, and these transplants can take on a life in radical substitution of the original.

Simulations and replications in the ‘post-colony’<sup>35</sup>

I will take as my central thread these issues of the licenses of the copy and its powers of emplacement or substitution, as I shift my focus, in this section, from the colonial pasts to some select scenarios of contemporary Indian history – contrasting a spate of temple remakes in Western India with a range of architectural fabrications that energize the space of a popular religious festival (the Durga Pujas) in the city of Calcutta, transforming the whole city into an ephemeral exhibitionary site. I take this huge leap in time and context with the full awareness that there are no direct or obvious connections

between these divergent histories. Rather, following Achille Mbembe, I will be arguing that it is a series of displaced and disjointedness temporalities that mark out the identity of the “post-colony” and allow it its many holds over “time on the move”.<sup>36</sup>

“To be sure, the postcolony”, Mbembe writes, “is chaotically pluralistic; it has nonetheless an internal coherence. It is a specific system of signs, a particular way of fabricating simulacra or re-forming stereotypes...The postcolony is characterized by a distinct style of ...improvisation, by a tendency to excess and lack of proportion, as well as by distinct ways identities are multiplied, transformed and put into circulation.”<sup>37</sup>

My case studies will test some of these distinct styles of improvisations, fabrications and circulations of simulacra that will help position the particularities of the regional history that I narrate – especially, of the production of Durga Puja tableaux in contemporary Calcutta – against the spectrum of the pasts I have charted, and also give it its own niche within a larger ambit of Indian national practices. A key concern here will be to see how new notions of the ‘religious’ and ‘sacred’ have come to coexist with the logic of exhibition, museum and spectacle in these different regimes of worship and sightseeing, taking the examples of two distinctly contrasting scenarios of what may be called “religious” and “festival” tourism. In taking this large sweep across India’s imperial and contemporary histories, my main argument will be to chart how the post-colony wrests from its pasts its own prides and prerogatives of staging the copy – how it enacts its own processes of assimilation and appropriation of national and world monuments, and thrives on a contemporary global sense of the portability of cultures across time and space.

### *Transplanting temples*

To make my point about the specificities and distinctiveness of the Durga Puja spectacles in their particular locations, it becomes imperative to separate out what can be seen as the ‘secular’ contours of these transient festival productions against another contemporary spreading trend of the reproduction of country’s sacred temples in various Indian urban sites, that transcribes spaces and structures with specific markings of the ‘religious’. To juxtapose the temporary vis-vis the permanent implantations of traveling monuments, to set off the purely exhibitionary logic of the one against the purportedly religious and

nationalist self-projections of the other becomes an instructive exercise. It throws open the question of what enables the sanctity of the 'religious' to be transmitted from the original to the replica and relayed into new spaces of consumption and display, also into a new politics of cultural nationalism and identity formations. It also pushes us to see how the sovereign space of the nation allows for one kind of free right and uncontested prerogative about transporting and reproducing its temples across regions, to make them available for a new self-brandishing consumerist Hinduism.<sup>38</sup>

Grandiose remakes of Hindu temples, mostly as a standardized model of the medieval *Nagara* architectural style of north India, but also increasingly as exact replicas of distant holy shrines, have become a thickly sprouting feature on the urban topographies of contemporary India. The state of Gujarat, with its concentrated powers of private, diasporic capital and state-sponsored politics of Hindu cultural nationalism, can be seen as one of the most powerful theatres of this trend, and of the socio-economic-political apparatus that sustains and bolsters it. The trend was set rolling here in the immediately post-Independence years by the state government's project of rebuilding the Somanatha temple. (Figure 24)

In a highly controversial move, flagrantly over-riding the objections of archaeologists, an earlier 12<sup>th</sup> century disused and dilapidated temple was demolished to make way for this brand new construction, commissioned by the traditional Somapura architect and stone carvers of the region, and ceremoniously consecrated with a new *Siva linga*



Fig. 24 - The rebuilt Somanatha Temple, Contemporary photograph

and holy waters from all over the nation. For shrine that had suffered the earliest, most notorious desecration by Islamic invaders in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and had become over the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century a growing symbol of a Hindu national resurgence, the compulsions of the remake, we find, could easily set aside the requirement of any

rigorous archaeological authentication of a historical style or the incorporation of sections of the older temple remains within the new structure. Leaving the sculptures of the demolished temple to be installed in a new Prabhasa-Pattan museum a few metres away, the remade temple of 1951, in all its newness, could, by the sheer fact of its location in the original site, stand in, in the public imagination, for the historic Somanath temple itself: one that miraculously survived and defeated and resisted the ‘sword of the infidel’.<sup>39</sup> As a thriving pilgrimage centre, the remade Somanatha temple offers a classic instance of a complete substitution of a historic original, absorbing within itself all references to the anterior structure that it embodies.

In retrospect, we can see the intricately carved architectural form of this Somanatha temple setting the broad stylistic rubric for the spate of temple building in contemporary north India, where in marked contrast to the dark, deep, dank interiors of old temples, the new interiors sport brightly lit, sparkling clean marble halls, corridors and elaborately sculpted panels on display. Conceived of as a larger revivalist cultural unit that would include, for instance, an-all India Sanskrit university to promote traditional Sanskrit



scholarship, the Somanatha project anticipates on a small scale another kind of production of the present. It

Fig. 25 - The massive (108 feet high, 240 feet long) Akshardham temple at Gandhinagar, Gujarat, consecrated and opened in November, 1992

is again Gujarat that pioneered the new kind of mega temple-museum-theme park extravaganza that is exemplified by the Akshardham temple complexes of the Swaminarayan sect, the first of which again came up in Gandhinagar at Gujarat in 1992, (Figure 25) and its newest extension on the banks of the Jamuna on the outskirts of New Delhi in 2005.<sup>40</sup> As for instance with the Bangladeshi Taj Mahal, the pride and power of these Akshardham complexes lie in the sheer scale of land, resources and the latest exhibition and display technologies at their command. The central monumental temple

and its surrounding colonnade, while not claiming to replicate any single temple, boasts of a rich blend of Indian temple architecture and sculpture of the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, that was constructed out of six thousand tones of pink sandstone and marble, housing inside a giant gold-leafed statue of the founder of the sect, Lord Swaminarayan. The greater novelties present themselves in the lush gardens around the temple, which offer lakes and waterfalls, games and Disney-land like boat-rides through dioramas on Indian mythology and history, alongside exhibition halls with audio-animatronics show on the Upanishads, Ramayana and Mahabharata, and a 14 screen presentation on “Mystic India” in an IMAX theatre.<sup>41</sup>

There is yet another trend that Gujarat can be seen to have spawned within this growing package culture of worship, spectacle and entertainment of the country’s capital-flushed neo-Hinduism. During the 2000s, it has transplanted avowedly exact replicas of two of India’s most inaccessible hill cave shrines from distant Kashmir – the Amarnath and Vaishno Devi temples – on to the Ahmedabad-Gandhinagar highway, and on the road from Gandhinagar to Mahdudi. (Figures 26, 27) If the new Somanatha temple had secured its legitimacy by growing out of the original sacred site, the Amarnath and Vaishno Devi temple remakes authenticate themselves in their transferred locations

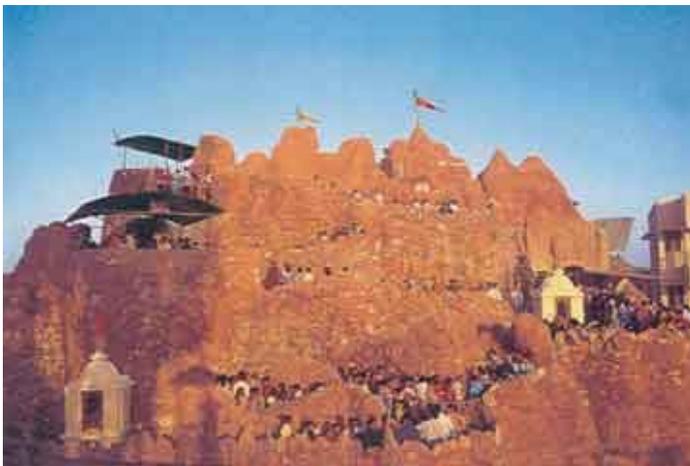


through an elaborate procedure of artificial fabrication of hills, rocks boulders and caves, making both the elite group of drive-in visitors and the more

Fig. 26 - Replica of the Amarnath cave temple at Amrapur, Mahdudi, Gujarat, Photograph, Courtesy: *India Today*. 2006

plebian mass of pilgrims undertake the steep mountainous climb to the cave sanctums. The idea is to reproduce as closely as possible the experience of pilgrimage at the distant sites, while making the climb that much easier and offering up the experience for all those who cannot undertake that dangerous and arduous journey to Kashmir. To complete the process of simulation, a great investment of the authorities has also been on bringing

to these remakes physical traces of the original shrines. So, we are told, the sacred flame was brought all the way from the Vaishno Devi shrine to consecrate the recreated interior of the ancient cave with its natural source of the holy Ganga (*banganga*) at Gandhinagar, just as some holy white ash was brought from the caves of Amarnath to be strewn around the ice *linga* of the replica shrine, the miraculous natural formation of the Kashmir caves maintained in the heat of Gujarat by the installation within the sanctum of a round-the-year cooling plant.<sup>42</sup> Standing in tandem with all the new centres of Hindu worship in the state, the replica here take on a function of a full transplant of the original, in all its indivisible spiritual aura – where, unlike the Somanatha temple, the copy never displaces



but empowers itself through its continuous reference to a distant master site. The replica, in these cases, thrives on a wholly autochthonous principle of simultaneous multiplicities.<sup>43</sup>

Fig. 27 - Replica of the Vaishnodevi temple on the Ahmedabad- Gandhinagar highway, Photograph, Courtesy: *India Today*, 2006

*Bringing all of India and the world to a city*

I wish to juxtapose this thickening scenario of what has been called “religious tourism” in one part of India - one that carries it with strong doses of the ideology of the Hindu Right and its agenda of a national cultural mobilization of publics - with an alternative trajectory of what I will term “festival tourism” as it is played out each year in the city of Calcutta around the autumnal event of the Durga Puja – one which is marked by a different spirit of transience, heterotopic emplacements and frenzies of mass spectatorship.<sup>44</sup> (Figure 28) The spectacular regime of Calcutta’s Durga Pujas presents itself in a series of contrasting and divergent frames.<sup>45</sup> A key difference can be mapped in the fluid and indeterminant ambience of the ‘religious’ in a festival which unfolds around the annual homecoming of goddess Durga, but where the worship of the goddess has long been synonymous with the biggest secular cultural celebration in Bengal. There is a long

history to the affective transformation of the image of the goddess from a martial slayer of the buffalo demon to a benevolent mother surrounded by her four divine children, and an adored daughter who returns each year for five days from her husband's abode in the Himalayas to her parental home on earth. (Figure 29) There is also a complex, concomitant history of the changing life of this urban festival over the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, from exclusive revelry and entertainment in wealthy homes to close-knit community celebrations in middle-class neighbourhoods, to new exhibitionary practices of the production of tableaux and spectatorial practices of touring and viewing.<sup>46</sup> (Figures 30, 31) In a current pan-Indian context, what most significantly connotes the 'secular' in the identity of the Durga Puja in Bengal is the marked absence from the scene of any large-scale Hindu religious organization or of an programmatic agenda of Hindu cultural nationalism - and in the preponderance instead of a discourse of art and craft production, of popular pedagogy and tourism, and of the creation of a new public visual aesthetic.



Fig. 28 - A Akshardham temple look-alike as a Durga Puja pavilion – Ekdalia, Calcutta, 2007

Also important are many other contrasts and differences. Local community clubs, with a growing line-up of commercial sponsors to prop their initiatives, remain the organizing force of this festival. Even as Calcutta Durga Puja has taken on a new corporate profile of awards and promotional campaigns, (Figure 32) the smallness of its production budgets stand out in sharp contrast to the hegemonic grip of large state and private capital in the making of temple sites in other parts of the county, and most specifically in a state like Gujarat. The command over vast expanses of land, and over equally vast amounts of construction material, labour and imaging technologies, that are central to the latter projects are radically reversed in Calcutta's festival - where replicas and remakes take shape through a circulating pool of local skills and simulacra, and magically sprout out of a maze of narrow lanes and small community grounds in the

congested heart of the city. (Figures 33, 34) The logic of massive, permanent temple ensembles are set off here by the constitutively different logic of these temporary tableaux, in the ways in which these convert lived urban spaces into liminal zones of worship and spectacle. This in turn creates its own intense frenzy of mass tourism and spectatorship - a phenomenal movement of crowds across the circuit of the festival city through the days and nights of the event – sustained by the knowledge that these spectacles will disappear in no time, and that these illusionary spaces will revert all too soon to their everyday uses. (Figure 35) The fortified enclosures of an Akshardham complex, with its screening and close regulation of visitors within its museumized spaces, stands powerfully overturned in the open, unbounded movements of crowds through the imaginary worlds and cultures that Calcutta’s Durga Puja places on display. Overall, then, there is a powerfully populist dimension, an inverted economy of scale and resources, equally of an alternative aesthetics of production and consumption, that make for the distinctiveness of Calcutta’s Durga Pujas.



Fig. 29 - The standard iconography of goddess Durga as *Mahishasuramardini*, accompanied by her four children, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganesh and Kartick

Fig. 30 - *Sindur Khela* by married women of the neighbourhood at the city’s oldest community Puja – at the Balaram Basu Ghat Road, Bhowanipur, 2008





Fig. 31 - Puja tableaux as new objects of tourism and photography – Badamtala Ashar Sangha Puja, Kalighat, Calcutta, 2008

Fig. 32 - Typical cluster of sponsorship and award banners at a North Calcutta Puja site, 2008



Fig. 33 - Nalin Sarkar Street Durga Puja, Hatibagan, 2006



Fig. 34 - Kabitirtha Puja,  
Khidirpur, 2004



Fig. 35 - Crowds of spectators in  
the narrow lane of the 66 Pally  
Puja, Kalighat, 2008

For the purpose of his paper, the critical question to ask would be – how have these distinctions also made for a different history of replica productions within the festival? What are the kinds of monuments and sites that are chosen for reproduction in the Puja sites, what governs the rights and claims of the copy in such spaces? For several decades now, a passionate investment in the fabrication of architectural structures, local or distant, ancient or modern, national or global, has marked out the art of pavilion (*pandal*) making for the city's Durga Pujas. (Figure 36) The pride of the festival has revolved around the way it could transform the entire city into an fantasy land of make-believe temples, mosques, palaces, churches, even glittering barges on water, inside each of which would be featured the image of the demon-slaying goddess and her familial entourage. (Figure 37) There have been no holds barred on what could be fabricated by local decorator

firms, using a simple fare of bamboo, ply, cloth and plaster, now with newer material like thermocol or fibre glass. Along with the nations' own historical monuments, an ever widening range of world buildings entered the repertoire of these pavilion makers – the Vitthala temple of Hampi in Vijayanagar alongside the Kremlin cathedral of Moscow, (Figures 38, 39) the Red Fort of Delhi alongside the Fontane de Trevi of Rome, a Tibetan Buddhist pagoda side by side with a giant Egyptian Sphinx. (Figure 40, 41) Typical of this festival fare have been the looseness of these remakes, and the heterogeneity of structures that can vie for attention in these overgrown urban sites. And a defining feature of such spectacles has been an unfettered local license to copy, reassemble and reinvent whatever monument or site that catches the fancy of organizing clubs, producers and publics.<sup>47</sup> The utter eclecticism of these choices of structures in which to house a Hindu goddess has never failed to bewilder religious purists, at one level, critics and connoisseurs, at another. Such an unapologetic catholicity of this representational field has laid the festival open to a constant charge of desacralization and trivialization, even as it held strong as the hallmark of its secular mass identity.

Fig. 36 - The now-demolished neo-classical architecture of the Senate Hall of Calcutta University, reconstructed as a pavilion at the Park Circus Puja, 2002





Fig. 37 - A Durga Puja pavilion in the shape of a massive golden barge, College Square Puja by night, 2002

Fig. 38 - Recreated Vitthala temple complex of Hampi, at the Bakulbagan Puja, Bhowanipur, 2008



Fig. 39 - Remake of a Kremlin cathedral at the Baghbazar Puja, 2006

Fig. 40 - A Tibetan Buddhist pagoda at the Ahiritola Sarbojanin Puja, 2005



Fig. 41 - A gilded Egyptian Sphinx-like structure at the Lake Terrace Puja, 2007

It is in this context that we must also consider the way the festival has sought, in recent times, to upgrade and refine its cultural image - not by inventing a more orthodox frame of religiosity and ritual tradition, nor by letting go of its wide representational licenses, but by laying a new premium on the authenticity, artistry and creativity of its productions. What has come to distinguish the present festival field is a new genre of specialist ‘theme’ tableaux, that take on their nomenclature from the idea of ‘theme parks’ but also stake their identity as a form of public installation art. Bringing into the fray a new group of art school trained artists and set designers, these identifiably new-wave productions also aim at reaching out to a more informed and discerning viewership. There are three broad, often overlapping, forms that have emerged for these contemporary ‘theme’ productions, each of which continue to revolve around the illusions of other sites and space, each seeking a new aesthetic of faithful similitude.

In one case, as against the free-wheeling mix of monumental architectural styles of the standardized Durga Puja pavilions (a concoction of temple and palace look-alikes), (Figure 42) the new designers place on offer a new order of exact scale-to-scale replicas of India's historical architecture – the Mukteswar temple of Bhubaneswar in Orissa, (Figure 43) a Jain temple of Jaisalmer in Rajasthan, (Figure 44) or a wooden palace of Padmanabhapuram in Kerala (Figure 45) – reproducing in throw-away material like ply and thermocol the full intricacies of carvings on the exterior and interior of these structures. Months in advance of the event, such panels are fabricated off-site in the designers' studios before their careful assemblage in the middle of a busy street, which gets temporarily inscribed as a heterotopic Puja site. In the second form, not just a single monument but an entire archaeological site (such as the caves of Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh with its oldest samples of cave paintings) come to be fabricated within neighbourhood parks, playfully using the subterfuge even of the blue Archaeological Survey of India signboards to authorize itself. (Figure 46, 47, 48) There also Puja clubs that work with a tighter sense of seriality in turning its grounds each year into theme parks of different Indian states, presenting an integrated spectacle of the architecture, arts and crafts and performances of states like Kerala, Rajasthan, Gujarat or Assam. (Figures 49, 50) In the third, most thickly proliferating form, artists and designers bring on to the production platform teams of village and tribal craftsmen from all parts of India to fabricate a series of craft and folk-art villages, with an elaborate lay-out of thatched hutments, ethnic designs and a folk-art goddess. (Figures 51, 52, 53) Upholding the cause of preservation and salvage of these endangered rural art forms of India, and cashing on the new tastes for ethnic-chic, these village pavilions of the Durga Puja provide the most resonant example of the 'folklorization' of urban India. This is also where the Pujas become the occasion for the production and circulation of a vast body of durable craft objects, that pour into the market and trickle into other public and interior decorations, even after the tableaux are dismantled.



Fig. 42 - Remake of Satya Sai Baba's temple at Puttaparthi, at College Square Puja, 2007

Fig. 43 - Replica of the Mukteshwar temple of Bhubaneshwar at Mudiali, 2005



Fig. 44 - On site assemblage of a Jaisalmer Jain temple replica at a Lake Town Puja, 2007



Fig. 45 - A carved wooden palace from Padmanabhapuram, Kerala, recreated at the Tridhara Sammillani Puja, near Deshapriya Park, 2008



Fig. 46 - Remake of the Bhimbetka Caves at a Puja at Garia, 2004

Fig. 47 - With details of the cave paintings in the inner walls





Fig. 48 - A copy of an Archaeological Survey of India signboard at the Puja site

What holds together this entire pool of productions is a common premium on preparatory site visits, field research and scholarship, and faithfulness to the original sites, cultures or craft traditions that are being reproduced. Equally crucial to this whole conglomerate is a bid for public pedagogy: a mission of educating the masses and reorienting their tastes for history, art and anthropology. As the festival in Calcutta lays out these more specialized routes of art, craft and archaeological tours, there is, each year, a “mini-India” to be toured free in the span of a week, in space of a single city, alongside other, more exotic journeys into far-flung parts of the globe. Let me offer a few examples of such world tours to show how a deepening claim not just on the national space, but also on transnational sites and cultures continues to animate this circuit of local festivity, boosting its new-found artistic self-image. In the age of the internet, it is a globally accessible pool of cyber-information and downloadable images of world art and monuments that comes to the aid of both the new groups of Puja artists and designers and of the older variety of decorator firms, in enabling and authenticating their productions. An important point to underline, here, is the undiminished local élan and confidence that spill over from the fabrication of Indian temples and craft villages, into tableaux that recreate African villages, its primitive masks and totem poles or the art of the ancient Inca civilization. In these transitory sites of make-believe, the exotic global can secure for itself the same niche and authority as the nation’s own art and architectural heritage.



Fig. 49 - A Kerala dance village on offer at the Suruchi Sangha Puja, New Alipore, 2003



Fig. 50 - An Assam temple and "theme park" at the same Puja site in New Alipore, 2008



Fig. 51 - A village installation at the Baishakhi Club, Ganguly Bagan, 2007 – featuring the batik and leather art of Santiniketan





Fig. 52 - A village complex designed with Bhil and Gond paintings at the Behala Club Puja, 2006



Fig. 53 - Durga designed in the form of the tribal metal statuary of Bastar, Bosepukur Shitala Mandir Puja, 2004

In recent times, these transnational imaginaries have come to revolve around a new primitivist aesthetic, with a concentrated taste for African tribal art suddenly becoming the rage of a Puja season. In one case, we saw this amazing remake of a Ghana village with decorated mud huts, laid out on an empty neighbourhood plot by a young designer of the locality. (Figure 54, 55) As explained in this concept-note, the designer drew on the model of one particular village of Sirigu in Ghana and its tradition of wall decorations executed by poor peasant women of the region, highlighting the aesthetics that alleviated the acute poverty of village life. In another instance, in another Puja site the same year, a more veteran designer in the field created his own amalgam of the many traditions of African art – wooden masks, bamboo panels, totem poles, and painted cloth canopies (Figures 56, 57, 58) – and blended these with a tribal art Durga group that he personally

designed, giving the clay image the appearance of an old bronze with a greenish patina. (Figure 59) Like an art work, the production was given a title that loosely translates as “The Wonder of Primitivism”, to emphasize the family genealogies between the art of the different primitive races of the world, and the indebtedness of modern man to this legacy of their primitive ancestors. While the look of the tableaux was distinctly African, it drew on a local pool of craftsmen from Assam and West Dinajpur in North Bengal to work on bamboo panels and wooden carvings with designs that harmonized with those of African art. (Figure 60)



Fig. 54 - Entrance of the Ghana village at the Behala Sahajatri Club Puja, 2004

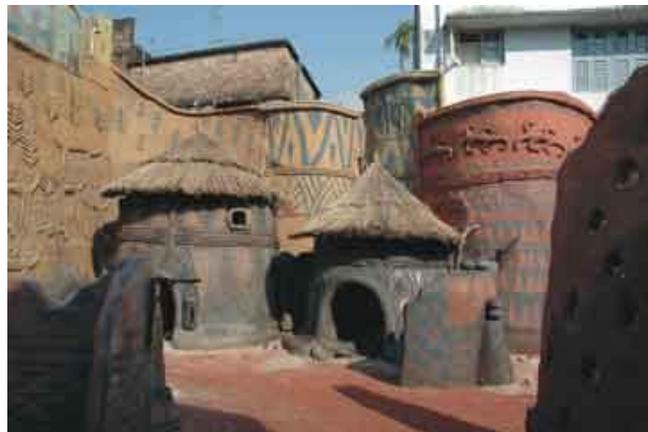


Fig. 55 - Painted huts of the Ghana village at the Behala Sahajatri Club Puja, 2004



Fig. 56 - Another African art installation in copper, bamboo and wood at the Khidirpur 25 Pally Puja, 2004



Fig. 57 - "The Wonder of Primitivism", Khidirpur 25 Pally Puja, 2004



Fig. 58 - "The Wonder of Primitivism", Khidirpur 25 Pally Puja, 2004

Fig. 59 - The 'tribal art' Durga ensemble at the Khidirpur 25 Pally Puja, 2004





Fig. 60 - Craftsman from West Dinajpur in North Bengal at work on carving bamboo poles at the Khidirpur Puja club room, 2004

In their repeated mobilization of traditional artisanal practices under the guidance of new professional expertise, these Durga Puja productions in Calcutta can be seen to be curiously playing out the history of the colonial exhibitions and the forms of their assemblages of Indian architectural design and industrial arts. They can also be seen as pushing this history into a new “post-ethnic” phase of cosmopolitan encounters and cultural flows.<sup>48</sup> If the display of the architectural and design wealth of India at the colonial exhibitions had required the laborious import of expertise and labour, materials and objects all the way from the colony, the staging of world cultures in the Durga Puja festival can nonchalantly dispense with the need for such authenticating inputs of persons and products from the original sites. Vernacular talent can be made to simulate the ethnicities and skills of the makers of African totem poles or of the relief sculptures of the ancient Incas, without in any way diminishing the effectiveness of the copy in the setting in which it is created. Thus, for instance, in keeping with the primitivist aesthetic sweeping through the festival, a group of young artists in a small, non-elite Calcutta locality decided in 2007 to profile the art of the ancient Inca civilization in their Pujas. (Figures 61, 62) Using the internet as their main resource on Inca art, these artists produced their own relief carvings of Inca motifs on soft stone slabs and grafted on Peruvian textile designs in fresco panels they painted around the carvings. And, as with all these tableaux, they ensured that the design and costume of the goddess Durga was in concordance with her Inca art surroundings. (Figure 63) That this production won the

most coveted Puja awards of the season and made it to the top of that year's popularity charts confirmed its appeal both for art connoisseurs and the touring crowds.



Fig. 61 - The art of the ancient Incas recreated at a Puja at Haridebpur, Calcutta, 2007



Fig. 62 - The art of the ancient Incas recreated at a Puja at Haridebpur, Calcutta, 2007



Fig. 63 - The still-to-be completed figures of Durga and her entourage at the Inca Art pavilion, Haridebpur, 2007

As all these examples amply bear out, here is a local exhibitionary setting where there are few who question the appropriateness of African painted hutments or Inca stone reliefs as the setting for the worship of Durga, and even fewer who question the proprieties of such simulations. This field of production has always thrived on an unbounded, unregulated local prerogative of copying and fabrication. So, it came as a bolt out of the blue when, perhaps for the first time in the present history of the festival, the charges of copyright violation suddenly descended on another star Puja production of the season of 2007 – on this towering remake of the Hogwarts castle of the Harry Potter

stories, that was put up in a large park by the Puja club of the locality and the decorator firm they commissioned for their pavilions.<sup>49</sup>(Figure 64) I will round off this story of the Durga Puja displays with case of this fabricated fictional castle, because it most powerfully encapsulates the spirit of post-colonial appropriations of the cultural property of the West, and the kinds of defences that could be garnered to its cause.



Fig. 64 - The Harry Potter Castle, constructed by a local decorator's firm, at the FD Block Puja, Salt Lake, 2007

For the local decorator firm which has come over the years to specialize in giant tableaux of international blockbusters on this same Puja site – a model of the capsized Titanic on the year of the film (1998), and of the Columbia space shuttle on the year of its crash (2003) –the choice of the Harry Potter castle in 2007 came as a natural extension of the style of work it is best known for. The achievement of this semi-professional work team lies in its self-initiation into the elite cultures of a globalized Indian middle class (fed on a diet of the Titanic and Harry Potter adventures), and its skills in converting images gleaned from the internet into a massive three-dimensional architectural structure. (Figure 65) While the vast castle, with a mock Hogwarts Express chugging in, took shape in plaster and ply wood over three months in the open park, (Figure 66) figures of Harry and his cast of characters were fabricated in a image-making workshop alongside the clay idols of Durga. (Figure 67) What angered the distant Western authorities – the agents of the author, J.K.Rowling and the film company, Warner Brothers - was less the grossness of these fairground remakes, but their alleged breach of the intellectual copyright of the material. That such a production in far away Calcutta could even attract the attention of the international powers-that-be was a sign of the kinds of global publicity that this local festival has come to attract in present times.<sup>50</sup>



Fig. 65 - A Puja club member and the pavilion-maker, displaying the web images from which they designed the Harry Potter Castle

Fig. 66 - The Harry Potter Castle structure under construction, a month ahead of the festival, 2007



Fig. 67 - Harry among the heathens – clay and plaster figures being created at an idol making workshop at Patuli, 2007

A few weeks into the completion of the tableaux, Penguin India, the national representatives of Rowling and Warner Brothers, filed a case against this Puja production in the Delhi High Court, bringing on the court order that either the structure be removed or that its organizers pay a fine of two million rupees for the violation of copyright (an amount that far exceeded the cost of its making). The critical twist to this story comes in the way that the local copy proudly survived this onslaught of national and international legal regimes of copyright – in the way this legal suit brought it even greater publicity in the festival and a wave of sympathy across groups who were convinced about the utter

unfairness of these charges. An eventual last-minute reprieve came for this Puja remake on the grounds of it being a purely non-profit and temporary construction, that was not within the purview of the authorized theme and publicity events for Harry Potter fans sponsored worldwide by the agents of Rowling and Warner Brothers. An added point was also made, in a support campaign, that such a local production could take the appeal of Harry Potter into wider, unexplored and probably more exciting avenues than ever be imagined by the corporate managers of Warner Brothers and their likes. The note ended with a salute to piracy.<sup>51</sup>

### Conclusion

It became all about the ‘triumph’ of the copy and a celebration of its ability to overturn or elude the powers of international corporations. In the context of this paper, this Pyrrhic victory of the Harry Potter castle in a Calcutta Durga Puja can be also seen to bear out the full force of post-colonial claims and conceits that attend the lives of replicas across different local, pan-Indian and transnational sites. The many histories that this paper has schematically charted underline, not just the radical shifts in production processes and authenticating agencies in the making of replicas, but also the changing registers on which these wrest their autonomies from the originals they simulate and validate their presence as copies. We have come a long way from the time of the giant plaster cast that had to be laboriously wrought from the body of the monument on site to be multiplied and reassembled at new sites of display to times when modern architectural firms in London or New Delhi, a film producer in Dhaka or pavilion makers in Calcutta can produce their remakes of historic architecture as fully autochthonous structures. We have also seen how the notion of the replica has come to thrive on an epistemic elasticity and amorphousness of the term, which can both produce its own discourses of authenticity and exactitude and allow for a wide scope of improvisations and departures. This is what enables this notion to inhabit this diverse and chequered history of productions, purposes and uses – ranging from the official to the popular, from the transnational to the local. This is also what has given the contemporary copy, as I have shown, its variant credibilities across the realms of ‘religion’, ‘art’ and pure ‘spectacle’, in each of which it is granted its particular rights and liberties of replication.

It is the domain of the popular – its spaces of worship and tourism, exhibition and entertainment – that can be seen to continuously push at the boundaries of the possible and the permissible. The replica, here, can occupy a position that can be ambivalently swing between a double and a fake, between the thing-itself and a thing-apart. Let me end by returning once more to the ever proliferating image of the Taj Mahal – to show how one of its newest fabrication as a Durga Puja pavilion in north Calcutta connects up with its controversial remake in the amusement park outside Dhaka. While he had visited the Taj at Agra several times and drawn inspiration from the original monument, what had particularly motivated Moni Ahsanullah was the copy of the Taj that he encountered at a Calcutta Durga Puja - a cloth, ply and plaster illusion of the marble mausoleum, where in a departure from the standard practice, in deference to the religious sentiments of Hindus and Muslims, the goddess was housed in a small separate unit outside the main tableaux. If the Taj could be made available for display and tourism within the ambit of Hindu religious festival, it could (in Ahsanullah's thinking) be as effectively and legitimately put up for show in an entertainment complex in Bangladesh,<sup>52</sup> the ephemeral Puja remake replaced here by a phenomenally expensive permanent replica, with no perceived violence to the original. That it leaves the original monument at Agra untouched in its singularity, (Figure 68) that it can in no way diminish its unparalleled grandeur, remains the safest ground of legitimacy of this remake. At the same time, that it lays claim to be Bangladesh's own Taj Mahal makes its very existence an affront to the sanctity of India's national monument.<sup>53</sup> (Figure 69) It exemplifies, once again, the local conceit and global insubordination of the copy – pushing the contemporary notion of the replica to its most disquieting extremes, smudging the boundaries between mimicry and mockery.



Fig. 68 - The pristine aura of the original

Fig. 69 - The claims and conceit of the copy - the Taj of Bangladesh, under construction at Sonargaon, 2008



<sup>1</sup> For a wide-ranging, free-wheeling account of the copy in Western culture, as likeness, duplicate, imitation, reproduction and facsimile, where the notions of the double range from twins, mirror images, death masks, plaster casts or shop window mannequins to processes of printing, colour photography, stenography or photocopying - see Hillel Schwartz, *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles* (New York: Zone Books, 1996)

<sup>2</sup> Ashis Chakrabarti, "India's Gift: Sanchi Stupa in China", *The Telegraph*, Calcutta, December 31, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> "India fumes at duplicate Bangladeshi Taj Mahal", *Hindusthan Times*, New Delhi, December 10, 2008

<sup>4</sup> The implementation of the project was entrusted to the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, on the Indian side, and to the Lyoyang Municipal People's Government, on the Chinese side. Working under an Advisory Committee, headed by Dr. Kapila Vatsyana, the Indian contributions have been (i) the provision of structural architectural drawings, with details of decoration, provided by a professional firm of architects (ii) a fully fabricated Buddha image (iii) Indian stone material (finished, semi-finished and crude) for exterior cladding of the structure (iv) and the full cost of construction. The main responsibilities of the Chinese side was to provide the land, handle tenders and the financial and technical monitoring of the project, and bear the costs of local transportation of material and additional on-site expenses.

All information and photographs on the making of the Sanchi Stupa in China have been procured through the generous assistance of Mr. Ashish Chakrabarti, a senior journalist with *The Telegraph*, Calcutta, who spent a year, between March 2008 and January 2009, on a journalistic assignment in China.

<sup>5</sup> The firm of the New Delhi-based architects, M/s Akshaya Jain and Raka Chakravorty

<sup>6</sup> An Indian stone supplier, M/s Mangla Exports, provided all the stone for the construction, and also secured stone craftsmen from Rajasthan and Orissa who have experience in doing temple architectural work.

<sup>7</sup> A concise introduction to the history of the Sanchi *stupa* and its sculptural iconography can be found in the booklet, *Sanchi* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, World Heritage Series, 2003)

<sup>8</sup> It was in the course of Marshall's archaeological operations, from 1912 –1918, that Sanchi was transformed from a site of ruin and spoliation to one of the best-preserved standing *stupa*

complexes of antiquity. The publication that immediately followed was sir J.H.Marshall, *A Guide to Sanchi* (Calcutta, superintendent, Government printing, 1918).

<sup>9</sup> The words were quoted to be those of Chinese monk at Baima Si, who referred to the damage of these rock sculptures at Lyoyang, Datong and Dunhuang in the hands of Western “cave raiders’ and Cultural Revolution ideologues – Chakrabarti, “India’s Gift: Sanchi Stupa in China”.

<sup>10</sup> I am indebted to the report and television feature of Ms. Monideepa Banerjee of NDTV (New Delhi Television) for the interview with Moni Ahsanullah, and much of the information and photographs on the Bangladeshi Taj Mahal.

<sup>11</sup> “Bangladesh gets its own Taj”, Headline News, *The Straits Times*, December 7, 2008. Ahsanullah talked of hiring specialist architects to measure the dimensions of the real Taj Mahal, and of bringing over six Indian technicians to the building site across the border to ensure the fidelity of the copy to the structure of the original.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* – Moni Ahsanuallah even claimed to have used “the same marble and stone as in the original Taj” and to have invested the same magnitude of material and labour in his production. “We used machinery, which is why it took less time. Otherwise, it would have taken us 20 years, too, and 22,000 workers to complete it.”

<sup>13</sup> “Replica of Taj Mahal opens to the public in Bangladesh” – *Beijing Time*, Xinhua, English, December 9, 2008

<sup>14</sup> The Indian High Commission in Dhaka, cited in the NDTV television feature on Bangladesh’s Taj Mahal, January 2, 2009

<sup>15</sup> I take the term from M.Mikhail Bakhtin - *The Dialogic Imagination*, translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) - to suggest the specificities of a configuration of time and space in lending context to a particular trend or occurrence in history.

<sup>16</sup> A landmark and widely-cited writing on this theme is Timothy Mitchell’s essay, “The World as Exhibition”, which appeared as the first chapter of his book, *Colonizing Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) and in *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, 31, no. 9, 1989. Among other significant studies of imperial exhibitions are Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988); Peter N. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); and Saloni Mathur, *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

<sup>17</sup> M.A. Pelizzari, “From Stone to Paper: Photographs of Architecture and Traces of History” in M.A. Pelizzari, ed., *Traces of India: Photography, Architecture and the Politics of Representation, 1850-1900* (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2003), pp. 26-28.

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of the techniques of these early dioramas, see *The Dictionary of Art* (London: Grove, 1996), Vol. 8, pp. 910-11.

<sup>19</sup> *An Illustrated Description of the Diorama of the Ganges* (London: Portland Gallery, 1850)

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<sup>20</sup> Fergusson's travels in India and writings on Indian architecture have been discussed in the first chapter of my book, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004). On the deployment of Fergusson's images for this diorama, see pp. 18-19.

<sup>21</sup> J. Forbes Watson, Report on the illustration of the Archaic Architecture of India being conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India (London: India Museum, 1868). Discussed at length in *Monuments, Objects, Histories*, pp. 22-26, 58-60.

<sup>22</sup> On the setting up of these Architectural Courts at the South Kensington Museum, see Tim Barringer, "The South Kensington Museum and the colonial project" in Barringer and Flynn, ed. *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum* (London: routledge, 1998), pp. 17-21.

<sup>23</sup> National Archives of India, New Delhi. "Convention for promoting universally Reproductions of Works of Art for the benefit of museums of all countries"– *Government of India, Home Department Proceedings, Archaeology Branch, 1869-70*, pp.7-8.

<sup>24</sup> Nayanjot Lahiri, "From Ruin to Restoration: The Modern History of Sanchi", in Timothy Insoll, ed., *Belief in the Past: Proceedings of the 2002 Manchester Conference on Archaeology and Religion* (British Archaeological Reports, International Series, Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004), pp.102-3.

<sup>25</sup> National Archives of India, New Delhi. Report by H.H. Cole, Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, N.W. Provinces, India, to the Under-Secretary of State for India, India Office, London, August 24, 1869 – *Government of India, Home Department Proceedings, Archaeology Branch, 1869-70*, pp. 2-4.

<sup>26</sup> *Art Journal*, London, 1870, pp.65-66, 1871, pp.65-68.

<sup>27</sup> Deborah Swallow, "Colonial architecture, international exhibitions, and official patronage of the Indian artisan: The case of gateway from Gwalior at the Victoria & Albert Museum", in Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn, ed., *Colonialism and the Object*, pp. 59-60..

<sup>28</sup> *Catalogue of the Indian Section of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, London, 1886* (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1886) – Preface, p. 9, Chapter VII, pp. 1-2.

<sup>29</sup> Peter N. Hoffenberg, "Photography and Architecture at the Calcutta International Exhibition" in M.A. Pelizzari, ed, *Traces of India*, pp. 185-185.

<sup>30</sup> *Catalogue of the Indian Section of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, London, 1886* – Preface, p. 9, Chapter VII, pp. 11-12.

<sup>31</sup> *Official Guide, British Empire Exhibition, Wembley, 1925*, ed. By G.C.Lawrence (London: Fleetway, press, 1925), pp. 74-75.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>33</sup> Donald Maxwell, *Wembley in Colour, Being both an Impression and a Memento of the British Empire Exhibition of 1924* (with over 100 sketches in colour and monochrome) (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1925), pp. 56, 68.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>35</sup> I take the term from the African cultural theorist, Achille Mbembe, and his collection of essays, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), which addresses issues of sovereignty, power, culture and politics in post-colonial African states, especially in Cameroon,

<sup>36</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102

<sup>38</sup> This new consumerist Hinduism is an offshoot of the politics of the Hindu Right in India, that has been a vibrant current within 20<sup>th</sup> century ideologies of nationhood and has gained steady ascendancy in India's electoral democracy since the 1980s. Orchestrating a campaign for the 'rebuilding' of a Ram temple in the holy city of Ayodhya, on the site of a 16<sup>th</sup> mosque that has supposedly been built over a destroyed temple, this politics reached its crescendo in the demolition of the mosque in December 1992 and its aftermath. There are a number of studies on the rise, political fortunes and cultural ideology of the Hindu Right in contemporary India - see, e.g., Tapan Bose, Pradip Datta and Sumit Sarkar, *Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags*, Tracts for the Times (Delhi: Orient Longman, 1991), Gyanendra Pandey, ed., *Hindus and Others: The Question of Identity in India Today* (New Delhi: Viking, 1993) or David Ludden, *Making India Hindu: Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999). The connections between the political careers of Hindu nationalism and new spate of temple building, as replicas and look-alikes of older medieval temples, is only recently becoming a subject of scholarly interest.

<sup>39</sup> The contending medieval narratives of the desecration and reconsecration of this temple, and the story of its rebuilding in the years after India's Independence are analysed at length in Richard Davis, 'Reconstructions of Somanatha' in *Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 213-221.

<sup>40</sup> The Akshardham temple complexes in both Gandhinagar and New Delhi now maintain elaborate websites, providing detailed information on the history of the Swaminarayan sect, the construction of the temples, the statuary and the larger display tableaux, and all the sights and exhibits to be toured within their vast enclosures. See, e.g., [http://e.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akshardham\\_\(Gandhinagar\)](http://e.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akshardham_(Gandhinagar))

<sup>41</sup> My discussion of the Akshardham temple complexes and of the two replicas of the Amarnath and Vaishno-devi temples in Gujarat, that follows, is entirely drawn from the recent work of Jyotindra Jain, "Curating Culture, Curating Territory: Religio-Political Mobility in India" in Gayatri Sinha, *Art and Visual Culture in India, 1857-2007* (Mumbai: Marg and Bodhi Art, 2008). My thanks to Dr. Jyotindra Jain for his generosity in sharing his research, writing and photographs of this material.

<sup>42</sup> Jyotindra Jain, "Curating Culture, Curating Territory", pp. 219-220.

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- <sup>43</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, “The Thing and its Doubles”, pp. 143-148.
- <sup>44</sup> This section on Durga Puja in contemporary Calcutta is based on my ongoing research on the subject, conducted collaboratively with my colleague, Dr. Anjan Ghosh, since 2002. It has drawn on the large archive of interviews, newspaper writings, publicity material, and photographs housed in the archive of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta.
- <sup>45</sup> Some of my arguments and material on the contemporary festival phenomenon in Calcutta is laid out in my article, “From Spectacle to Art”, *Art India, The Art News Magazine of India*, vol. ix, issue iii, quarter iii, 2004.
- <sup>46</sup> For a brief but incisive history of the changing social and civic character of the festival in 19<sup>th</sup> Calcutta, see Tithi Bhattacharya, “Tracking the Goddess: Religion, Community and Identity in the Durga Puja Ceremonies in Nineteenth-Century Calcutta”, *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 66, no. 4, November 2007.
- <sup>47</sup> Pradip Bose, “The Heterotopias of Calcutta Durga Puja”, translated from the Bengali article of 1997 by Manas Ray, in Amit Chaudhuri, ed., *Memory’s Gold: Writings on Calcutta* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2008)
- <sup>48</sup> The term, “post-ethnic” has been used by Hans Belting to talk about the way the ‘primitive’ or ‘indigenous’ arts of the non-Western world have transcended their ethnicity and invented their new identity as contemporary art - Hans Belting, “Contemporary Art and the Museum in the Global Age”, in Peter Weibel and Andrea Buddensieg, ed., *Contemporary Art and the Museum: A Global Perspective* (Hatje Cantz, 2007)
- <sup>49</sup> “Summons for Potter *pandal*”, “*Pandal* wins reprieve”, *The Telegraph*, Calcutta, October 11, 13, 2007.
- <sup>50</sup> “Harry Potter and the Hindu Gods”, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/7040191.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7040191.stm)
- <sup>51</sup> E-mail correspondence from Solomon Benjamin, “The Car, the Road, and the Road in the City: Copyright Claim over Harry Potter *pandal*”, October 12, 2007
- <sup>52</sup> Interview with Ahsanullah by Monideepa Banerjee in the NDTV television feature on Bangladesh’s Taj Mahal, January 2, 2009
- <sup>53</sup> Answering newspaper critics and many who felt cheated at the poorness of this copy, Moni Ahsanullah defended his creation, “It’s the Taj of Bangladesh...” In a boldly populist stance, he continued, “If you want to see the real Taj you have to travel to the Indian city of Agra and spend at least 20,000 *takas*. It costs only 50 *takas* to see my Taj.” – “Bangladeshi Taj Mahal owner slams critics”, *Agence France-Presse* (AFP), December 15, 2008.