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Errata

On page 79 the paragraph beginning 'Roy represents a target...' and the subsequent indented quotation beginning 'The one in which...' are incorrect. The text should read as follows:

Roy has also become a target of both censorship and ridicule. Previously she had faced a criminal case in Kerala for corrupting public morality through her novel *The God of Small Things*. 'I am, apparently, a writer-activist. (Like a sofa-bed) Why does that make me flinch? Because it suggests writers are too effete to come up with the clarity for debate. "Go and play with your toys, leave the real world to us", goes the taunt' (2002b). Yet she was still determined to challenge the authorities over Narmada: 'Instinct led me to set aside Joyce and Nabokov, to postpone reading Don DeLillo's big book and substitute it with reports on drainage and irrigation, with journals and books and documentary films about dams and why they're built and what they do' (Arundhati Roy, cited in Gupta 2001). Roy knew that she was walking in to a minefield when she took up Narmada as a cause, for she became the first woman to challenge the Indian Supreme Court. In 2001 she was accused of committing criminal contempt of court by organising and participating in a demonstration outside the gates of the Supreme Court to protest against the judgment on the Sardar Sarovar dam. She was jailed for one night.

Sincere apologies are made to the author and subscribers.

India's Narmada dams controversy

Interdisciplinary examples of global media advocacy

JANE CHAPMAN

What sources will contemporary historians use when they reflect on *resistance* to globalisation by regional and environmental groups such as India's NBA (Narmada Bachao Andolan or 'Save the Narmada Movement')? As the country is the world's third most important dam builder, consistent mass protest against construction of the 3,200 Narmada dams in this enormous river valley over almost 20 years must surely merit further study. Campaigners seem to have developed a sense of history, but how do some of their most well-known international works of communication conform to existing models of media advocacy?

This article assesses the nature of two documentary films – Anand Patwardhan's (with Simantini Dhuru) *A Narmada Diary* (1997) and Franny Armstrong's *Drowned Out* (2004) – and the writings of Arundhati Roy, all emanating from the Narmada Dams controversy. As works of advocacy, these media communications popularised the Narmada conflict internationally, and in the process also championed fresh styles of communication. These three works represent interdisciplinary examples which, through their narratives and styles, have brought an extended creative and political repertoire of 'engaged' journalism on development issues to mainstream outlets outside of India. These examples allow us to test the continuing relevance of certain aspects of counter-hegemonic discourses, as presented in existing academic work.

DEFINITIONS

The three works selected comprise: print publications of political essays and *movement* by Roy; an independent documentary by Patwardhan and Dhuru made originally on behalf of, and used by, the NBA, but with subsequent television screenings abroad; and an independent 'activist' documentary by Armstrong, made specifically for non-Indian audiences and eventually sold to the US broadcaster PBS. As my discussion moves between the print and documentary genres, I apply the collective term 'media communicators' for the authors concerned.

It is John Downing's long-term contribution to scholarship on radical and 'alternative' media (1984, 2001), and his global perspective' (1996, 1999a) that allow him to refer to the 'historical persistence and geographic pervasiveness of radical alternative media' (2001, p.v). These two points seem to be particularly relevant to the Narmada controversies, but, before they are examined more fully, some caveats need to be made on the question of definition.

Arguably, 'alternative' is an inadequate term, as whatever appears 'alternative' will depend on the point of history at which it was taken: 'Everything, at some point, is alternative to something else' (2001, p.ix). Equally, 'radical' is problematic, as it can imply both reactionary and progressive – fundamentalist or racist, for instance. Radical can also include minority ethnic media. The term preferred in the US is 'journalism of advocacy'.²

In the Indian context, supporters of the involvement of the poor and disenfranchised within society's decision-making process have made connections between this need for empowerment and the requirement for a democratic media with freedom of expression, arguing that 'development journalism' should act as a vehicle to achieve these aims (Namra 2004). Although this concept does not necessarily imply engaged activism, the NBA itself has effectively used the mainstream as well as its own 'alternative' communication tools, implying a certain fluidity. Downing concludes that 'Context and consequence must be our primary guides to what are or are not definable as radical alternative media' (2001, p.x). He points out that, under certain circumstances, media will be in a 'binary' or 'either-or' situation when censorship is applied. Although this is more clearly distinguishable in the case of Soviet communism, or during the McCarthy period, for instance, it is interesting to reflect on the forms of censorship experienced by Patwardhan and Roy (Chapman, 2006; Chapman 2007(a), pp. 148, 150-154; Chapman 2007b).

INTRODUCTION: THE NARMADA CONTEXT

What displaced persons actually get depends a great deal on their political power and organisational abilities. (Dréze, Samson & Singh 1997, p.2)

In the 1940s, the independence movement viewed the construction of big dams as a symbol of nation-building virility, epitomised by Nehru's much-quoted reference to dams as the new 'temple of India'. However, he did not anticipate that they would later become 'the implement and symbol of an unjust and unsustainable form of development – one that increasingly seeks to uproot people on a global scale' (Sharma 2002, p.290), and he later changed his outlook (Roy 2002a). Today in the developing world such big projects are being viewed as environmental dynamite. The Narmada dams displace up to half a million people, mainly *adivasi* (indigenous tribals) and *dalits* (lower caste people) who have been forced into social and material destitution. Inadequate drainage provision has meant the region will be permanently damaged rather than reaping the intended agricultural prosperity. With non-violent protests and a

determination to drown rather than to leave their homes and land, the people of the valley have become symbols of a global struggle against what they claim to be an unjust form of development, and the NBA, by spearheading protests, emerged as one of the most dynamic struggles in contemporary India.

NBA efforts ensured that public attention was directed, for instance, towards the problems of the 100,000 people displaced by the reservoir during the construction of the giant Sardar Sarovar dam. This was achieved by coverage in the mass media and by their own communications, such as *A Narmada Diary*. Each phase of dam construction has been accompanied by a new phase of human misery, eloquently described on one occasion by Arundhati Roy:

Even as I write, the monsoon is raging outside my window. It's high noon, but the sky is dark, and my lights are on. I know that the waters of the Sardar Sarovar reservoir are rising every hour. More than ten thousand people face submergence. They have nowhere to go. I have tried very hard to communicate the urgency of what is happening in the valley. But in the cities, peoples' eyes glaze over. 'Yes, it's sad', they say. 'But it can't be helped. We need electricity.' (1999, preface)

Alongside the beneficiaries in the state of Gujarat, organised groups ranging from the displaced communities in the valley to the NBA and the ARCH-Vahini (a Gujarat NGO helping displacees to obtain adequate resettlement), scholars, activists, government officials and so-called experts, have all long been locked in to a complex discourse (see Fisher 1995; Dreze et al 1997; Thukral 1992). The central issue was not one of tribals versus non-tribals, but one of adequate resettlement (Joshi in Dreze et al 1997, pp.168-184).³ In India, the provision of alternative land for displacees is not legally binding and the rights of the landless – that is, those people who have no formal land titles – to compensation are not recognised. Therefore the case for economic justice has needed to be presented by effective projection within the public sphere.

Arundhati Roy came to the debates quite late, so she has not been alone in articulating her concern about Narmada;⁴ nevertheless, her international fame since the Booker Prize winning novel *The God of Small Things* has enabled her to more easily access worldwide readerships and to influence them. She discovered that, out of a total Indian population of a billion, according to a conservative estimate, 50 million people have been displaced. 'I feel like someone who's just stumbled on a mass grave. Fifty million is more than the population of Gujarat. Almost three times the population of Australia. More than three times the number of refugees that Partition created in India. Ten times the number of Palestinian refugees' (Roy 1999, pp.22-23). Yet, amazingly, there are no official government records on numbers and, so she claimed at the time of writing, there is no national rehabilitation policy (only state regulations).

Therefore it has been incumbent on media communicators not only to create a discourse about the need for policy changes but also to reveal that the so-called benefits of big dam construction have been eroded by corruption and incompetence. Certain creative advantages emerge from the relationship between media m u -

nicators as advocates and the social movements that provide their subject matter. Public expression generated by protest movements is potentially more dynamic, spontaneous and informal than the communication between public organisations and the mainstream media. Furthermore, upsurges in campaign movements generate and are stimulated by 'engaged' media.

Roy's writing about Narmada, for instance, brought a raw fluency that is often missing in mainstream journalism and, more obviously, in academic discourse:

Big Dams are obsolete. They're uncool. They're undemocratic. They're a government's way of accumulating authority (deciding who will get how much water and who will grow what where). They're a guaranteed way of taking a farmer's wisdom away from him. They're a brazen means of taking water, land and irrigation away from the poor and gifting it to the rich. Their reservoirs displace huge populations of people, leaving them homeless and destitute. Ecologically too, they're in the doghouse. They lay the earth to waste. They cause floods, waterlogging, salinity, they spread disease. There is mounting evidence that links Big Dams to earthquakes. Big dams haven't really lived up to their role as the monuments of Modern Civilisation, emblems of Man's ascendancy over Nature. (Roy 1999, p.16)

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The 'normal' exercise of hegemony ... is characterized by the combination of force and consensus which vary in their balance with each other, without force exceeding consensus too much. Thus it tries to achieve that force should appear to be supported by the agreement of the majority, expressed by the so-called organs of public opinion- newspapers and associations. (Gramsci, *Quaderni del Carcere*, p.1638, cited in Joll 1977, p.99)

A theoretical appreciation of the symbiotic relationship between media communicator and social movement has its roots in studies of hegemony and, more recently, counter-hegemony. Gramsci's theory of hegemony (1971) has become indelibly influential on the scholarship on power, capitalism and culture, especially in Europe and Latin America. The basis for much of the recent debate was established in the late 1980s and during the 1990s⁵ around his argument that capitalism has maintained and organised its leadership through the media. Other social, political and corporate agencies of information and culture become the first line of defence, which leads to an institutionalised acceptance of the status quo and the power of ruling classes as inevitable. This is supported at times of crisis by use of the police, courts and jails.

Since the 1920s and 30s when Gramsci was writing, scholars have reflected on the ways in which journalists mediate the relationship between ruling class ideology and news content (Murdock 2000). Similarly, according to the definitions of Schudson (1995), reporters are part of the power structure. In an essay 'What is a Reporter', he concludes that reporters become attuned to conventional wisdom, serving the political culture of media institutions. In short, they tend to be committed to a narrow range of public and literary expression, a constraint of mainstream journalism where stories

rend to be framed by content and sources, mostly emanating from existing power structures.

Thus the restrictions of the mainstream approach are usually reflected in the raw material that is selected by media communicators. Minority voices are cut out because of the choice of official sources, reflecting the outlook of the organisation. Conversely, this selectivity allows alternative media to use a different set of sources and voices (Cottle 2000, pp.434-35). Hence the insider/outsider divide has prompted categorisation of attempts to challenge existing ideological frameworks. These have been labelled as 'counter-hegemonic' – and many engaged journalism or advocacy falls within this framework: 'the role of radical media can be seen as trying to disrupt the silence, to counter the lies, to provide the truth' (Downing 2001, p.15).

The need for such strategies is supported by research by Herman (1992) and Jensen (1997) into news censorship and propaganda, and more recently by debates about the potential democracy of the internet (Castells 2001; Bagdikian 1997, 2000; Gauntlett 2000; Chapman 2005, pp.250, 263-264). Although it could be argued that the latter could have the effect of undermining the potency of counter-hegemonic theories, nevertheless there is still sufficient evidence of the commercial dominance of English language and of a western-dominated global communications cartel for Gramsci's influence to still provide a framework for forms of insider/outsider communication.

APPLYING DOWNING'S CHARACTERISTICS OF RADICAL MEDIA

Downing identifies four characteristics within his model which can be tested in the case of Narmada communications:

- rule-breaking
- * democratic methods
- combined lateral and vertical purposes
- * attacks from authority.

Rule-breaking

Rule One for a writer, as far as I'm concerned, is There Are No Rules. And Rule Two (since Rule One was made to be broken) is There Are No Excuses for Bad Art. Painters, writers, singers, actors, dancers, filmmakers, musicians are meant to fly, to push at frontiers, to worry the edges of the human imagination, to conjure beauty from the most unexpected things, to find magic in places where others never thought to look. If you limit the trajectory of their flight, if you weight their wings with society's existing notions of morality and responsibility, if you truss them up with preconceived values, you subvert their endeavour. (Roy 2004, p.5)

Radical media, according to Downing, 'break somebody's rules, although rarely all of them in every respect' (Downing *M*, p.xi). Manifestations of the phenomenon can be

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political, or stylistic, or both. The former is analysed in terms of clashes with authority. Here I examine stylistic challenges to the conventions of production technique. Roy, for instance, adopts a hybrid literary style – part journalism of opinion, part essay, part descriptive feature, part rhetorical narrative. This journalistic technique shamelessly challenges all the golden rules of conventional 'professionalism': fact and comment are intermingled, emotion and use of the personal take pride of place along with political didacticism.

The dilemma that Armstrong faced in post-production was how to present information at the end of the film when normal conventions required a resolution to the story. Here she broke the normal rules of production. In reality, a ruling from the Supreme Court came first, followed by a government ruling. But, for the purposes of the narrative structure, the Supreme Court verdict represented the crunch point, and everything thereafter was resolution. Armstrong *w a d* the Supreme Court verdict as the end of the third act, which would be logical, but not chronological. By changing the order, she sacrificed current affairs accuracy, but gained emotional impact that served to enhance the general spirit of injustice that the film was intended to expose. She explains: 'I wanted to make a long term film, therefore chronology was less important than the bigger significance' (interview with author, June 2005). The importance of this apparently small decision is greater than the face value would suggest. The change involved the adoption of a fictional narrative technique to evolve a factual story, in a way that would strengthen emotional impact. By the end of the film, audiences have been moved to tears at the plight of Luhariya and his family, but reality has been manipulated in a Hollywood way, more than is usual in a documentary.

DEMOCRATIC METHODS

Over the years we became very close to the movement and the film reflects this intimacy. (Patwardhan 1997)

Downing maintains that radical media endeavour to make their internal organisation 'somewhat more, or sometimes considerably more democratic than conventional mainstream media' (Downing 2001, p.xi). In the case of the three examples taken here, democracy relates to *how* the cultural producer connects with the people who are the subject of their communication. Roy became a public face for the NBA and joined in their protests, donating her Booker Prize money to the organisation for much-needed boats in order to facilitate contact between the sometimes remote communities. Although the nature of funding for independent production means that Armstrong has moved on to other subjects, nevertheless she too displayed empathy for the people she had filmed. They live without electricity, but by hiring a generator and transporting it to the village – itself a marathon effort that she recorded on film – (Armstrong 2004) – she ensured that the completed film could be screened by the participants. She describes the action as 'A moral imperative' (interview with author,

June 2005). It was also an historic event: the first time that the people of Jalsindhi had viewed a movie (Armstrong 2004).

A Narmada Diary started as a project on behalf of the NBA, with an informal archiving of various events, shot as a video diary to catalogue five years of ongoing struggle at a point when the construction of the Sardar Sarovar hydroelectric dam threatened to drown over 37,000 hectares of fertile land, homes and lifestyle. In production terms, actuality footage is used to progress a narrative that catalogues a story of triumphs, defeats and confrontations with power elites. During the post-production process when the structure and editing decisions were being formulated, Patwardhan took pains to consult with the activists involved.

His predisposition towards the people who appear in his film projects represents in itself an extension of his advocacy: documentary production has a political not a commercial motivation:

In the beginning, I saw filmmaking more in utilitarian terms, as a means towards an end, as a pamphlet that would be more exciting than the usual fare and would overcome the shackles of illiteracy. In time, I was seduced by the medium itself and began to take more interest and pay more attention to the craft of filmmaking and the ways of storytelling. But I don't think my original motivation ever left me. (Maclay 2004)

COMBINED LATERAL AND VERTICAL PURPOSES

I choose moments that are very dear in themselves and then string them together. I'm always looking to find the moment of greatest, the most obvious contradiction which anyone can see, focus in on it for a while ... (Patwardhan 1997)

There is a dual purpose to this selective production strategy. The end product will highlight an iniquity in the system which needs to be changed and the film's revelation will draw the attention of those in power to the need for change, while simultaneously galvanising ordinary people into further political awareness, hence action. 'Combined lateral and vertical purpose' is probably the most complex but also the most relevant of the four Downing points that are tested in the Narmada example. The relationship between creative content makers and social movements is at issue:

radical alternative media generally serve two overriding purposes: (a) to express opposition vertically from subordinate quarters directly at the power structure and against its behaviour; (b) to build support solidarity, and networking laterally against policies or even against the wry survival of the power structure. In any given instance, both vertical and lateral purposes may be involved. (Downing 2001, p.xi)

Certainly, Patwardhan's controversial documentaries continue to offer 'lessons on the politics of public institutions and their interactions with minority communities' (Sharma 2002). According to Gramsci, future counter strategy against hegemony entails mass involvement, that is, social movements. Their importance is recognised

by Downing when he argues that the relationship is not one of base to superstructure, but one of 'dialectical and indeed acute interdependence' (2001, p.23).

Although statements by Patwardhan, such as 'I keep shooting things and eventually some of those things become useful and can be used in a larger film' (Kripalani 1998, p.168), make his production technique sound deceptively simple, his editorial choices are in fact accompanied by a three-way effect. In *A Narmada Diary*, the political contradictions revealed by the filming of the aftermath of destruction caused by BJP and Congress activists on the NBA offices illustrate a triangular relationship between social movement, media and the public sphere.

Attacks from authority

The Indian state doesn't easily tolerate criticism, so I'm constantly fighting court battles to force the national television network to show my work ... (Patwardhan in Goldsmith 2003, pp.11, 12)

Writers have proved when they turn their back to power and start to feel the pulse and pain of society, they become powerful. That is the power beyond power that Arundhati Roy brings forth. (Shiva, endorser of *Power Politics* - Roy 2001)

Downing points out that radical media can be 'on occasion the target of great anger or fear or ridicule from on high, or even within the general public sphere, or both' (Downing 2001, p.xi). On the first day of filming *Drowned Out*, Armstrong was standing in the river by the village of Jalsindhi, filming the protesters until they were all arrested by the police. She spent the first night of the filming schedule in jail. Patwardhan has to apply more effort to fighting legal battles than he does to making films. This procedure has continued for more than 20 years, yet his continuing strength 'derives from his perseverance, compassion, and extraordinary insight into the human condition' (Gold-~~S~~ 2003, ch.10).

A Narmada Diary won the central government's national awards, which, in those days, guaranteed screening on Doordarshan. Yet, not only did the state refuse to issue a censorship certificate, despite this official accolade, but it declined to show it on national TV. 'The director [has] had to move the court on numerous occasions to enforce his rights' (D'Monte 2002). Patwardhan argues that not showing his films on TV amounts to censorship and a denial of the freedom of speech guaranteed according to the Indian Constitution: 'These court cases take years to get resolved but at least they help to keep the films in the news' (Patwardhan 1997). If a film won an award (which still regularly happens) and with a censor's certificate, then it would qualify to be screened on Indian national television. 'I believe films can have a real political impact only if they reach mass audiences; in other words, through television' (Gold-~~S~~ 2003, pp.11, 12).

Patwardhan's battles are never over: India is one of the few democracies where censorship rules are being followed rigidly (*The Hindu*, 9 June 2005). A popular campaign by the Campaign against Censorship has resulted in amendments to the rules

and a censorship clause being removed that had been imposed on Indian entries to the Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF) in 2004 (Patwardhan 2004a). Later the campaign was made into a more permanent organisation entitled Films for Freedom (www.freedomfilmsindia.org).

In other countries, such as the US, legal action over documentaries has sometimes had the effect of increasing transparency within the public sphere. The \$120 million milestone libel case brought by General Westmoreland in 1982 against CBS and the producers of a documentary entitled *The Uncounted Enemy: a Vietnam Deception*, springs to mind.

Similarly, in India today there are high stakes in the communication of activist vision, but according to Patwardhan:

The only lesson our politicians and *project* builders have learnt is that large projects mean large kickbacks. So now the great new game in India is a multi-billion dollar, thoroughly improbable project to inter-link our rivers. How could all this happen? My view is that it has to do with the near absolute ideological control that is exercised over the global media. The images the world needs to see, the facts it needs to hear, are often doctored or suppressed. (Patwardhan 2004b)

Roy represents a target of both censorship and ridicule. Previously she had faced a criminal case in Kerala for corrupting public morality through her novel *The God of Small Things*: 'I am, apparently, a writer-activist. (Like a sofa-bed.) Why does that make me finch? Because it suggests writers are too *effete* to come up with the *clarity* for debate. 'Go and play with your toys, leave the real world to us', goes the taunt' (2002b). Yet she was still determined to challenge the warring armies massed alongside them:

The one in which it would be possible to wade through the congealed morass of hope, anger, information, disinformation, political artifice, engineering ambition, **W** — socialism, radical activism, bureaucratic subterfuge, misinformed emotionalism and of course the pervasive, invariably dubious, politics of International Aid. (Roy 1999, pp.8-9)

According to Baber (2003, p.286), 'Roy represents a new generation of Indian novelists who not only *spin* a good yarn but can also wield their rhetorical and expository skills to great *effect* to make sense of the contested visions about the future of India and South Asia'. To Roy, Narmada was THE big story, 'in which the battle-lines were clearly drawn, the warring armies massed alongside them. The one in which it would be possible to wade through the congealed morass of hope, anger, information, disinformation, political artifice, engineering ambition, disingenuous socialism, radical activism, bureaucratic subterfuge, misinformed emotionalism and of course the pervasive, invariably dubious, politics of International Aid' (Roy 1999, pp.8-9).

Roy has also moved the spotlight to an investigation of power politics, by exposing the injustices and corruption perpetrated by Enron and its connections with the US and Indian organs of state. 'My writing is not about nations and histories, it's about power. About the physics of power. I believe that the accumulation of vast unfettered

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power by a state or a country, a corporation or an institution — or even an individual — regardless of ideology, results in excesses' (Roy 2004, p.14). According to Roy, dams and big energy projects have mortgaged India to the World Bank, which has been facilitated by export credit agencies (ECAs), as they insure private companies operating in foreign countries against commercial and political risks 'Roy argues a form of hydraulic despotism in which such schemes enforce a terrible and irreversible depend — on the state' (Martin 2000, p.252).

CONCLUSION: CONTINUITIES, CHANGE AND AWARENESS OF AUDIENCE

If you could provide a significant work ... I won't call it entertainment ... but a form that engages people's minds in a way that doesn't oppress them, that doesn't take away their dignity, I think that's worthwhile art. (Patwardhan in Gangar & Yardi 1993, pp.22-3)

The Narmada struggle has continued in phases, and is by no means over. As the floods rise with each stage of dam construction, once more they move higher up the river banks to new slopes in an attempt to find fertile land on which to settle, if only temporarily. 'There will soon be no more hills', says Luhariya as he looks over the liquid expanse (Armstrong 2001) repeats at the beginning of the film what she has already stated in print 'this is the story of modern India'. Meanwhile media coverage of villages that are being continues (see e.g. 'City of the Damned', *The Independent*, 29 September 2005). Above all, the two examples examined here create a discourse between continuity and change as a form of advocacy which seeks to engage international audiences.

Downing stresses that long-term memory of periods of social movement activity can be 'immensely influential' (Downing 2001, p.389), even if the more immediate campaign appears to have failed. This is because the energy may continue through decades, sometimes transferred to other projects. When 'pre-figurative politics' foreshadow later movements, a sense of memory is created. Patwardhan's voice-over narration in *A Narmada Diary* acknowledges the influence of pre-figurative politics:

the strength of people's resistance to the dams in the Narmada Valley is echoed by others in different places and wearisome struggle has not changed wry much: there are still broken promises from the name of development. (*A Narmada Diary* 1995)

If activist communication is pre-figurative, what are the more permanent legacies? Downing points to two factors. Firstly, over the long term the energy focused on such projects can move to others, frequently with the same features. Secondly, he refers to the power of memory that will not go away: 'These radical media in pm — often offer a vision, & from their contents or their making or their interaction with social movements, or all three, that bends like the willow in a gale but does not uproot' (2001, pp.391-2). Armstrong's *Drowned Out* takes over chronologically where *A Narmada Diary* left off, demonstrating that the long and wearisome struggle has not changed

very much: there are still broken promises from the authorities, still indigenous people suffering and still little alternative for adivasi inhabitants whose culture, livelihood and lives continue to be threatened by environmentally damaging and economically unsound big dam construction.

For Roy, history serves a didactic purpose. She highlights both continuities and change in an essay entitled 'Ahimsa — Ghandi'ist non-violent resistance' (2004). It is the story of four hunger strikers who fasted two days longer than Gandhi did on any of his fasts for freedom against colonial rule. These NBA activists were protesting against the Madhya Pradesh government's forcible eviction of more than a thousand adivasi families to make way for the Maan dam. In just a few pages, Roy connects micro with macro, in this case the 'Tin Shed' location with the war against terror: 'On a pavement in Bhopal, in an area called Tin Shed, a small group of people has embarked on a journey of faith and hope. There's nothing new in what they're doing. What's new is the climate in which they're doing it' (2004, p.3). Essay form blends with journalism of opinion to make the links and reveal the big questions:

Across the world, when governments and the media lavish all their time, attention, funds, research, space, sophistication, and seriousness on war talk and terrorism, then the message that goes out is disturbing and dangerous: if you seek to air and redress a public grievance, violence is more effective than non-violence. Unfortunately if peaceful change is not given a chance, then violent change becomes inevitable. (2004, p.7)

Next she protests: 'Right now, the NBA is not just fighting big dams. It's fighting for the survival of India's greatest gift to the world: non-violent resistance' (2004, p.7). She follows up with the major connections: 'In the twenty-first century the connection between religious fundamentalism, nuclear nationalism, and the pauperization of whole populations because of corporate globalization is becoming impossible to ignore'. But what can her readers do? Literary skill and political sincerity combine to round off the link between macro and micro:

As for the rest of us, concerned citizens, peace activists, and the like — it's not enough to sing songs about giving peace a chance. Doing everything we can to support movements like the Narmada Bachao Andolan is how we give peace a chance. This is the real war against terror. Go to Bhopal. Just ask for Tin Shed. (2004, pp.8-9)

Globalisation has had the effect of raising the profile of questions of audience. Armstrong has an international audience in mind when she contends: 'I hate the word "activist", because most so-called "activist" films are awful. But I am one because I want to tell important stories so that people who watch them will change their views.' Downing stresses the close interactivity involved between radical media and audiences which influences the nature of the creativity: 'This interactivity, this dialogue, does not by itself create the precise aesthetic charge, but it is within its arc that the charge builds up and is explosive' (2001, p.389). A *Narmada Diary* brought a record of the NBA's activities to the wider public in India as a form of consciousness-raising; later it was screened in Britain and the United States. In contrast, *Drowned Out* was made by

a foreign activist for foreign consumption, itself a function of the growing global nature of much protest today. The film was renamed *The Damned* and reversioned for the American PBS strand *Wide Angle*, which presents character-driven narratives revealing the humanity behind the headlines of international events and issues). The film is an example of global advocacy, manifesting a strong sense of audience – something that was missing in previous journalism history, as Schudson points out (1995, p.110).

The three examples present an awareness of global audience and a fresh interdisciplinary creative approach to production. It is likely that other forms of flexible, hybridised style will be increasingly manifest in the future as boundaries between mainstream and advocacy journalism are further eroded. However, there is one very old characteristic of Narmada communication that remains unchanged. Censorship has traditionally posed a prevalent threat to freedom of communication throughout the world (Chapman 2005, pp.45-9), and as considerations of global audience increase, will the risks of censorship also remain?

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NOTES

1. There is much interesting research at national and local levels. For example, in the UK, see Atton (2002) and Harcup (2003).
2. There are studies elsewhere that use the word 'alternative'; see, for instance, *Journalism* (Sage, 2003, vol. 4, no.3). But this point was stressed by colleagues from the AJHA-AEJMC (Journalism History division) in the United States in their response to my paper at the March 2006 New York meeting. I am also grateful for input from the editor and readers of JIC and from my colleagues in the Faculty of Media and Humanities at Lincoln University, to whom I presented a research paper.
3. See also A. Baviskar (1997) *In the Belly of the River: Tribal Conflicts over Development in the Narmada Valley*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
4. See also the important work 'development journalists' such as Dionne Bunsha, P. Sainath from *The Hindu* and B.G Verghese as a pioneer founder of the media watch campaign *The Hoot*.
5. See, inter alia, Bagdikian (1997, 2000), Brook and Boal (1995), Gitlin (1983) and Herman and Chomsky (1988).

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