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In Defiance of the State: The Nehru Era and Satyajit Ray's films

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Dr Suman Ghosh

Senior Lecturer in Film and Screen Studies

Department of Film, Media and Creative Computing, School of Humanities and Cultural Industries, Bath Spa University, Newton St. Loe, Bath, BA2 9BN, United Kingdom

Email: s.ghosh@bathspa.ac.uk Telephone: 01225 876359

Abstract

In his first decade (1955-64) as a filmmaker, Satyajit Ray directed ten feature films, one 'feature-length anthology' film (*Three Daughters*, 1961), and a documentary on the poet Rabindranath Tagore. This prolific phase includes many of his better remembered films, including the *Apu Trilogy*, *The Music Room* and *The Lonely Wife*. This is also the final decade of the premiership of Jawaharlal Nehru, post-Independence India's first prime minister, whose support for Ray's films was both personal and institutional.

This essay challenges the predominant scholarship on Ray's early films as the cinema of the Nehruvian establishment whose lyrical quality avoided the harshness of Indian rural and urban reality. It argues that these films, while being clearly influenced by Nehru's vision, reveal an increasing uneasiness with the Nehruvian ideology of nation-building led by an industrial economy. This uneasiness spreads to other consequences of Nehruvian policy, including the high investments in nuclear technology amidst the increasing unemployment of the late 1950s, followed by the economic depression of the 1960s. Far from being a cinema of the establishment, it is possible to read these films as critiques of the Nehruvian state, and of the social inequities it fostered that threatened to polarise Indian society.

Keywords

Indian cinema - Satyajit Ray - Jawaharlal Nehru - Rabindranath Tagore - rural development - nuclear energy

In Defiance of the State: The Nehru Era and Satyajit Ray's films

‘I admired Nehru, I understood him better, because I am also in a way a kind of product of East and West. A certain liberalism, a certain awareness of Western values and a fusion of Eastern and Western values was in Nehru... as a man, I always understood what Nehru was doing, as I understood what Tagore was doing -- because you can't leave Tagore out of this, it's a triangle.’ - Satyajit Ray¹

‘Since Tagore's centenary was due in 1961, a committee was formed in 1959 to prepare the celebrations. The name of Satyajit Ray... came up during early discussions about the production of a biographical film on Tagore. ... At a meeting of the committee, someone... put in the objection that Ray, not being an historian, was an unsuitable person to direct the Tagore film. The committee member who grasped the fallacy of such a view was Jawaharlal Nehru. He put down his foot, reportedly saying: 'We don't need an historian. What we need is an artist!' Having seen Pather Panchali, Nehru could speak for Ray and say: 'Satyajit Ray is that. I don't think any historian should interfere.’ –Marie Seton²

As post-Independence India's first Prime Minister from 1947 till his death in 1964, Jawaharlal Nehru's (1889-1964) vision of India had a far-reaching impact on Indian politics, society, economy, industry, art and culture. His personal and institutional support for Satyajit Ray's films has frequently polarised critical writing on Ray's work. Since the 1970s many scholars of Indian film have defined Ray's early films as the axis around which a cinema of the ‘establishment’ emerged, because of their supposed compatibility with Nehruvian ideology, and the government's appreciation of their success in film festivals abroad by decorating Ray with state honours. Ray's silence on the matter, punctuated by his occasional acknowledgement in interviews that he was more comfortable with the modernist East-West synthesis idealised in Nehruvian thought than with the Gandhian vision of a traditionalist India, gave credence to these arguments.

It was their shared admiration for the work of the Indian literary poet and novelist Rabindranath Tagore which provided common ground for the interaction between Nehru, the veteran politician and Ray, the young film director. In an interview with Ray for a radio biography on Tagore's centenary, Nehru went so far as to declare that even though he was close to Gandhi, his 'mind was a little more in tune with Tagore.'³ This radio biography was devised, written and produced by Ray for India's national broadcaster All India Radio and also included interviews with novelist EM Forster, Argentine poet Victoria Ocampo and the philosopher S. Radhakrishnan, who would become India's president the following year.

Ray's association with Nehru began with his first film *Pather Panchali*, which received the Best Human Document award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1956. The film was screened in Cannes only after Nehru overruled opposition within his own government⁴ and approved the exhibition of *Pather Panchali* at the festival.⁵ Later, the Indian bureaucracy's hesitation in responding to requests for prints of the film for screenings abroad ended only when Nehru personally intervened and wrote a letter instructing the Indian government's ministry of external affairs 'to acquire copies of *Pather Panchali* to circulate to Indian embassies abroad'.⁶

On the strength of Nehru's personal endorsement and the continued international success of Ray's films over the next few years,⁷ it became possible for the 'Nehruite intelligentsia' to view art-house realist films represented by *Pather Panchali* as 'an alternative ambition ... it offered a new sense of the past against

which post-war/post-Independence reconstruction could be attempted, presenting itself as an explicitly 'independent' cinema but nevertheless one that located Indian nationalism as itself a kind of Third World counterpart of western modernism. ... The mid-1950s were the years when the government... was faced with the sharpest divide yet between the commercial mainstream 'Hindi film' on the one side and 'Satyajit Ray' cinema on the other.'⁸

While the Nehruite intelligentsia found in Ray's international fame a convenient argument for citing his films as examples of the success of the Nehruvian project, his critics then and later found it equally convenient to offer generalised and reductionist views on these films, sometimes with a creative use of the passive voice.

'It has been argued that the films between 1955 and 1964 strongly endorsed Jawaharlal Nehru's vision of nation-building, which Ray greatly admired then. There is certainly evident in his early cinema an idealism that borders on the romantic as Ray upholds values such as education (*Aparajito*, *The Unvanquished*, 1956), the family as a social unit (*Pather Panchali*), and the emancipation of women (*Mahanagar*, 1963; *Charulata*, 1964) while he critiques feudalism (*Jalsaghar*, *The Music Room*, 1958) and orthodoxy (*Devi*, *The Goddess*, 1960), which stand in the way of an apparently progressive modernity (*Ganguly 6*). It is this body of work that has been described as "an enlightened liberal's perception of the history of modern India" (Bandyopadhyay v), in which Ray envisions the modern as emerging from a dynamic relationship with history where there are no violent ruptures but only lessons from the past and present.' - Brinda Bose.⁹

These easy generalisations contribute to a broader argument by a section of critics that in his first decade, Ray is absorbed in creating timeless masterpieces whose lyricism is a distraction from the 'violent ruptures' and despair of the post-independence times in which they were made. Put bluntly, their argument is that the

films of Ritwik Ghatak and other film directors (particularly those allied with the IPTA) captured the anguish of their time but were overlooked because they did not conform to the Nehruvian project, for which predicament, they imply, Ray is responsible. For example, in *The Cinematic Imagination*, the author Viridi uses the third person in a manner strikingly similar to Bose, and describes Ghatak as ‘a superb filmmaker in his own right— from whom many believe Satyajit Ray undeservingly stole the spotlight and title of “the master” of Indian cinema’.¹⁰

Neither Ray nor Ghatak lacked the refinement or the film sense that eluded some of their critics. While Ray rued that Ghatak was ‘largely ignored by the Bengali film public in his lifetime’ and received ‘generally lukewarm reception from professional film critics’, he regarded Ghatak as ‘one of the few truly original talents in the cinema’ in India who was ‘in a class by himself’ and ‘virtually unsurpassed in Indian cinema as a creator of powerful images in an epic style.’ For Ray, Ghatak’s ability to avoid the influence of other schools of film making, except for the ‘occasional echo of classical Soviet cinema’, distinguished him from other directors. ‘For him Hollywood might not have existed at all,’ Ray says, in an observation which is particularly significant because of Ray’s own cultural ‘debt’ to the films of Capra, Wilder and other directors of Hollywood’s classical period, especially in his use of film technique.¹¹ Ghatak, on the other hand, declared in his direct, grand and unambiguous way that he believed ‘Satyajit Ray, and only Satyajit Ray in India, in his more inspired moments, can make us breathtakingly aware of truth’.¹² Though Ghatak later chided Ray for his ‘clinically disinfected realism of poverty’,¹³ their ideological differences never descended into the personal.¹⁴

Ghatak was a member of the Indian Communist Party¹⁵ and was involved closely with its cultural wing, the Indian Peoples Theatre Association since 1948. His ideological position was very different to Ray's, who kept a studied distance from party politics all his life. Ray's association with Nehru and his daughter Indira was personal rather than political, and his success with domestic audiences in Bengal and in the international art house circuit made him a widely feted establishment figure, admired both for the quality and the frequency of his output as a director. While Ray's oeuvre in the Nehru years included ten feature films, three short films and a documentary till 1964, Ghatak directed his first complete film *Nagarik* in 1952 three years earlier than Ray, but had only six feature films to his credit since 1964.¹⁶ In the post Nehru years, he made only two more feature films before he died in 1977. Ray was reputed for his humanistic films with universal themes, and his adaptation of literary classics. Ghatak's films featured nostalgic narratives about the open wounds of India's partition and the struggle faced by the millions who had been displaced by it. Ray's success story, mainstream acceptability and suave demeanour made him a politically convenient poster boy for the Nehruvian establishment, while Ghatak's inconsistent output, box office failures and alcoholism made him a marginal outsider who was out-of-tune with the government's preferred images of success.

These images of success were part of the Nehru administration's persistent attempts to cultivate and project abroad an image of 'modern India' far removed from the stereotypes of the colonial era and the Orientalist discourses that accompanied them. Ray's sense of comfort as a product of the East and the West suited this new vision of 'modern' India which had progressive values and an internationalist outlook,

a vision conceived and cherished by Nehru himself.¹⁷ He became Nehru's favoured cultural ambassador.

Ray's international profile, however, did not make his relationship with the Indian government any easier. In fact, he seems to have been distinctly unpopular with some sections of Nehru's government and was rescued from difficult situations only because of his personal rapport with the Prime Minister. As Penelope Gilliatt observed in the *New Yorker*:

'When Satyajit Ray made *The Goddess*... it was banned for export because the Indian Government thought its candour about the power of superstition in India might harm their country's name abroad. The man who lifted the ban was Nehru himself.'¹⁸

Ray's narratives of India repeatedly challenged, rather than endorsed the Nehruvian vision of modern India, but their exhibition was unhindered by governmental disapproval because of Nehru's personal admiration for Ray and his work.¹⁹ The government did not spare any effort to bring Ray into the fold of its narrative, but without much success. Ray's biographer Marie Seton recalls an incident in May 1961 in Ray's hotel in Delhi when Nehru's daughter, Mrs Indira Gandhi, asked him 'if he would be interested to make a film on Social Welfare, because she had been responsible for obtaining the funds for such a film. Satyajit... said, instantly and simply, 'No, because I'm not interested.' He knew Indira Gandhi would understand'.²⁰ The following year, Mrs Gandhi's secretary Usha Bhagat brought him to him a proposal for a documentary film on contemporary India for the New York World Fair which Ray rejected 'on the grounds that he was not a documentary director'.²¹ However, Ray did agree in principle to make a short film for Nehru in

January 1963 during India's war with China. This film would be 'nothing very elaborate, something simple and effective, and something which-- very important this-- directly helps Panditji. To me this is the only worthwhile subject for a short at this juncture. My own wish is to see Nehru, talk to him, and get him to appear in the film.' Despite meetings between Ray and Nehru over Christmas 1962 and the New Year 1963 in Tagore's Santiniketan, and then in Technicians' Studio, Kolkata where Ray had begun shooting his next film *Mahanagar*, the film could not be made.²²

This list of unrealised projects chronicles Ray's steadfast unwillingness to be incorporated into the folds of the Nehruvian narrative despite his personal affinity towards Nehru.²³ Scholars of Indian film have frequently mistaken the one for the other in their cursory summaries of Ray's films as examples of Nehruvian ideology. Even as he held meetings with Nehru in 1962, Ray's *Kanchenjunga*, a film based on his own story which clearly articulated his personal discontent with Nehruvian ideologies of development, had already been released. The film, Ray's first in colour, was one his rare failures at the box office. While critics were confused by its challenging narrative style, describing it as 'anti film' and 'lightweight',²⁴ they largely ignored (or did not recognise) the film's discourse on conflicting ideologies of development.²⁵

Kanchenjunga was not the first film where Ray voiced his disaffection with Nehruvian ideology. Ray's discomfort with the Nehruvian agenda surfaced three years earlier, with the opening scene in *The World of Apu*, the final film of his celebrated Apu Trilogy.

The World of Apu

Unlike the first two films of the Apu trilogy,²⁶ the opening sequence of *Apu Sansar* (*The World of Apu*, 1959) begins on a discordant note. Apu has finished his intermediate level studies and is looking for employment. He collects a ‘character certificate’ from his college tutor who regrets he cannot study for a Bachelor’s degree because of the expense, and advises him not to give up on his love of writing. His tutor opens the door, and Apu walks out into the blazing Kolkata sun, while cries of *Inquilab Zindabad* (‘long live the revolution’,²⁷) from a passing demonstration fill the air.²⁸

Apu’s search for employment takes him to a primary school where he is considered overqualified for a teaching position, and a pharmaceutical factory, where the sight of labourers labelling medicines in a dimly lit room stirs in him a youthful refusal to accept that his future would be no better than theirs. His idealism, however, further limits his choices as he refuses a salaried position in the railways because they were recruiting staff to replace striking workers whose contracts were being terminated. Till such time as he finds a job, he is content to provide private tuition to students for a paltry sum of fifteen rupees per month which scarcely pays the rent for his shabby one room apartment.

Even though the story is set in 1943, the theme is strangely topical in 1959, when the film is released. India became free from British rule in 1947, but the enthusiasm of the first decade of independence did little to quell the growing

disaffection among West Bengal's youth, who faced an uphill struggle against rising unemployment and limited opportunities. While *Pather Panchali* and *Aparajito* both agreed with a central idea of the Nehruvian project that formal education would provide direction for the future prosperity of the nation and its citizens, *Apur Sansar* questions the value of this premise in a society where the ranks of the educated unemployed swelled steadily. A study of three surveys of unemployment in Kolkata in the 1950s reveals that '...unemployment rates were low for illiterate unskilled manual workers and high for literate and educated non manual workers, so that the situation of the educated unemployed in Calcutta was already one of crisis in the 1950s. The highest unemployment rates affected the younger age groups, 16-20 and 21-25.'²⁹

In *Apur Sansar*, Ray had made much more than an adaptation of Bibhutibhushan's classic Bengali novel.³⁰ What had emerged instead was a modern film in tune with the disaffection of Bengal's educated unemployed youth, for whom the fruits of independence were beginning to taste sour. Unlike *Aparajito*, *Apur Sansar* was a resounding commercial success.

This theme is reiterated throughout the film. In the beginning of the film Apu, in his spare time, is an aspiring author of a semi-autobiographical novel whose protagonist is someone like himself, a poor but talented, sensitive and ambitious village boy who refuses to follow the path of priesthood that had been the livelihood of his forefathers, instead opting for a love of learning and an education which opens a different world to him. In this brave new world rationality triumphed over

superstition, scientific reason was supreme and he would always fight every challenge life threw at him. This idea of education is clearly Nehruvian.³¹

The affinity towards the Nehruvian model of education³² also accounts for Apu's reluctance to become an office clerk, a position which symbolised a different system of education which began in the 19th century in which young Indians were taught the virtues of the English language and encouraged to become docile, obedient 'babus' who served across the middle and lower rungs of the colonial administration. This form of school and college education, which was first conceived in Thomas Babington Macaulay's tract on education, was devised to create (in Macaulay's famous words) 'a class of interpreters' between the British rulers and their Indian subjects.³³ Apu is disinclined to become one of this class of 'interpreters'. He would prefer to chart the course of his own journey himself.

Apu takes his manuscript with him wherever he goes, even on his aimless travels after the death of his wife. On a clear dawn, surrounded by mountains watching the sunrise across a valley, in a moment where the background music invokes a sacred chant, Apu lets go the pages of his manuscript and watches them as they drift down into the valley below. With this act, Apu has severed his final link with his past. Even more, he has rejected a world view and a belief system based on the premise of education, self improvement and ambition, which is central to the Nehruvian policy of nation building.

In the final reference to the Nehruvian project, Apu accepts a job in a coal mine far from the city of Kolkata, in a self imposed exile. The coal mine, central to the Nehruvian project of industrialisation,³⁴ appears in the film as a desolate land, inhabited by machines and human beings whose machine like existence is regulated by the sound of the industrial siren. Far from being a sophisticated industrial space in which technically qualified graduates with higher degrees provide leadership for the nation-building project, the coal mine is portrayed as an alienating space where an unemployed and directionless Apu gets a job as a manager, in an environment devoid of creativity or development where the future appears bleak.³⁵ The music of tribal people in the background is a constant reminder of the previous cultural vibrancy of the locals who have now been colonised by industrial forces that are too powerful to resist.

The Nehruvian project was elaborately conceived, and included building both industries and the training infrastructure required for their efficient performance. The leadership for industry would be provided by trained graduates from premier engineering colleges, including the newly established Indian Institutes of Technology.³⁶ However, even as these institutions worked towards achieving academic excellence, their graduates were left to compete with another, more privileged group, comprising those who returned to India with engineering degrees from British or German universities. Apu's friend Pulu³⁷ and Banerjee, the young engineer in *Kanchenjunga*, wear their suits with ease, their places in Nehru's India secured by their British engineering degrees. Nehru was a patriot, but an Anglophile and internationalist in equal measure³⁸ and this broad range of sympathies reflected the thinking of significant sections of the upper and 'decision making' classes of

independent India, compounding the complexities of an increasingly difficult situation in the industrial sector. India was independent, but the language of its corporate and bureaucratic elite was still English, their education Anglophilic and their codes of behaviour Western, even though their thinking and allegiance was undoubtedly Indian. Their cultural distance with the masses they governed increased steadily.

India's elite, and the aspirants to that status, were hardly unaware of this distance. As Banerjee says in *Kanchenjunga*, his place of work--- where he had already been offered an impressive starting salary on the strength of his British engineering degree--- will be beautiful but secluded, surrounded by hills, with his quarters overlooking a lake. He could tell even without living there that it would be lonely, without any of his own kind, and he would 'prefer loneliness to uncongenial company'.³⁹ He firmly believes in the 'immediate uses' and 'tangible results' of his engineering profession and prides himself on being able to use materials and manpower to build dams across rivers in order to increase agricultural yield. In his proudly utilitarian and comfortably gendered world, women practice the arts, which is a sphere exclusive from that of men who are engineers, doctors and politicians, in charge of 'down to earth and practical things' like 'budgets, calculations and profits'. With remarkable self-assurance, even before he has begun working, he proclaims that he has a 'bright future'.

In his Anglophile sensibilities and his sense of entitlement, Banerjee is the true cultural successor to Indranath, a retired senior bureaucrat whose allegiance is firmly

on the side of his erstwhile British masters even though he expresses smug satisfaction over ‘enjoying the fruits of independence’. Ray’s early 1960s films increasingly refer to the gap between classes and the insularity of the elite towards the disaffection of the masses, including the youth, as a disconcerting feature of the Nehru era and its inability to sever ties with India’s class-ridden colonial past.

Unkept promises

In 1961, Rabindranath Tagore’s birth centenary was celebrated across India. It received significant patronage from the Nehru government, but more significantly, became the first major nationwide cultural event with popular appeal. Tagore’s poems, novels and essays were translated in many languages, his plays staged, his songs performed by artistes across the country, his paintings exhibited, and collections of his works published and widely sold. A generation of new artistes and performers attained stardom on the strength of their renderings of his compositions. The Gramophone Company of India published a special set of recordings of his music in vinyl records, the jacket covers for which were designed by some of India’s most celebrated painters. India’s embassies abroad and Tagore’s admirers across the world held special exhibitions showcasing his work. Many of his short stories and novels were adapted into films, and these steadily remained popular at the box office throughout the first part of the 1960s.

In 1960, Ray directed *Devi*, which was an adaptation of a story by Prabhatkumar Mukhopadhyay based on a plot suggested to him by Tagore. Ray’s first

‘direct’ film adaptation of Tagore’s work was *Teen Kanya (Three Daughters, 1961)*⁴⁰ which comprised three short films based on three short stories by Tagore. The first, *The Postmaster*, featured a young urban man’s experience of working in a rural post office where he survives an attack of malaria under the care of an orphaned girl, before hastily retreating to the comfort of the city. The second, *Monihara* was a ghost story while the third, *Samapti* was a romantic comedy about young man with urban affectations, and a spirited girl from his village who (much to his mother’s consternation) did not conform to traditional expectations of a docile daughter-in-law.

*The Postmaster*⁴¹ is arguably one of Ray’s most powerful films in the first decade. The story of an urban youth’s inability to adapt to the rural environment in his job as a postmaster belies a much more complex discourse. Nanda, the newly appointed village postmaster, finds a way to break the monotony of his existence by offering free lessons to Ratan, an orphaned pre-teenage girl who does his housecleaning, washing and other chores. Ratan has a tuneful voice, is stoic to her own condition but empathetic to Nanda’s discomforts, and is a quick learner. She nurses Nanda through an attack of malaria, administering his quinine tablets without failure. Unlike previous postmasters who assaulted her,⁴² Nanda is kind to her and she even begins to believe in his declaration that she is ‘like his sister’. Then, as she does his chores one morning, a new postmaster arrives, and Ratan learns that Nanda had secured a transfer because, being city-bred, he was unable to adjust to the slow pace of village life. He had concealed the news of his departure from her. As he leaves, Nanda wants to give Ratan a tip. Shocked by his insensitivity, she rejects his money and walks away silently to attend on her new employer.

As he hands over charge of the post office to the new incumbent Nanda acknowledges to the new postmaster that he is troubled because he was leaving a ‘job unfinished’. This ‘incomplete project’ is of course, Ratan’s education. She had been an attentive pupil, but he had fallen short of his promise to teach her how to write conjoined consonants in the Bengali script⁴³ and take her education forward. He had led her to believe that he actually cared for her, while his educational project had merely been an excuse to break his own monotony. When the time came, he would thoughtlessly cast her aside and return to his comfort zone in the city.

The Postmaster is among Tagore’s early short stories, written in 1891. Three years earlier, his father Debendranath had executed the Trust Deed of the Santiniketan Trust in 1888. In 1890, Rabindranath took charge of the management of the Tagore estates with its headquarters at Shelidah in Eastern Bengal, and spent the summer at Santiniketan. In the winter of 1891, he supervised the consecration of the prayer hall at Santiniketan. His contact with rural Bengal was about to take a decisive turn as he persevered over the next three decades to set up a school and later, a university in Santiniketan that was built on a model of learning which drew on the Indian ‘tapovana’ and ‘ashram’ traditions, and developed an alternative system of education based on ‘creative thinking and reflective learning’⁴⁴ which brought students from all parts of India and many from abroad. The university was named Visva Bharati, literally translated as ‘the world in India’⁴⁵.

The Visva Bharati model did not merely seek to establish an urban intellectual and cultural ‘colony’ in the heartland of rural Bengal. In 1919, Tagore invited British

agronomist Leonard Elmhirst to begin work on a rural reconstruction centre at the village of Surul, adjacent to Santiniketan. In Tagore's vision the project would 'bring back life in its completeness into the villages making them self-reliant and self-respectful, acquainted with the cultural traditions of their own country, and competent to make an efficient use of the modern resources for the improvement of their physical, intellectual and economic condition.'⁴⁶ Over the next few years this project, named Sriniketan, saw the development of agricultural farms, dairy and poultry farming, cottage industries, sanitation and drainage systems to eradicate malaria, and offered healthcare and primary education, along with initiatives for rural development and economic self reliance which were led by a number of cooperative societies including a central cooperative bank. Tagore would persevere all his life to develop the educational project he had begun with a small school in Santiniketan. In this grand project, education would be applied to develop self-reliant societies. Unlike the 'postmaster' in his story, Tagore did not leave his self-appointed task of rural development unfinished.

Tagore's Visva Bharati received Nehru's active support throughout his life, even though it was different from the Nehru government's technology-driven model of education for independent India. 'I sent my daughter Indira to Santiniketan hoping she would imbibe something of the atmosphere of the place...'⁴⁷ Nehru noted later. However, the Nehru government's own preference was clearly for technology-based education, and was part of Nehru's efforts to project an alternative, modern image of contemporary India, shorn of the myths about rope tricks, elephants and snake charmers that had been perpetuated by Orientalist scholars and embedded in the Western psyche during three centuries of colonial rule. As part of this effort, Nehru

personally ensured unprecedented access to the Italian film director Roberto Rossellini for his film *India: Matri Bhumi (India: Motherland, 1959)*. Rossellini, one of the most famed directors of Italian Neo-Realist cinema, wanted to make a film reflecting his interest in the ‘actual and real India, not in exoticism and Western invented myths such as ‘spiritualism’ and other tourist attractions – ‘yoga, serpent charmers, rope climbers’. The film would ‘debunk the clichés and platitudes about India’, and would be an object exercise in ‘demystification’⁴⁸. As a mark of his intent, Rossellini’s film included an eighteen minute sequence about the building of the Hirakud Dam in Orissa, India, then the longest dam in the world and a showpiece of Nehruvian ideas of technological progress.⁴⁹

Though the Nehruvian narrative included an emphasis on the growth of self-reliant village communities, the planning and implementation of these projects seemed to ignore the real plight of India’s poor in the noble effort to improve agricultural yield, sometimes causing widespread devastation. More than 150,000 people were displaced by the Hirakud dam alone, two tehsildars ‘murdered by furious villagers, causing severe police repression’, factors which contributed to Orissa chief minister Nabakrishna Chaudhury’s resignation in 1956.⁵⁰ Rural India had been betrayed by the oversight of the same establishment which professed to protect its interests. The ongoing programmes of development were of little benefit to the hundreds of thousands of villagers who were displaced by grand projects of nation building.⁵¹ These projects sought to implement rural developmental programmes from a predominantly urban perspective. They were led by a privileged, insular class of people with urban backgrounds and sensibilities who provided social and cultural

leadership to the nation even though they were dissociated from the life experience of India's overwhelming village populations.

The Postmaster dismantles the carefully constructed visuals of the Indian village created in Ray's Apu films, *Jalsaghar*, and (to a limited extent) *Devi*. The village in Ray's *Postmaster* has none of the lyrical elements and visual splendour that are characteristic of images of rural Bengal in Ray's early films. There are no open skies, no expansive paddy fields, no fruit trees and blooming lotuses. This village is one in which the roads are slippery and waterlogged, infested with malaria,⁵² where old men of limited vision prevail and child labour and lack of education are part of daily life, where young girls like Ratan cannot escape servitude. This village is not a model of Nehruvian progress. It has no vision of the future, and has been abandoned by the city dweller who made false promises of development. Ratan's refusal of the postmaster's tip is symbolic. It would take much more than a gratuity of a few rupees to compensate for the hurt caused by this institutional betrayal of rural India during Nehru's premiership.

The Bird Man

Ray's 1962 film *Kanchenjunga* is a story, written by Ray himself, of an upper class Calcutta family on holiday in Darjeeling, the Himalayan hill resort which was a favourite summer retreat for the English ruling classes during the colonial era, and remained popular with Indian tourists after Independence. The narrative revolves largely around their preoccupation with marital discord and matchmaking even when

they are on holiday. Accompanying the family on this trip is ‘uncle’ Jagadish, who has a different interest. He is a birdwatcher, and rambles around Darjeeling trying intently to spot rare species of bird with his binoculars, and is seemingly unconnected to the two main storylines of the narrative, which include an unsuccessful proposal of marriage and the resolution of a marital crisis.

The birdwatching Jagadish is an unmistakable reminder of India’s celebrated ornithologist Salim Ali who was by this time a well decorated celebrity, and had been awarded the Padma Bhushan by the Indian government for his pioneering studies of Indian birds and his conservation efforts. He was also a particularly important figure in the Nehru era because of his personal friendship with Nehru, a connection that he sometimes utilised to establish conservation projects that would ensure protection of India’s wildlife, particularly its bird population.⁵³ The most well known among these projects is the bird sanctuary at Bharatpur in Rajasthan, which was secured for the state by Nehru’s personal intervention on Ali’s request after developers had threatened to take possession of it.⁵⁴ Nehru was a keen birdwatcher himself, like his daughter Indira, and had been friends with Ali who visited him occasionally when he served jail sentences as a political prisoner near Dehra Dun long before India’s independence in the 1930s.⁵⁵

The identification of Jagadish with Salim Ali is visually effected by equipping Jagadish with a suitable prop, a copy of Ali’s popular volume *The Book of Indian Birds*.⁵⁶ There is also a biographical similarity between the two men. Like Ali, Jagadish’s wife had died at a young age, and he had immersed himself in ornithology

after her passing. In a climactic scene, Jagadish questions the impact of human activity on natural phenomena. Fascinated by migratory birds, large populations of which fly into the Indian subcontinent every year to escape the harsh winters of central and eastern Europe, Jagadish wonders how they would respond to the rapid changes in environment caused by human activity in the quest for progress:

‘I have a fear. You may laugh at this, but it is a real fear. I lie awake at night and think of these nuclear tests being held, which fill the sky with tiny specks of poisonous radiation. I fear that one day I would find that the birds have not arrived. Maybe they have lost their minds and forgotten their way here. Maybe they have lost their special instinct. Or, what could be even worse is that somewhere during their journey they have all died and fallen one after another like drops of rain.’

Jagadish’s monologue is an articulation of a fundamental contradiction of the Nehruvian model of development. While the friendship with Salim Ali is symbolic of Nehru’s love of nature and his progressive attitudes towards conservation, the other great mascot of the Nehru era is the physicist Homi J. Bhabha, who was entrusted with the leadership of India’s ‘atomic energy’ programme by Nehru himself. One of Nehru’s lasting legacies in independent India was his advocacy of the nuclear programme. It was under Bhabha’s leadership that the atomic energy commission made its first advances towards nuclear testing and the use of nuclear power both for energy and defence purposes. The peaceful objectives of generating nuclear power to fulfil the increasing demands for energy ran concurrently with the possibility of using the same capability for developing nuclear weapons.

Nehru's own nuclear intentions were initially peaceful. 'We have declared quite clearly that we are not interested in and we will not make these bombs, even if we have the capacity to do so' he announced in a speech in the Indian parliament as late as 1957.⁵⁷ However, behind the scenes, the narrative had begun to change. By the late 1950s, for a number of political reasons⁵⁸ Nehru had begun to evaluate at least the possibility of developing a nuclear bomb.⁵⁹ Under Bhabha's advice, he was persuaded that increased investment in nuclear research would bring rapid progress and long term benefits to India's economy. Such was Nehru's faith in Bhabha that the investment in this sector was glaringly disproportionate at a time when the domestic economy was stagnating, and between 1954 and 1956, in Nehru's own estimation, the budget for atomic energy research had increased 12 fold.⁶⁰ As a result, 'by channelling India's capital investment into nuclear power before the rest of the national infrastructure and skilled manpower base had developed, Bhabha and Nehru imposed unintentionally high opportunity costs on the national economy.'⁶¹ Economic stagnation ensued, resulting in increased unemployment and youth disaffection, which built up steadily throughout the 1960s, fuelling a rise in militant Left wing politics, particularly in West Bengal.

Nehru was not untouched by the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki which were unleashed on a hapless Japanese population by the most progressive nation on earth.⁶² As Perkovich succinctly summarises, the duality in Nehruvian policy is indicative of two contrasting sides to Nehru's personality. 'The moralist visionary Nehru abhorred the wanton destructiveness of nuclear weapons and saw them as anathema to the unique spirit of India.... At the same time, however, there was another Nehru, the ambitious, realist prime minister who recognised that nuclear

weapon capability could enhance India's status and power in the Western-dominated world whose logic he understood well from his Cambridge education and his reading in science and European history'.⁶³

In Jagadish's monologue, Ray had deliberately juxtaposed two contradictory and equally powerful forces at the heart of Nehruvian policy, symbolised by Nehru's proximity to both Salim Ali and Homi Bhabha. The apparently 'lightweight' narrative of *Kanchenjunga* is, effectively, a criticism of the core values of Nehru's India which, fifteen years after independence, was still governed by hegemonic practices based on class prejudice, bureaucratic hierarchy, colonial attitudes, feudal mindsets and an insular approach towards poverty and marginal populations. Ray's *Kanchenjunga* portrayed an independent country where the educated urban ruling classes had reneged on their promises of rural development, where retired civil servants still wore their colonial titles with arrogance, and where a new generation of Western educated engineers prided themselves on their ability to build dams whose capacity for human and natural destruction on a massive scale was only matched by that of the nuclear plants in which the government had disproportionately invested.

Kanchenjunga is Ray's first film in colour, but he resisted the obvious temptation to portray Darjeeling as a pretty space where the flowers were in full bloom, because it did not match the mood of the story.⁶⁴ The city dwellers of his story are too self-absorbed, too preoccupied with their own problems to respond to the beauty of nature surrounding them. In a retribution that is 'natural', they are denied the sight of Darjeeling's chief attraction: a view of the snow-capped mountain peaks

including the Kanchenjunga, which remain under a cloud cover that lifts only at the end after the actors have left the scene.

Epilogue

In a speech titled ‘Social Aspects of Small and Big Projects’, which he delivered to Central Board of Irrigation and Power in November 1958, Nehru regretted the increasingly glaring failures of his own project of nation building.⁶⁵ Deploring what he called the ‘disease of gigantism’, Nehru said: ‘We want to show that we can build big dams and do big things. This is a dangerous outlook developing in India... the idea of having big undertakings and doing big tasks for the sake of showing that we can do big things is not a good outlook at all,’ he declared, suggesting instead that ‘small schemes’ built on ‘public cooperation’ had much more ‘social value’, were ‘efficient’ and would obtain ‘rapid results’.⁶⁶

Historian Ramachandra Guha argues persuasively that Nehru’s thoughts here are ‘unprompted’. There had been no protests on the streets to trigger this shift in his position. These were ‘the self-correcting thoughts of a man who was a thinker before he was a Prime Minister’.⁶⁷ Nehru’s grand vision of ‘modern India’ had become much bigger than its original architect, and the builders of the new nation had erected a superstructure that increasingly overshadowed even the all powerful Nehru in the last decade his premiership. In his final years Nehru would visit Tagore’s Santiniketan on holiday, the kind of self-sustaining, viable project built on ‘public cooperation’ with discernable ‘social value’ that he now preferred, far away from the gigantic schemes

of colossal dams and nuclear reactors which had spiralled beyond his control. Nehru in this final phase was a statesman far distant from the Nehruvian system that he had once sought to create.

Ray and Nehru found common ground in their connection with Tagore's vision of India, in a friendship that lasted till Nehru's death in 1964. While Ray's films were increasingly critical of the Nehruvian system's claims of 'development' throughout the 1950s and in the early 1960s, he remained willing to make a film to 'help Panditji' despite turning down other projects from Nehru's government.

The influence of Nehru's vision notwithstanding, Ray's early films are not the cinema of the Nehruvian establishment and their ideology of 'modernity'. It is possible to argue that, on the contrary, they articulated the only sustained cinematic challenge faced by Nehruvian ideology during Nehru's lifetime, and did so, ironically, with the support of Nehru himself.

NOTES

¹ Cardullo, Bert ed. 2007. *Satyajit Ray: Interviews*, Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, p. 50. This interview with Folke Isaksson was first published in *Sight and Sound* in 1970.

² Seton, Marie. 2003. *Portrait of a Director: Satyajit Ray*. London: Penguin Books, p. 142

³ *Rabindranath Tagore - Radio Biography*. Written & Produced by Satyajit Ray. All India Radio. First broadcast on 10.05.1961.

⁴ Actor Utpal Dutt later remembered Ray's first recorded incident of friction with the Nehru government. 'All this began with Pather Panchali, which the highest executive of the Government of India saw in Calcutta and went red in the face. Fuming, he asked Mr Ray whether showing such poverty on celluloid would not bring India to disrepute in the eyes of

the world... Mr Ray's answer put the executive down immediately: if it is not disreputable for you to tolerate such poverty, why should it be disreputable of me to show it?' See Dutt, Utpal. 1994. *Towards a Heroic Cinema*, Calcutta: MC Sarkar, p. 33

⁵ 'Despite sustained opposition in both the West Bengal Government and in the Government of India in Delhi because of its depiction of poverty, *Pather Panchali* was sent to Cannes in 1956 with the personal approval of Jawaharlal Nehru, after important efforts on its behalf by Seton.' Robinson, Andrew. 2004. *Satyajit Ray; The Inner Eye: the Biography of a Master Filmmaker*, London: IB Tauris, p. 104

⁶ Seton, Marie. 2003. *Portrait of a Director: Satyajit Ray*. London: Penguin Books, 2003, p. 88

⁷ In his first decade Ray's films won awards at most major international film festivals including the Golden Lion of St Mark in Venice, two Palme d'or nominations in Cannes, three best film awards in Berlin, etc.

⁸ Rajadhyaksha, Ashish. 1997. 'India; Filming the Nation' in Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey ed. *Oxford History of World Cinema*, Oxford: OUP, p. 683

⁹ Bose, Brinda. 2008. 'Modernity, Globality, Sexuality, and the City: A Reading of Indian Cinema', in *The Global South*. Vol. 2 Issue 1. pp. 35-58; the quoted section is from p. 48.

¹⁰ Viridi, Jyotika. 2003. *The Cinematic Imagination: Indian Popular Films as Social History*, London: Rutgers, p. 52. Other pieces following similar lines of argument on Ray's identification with ideologies of Nehruvian 'modernism' include Rajadhyaksha, Ashish. 1993. 'Satyajit Ray, Ray-movie and Ray's films', *Journal of Arts & Ideas*, no. 23-24, pp. 7-16 and Kapur, Geeta. 1993. 'Cultural Creativity in the First Decade: the Example of Satyajit Ray', *Journal of Arts & Ideas*, no. 23-24, pp. 17-50, which argues cryptically that *Pather Panchali* 'provides a gloss on the civilizational trauma caused by progress' and 'sublimated (and displaced) the threat of modernization into a dream of autonomy' (p 20).

¹¹ Besides many essays in which he discussed his admiration of American films from the Classical period, Ray said sweepingly in his acceptance speech for the Oscar for lifetime achievement in 1992: 'I have learnt, everything I have learnt about the craft of cinema, from the making of American films'.

¹² Ghatak, Ritwik. 1987. *Cinema and I*, Calcutta: Ritwik Memorial Trust, p. 15

¹³ Ibid. p. 70

¹⁴ During Ghatak's times of difficulty Ray helped Ghatak get a lecturing position at the Film and Television Institute in Pune in 1965-6, 'where he made a big impact as a teacher and helped some of the aspiring film-makers.' See Robinson, Andrew. 2004. *Satyajit Ray; The Inner Eye: the Biography of a Master Filmmaker*, London: IB Tauris, p. 336.

¹⁵ Ghatak joined the Communist party of India in 1946 but was struck off from its membership in 1955. See Ghatak, Ritwik. 1987. *Cinema and I*, Calcutta: Ritwik Memorial Trust, pp. 107-109.

¹⁶ From 1951 -1964, Ghatak's output includes six feature films, one film advertisement, three documentaries, one test film and three incomplete feature films. After 1965, he directed two feature films, four documentaries, one short film, an incomplete feature film and two incomplete documentaries and supervised two student films. See Ghatak, Ritwik. 1987. *Cinema and I*, Calcutta: Ritwik Memorial Trust, pp. 112-139

¹⁷ During his visit to the USA for the Robert Flaherty Seminar in 1959, an American journalist reported: 'Ray is no dreaming dilettante. A strapping, swarthy chap, with strong features, he talks like a realistic poet, without the slightest foreign accent, looking fresh from the American gridiron'. See Seton, Marie. 2003. *Portrait of a Director: Satyajit Ray*. London: Penguin Books, p. 10

¹⁸ Das Gupta, Chidananda. 1981. *Satyajit Ray: An Anthology of Statements by Ray and on Ray*, New Delhi: Directorate of Film Festivals, p. 47

¹⁹ For example, Nehru instructed his daughter Indira to investigate the veracity of a formal complaint made against Ray's 1963 film *Mahanagar* to India's Central Board of Film Censors by a section of Indian politicians including a member of India's parliament. The film was passed after the charges of anti-Anglo-Indian-sentiment were found to be unfounded. See

Seton, Marie. 2003. *Portrait of a Director: Satyajit Ray*. London: Penguin Books, p. 236

²⁰ Seton, Marie. 2003. *Portrait of a Director: Satyajit Ray*. London: Penguin Books, p. 50

²¹ Ibid. p. 256

²² Ibid. p. 236

²³ After Nehru's death in 1964, Mrs Gandhi asked Ray to film the immersion of his ashes in the Ganges. This too was an unrealised project. Seton, Marie. 2003. *Portrait of a Director: Satyajit Ray*. London: Penguin Books, p. 236

²⁴ See Robinson, Andrew. 2004. *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye*, London: IB Tauris, p. 136

²⁵ See Ghosh, Suman: 'Development Dynamics in India: Two Examples, One Film; A Reading of Satyajit Ray's *Kanchenjunga*' in *Global Built Environment Review*, March-April 2004, vol 3, no. 3, pp. 15-23

²⁶ *Pather Panchali* begins with a typical scene in a Bengal village of a little girl stealing fruit while *Aparajito* begins with a train crossing the railway bridge on the river Ganga to the north Indian city of Varanasi, one of the most ancient holy cities for Hindus.

²⁷ An enduring legacy of India's freedom struggle, 'Inquilab Zindabad' (Long Live the Revolution) was a widely used slogan during the freedom movement, but after 1947 was appropriated by other protest movements, particularly Left wing political and youth movements.

²⁸ This sequence is absent in Bandyopadhyay's original novel *Aparajito*, where Apu is employed in a newspaper office when his friend Pulu (Pranab in the original novel) meets him.

²⁹ Lubell, Harold. 1974. *Calcutta: Its Urban Development and Employment Prospects*, Geneva: International Labour Office, pp. 54-55

³⁰ Anecdotally, *Apur Sansar* seems to have originated in a question Nehru asked Ray after the screening of *Aparajito*: 'So what happens to Apu now?' See Robinson, Andrew. 2011. *The Apu Trilogy: Satyajit Ray and the Making of an Epic*. London: IB Tauris, p. 127

³¹ 'Education will always have to think in terms of the millions of people, and not sacrifice their interests to any group or class' in order to build a society based on 'co-operation'. See Nehru, Jawaharlal in Agrawal, SP and Aggarwal, JC. eds. 1989. *Nehru on Social Issues*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing p. 113.

³² This early form of the 'Nehruvian model' of education had its origins much earlier in Tagore's model of education which were implemented in Santiniketan.

³³ Macaulay, Thomas Babington. 'Minute on Indian Education,' in Clive, John and Pinney, Thomas eds. 1972. *Selected Writings*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 249

³⁴ India has one of the world's largest coal reserves and coal mining was central to the energy requirements of the industrial economy envisaged by the Nehru administration. Though a large proportion of coal mines continued to be privately owned after India became independent, the government established the National Coal Development Corporation in 1956 in order to improve efficiency and increase output. NCDC was the first step towards the eventual state takeover of coal reserves in the 1970s.

³⁵ The coal mine episode is absent in the original novel by Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay.

³⁶ The first Indian Institute of Technology was established in Hijli in 1950, followed by four others between 1958 and 1961. From the beginning they had special status as institutes of 'national importance'.

³⁷ This too is a significant deviation from the original novel, where Apu's friend Pranab is a political activist, not an engineer.

³⁸ The dichotomy of patriotism and internationalism in Nehru's ideas is expressed succinctly in his tribute to Tagore: 'Nationalism is sometimes apt to become a narrowing creed. Tagore helped, to some extent, to break these barriers and yet he believed firmly in a people growing from their own soil and according to their own genius. He drew inspiration from outside sources. He loved the English language and took the trouble to learn German so that he could read Goethe and other great German writers in the original.' (see Nehru, Jawaharlal. 1961. 'Introduction', *A Centenary Volume: Rabindranath Tagore 1861-1941*, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, p. xv)

³⁹ Ray's 1965 film *Kapurush* features a manager in a tea plantation in the foothills of the Himalayas who explains his lack of 'company' because it is an 'unwritten law', created by the British colonial rulers of India, that the classes cannot mix. 'The law has been there for 150 years, so we cannot reverse it overnight', he says, adding that 'not challenging it makes life easier'.

⁴⁰ Screened as *Two Daughters* outside India (without *Monihara*).

⁴¹ Based on Tagore's short story of the same name, written in 1891.

⁴² Ratan tells Nanda that the previous postmaster used to physically beat her.

⁴³ Conjoined consonants or *juktakkhar* are a central feature of writing in the Bengali script.

⁴⁴ These phrases are translations of the Bengali '*kalpana*' and '*chinta*' used by Tagore to describe the pillars of an alternative system of education in his essay titled '*Shikkhar Herpher*' ('Differences in Education', 1892).

⁴⁵ This is a literal translation, with obvious limitations. The motto of Visva Bharati is 'Yatra Visvam Bhavatyekanidam', meaning 'where the world meets in a single nest', Bhattacharya, Kumkum. 2014. *Tagore: Adventure of Ideas and Innovative Practices in Education*, London: Springer, p. 57

⁴⁶ Tagore, Rabindra Nath in *Visva-Bharati Bulletin*, No. 11, 1928, p.1, quoted in Bhattacharya, Kumkum. 2014. *Tagore: Adventure of Ideas and Innovative Practices in Education*, London: Springer, p. 81

⁴⁷ Nehru, Jawaharlal. 1961. 'Introduction', *Rabindranath Tagore: A Centenary Volume*, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, p. xv

⁴⁸ See Miller, Sam. 2014. *A Strange Kind of Paradise: India Through Foreign Eyes*. London: Penguin Books, p. 353

⁴⁹ Despite his admirable intentions, Rossellini could not avoid the other clichés about India in his film, including monkeys, tigers and a twenty four minute sequence with an elephant.

⁵⁰ Das, Samarendra and Padel, Felix. 'Resettlement Realities: The Gulf between Policy and Practice' in Mathur, Hari Mohan ed. 2011. *Resettling Displaced People: Policy and Practice in India*, New Delhi: Routledge, p. 165

⁵¹ Two other Nehruvian projects, Bhakra-Nangal and Damodar Valley, resulted in the displacement of 36,000 and 93,000 people respectively. See Hill, Christopher. 2008. *South Asia: An Environmental History*. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, p. 189-190

⁵² Under Elmhirst's leadership, Tagore's programme of development in Surul began with medical care and the eradication of malaria. See Dasgupta, Tapati. 1993. *Social Thought of Rabindranath Tagore: A Historical Analysis*, New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, p. 134

⁵³ After India's independence, the reclusive Ali was keenly aware of the potential public consequences of his friendship with the Prime Minister. 'During his prime ministership I deliberately kept away from Jawaharlal as much as possible lest it be suspected that I had an axe to grind. ... this was a tactical blunder because with his sympathetic backing much could have been done to conserve wildlife and forests'. Ali said later. See Gandhi, Gopalkrishna. *Of a Certain Age: Twenty Life Sketches*. New Delhi: Viking p. 61

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 60-61

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 60-61

⁵⁶ Actor Anil Chatterjee later remembered that during the filming of a sequence with Jagadish, a man suddenly walked up to them from his seat in the Mall in Darjeeling, and insistently offered to help with finding birds. Ray asked Chatterjee to persuade him to leave, only for Chatterjee to discover that the man was Salim Ali himself. See Chatterjee, Anil. 'Chitranatya-i onekta abhinoy kore rakhe' in *Desh*, 28 March 1992, p. 91

⁵⁷ Quoted in Perkovich, George. 2001. *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, London: University of California Press, p. 13

⁵⁸ This includes a threat from the USA to terminate aid because of India's pursuit of nuclear energy (Perkovich, p 22) and, from 1954, increased American military assistance to Pakistan (Perkovich, p 23).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 34-36

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p. 33

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 31

⁶² Ray's anxiety with nuclear technology featured again in his final film *Agantuk* (*The Stranger*, 1991) where the climactic sequence features a debate on civilization where the anthropologist protagonist Manamohan declares sarcastically that 'the truly civilised people are those who develop a weapon which can destroy the inhabitants of an entire city at the press of a button, and those who can decide to take such action without turning a hair'.

⁶³ Perkovich, George. 2001. *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, London: University of California Press, p. 14

⁶⁴ Chatterjee, Anil. 'Chitranatya-i onekta abhinoy kore rakhe' in *Desh*, 28 March 1992, p. 91

⁶⁵ Contrary to popular belief, Nehru never used the phrase 'temples of modern India' usually attributed to him. The closest he came to using this phrase in a speech was at the inauguration of the Bhakra-Nangal dam where he said, in his lofty and idealistic style, that 'the biggest temple or mosque or gurdwara is the place where man works for the good of mankind'. For the full speech see Mukherjee, Rudrangshu. 2011. *The Great Speeches of Modern India*, London: Random House.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Narayanan, Pavithra. 2012. *What are You Reading?: The World Market and Indian Literary Production*, New Delhi: Routledge, p. 53

⁶⁷ Guha, Ramachandra. 'Prime Ministers and Big Dams' in *The Hindu*, 18.12.2005, available at <http://www.hindu.com/mag/2005/12/18/stories/2005121800180300.htm> (Last retrieved on 21.06.2014)