

“Subaltern” Remembrances Mapping Affective Approaches to Partition Memory

Theorizing affect in relationship to interdisciplinary developments among geographies of memory and subaltern studies, this essay engages the visual art of feminist artist, Pritika Chowdhry, in her latest exhibition, *Remembering the Crooked Line*, in order to understand the migratory nature of cultural memories as a result of global flows. Situating Chowdhry's aesthetic contributions alongside the work of postcolonial, feminist scholar, Gayatri Spivak in “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” this essay offers a framework for understanding memory-production beyond spatially-fixed and geographically-bound points of reference, and theorizes how memories are produced across seemingly disparate spaces and geopolitical histories. Thus, corralling multiple geographic vantage points and subjectivities, Chowdhry's aesthetic motives pull together dispersed geopolitical contexts and subjects as partition memories are re-membered, re-produced, and re-inscribed as a result of globalization and diasporic affiliation. Consequently, this essay moves towards an understanding of subaltern-memory as a “queer” intervention into dominant constructions of partition societies and their corresponding memories.

INTRODUCTION

Remembering the Crooked Line (2009), by feminist artist and scholar, Pritika Chowdhry, is dedicated to understanding the role of partitions in historical and contemporary conditions. Chowdhry, a diasporic Indian and now U.S. citizen, is two generations removed from the events of the 1947 Partition of India, which dislocated an estimated 12 million from the subcontinent during the British-led creation of two separate countries: India, a country for Hindus, and Pakistan, a country for Muslims.



Figure 1. Installation view 1. *Remembering the Crooked Line*.
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As the fourth installation in the *Partition Memorial Project* (2007–2009), a series of traveling art installations dedicated to the (gendered) memories of the 1947 partition of India, *Remembering the Crooked Line* follows many of the intellectual and aesthetic trajectories exhibited in Chowdhry’s previous installations: *Queering Mother India*, *What the Body Remembers*, and *Silent Waters* (see Micieli-Voutsinas, forthcoming-a). Comprised of vignettes such as “Lines on Control” (chess boards), “The Shadow Lines I, II, and III” (kites), “The Crooked Lines” (Pachisi boards), and “Ring-a-Ring-a-Roses I and II” (shirts), this latest installment continues to address the geographic, material, and psychic violence of partition memory across the subcontinent.

According to the artist's statement (Chowdhry 2010b), *Remembering the Crooked Line* is "an intensive investigation of map-making and cartography as technologies of colonization, nation-building, and ethnic division."

Building upon her previous aesthetic claims in *Partition Memorial Project*, namely the social-psychic construction of geopolitical borders through ontologies of abject corporeality, *Remembering the Crooked Line* pushes the boundaries, geographic and aesthetic, of partition memory further as it moves from the particular geopolitical locale of South Asia, to larger patterns of neo/colonial re-ordering of time and space across the globe. Unlike her previous *Partition Memorial Project* installations, *Remembering the Crooked Line* shifts the conversation of Partition from its South Asian focus to partition memories elsewhere by juxtaposing multiple partition histories—some real, some fictional. By ascribing the geography of the exhibition beyond the South Asian subcontinent to places like Palestine, Ireland, Cyprus, Germany, Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq, Chowdhry suggests the historical continuity of partition memory and its colonial underpinnings within other cartographies and contemporary contexts. Consequently, the artist's aesthetic aims, as well as my theorizations of her mobilization of partition memory throughout *Remembering the Crooked Line*, are twofold.

First, Chowdhry's work functions as both an aesthetic and intellectual intervention within discourses of partition memory that center the South Asian subcontinent within their focus. As such, *Remembering the Crooked Line* moves the conversation of partition memory from this singular geopolitical locale, to a larger global cartography made visible through neo/colonial re-orderings of time, space, and identity, via partitions.¹ Recent scholarship on comparative partition studies, for example, similarly aims to re-frame the temporal and spatial fixity traditionally applied to partition memory by arguing for the re-examination of partitioned cartographies across divergent histories and contemporary sites (see Bianchini 2006; Jassal and Ben-Ari 2007). According to Jassal and Ben-Ari (2007, 47),

Cross-case analysis may illuminate events that a focus on only one instance may obscure . . . Placing . . . distinct experiences "side-by-side" with each other to generate dialogs between partition societies . . . interven[e] in contemporary and ongoing debates entailing citizenship and social identities; states and nation-building; borders and boundaries; the

nature of contemporary conflicts; social and collective memory, and issues of remembrance and forgetting.

Although the 1947 Indian partition marks a clear starting point or template for these authors, as it likewise does for Chowdhry's artistic intervention, their collective efforts aim to shift the framework of partition memory beyond the confines of the South Asian subcontinent in order to trace existing geopolitical projects of bordering or boundary-making—and their inherent memories—across colonial, nationalist, and even diasporic ontologies of space and place, history and time.

The following framework subsequently establishes an affective approach to studying partition memory vis-à-vis a “queer” re-orienting of memory time-space. Engaging *Remembering the Crooked Line* in relationship to interdisciplinary convergences between queer and affect theory, and geographies of memory, this sub-section focuses on the role of Chowdhry's work in re-directing partition scholarship toward partition memory's polymorphous and non-linear nature as a result of global flows of people, technologies, and knowledge. Specifically, in theorizing partition memory beyond its spatially-fixed, geographically-bound points of reference, such as the Indian or Pakistani nation-states, this section outlines how partition memory, understood as a traumatic collective event and subsequent historical memory, is affectively produced across seemingly disparate time-spaces and geopolitical histories.²

MEMORY'S AFFECT: INTIMATE TIME-SPACE

For scholars of collective memory, the twentieth century was marked by legacies of atrocity, decolonization, and mass migration.³ As a result, investigations into collective memory have spanned the transgenerational transmission of traumatic events vis-à-vis “post-memory,” colonial and postcolonial “melancholy,” and national and diasporic reckonings with nostalgia and loss (see Hirsch 1997; Gilroy 2005; Eng and Kazanjian 2003; Hirsch and Miller 2011). Today, the interdisciplinary field of memory studies encompasses individual, cultural, and collective configurations of memory and its corresponding representations and theorizations across the arts, humanities, and social sciences: from memory's affective and performative functions, to its materialization within sites or places of memory, to its socio-

political re-narration and unfolding through cultural processes of remembering and forgetting (see Till 2006; cf. Radstone and Hodgkin 2006). Accordingly, issues of time and space are central concerns for those studying memory.

As I have argued elsewhere (see Micieli-Voutsinas, forthcoming-b), the spatial-temporal unfolding of collective memory manifests as a montage within local sites or places of memory, where past memories of place (and its inherent social relations) are re-articulated within and through the present. Geographers Steven Hoelscher and Derek Alderman similarly address the “palimpsestic” production of places of memory in their essay, *Memory and place: geographies of a critical relationship*.⁴ For Hoelscher and Alderman (2004), socio-political processes of place-making are rooted in our abilities to saturate specific geographies with social meaning vis-à-vis individual and collective memories of said landscapes. Thus, “as physical assemblages, places of memory are infused with past narratives that are realized in and through their re-materialization in contemporary time-space. Accordingly, landscapes [read: places] of memory are re-made as extensions of something, or rather, somewhere anew” (Micieli-Voutsinas, forthcoming-b).

The presence of multiple temporal and spatial realms within places of memory is a persistent theme within much of the geographic literature on the subject (see Johnson 2005; Legg 2007; Dwyer and Alderman 2008; Azaryahu and Foote 2008; Rose-Redwood et al. 2008; Till 2005; Hoskins 2007; Hoelscher 2008; Stangl 2008; Legg 2005). For example, British geographer Stephen Legg (2007) similarly articulates the precarious relationship between past and present within places of memory as a type of socio-political or spatial-temporal unfolding in lieu of collective amnesia. For Legg, processes of place-making are contested through discursive and, at times, physical battles for memory as multiple stakeholders attempt to narrate or re-narrate place and its (dis-) inherent meanings. Consequently, “this idea that memory-making occurs in and across multiple spaces at multiple times, mandates an understanding that memories—and their corresponding places—are mutable entities” (Micieli-Voutsinas, forthcoming-b). As geographer, Owain Jones (2005, 208), eloquently sums: “memory is not just a retrieval from the past or of the past, it is always a fresh, new creation where memories are retrieved into the conscious realm and something new is created. The *strangeness* of memory is the presence of what is apparently past in the present.” Memory, then, is an inherently affective form of knowing.

In highlighting the temporal and spatial intimacies underpinning individual, collective, and cultural processes of memory-making, and their supposed geographic fixity, a growing interdisciplinary literature amongst queer and poststructural theory offers imaginative insights for the affective re-framing of collective memory (e.g., Ahmed 2004; Cvetkovich 2003; Halberstam 2005; Huyssen 2003; Sedgwick 2003; Gordon 1997; Muñoz 2009; Gilroy 2005; Stoler 2009; Freeman 2010; Raimondo 2010).⁵ For example, in her article, “Archive, Affect, and the Everyday: Queer Diasporic Re-Visions,” literary scholar Gayatri Gopinath (2010, 167) defines (queer) intimacy as affective attachments “outside [of] a logic of blood and kinship,” including, by extension, the nation-state itself. Gleaning her analysis of diasporic public cultures through the synergies shaped between queer-of-color and postcolonial-diasporic critique, Gopinath offers a “queer” optic for reading socio-historical modalities of inclusion-exclusion against the heteronormative ordering of certain “landscapes of belonging,” such as the home, nation, family, and community.

Situating the diasporic aesthetics at work in the essay’s archive as counter to the nation-state’s bio-legal-patriarchal organization of bodies and borders, Gopinath’s visual analysis renders the diasporic histories presented within the archive as non-linear and polymorphous as a result of their affective associations with other bodies, geographies, and time-spaces. Made tangible through artistic engagements with individual, collective, and cultural forms of memory vis-à-vis its aesthetic representation, Gopinath’s queer archive offers an avenue for understanding contemporary identities outside of the temporal and spatial confines of the nation-state and its linear, unidirectional notion of history (cf. Levy 2010).

For example, despite the seemingly unrelated historical trajectories of the artists in question, and the subject matter of their work, Gopinath’s analysis of diasporic public culture unearths affective ways of knowing and feeling socio-cultural displacements as they are aesthetically reconstituted across contemporary time-space through modes of remembrance situated in the work of visual artists. Here, the aesthetic interplay between past time-spaces and present ones are reconceived through the affective and performative registries of diasporic memory foundational to the selected archive of Gopinath’s analysis. As diasporic memory is performed in present-times through queer diasporic visual cultures, it simultaneously unleashes and recalls a series of past-present connections, thus blurring the distinction

between past and present time-spaces, however momentary, and potentially changing future meaning altogether.

Emerging as an affective mode of entry into the emotional economies embedded within and constituted between our memories of “places, people, [and] things,” the queer spatial and temporal intimacies rendered tangible throughout Gopinath’s (2010, 184–85) analysis of diasporic memory—or, more accurately, remembrances—“conjures other times and places, other landscapes both physical and psychic, and other relationalities and affiliations that are deemed excessive or irrelevant within the conventions of the [nation-state’s] official archive” of historical memory.

Although much of the geographic literature on collective memory tends to focus on the socio-political and metaphysical construction of *place* through memory, this essay shifts its focus to the construction of *memory* through place. Such a maneuver allows for the unhinging of memories from the physical environments they are said to derive, as well as adheres to the queer spatialities and temporalities of memory’s affective traces, or, in Gopinath’s words, the “affective attachments” places of memory (and memories of place) evoke as they travel through and across local and global “regimes of memory.”⁶ It is this attention to the polymorphous spatiality and non-linear temporality of partition memory vis-à-vis emotional attachments and visceral pulls to other spaces, places, and times that this essay aims to mobilize through Chowdhry’s *Remembering the Crooked Line*.

(COUNTER-) MEMORY’S (SUBALTERN) AFFECT: INTIMATE TIME-SPACE

Building upon the queer diasporic frameworks offered by Gopinath and the fissures her analysis opens up between queer and affect theory, geographies of memory, and Subaltern studies, the following sections offer an alternative genealogical approach to the study of partition memory through what memory scholar and geographer, Stephen Legg (2005, 2007), terms, “subaltern memory.” As Legg (2007, 461; emphasis added) submits,

Although nations will come to share common ways of remembering, and common national memories, we should be wary of oversimplifying any regional or national processes

of memory formation, or of focusing entirely on the West. A series of exceptional memory studies in India have managed to show how specific forms of remembering have emerged in the subcontinent, but . . . these processes of memory are very much about *contestation*, *silence*, and *interruption*.

Utilizing *disruption* as a key mode of remembering, subaltern memories, according to Legg, attempt to recover those memories that have been suppressed, removed, or denied entry from the official national archive, or have otherwise been overshadowed by studies of memory located in the global North, namely the Holocaust.

In situating Chowdhry's aesthetic contributions as a framework for theorizing collective memory through modes of remembrance that recall the gendered narratives of partition history—in particular, those traditionally omitted from both the colonial and postcolonial archive of partition—the second aim of my analysis argues for a reading of *Remembering the Crooked Line* as a form of “subaltern” memory-production against colonial and hegemonic nationalist modes of remembering that elide certain narratives from official records (see Menon 1998; Butalia 2000). For this, I will engage the scholarly intersections emerging between affect theory and subaltern studies, to address the gendered memories mobilized throughout Chowdhry's work on the partition vis-à-vis emotional and visceral modes of remembrance.⁷

For example, evoking the scholarship of Gayatri Spivak, Veena Das, and Michel Foucault, Legg's (2007, 461–63) articulation of subaltern memory is rooted in embodied modes of remembrance that disrupt colonial and hegemonic nationalist ways of forgetting and remembering the traumatic past. Throughout his engagement with the term, Legg theorizes the subversive qualities that such memory projects exude in challenging anti-colonial nationalist, and, at times, anti-nationalist historiographies vis-à-vis processes of “disruption.” Situating “subaltern memories” as “counter-memories” to colonial and hegemonic nationalist renderings of events, places, spaces, and temporalities, Legg's utilization of the term is firmly positioned within British-Indian post/colonial contexts.

Expanding upon Legg's framework of subaltern memory, the following sections argue for an unhinging of the subaltern from the term's geopolitical associations and moving towards the affective nature of such “counter-memories” as they are both produced and

dispersed across spatial and temporal distinctions (cf. Mälksoo 2009; Rodriguez and Lopez 2001; Bal et al. 1998; Foucault 1984). Similarly, Gopinath's (2010, 173) deployment of subalternity in characterizing Christopher Pinney's theory of "looking past"—a multi-temporal, multi-spatial, counter-hegemonic reading practice enabling "subaltern subjects" the ability to "challenge dominant... representation"—likewise acknowledges the term's salience to projects resistant to dominant ways of remembering histories, identities, and geographies. Accordingly, my deployment of the term in relation to *Remembering the Crooked Line* acts as a destabilizing approach to the largely nation-centric and Western-centric focus of much collective memory scholarship and its underpinning time-spaces. Consequently, the subaltern memories exuded throughout Chowdhry's installation exist in tandem to both state-generated and Western frameworks of collective memory, while simultaneously aiming to disrupt the trans/national dominance of Western, colonialist, and hegemonic-nationalist narratives of collective memory and their elided cultural traumas. For example, by underscoring what Legg terms the "disruptive, contestatory, and interruptive" quality of subaltern memory—that is, a reading of subaltern re-membrances as processes of undoing and becoming, we can begin to theorize how resistances to dominant social memories, or regimes of memory, are affectively generated and registered across time and space.

To begin tracing the relationship between subaltern and affective realms of memory-production, I turn to the work of Gayatri Spivak. More poignantly, I offer Spivak as a starting point for understanding Chowdhry's aesthetic interventions as an alternative archive to prevailing accounts of partition memory throughout *Remembering the Crooked Line*. In doing so, I construct an affective context from which to engage the political and emotive processes of remembrance that re-inscribe and resist dominant narratives of space, place, and time. For instance, can we theorize the production and circulation of "counter-memories" in relationship to dominant social and political frameworks of remembering and forgetting, nationally and transnationally, by focusing on the role of affective attachments within subaltern memory projects? Additionally, how are hegemonic discourses of memory reproduced through uneven economies of emotion and access to political processes of memory-making across time and space?

Before proceeding, it is important to note that this theoretical move to situate subaltern memory as counter-hegemonic is not an attempt

to claim that the subaltern—a specific anti-colonial site—possesses or produces “authentic” and, thus, “liberatory” memory. Nor is it to claim that the subaltern is closer to the metaphysical and thus more “prone” to affective or emotional realms of being. Rather, the discursive yoking between subaltern and “counter-memory,” and subaltern and affective-memory, attempts to de-center the Western and nation-state-centric focus of majority of collective memory scholarship (Legg’s argument), as well as to theorize the affective practices of remembrance as they are produced within specific spatial and temporal contexts and re-produced across transnational circuits of collective memory (my argument).⁸ Therefore, as with comparative partition studies, studies of collective memory must theorize across ostensibly unrelated locales in order to understand the relational production and affective process that is collective memory-making—particularly, traumatic collective memories—as they moves across time and space. As Chowdhry (2010a) concurs regarding the shifting nature of collective memory in her latest installation,

One of my [artistic] goals [throughout *Remembering the Crooked Line*] is to re-center the field of cultural memory [in the West] from the Holocaust and Middle Passage to subaltern memory discourses formed by histories, literatures, and cultural productions from other regions of the world. While my cultural lens is necessarily and predictably tinted with the colors of South Asia, it does not prevent me from . . . making connections with other parallel histories.

As a result, the subsequent analysis attempts to understand the aesthetic and affective production of subaltern memory throughout Chowdhry’s work in order to trace these cross-border connections. Lastly, the study of partition memory as solely a historical effect, neglects to address its relevance to contemporary happenings and geopolitical events. Accordingly, any theory of “subaltern memory” must centrally locate the various ways in which memories—even those deemed “resistant” to dominant narratives—can and do work in the favor of present-day neocolonial, postcolonial, and imperial practices of inclusion-exclusion (e.g., Bacchetta 1999; cf. Ong 1999). As a result, subaltern memories must be understood as both a tool for resistance as well as a potential technique of prevailing—or future—modes of governmentality (see Butler 2004; Hyndman 2007). Subaltern memory, in the end, can both

resist *and* enable neo/colonial and hegemonic nationalist forms of remembering that silence and expunge “othered” narratives in response to larger geopolitical formulations of collective memory.

RE-MEMBERING THE SUBALTERN

Although memory sustains hegemony, it also subverts it through its capacity to recollect and to restore the alternative discourses the dominant [order] would simply bleach out and forget. Memory, then, is inherently contestatory. (Richard Terdiman quoted in Legg 2007, 460)

In her foundational essay, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” Spivak (1988) challenges Western re-presentations of the third world subject as a static, subjectless victim of colonial and, depending on sex, patriarchal domination (cf. Mohanty 1988). For the purpose of re-thinking contemporary formulations of counter- and affective-memory as they intersect with Chowdhry’s artistic production, I am interested in understanding *how* the subaltern subject speaks throughout Spivak’s seminal article. For example, what are the subaltern’s modes of communication and how does it access dominant constructions of space and time?

Over the past two and a half decades, discussions over the term subaltern have been highly contested (see Guha 1988; Ludden 2001; Chaturved 2000; Chaudhury 1985; Gyanendra 2001). As a result, the subaltern remains an ambiguous signifier within South Asian discourses, shifting in and through capitalist and neo/colonialist (re-) orderings of time-space. Therefore, the goal of this section is not to determine whether the subaltern subject is solely delineated to underclass (and caste) positions, or, whether it can be more generally applied to the silenced, and perhaps, gendered subject of intersecting colonial and patriarchal nationalist interests. Rather, the aim of this section is to trace Spivak’s articulation of the term subaltern in relationship to affective memory-formation as it is produced in relation to conflating colonial, nationalist, and gendered interests. As Spivak (1988, 286) herself concluded, there is no pure subaltern consciousness.

In quoting Pierre Macherey, Spivak (*ibid.*, 287) articulates the subaltern as a type of quasi-methodology that she refers to as “measuring the deviation.” In Macherey’s (quoted in Spivak 1988, 286, *italics in the original*) words:

What is important in a work is what it does not say. This is not the same as the careless notion, “what it refuses to say,” although that would in itself be interesting: a method might be built on it, with the task of *measuring silences*, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged. But rather this, what the work *cannot say* is important, because there the elaboration of the utterance is carried out, in a sort of journey to silence.

As Spivak (*ibid.*, 287; emphasis in original) continues, “when we come to the concomitant question of the consciousness of the subaltern, the notion of what the work *cannot say* becomes important.” Geographer Legg (2007, 461) has likewise noted the dissident qualities of subaltern remembrances to disrupt exclusionary historiographies; as outlined in the previous section, “contestation, silence, and interruption” are integral components to subaltern memory formulation/formation. Legg’s work, however, largely positions subaltern memory within the same logics of political contestation as offered by the Subaltern Studies Group, namely anti-colonial, Indian nationalist memories that resist British historiography. Legg also utilizes feminist theorizations of the body and embodiment as key sites for the production of counter-hegemonic, collective memory in some of his earlier work. In citing the work of Das (1995, 1997), for example, Legg underscores the role of the body as “a medium through which a historical wrong done to a person can be represented” (2005, 185). It is this connection to the body as a vessel of memory by scholars such as Das and Legg that I would like to revisit in relationship to Spivak. Specifically, I would like to turn to Spivak’s final example of the (sexed) subaltern subject in “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988, 307): the precarious case of Bhuvaneshwari Bhaduri, a young, female, anti-colonial nationalist who commits suicide in order to deflect an assassination mission.

As Spivak describes Bhaduri’s political situation and her resulting decision to self-immolate, it appears that Bhaduri’s death attempts to displace both nationalist and colonialist readings of her gendered, anti-colonial subjecthood, however momentarily. For instance, waiting to menstruate prior to committing suicide, Bhaduri puzzles local officials as her death cannot be read as a sign of her gender deviance, specifically, an unsanctioned pregnancy (*ibid.*). In an attempt to dislodge a sexed (read: apolitical) re-narration of her death by local officials, Bhaduri strategically stages her body prior to death in order to underscore the political motivations behind her suicide. In the end, however,

patriarchal narratives of nation, gender, and sexuality re-appropriate Bhaduri's suicide and result in Spivak concluding that the subaltern subject—particularly the sexed subaltern subject—cannot speak.

Although remembering Bhaduri's death ultimately functions as a failed attempt to (re-) construct the sexed anti-colonial subject outside of colonial and nationalist discourses, I remain intrigued by Bhaduri's usage of her material body, particularly its menstruation, not only as an articulation of subaltern memory, but as an assertion of subaltern resistance. Given the fact that Bhaduri was unable to verbally confirm the rationale for her suicide, or leave a suicide note in lieu of fears that its content would be altered, Bhaduri carries out her authority over her death through the bodily fluids she leaves behind for those who discover her body. Despite her death failing to be recorded within official post/colonial archives as an act of political resistance, Bhaduri's critical usage of affective modes of remembering vis-à-vis bodily traces underscores her engagement with post/colonial sex and gender discursive formations in order to reframe her death and, more importantly, her life, outside of such logics. Thus, as a case study for measuring silence, or rather, what "cannot be said," Bhaduri's suicide methods highlight the utilization of affective registries—specifically, haunting and viscerality—to assert a sense of agency over the social and political structures that defined her choices and body, even posthumously.

In the past decade, the "affective turn" within social and queer theory has made important contributions to scholars of collective memory (e.g., Ahmed 2004; Cvetkovich 2003; Halberstam 2005; Sedgwick 2003; Gordon 1997; Muñoz 2009; Huyssen 2003; Stoler 2009). In her work on post-unification Berlin, geographer Karen Till (2005) discusses the city's landscape as a montage of past and present where the ghosts of Germany's violent past haunt present-day memory in its quest to re-produce both urban and memorial space within the city. As Till (*ibid.*, 11; emphasis in original) posits regarding the memorial surge in Berlin:

They made places as open wounds in the city to remind them of their hauntings and to feel uncomfortable. And while these places of memory gained their authority as landscape markers from the past, they were nonetheless powerful as places of memory because they were also traces of the future.

Building upon the work of sociologist Avery Gordon (1997, 7), Till underscores the role of haunting as “a constituent element of modern social life.” As with the case of Berlin, the social haunting of places of memory within the newly emerging cityscape is marked by the lingering presence of the past and its ghosts. “Ghosts,” according to Gordon (*ibid.*, xix), “are characteristically attached to the events, things, and places that produced them in the first place; by nature they are the haunting reminders of lingering trouble.” As Gordon continues,

Being haunted draws us *affectively*, sometimes against our will and always a bit magically, into a structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as a transformative recognition. (*ibid.*, 8; emphasis added)

To write stories concerning exclusions and invisibilities is to write ghost stories. To write ghost stories implies that ghosts are real, that is to say, that they produce material *affects*. (*ibid.*, 17; emphasis added)

Consequently, Spivak’s story of Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri lingers in my mind as a direct result of the visceral traces her body leaves behind in order to haunt this scene. Operating as a clue in uncovering an alternative story for her suicide, Bhaduri’s menstruating body inscribes her death with its own ghost. Specifically, it allows her agency to speak across time and space by haunting the narrative of her suicide posthumously.

As India’s colonial past is re-membered, or re-lived in the present through Bhaduri’s death, her actions attempt to thwart legacies of colonialism and patriarchal nationalism in the future, however fleeting. Consequently, the silences surrounding Bhaduri’s suicide cannot be heard; rather, they must be *felt*, as both Gordon and Till allude. Accordingly, the ability of Bhaduri to resist such historiographies—at least to those who were made aware of the conditions surrounding her suicide—is made possible through the visceral.

According to feminist geographers, Jessica Hayes-Conroy and Allison Hayes-Conroy (2010), the visceral is the realm in which bodies register affects in relationship to space and each other. In other words, the visceral enables our abilities to affectively register and comprehend time, space, and place; it helps us make sense of the social, political, and economic world around us, individually and collectively.

Therefore, in relationship to Bhaduri and affective memory-making, the recognition of subaltern disruption is ultimately felt emotionally and viscerally by those to have witnessed her death. Furthermore, if the presence of Bhaduri's ghost is a larger indication of unfinished business, or the presence of multiple truths and histories, affective modes of communication, such as hauntings and viscosity, must be understood as potential modes of counter-memory-making. As philosopher Dylan Trigg (2009, 89) similarly alludes, "Spectrality [i]s a transitional point between subject and...place...the [ghost's] capacity to haunt...effectively undercuts a claim of temporal continuity and, instead, offers a counter-narrative in which testimony becomes guided by voids [read: absence] rather than points of presence." I will now turn to Chowdhry's installation, *Remembering the Crooked Line*, in order to understand how these affective modes of memory-making are utilized in the transmission of collective memories across desperate geographies, times, and spaces.

"SUBALTERN" REMEMBRANCES

In "The Aesthetics of Sense-Memory: Theorizing Trauma," arts scholar, Jill Bennett (2006, 28–29), refers to affective modes of remembering that rely on visceral and bodily exchanges within and across time and space. "Sense-memory," according to Bennett, is distinguished from representational memory; sense-memory can be conveyed through depicting embodied experiences within the visual cultures of memorials, museums, and art galleries (cf. Bennett 2005; Lauzon 2008). As Bennett (2006, 28–29) continues,

The imagery of traumatic memory deals not simply with a past event, or with the objects of memory [artifacts, archives and such], but the present experience of memory. It therefore calls for a theorization of the dynamic in which the work is both produced and received—a theory, in other words, of affect . . . As the source of a poetics or an art, then, sense memory operates through the body to produce a kind of [feeling truth] rather than a "thinking truth," registering the pain of memory as it is directly experienced, and communicating a level of bodily affect.

Likewise, the poetics of *Remembering the Crooked Line* are sensed by what is simultaneously present and absent from the visual scene the artist has conjured: the material body itself. Accordingly, it is the body's absence that produces its material (read: affective) traces, or presence, throughout the exhibition space (see figures 1 and 2).



Figure 2. Installation view 2, *Remembering the Crooked Line*.
© Pritika Chowdhry, 2009.

Throughout the multiple stations of *Remembering the Crooked Line*, the body-in-play functions as a central thread in connecting the artist's current installation with those previously exhibited in the *Partition Memorial Project* (see *What the Body Remembers and Silent Waters*).⁹ For example, in “Lines on Control” (chess boards), “The Shadow Lines I, II, and III” (kites), “The Crooked Lines” (Pachisi boards), and “Ring-a-Ring-a-Roses I and II” (shirts), Chowdhry utilizes childhood memories of play to saturate the gallery space with corporeality and embodiment. However, the only bodies present—and, therefore, afforded the access to play these games—are the audience members and passersby who engage with the intimacy of the installation objects. As a result, the bodies whose histories this scene attempts to depict are only available as ghostly traces, marked vis-à-vis the desire and need for kites to be flown and board games played (see figure 2). Operating as a mnemonic marker for cultural and individual trauma, the body's absence—and presence—in moments of play, mark

the affective circulation of collective memory by conveying what is left unsaid to audiences: namely, the simultaneous existence of pleasure and violence, life and death, as it is aesthetically re-membered through the partitioned body's trace.



Figure 3. Installation view 3. *Remembering the Crooked Line*.
© Pritika Chowdhry, 2009.

Chowdhry's usage of corporeal references throughout *Remembering the Crooked Line* is central to her political and aesthetic aims. Her incorporation of feminine clothing—*cholis* (women's blouses) and *kurtis* (girls' vests), hauntingly inserts gendered modes of memory into the remaining stations of the exhibition space. For instance, through the negative spaces maintained by the fabric's curvaceous shapes, the feminine body produces its own material traces for the viewer. Consequently, in "Ring-a-Ring-a-Roses I and II," the feminine body is rather innocently depicted playing a childhood game while an onset of (unmanned) kites soar directly overhead (see figure 3). Although the artist does not definitively name these different modes of play (ring-around-the-rosy and kite-flying) as male and female, the juxtaposition of feminine clothing and corporeal outlines against the installation's otherwise gender-neutral, or body-less space, inscribes a gendered reading onto the exhibition's components. Furthermore, "Ring-a-Ring-a-Roses" includes an audio track featuring the voices of an adult woman and girl children. Suggesting intergenerational

experiences and remembrances of trauma vis-à-vis partition memory, the tonality of these voices work affectively in lieu of bodies throughout the exhibition space to inform the viewer of the gendered and intergenerational dimensions of partition violence—a theme also stressed throughout Chowdhry’s previous *Partition Memorial* works. However, this is not to say that Chowdhry’s aesthetic positions the male body as less vulnerable to partition violence.

For instance, given *The Kite Runner* (Hosseini 2003) inferences streamed throughout the installation, the “othered” male child’s exposure to corporeal violence is but one example of such vulnerability.¹⁰ Exacerbated by social factors such as age, ethnicity, religion, class, and caste, the “other” male body is likewise feminized within much of partition discourse and memory (e.g., Butalia 2000). Thus, in highlighting the female and “other” male body’s vulnerability to physical and emotional trauma throughout partition, Chowdhry is able to construct an alternative archive of partition memory, one that focuses on the gendered—and racialized—underpinnings of this collective memory throughout the subcontinent.

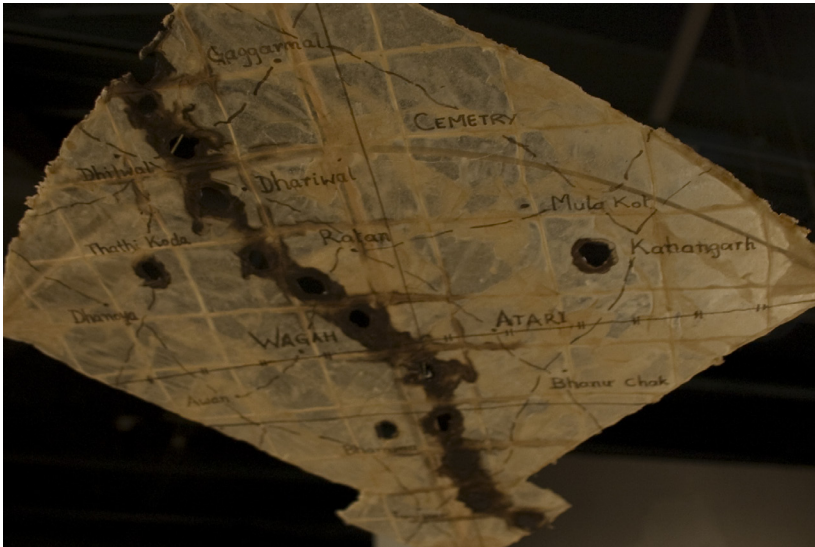


Figure 4. “Shadow Lines I,” detail. *Remembering the Crooked Line*.
© Pritika Chowdhry, 2009.

Drawing on the works of feminist scholars such as Veena Das and Urvashi Butalia, Chowdhry’s art addresses the un-representability of partition memory, namely the intense psychological and physical scars

that linger as a result of such geopolitical re-structuring. As depicted in the above image (see figure 4), the precise delineation of geographic territory with conventional cartographic tropes, such as lines and grids, is simultaneously marked by the presence of burn holes, tares and “bleeding” borderlines, to convey the human qualities and casualties of nation-building. As the artist similarly concurs,

By extracting real and fictionalized cartographic fragments of the borderlines of each of the mentioned countries, and grafting them onto garments, kites, and game boards, I wish to give material form to the *skin of the nation*. (Chowdhry 2010b, italics added)

Therefore, it is the artist’s reliance on the body and its ensuing visceral traces that makes her work so effective in conveying these memories.

Underscoring the material and discursive violence eluded within hegemonic-narratives of partition memory, Chowdhry’s aesthetic vision recasts the (missing) body and its visceral sensations vis-à-vis its absence in order to affectively convey past experiences, material and metaphysical, to present-day gallery-goers. As Jenny Edkins (2003, 178) similarly notes, absence or loss, when “passe[d] down the generations . . . is an uncomprehending, visceral grief.” For subsequent generations, then, traumatic pasts are marked by the physiological and psychological responses our bodies undergo when we are called to remember. Consequently, Chowdhry’s mobilization of the visceral marks the affective transmission of traumatic memory across temporality and space in order for such memories to carry on into the future.

Throughout *Remembering the Crooked Line*, the scale of the body is continually referenced and affectively reproduced as geographic bordering is conflated with geopolitical identities. As such, Chowdhry’s art is well-situated within a recent artistic practice known as memory sculpture. According to scholar, Andreas Huyssen (2003, 110), *memory sculpture* is, “Sculpture expanded toward installation and incorporating memory traces [that] rel[y] on the tradition of the sculpted human body.” As the artist expands in an interview,

The body is key to understanding these installations. For example, the kites are hung at approximately head-level and eye-level, the Pachisi and chess panels are all at eye-level, the *cholis* are at shoulder-level, the *kurtis* are at



Figure 5. "Lines of Control," detailed maps of fictional partitions: Iraq into "Sunnistan," "Kurdistan," and "Shiastan" (top), and Jerusalem into Israeli and Palestinian segments (bottom). *Remembering the Crooked Line*. © Pritika Chowdhry, 2009.

torso-level, the chess board and Pachisi board are at knee and calf level. (Chowdhry 2010a)

Consequently, Chowdhry's material choices are grounded within benign, everyday geographies of embodiment in order to carefully manipulate the visitor's own visceral experience.

For instance, Chowdhry compiles a careful selection of everyday objects as they are re-produced through colonial (mis-) use. Khadi and tassar fabrics, tea, silk, paper, thread, and turmeric, for example, are utilized to produce the installation objects, and, once again, position the body—more specifically, the laboring body—through local and colonial practices of consumption. As a result, the textuality of the art is yet another layer in her efforts to secure the corporeal and affective re-production of national borders and bodies within the gallery space. Thus, whether used in colonial trading circuits, or to boycott colonial economic domination, the selected objects affectively embed the subaltern body (read: anticolonial Indian body) throughout the exhibition space.

Infusing the exhibition with subtle geographic and material references specific to the Indian subcontinent, Chowdhry acknowledges the presence of subaltern memory as incited by the Subaltern Studies Group, while simultaneously challenges its contemporary salience by making connections to other geographic locales partitioned as a result of British empire-building and its subsequent decline post-WWII. For example, the artist has incorporated map fragments throughout the exhibition space—some real, some fictional—depicting past, and possibly present, sites of this neo/colonial and imperialist military practice (see figures 5 and 6). Astutely aware of the historical significance of the moment in which we currently live, an unmistakably post-9/11 world, Chowdhry questions the present-day geopolitical stronghold that partitions have in the western geographic imagination as it is affectively (re-) evoked in places like Iraq and Palestine in conjunction with the US-led war on terror. Therefore, given the prevalence with which partitioning was, and, to an extent, is still mobilized in the name of empire and military occupation, what colonial legacies ensue as a result of this particular cartographic exercise? Furthermore, what if anything, can partition memories teach us about the current, post-9/11 moment?¹¹

Keeping in line with the previous exhibitions in the *Partition Memorial Project*, *Remembering the Crooked Line* is infused with

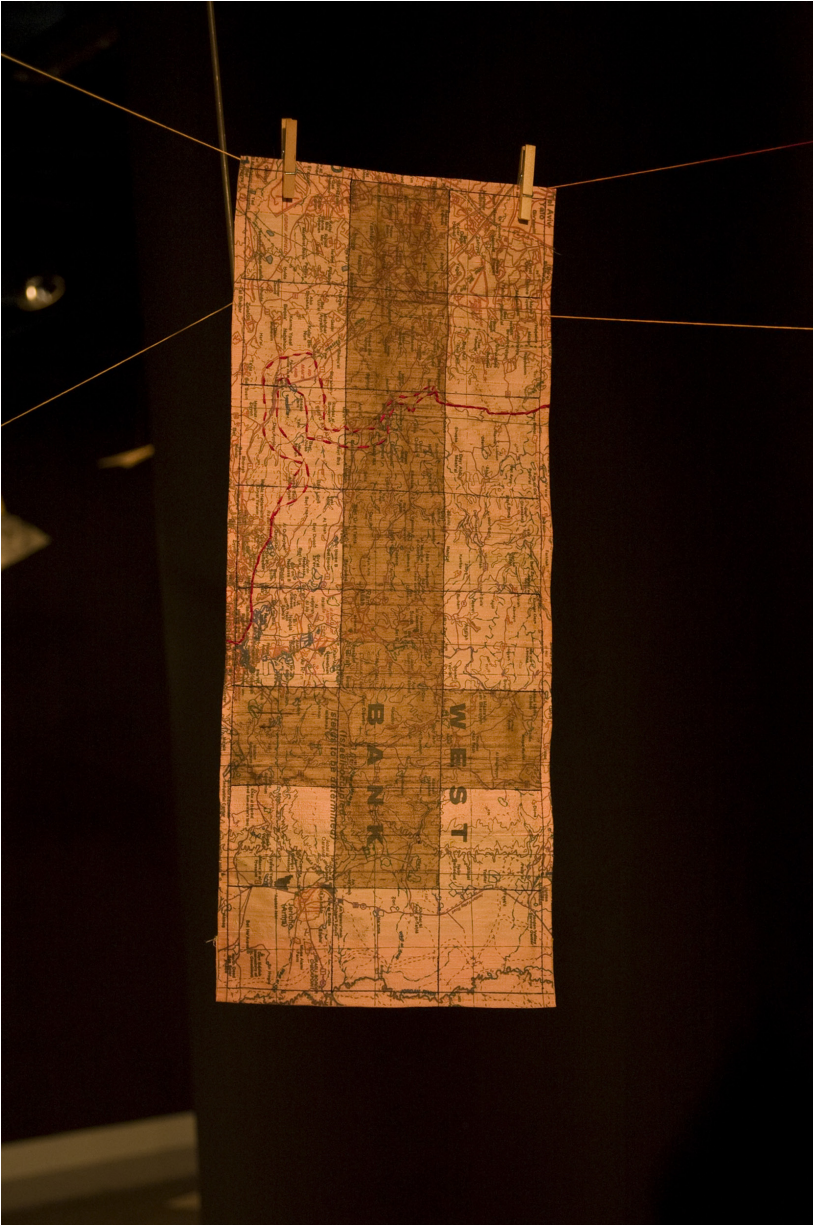


Figure 6. "The Crooked Line," detail. *Remembering the Crooked Line*.
© Pritika Chowdhry, 2009.

intertextual references to literary and cinematic works that share the subject of partition memory. According to the artist, “The crisscrossing histories of nations and the histories of games, as well as the histories of literary and cinematic works, is particularly symbolic for the purpose of ... trying to show the interconnections between different partitions” (Chowdhry 2010a) For example, the title of the exhibition itself is borrowed from a novel bearing a similar name (*The Crooked Line* [2006]) by Muslim-Indian author, Ismat Chughtai. Thus, corralling multiple geographic vantage points and subjectivities, Chowdhry pulls together disperse geopolitical contexts and subjects as partition memories are affectively re-membered, re-produced, and re-inscribed as a result of globalization and diasporic affiliation. Consequently, Chowdhry’s mobilization of subaltern-memory can be understood as an aesthetic intervention into dominant constructions of partition memory that procure essentialist constructions of the nation-state and its corresponding “imagined community” (Anderson 1991). As the artist acknowledges,

This is a multi-part installation and archive . . . reference[ing] and connect[ing] the partitions of India, Palestine, Ireland, and Cyprus—all former British colonies that were divided along ethnic lines at the end of British rule. I[t] also ma[kes] specific connections with the cold-war partitions of Korea, Vietnam, and Germany, to show the emerging role of the American empire in instigating or engineering partitions. (Chowdhry 2010b)

Accordingly, Chowdhry both locates and abandons geographical specificity throughout *Remembering the Crooked Line*, in favor of multidirectional constructions of space and time in order to link multiple sites of (de-) colonization in the name of empire-building, past and present (cf. Rothberg 2009).

Piecing together various historical and geographic references within the gallery space, Chowdhry’s installation evokes a “subaltern” memory-scape that disrupts the very fixity of the term’s geographical origins and subject positioning, while simultaneously reproduces an aesthetic palette similar to those found in the preceding installations in *Partition Memorial Project*. Here, the presence of multiple geographies and their corresponding (memories of) “others,” both aim to conjure and convolute the psychic and geopolitical relationships the artist is

attempting to foster between the partition in India and partitions elsewhere. As a result, it is not immediately apparent to the viewer who Chowdhry's "subaltern" subject is and which history his or her presence is attempting to disrupt.

Inscribed with multiple meanings and geographic points of reference, the tiles sewn throughout the exhibition space add yet another layer of interconnectedness as the geographies of particular partition memories are re-circulated throughout current-day recollections and geopolitical occurrences. For example, "Lines of Control" contains three meanings: it is the name of a novel written by Shahnaaz Deshpande (2003); the official namesake of the moving borderline that shifts to indicate Indian or Pakistani military control in Kashmir; and, in *Remembering the Crooked Line*, Chowdhry has assigned this name to the chess boards located throughout her exhibition. The seemingly innocent motifs of child's play strewn throughout the exhibition serve as an allegory for military decision-making, where "playing games" acts as a synonym for playing with peoples' lives. As Chowdhry (2010a) confirms,

The panels [of the board games] are Velcro-backed so that viewers can easily change them out. The idea is that the viewers can choose which countries/regions they would like to play a game with. The goal of this participatory aspect is to make the viewers/players experience the sense of power that was at play in situations where a Partition was engineered. Visually both games, Pachisi and chess, are grid-based like maps are, and both are games of strategy, much like the machinations of Empire.

Consequently, it is this presence of playfulness within the gallery space, in combination with an overarching feeling of loss (marked by the body's absence), which enables Chowdhry to shift the visitor's interaction with the installation objects back and forth between the vantage points of empire's agent and its subaltern subject. Similar to the affective forms of knowledge conjured throughout *What the Body Remembers* and *Silent Waters*, the audience's experience within the gallery space is central to (re-) producing the exhibition's meaning and the modes of remembrances it evokes (see Micieli-Voutsinas, forthcoming-a).

CONCLUSIONS: QUERYING SUBALTERN MEMORY

We experience our present . . . in a context which is causally connected with past events and objects, and hence with reference to events and objects which we are not experiencing when we are experiencing the present . . . Present factors tend to influence—some might say distort—our recollections of the past, but also because past factors tend to influence, or distort, our experiences of the present. (Connerton 1989, 2)

As indicated in the above quote, memory is an inherently affective form of knowing. It moves across time and space, and, as a result, is constantly in a state of becoming. Consequently, this essay has attempted to understand how partition memory is produced and reproduced throughout time and space despite originating in particular sites of cultural trauma. Through the lens of *Remembering the Crooked Line*, this essay retraced the aesthetic and affective production of “subaltern memory” as it was traced across geographic and emotive borders through the work of cultural producer, Pritika Chowdhry. Therefore the following questions remain: What is the role of transnational circuits of production and consumption in producing these overlapping geographies of memory? How, for example, do our memories move, emotionally and geographically, across national, material, and psychic borders? Do “subaltern” (read: counter-hegemonic) remembrances force our own memories of certain events, histories, and experiences to move or change, or move us in an emotional sense as human beings?

As significant literature on affect continues to circulate out of queer studies (Sedgwick 2003; Halberstam 2005; Ahmed 2004; Cvetkovich 2003; Muñoz 2009; Gopinath 2010), I would like to conclude by turning to Jasbir Puar’s text, *Terrorist Assemblages* (2007), to address the interplay between Spivak’s subaltern subject and the transnational circulation of subaltern memory post-9/11. Specifically, I would like to gesture towards querying subaltern memory by attending to Puar’s engagement with subaltern memory as it operates (however unacknowledged) throughout her textual analyses of the terrorist body in relationship to Deleuze’s theory of the rhizome. For instance, how do subaltern, or counter-memories, foster affective attachments through intersecting nodes of traumatic rupture and remembrance across disparate sites of memory?

According to Puar's conclusions, the terrorist corporeality resonates across time and space. Operating as an assemblage, the terrorist body is transformed by all that it comes into contact with, and, as a result, transforms all that it touches long after it ceases to exist, biologically-speaking (ibid., 216–17). At a cellular level, Puar (ibid., 217) describes the process of the assemblage as an exchange, the intermixing of bodily parts and fluids as the terrorist's body explodes in fulfillment of its political mission. At the metaphysical level, the assemblage represents the transformation of the physical human body from an agent of life, to a weapon—an agent of mass destruction, denoting the limits between life and death, blood and bone, human and machine (ibid., 216–17). As a result, terrorist corporealities change as they travel and reverberate across time and space, re-mapping particular sets of past events and historical conditions onto present-day and future geographies. Accordingly, Puar's theorization of the terrorist body—in particular, the suicide-bomber—mandates subsequent analyses of subaltern memory as both are marked by the convergence of ghosts inciting colonial and postcolonial pasts, past- and present-day traumas.

Given that I began this journey into subaltern remembrances by revisiting Spivak's example of Bhuvanewari Bhaduri, a young-female anti-colonial nationalist who commits suicide in order to deflect an assassination mission, I would like to end by suggesting that both the terrorist assemblage and the subaltern remembrance are inherently comprised of a desire to *re-member*. As Puar (ibid., 218) appears to concur: "Suicidal resistance is a message inscribed on the body when no other means will get through."¹² Thus, existing in the present moment as extensions of past times and places, both the terrorist assemblage and subaltern remembrance utilize their corporeality as a means to re-produce history (time), geography (space), and memory (time and place) well into the future. Consequently, both are essential to the transnational circulation of post/colonial memories, particularly post-9/11. In other words, these assemblages underscore the uneven boundaries erected between self and other, East and West, as memories of past trauma are revived, revisited, and recreated across uneven geographies of present-day trauma perpetrated throughout the war on terror.

To summarize, it is not my aim here to conflate political acts of terrorism with the political act of self-immolation, although I realize that the example of Bhaduri blurs this distinction. Nor am I attempting to equate terrorist motivation with subalternity to justify terrorism as a

viable form of political communication. I do, however, think that Puar's notion of the terrorist, or queer assemblage, locates a distinct starting point and springboard for future discussion of subaltern, or counter-memory, and (traumatic) affect, as it pushes us to re-theorize memory as geographically bounded, or as simply the byproduct of historical events. Both the terrorist assemblage and subaltern remembrance aim to undo hegemonic forms of knowing and being, regardless of whether we agree with their methods. Subaltern memories serve to remind us how past times, spaces and places, haunt our present-day landscapes, material and psychic. Consequently, we must move towards a theory of memory not only as a physical assemblage of past times and places, but as a geopolitical affect that helps mediate our future. As Gordon (1997, 22, italics added) offers,

To be haunted and to write from that location, to take on the condition of what you study, is not a methodology or a consciousness that you can simply adopt or adapt as a set of rules or an identity; it produces its own insights and blindneses. Following the ghosts is about making a contact that changes you and refashions the social relations in which you are located. It is about putting life back in only where a *vague memory* or a *bare trace* was visible to those who bothered to look. It is sometimes about writing ghost stories, stories that not only repair representational mistakes, but also strive to understand the conditions under which a memory was produced in the first place, toward a counter-memory, for the future.

In the end, ghosts are unable to provide us with the truth of our experiences; rather it is the *memories* of those truths that ghosts can unearth. Accordingly, all memories, counter- or otherwise, are always in process of becoming.

NOTES

- 1 As a recent example of this intellectual shift, see *Lines of Control: Partition as a Productive Space*, a collaborative exhibition among artists and scholars seeking to represent and study partition memory in and across a variety of global sites. For more information, please see the exhibition catalog (Johnson Museum of Art 2012). *Lines of Control*, the exhibition, opened in 2009 with showings in London, Dubai, and Karachi. The exhibition was recently displayed at Cornell University from January-April 2012.

- 2 Invoking the scholarship of Cathy Caruth (1995, 1996) and Ruth Leys (2000), I frame the 1947 partition of India as “unclaimed experience,” or as an experience beyond a normative framework of comprehension. As a result, the trauma that was India’s partition can only be understood through the event’s subsequent remembrances in relation to other spaces and times of trauma, and their equally traumatized geographies. Thus, it is through trauma’s need to be recalled beyond the here and now of its temporal and spatial existence that acts as precursor to a “queer” reframing of partition memory and its related geographies (cf. Edkins 2003). Building upon Ann Cvetkovich’s (2003) critique of the aforementioned psychoanalytical approaches to trauma—namely, the individual and medicalized trajectory applied to studies of traumatic memory—my mobilization of the term aims to conjoin both the psychoanalytic and social constructionist approaches, thus moving trauma beyond individual, or privatized experiences, in order to account for collective and social experiences of trauma and its subsequent remembrances, albeit individual and collective (cf. Yusin 2009).
- 3 For a discussion of collective memory, please see Connerton (1989) and Halbwachs (1992). I use the term here to connote both the summation of individual recollections to form generally accepted social narratives surrounding certain historic events, as well as to indicate the socially constructed nature of individual and cultural memory in relation to present-day contexts and social-relations. Also see Winter and Emmanuel 1999 for an important critique of and departure from Halbwach’s Durkheimian model of a collective conscious.
- 4 See palimpsestic time in Alexander 2005. Alexander builds upon the idea of “ideological trafficking” from Payal Banerjee, in order to address the non-linear histories of post/colonial experiences and their manifestation in contemporary time-space.
- 5 Although the mentioned authors do not foreground memory within their theorizations of queer times and spaces, they nevertheless offer a way forward to re-frame theorization of time and space within studies of memory more broadly, by mapping the affective and emotional realms of identity and subjectivity that undermine linear or fixed conceptions of time-spaces—past, present, and future.
- 6 The above term is defined in Radstone and Hodgkin (2006, 1–2). As the authors offer: “Knowledge/power relations [that] cannot be equated with . . . regimes of subjectivity . . . The study of regimes of memory . . . complicate[s] as well as . . . deepen[s] our understanding of related regimes—for instance, of subjectivity, of history, or of the mind.” My usage of the term here aims to build upon Radstone and Hodgkin’s theorization by evoking the sense with which certain memories evolve into “cultures of memory” within local and global contexts. As such, more well-known memory cultures become the prism through which lesser-known memory cultures become narrated through, or even against. Also see Levy and Sznajder (2006) for their related theorization of the Holocaust as cosmopolitan memory.
- 7 Throughout my analysis, I utilize the term remembrance as a symptom of ongoing exchange between individual and collective modes of memory-making. For example, Jenny Edkins (2003, 28–31) characterizes processes of remembering as individual recollections of past experiences in and through present-day re-narrations of past events, including past selves, as they change over time through cultures of commemoration, such as historical museums, or through public discourse. Consequently, I articulate remembrances here as an active and ongoing form of memory-making where both individual and collective narratives of memory move and are moved by and through time and space, thus (re-) creating narratives of the past in the present-day in an effort to make sense of the present-past; in other words, understanding remembrance as a theory of undoing and becoming.
- 8 Foucault’s notion of counter-memory can be read twofold. First, as a genealogical approach to historical memory, which—rather than viewing the past as frozen or disassociated from the present through the linear progression, or distancing of time through space—underscores the oscillating movement of events and subjectivities. Secondly, Foucault’s argument towards a theory of counter-memory seeks alternative accounts or interpretations of the historical record, which, in true poststructuralist form, he criticizes for its inherent quest for knowable truths.
- 9 For a fuller engagement with Chowdhry’s previous *Partition Memorial Project* installations, including an in-depth analysis of child’s play as it is mobilized throughout the artist’s work, see Micieli-Voutsinas, forthcoming-a.
- 10 In an interesting aside, the artist’s original title for “The Shadow Lines” was, in fact, “The Kite Runner,” thus noting the artist’s conscious connection to Hosseini’s novel (Chowdhry 2010a).
- 11 An essay addressing this very theme is currently in progress: “Nodes of Memory: Transnational Archives of Trauma after 9/11” by Jacque Micieli-Voutsinas and Soumitree Gupta.

- 12 During the spring of 2011, several months after this essay was initially written, the Arab spring came to fruition. I would like to acknowledge the initial catalyst for this historic movement of dissent across the Middle-East and North Africa: the actions of a young Tunisian man who self-immolates by setting himself on fire as a result of the crippling economic prospects he faced even as a university graduate. In connection to my analysis, this man's actions are a clear example of how the body is utilized materially and politically in subaltern modes of resistance. Furthermore, his death was and continues to be produced and felt affectively across disparate geographies and political contexts as a means to incite further, future resistance.

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