

Die Ausgabe #8 von wissenderkuenste.de widmet sich der Frage nach dekolonialen Verschiebungen in künstlerischen Produktionen und Forschungen sowie kuratorischen Ansätzen. Sie ist hervorgegangen aus den Einreichungen auf einen Call for Submissions der AG „Dekoloniale Ästhetiken“, die an das DFG-Graduiertenkolleg „Das Wissen der Künste“ der Universität der Künste Berlin angegliedert ist, aber auch weiteren Interessierten offensteht. Die AG beschäftigt sich mit Fragen der ästhetischen Theoriebildung im Kontext von Anti-Kolonialismus, Postkolonialität und Dekolonialität und untersucht ästhetische Strategien des Dekolonialen anhand von künstlerischen Produktionen. Konkret interessiert uns: Wie werden in künstlerischen Arbeiten Wissen und Erfahrungen komplexer kolonialer Verflechtungen produziert, inszeniert und kritisch reflektiert? Wodurch intervenieren künstlerische Praktiken in Formationen epistemischer Gewalt oder unterbrechen sie diese. Inwiefern vollziehen sie ein *delinking*?

Herausgegeben von Juana Awad, Maja Figge, Grit Köppen, Katrin Köppert.

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Der Begriff des *delinking*, der von Aníbal Quijano und Walter D. Mignolo in deren Arbeiten zu Moderne/Kolonialität vorgeschlagen wurde, ist für die Frage nach dekolonialen Verschiebungen in der Kunst von zentraler Bedeutung. In *Epistemischer Ungehorsam* führt Mignolo aus, dass das Konzept der Kolonialität der Macht nicht nur politisch-ökonomische Aspekte umfasst, sondern gleichermaßen auch Erkenntnis und Sein (Geschlecht, Sexualität, Subjektivität und Wissen) sowie Wahrnehmung, Empfindung und Aisthesis beinhaltet:²

Die Kolonialität der Macht verweist als Ganzes auf eine komplexe Matrix der Macht, auf ein Muster der Macht, das auf drei Pfeilern ruht: Erkennen (Epistemologie), Verstehen oder Begreifen (Hermeneutik) und Wahrnehmen (aisthesis). Die Kontrolle von Ökonomie und Autorität (die politische und ökonomische Theorie) wird von der Grundlage her bestimmt, auf der sich Erkenntnis, Verständnis und Wahrnehmung behaupten. Die koloniale Matrix der Macht ist letztlich ein aus Glaubenssätzen gesponnenes Netz, vor dessen Hintergrund gehandelt und Handlung rationalisiert wird, aus dem Vorteile gezogen oder dessen Konsequenzen erlitten werden.³

Dekolonialität ist vor diesem Hintergrund als Beschreibung und Demontage der Kolonialität der Macht zu verstehen. Das konzeptuelle Begriffspaar

von Kolonialität und Dekolonialität stellt für Mignolo einen Bruch mit Postmoderne und Postkolonialismus dar, weil es sich auf eine andere, außereuropäische Genealogie der Theoriebildung bezieht.⁴ Statt Poststrukturalistischer Theorie rücken hier dekoloniale Denkansätze „der radikalen Politik einer epistemischen Wende von Amílcar Cabral, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Rigoberta Menchú, Gloria Anzaldúa und anderen“⁵ in den Vordergrund. Während Mignolo Postkoloniale Theorie als akademische Transformationsstudien kritisiert, geht es hier um einen dekolonialen Umsturz, der mit einer epistemologischen Entkopplung, einem Delinking beginnt.⁶

Gabi Ngcobo, Kuratorin der Berlin Biennale 10, hat in ihrem Vortrag „Curatorial Collaborations as Ways of Knowledge Production“ im Rahmen der vom DFG-Graduiertenkolleg „Das Wissen der Künste“ veranstalteten Ringvorlesung „Künste dekolonisieren. Ästhetische Praktiken des Lernens und Verlernens“ etwas ähnliches formuliert: Mit Bezug auf Fanon definierte sie den Prozess der Dekolonisierung als „program of disorder“, als „undoing“ und betonte damit die Schwierigkeit diesen umzusetzen bzw. problematisierte mit diesem Hinweis relativierende Einsätze des Begriffs Dekolonisierung – gerade im Feld der Kunst.⁷ Zugleich ist die Arbeit an der Dekolonisierung der Wahrnehmung und Erkenntnis nicht neu, sondern ist genealogisch verbunden mit antikolonialen ästhetischen Praktiken seit Beginn der Kolonisierung:

Decolonial aesthetics refers to ongoing artistic projects responding and delinking from the darker side of imperial globalization. Decolonial aesthetics seeks to recognize and open options for liberating the senses. This is the terrain where artists around the world are contesting the legacies of modernity and its re-incarnations in postmodern and altermodern aesthetics.⁸

Alternativ zur Übersetzung von *delinking* als Entkopplung hat Sabine Broeck vorgeschlagen, von Entbindung zu sprechen, da diese neben dem Loslösen aus den Wissenspolitiken der kolonialen Moderne den Aspekt des „in die Welt Setzens“ betont.⁹ Wenn wir den epistemischen Gehalt von Kunst auch in Hinblick auf das Vermögen von Kunst, Welt(en) herzustellen, verstehen, scheint auch Delinking nicht nur als Potential der Ablösung, sondern Neueinsetzung von Welt mit den Mitteln der Kunst auf. In seiner Besprechung der Sharjah Biennale 2013, „RE:EMERGING, DECENTRING AND DELINKING. Shifting the Geographies of Sensing, Believing and Knowing“ betont auch Mignolo das Potential von Delinking als Verschiebung hin zur (Er)Öffnung von spezifischen Wegen in eine andere Zukunft (der Kunst).¹⁰

Von uns als *deferral* (im Unterschied zu *shifting*) übersetzt, erhält Verschiebung neben der räumlichen bzw. geopolitischen Dimension auch eine zeitliche – im Sinne von Verzögerung oder Aufschub – und deutet damit auf rassistische Chronopolitiken, die Kara Keeling, die in dieser Ausgabe im Gespräch mit dem Queer Frequency Modulation Collective zu hören ist, in ihrer Lektüre von Frantz Fanons *Schwarze Haut, weiße Masken* herausgearbeitet hat: Wie lässt sich die Schwarze Erfahrung des Aufschubs, die Schwarze Bedingung des Wartens in kolonialer Zeit (*colonial time*) hin auf eine Zukunft öffnen oder als geöffnet denken?¹¹ Auf welche Weise intervenieren künstlerische Arbeiten in das rassistische Zeitregime? In welcher Weise, und das ist die der Ausgabe zugrunde liegende Fragestellung, greifen anti- bzw. dekoloniale Theoriebildung und künstlerische Praktiken ineinander bzw. inwiefern wird Kunst selbst theoretisch?

Eingeladen waren künstlerische und wissenschaftliche Auseinandersetzungen mit verschiedenen Wissensbeständen und deren ästhetischen Bearbeitungen in Kunstproduktion, die dekoloniale Verschiebungen aufzeigen oder selbst vollziehen: Wie können performative, filmische, fotografische und andere künstlerische Praktiken koloniale Machtverhältnisse irritieren? Worin unterscheiden sich die Formen, Mittel und Strategien in den jeweiligen Künsten und Kunstpositionen voneinander? Besonders interessierten wir uns für Beiträge, die entweder selbst ästhetische Praktiken der Erinnerung darstellen oder diese analysieren. Um vor dem Hintergrund dieser erinnerungspolitischen und historiografischen Arbeit an der Geschichte der Kolonisierung, aber auch des diese durchziehenden anti-/ und

dekolonialen Widerstands die Gegenwart zu reflektieren und für die Zukunft zu öffnen, ist die Auseinandersetzung mit dem (anti-)kolonialen Archiv von zentraler Bedeutung.¹² Im Zentrum stehen vor allem Beiträge, die das Archivieren als ästhetische Praxis im Hinblick auf dekoloniale Politiken befragen: Welche Ästhetiken des Archivierens greifen dekolonialisierend in Wissensformationen ein? Was bleibt vom kolonialen Archiv übrig, wenn Ästhetiken des Ephemereren wie etwa Performances oder Musik, Teil von Wissensbeständen werden?¹³ Wie werden solche Ästhetiken für dekoloniale (Wissens-)Politiken oder Archive produktiv gemacht?

Die Ausgabe versammelt Beiträge von Künstler_innen und Wissenschaftler_innen in so unterschiedlichen Medien wie Schrift, Sound, Videos, digitaler Zeichnung, Fotografie. Geografisch divers befassen sich die Beiträge mit Situationen im Globalen Süden, Afrika, Asien, Lateinamerika, und deren Verbindungen und diasporischen, migrantischen Verflechtungen mit Europa und Nordamerika. Die Künstlerin und Kuratorin **Imayna Caceres** adressiert mit ihrer digitalen Zeichnung *The Wound as Bridge and the Path of Conocimiento* (2018) und dem begleitenden Essay, ihre künstlerische Arbeit als Einschreibung und Fortschreibung einer Genealogie antikolonialer, queer-feministischer, indigener Praktiken, in der die Wunde als Brücke zu dieser fungiert. Der „Pfad der Erkenntnis“ oder auch des Wissens ist ein Konzept, das sich Caceres von Gloria Anzaldúa leiht und eine Form spiritueller Forschung und Aktivismus darstellt, die durch kreative Praktiken erreicht werden kann und auf Heilung der kolonialen Wunde ausgerichtet ist. Es sind nicht nur marginalisierte Narrative, die Caceres' Erfahrung und künstlerische Praxis prägen, sondern es ist auch der Dialog mit dekolonialer Theoriebildung (insbesondere mit Anzaldúa und Quijano), der dieses Werk durchzieht. Damit interveniert sie in das koloniale/moderne Narrativ der Fortschrittsgeschichte. Auch der künstlerische Beitrag *Looking Back Forward_Quip Nayr* der Kulturwissenschaftlerin, Künstlerin und Kuratorin **Verena Melgarejo Weinandt** bezieht sich auf Gloria Anzaldúa, konkret auf das Konzept „Haciendo Caras/Making Faces“, dem sie im begleitenden Essay „Haciendo Caras/Making Faces: Connecting Identity, Resistance, Art, and Spirituality“ nachgeht und das sie auf ihre eigene künstlerische Arbeit bezieht. Auch hier geht es um die Frage, in welcher Weise Kunst dazu beitragen kann, in eurozentrische Epistemologien und deren physisch erfahrenen Konsequenzen, etwa durch rassistische Zuschreibungen, zu intervenieren. Melgarejo Weinandt lädt dazu ein, ihrer theoretischen und künstlerischen Auseinandersetzung mit Anzaldúas Konzept zu folgen und ihre Arbeit, die in der Verbindung selbst gefärbter Textilien mit Fotografie und Schrift Zwischenräume und Interfaces betont, zu betrachten. Das „Gesichter Machen“ wird hier zur widerständigen wie heilsamen Strategie, diesen gewaltförmigen Anrufungen zu begegnen.

Die Theaterwissenschaftlerin **Grit Köppen** beobachtet in ihrem Aufsatz „Ästhetik des Aufbruchs: Dekoloniale Verschiebungen im zeitgenössischen Theater“ andere Strategien in den Theatertexten afrikanischer und afro-diasporischer Dramatiker_innen, die sie als Erweiterung des Delinking verstanden wissen möchte: die der Erhebung, des Aufschreis und des Verlachens. Mit Bezug zu Achille Mbembe, und darin Anzaldúa nicht unähnlich, betont sie die Praxis des „Selbstschreibens“ als dekolonisierende Methode.¹⁴ In ihrer Analyse des Stücks *Im Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes und des J.M. Weston* des kongolesischen Bühnenauteurs Julien Mabilia Bissila arbeitet Köppen verschiedene ästhetische Verschiebungen heraus, die sich sowohl durch formale Unterbrechungen europäischer Dramenkonventionen, die sie als Delinking deutet, auszeichnen wie auch inhaltliche Strategien des *Naming* oder der Verschränkung von Zeit- und Raumbenen, die dem Erinnern an Widerstandspraktiken dienen, was Köppen als *Linking* bezeichnet. Bissila verschiebt die Bezeichnung der einzelnen Akte vom Aufzug hin zum Atemzug und betont damit die Bedeutung des Körpers – nicht nur in darstellender Kunst, sondern auch für dekoloniale Artikulationen.

In der Ton-Bild-Spur der Podcast Installation *Looking After the Future: On Queer and Decolonial Temporalities* präsentiert das **Queer Frequency Modulation Collective**, wie bereits erwähnt, die Montage eines Interviews mit der Film- und Medienwissenschaftlerin **Kara Keeling**. Zentraler

Gegenstand des Gesprächs sind Überlegungen zu Zeitlichkeit und Dekolonisierung. Keeling betont, dass die auffindbaren Spuren Schwarzer Subjektivität im kolonialen Archiv, es nicht notwendiger Weise erlauben, die Leben zu rekonstruieren. Ebenso wenig ist wissbar, wie sich wirkliche Dekolonisierung anfühlt, so dass auch hier nur der Umweg über die afrofuturistische Fiktion bzw. Spekulation bleibt. Die hierbei ins Spiel gebrachten vergangenen und gegenwärtigen Entwürfe einer queeren, dekolonialen Zukunft wurden durch das Kollektiv so mit Sound montiert, dass auch das Verhältnis von Erzählzeit und erzählter Zeit ins Rutschen gerät und spekulativ bleibt.

Die Autorin und Forscherin zu Race, Gender und Fotografie, **Stefanie Fock**, untersucht in ihrem Aufsatz „Why the Pictures Had to Come from Black. Looking with Myra Greene at *Character Recognition*“, die gleichnamige Fotoserie der afro-amerikanischen Fotografin Myra Greene, mit der diese in das Archiv der visuellen Anthropologie und des wissenschaftlichen (anti-schwarzen) Rassismus interveniert. Fock argumentiert, dass Greene in ihrer künstlerischen Forschung die visuellen Praktiken und Schauanweisungen aus dem 19. Jahrhundert in Schwingung mit dem Heute bringt und so zu einer Verschiebung beiträgt. Ausgehend davon versteht sie Greenes Vorgehen als dekoloniale künstlerische Methode, wie sie Rolando Vasquez vorgeschlagen hat.¹⁵ Indem Fock selbst den Weg wählt, mit Greene zu schauen, ein Impuls der vielleicht vergleichbar ist mit dem von Trinh T. Minh-ha vorgeschlagenen „speaking nearby“¹⁶, arbeitet sie in ihrem Beitrag heraus, auf welche Weise Greenes Eingriffe in das (visuelle) koloniale Archiv als Heilung und Herstellung dekolonialer Optionen zu verstehen sind. Auch der Filmemacher und Künstler **Ali Kazimi** schlägt in seiner stereoskopischen 3D-Installation *Fair Play* eine Umnutzung früher fotografischer Technologien vor und betont so die Verbindung von Vergangenheit und Gegenwart. Gegenstand der Arbeit ist die Geschichte der *Komagata Maru*, eines japanischen Dampfers, mit dem Migrant_innen aus dem kolonialen Indien 1914 versuchten nach Kanada einzuwandern, aber vor der Küste Vancouvers abgefangen und an der Einreise gehindert wurden. Dieser ‚Fall‘ steht exemplarisch für die Verflechtung von Kanadischer Migrationsgeschichte, Rassismus und Kolonialismus. Die Kunsthistorikerin **Viktoria Nolte** untersucht in ihrem Beitrag die ästhetischen Strategien des Erinnerens in *Fair Play*. Sie argumentiert, dass die Betonung des Affekts in der formalen Ausrichtung der immersiven Installation eine dekoloniale Ästhetik erzeugt, die die Beziehung zu dieser Vergangenheit in den Betrachter_innen restrukturiert und dabei das Leben und das Wissen der Passagier_innen, die zuvor aus den Erzählungen über die *Komagata Maru* gelöscht wurden, zur Wahrnehmung bringt. Darin sieht Nolte nicht nur einen Eingriff in nationale (Kolonial-)Geschichte, sondern auch in neoliberale Kunstkritik. **Su-Ran Sichling** beschäftigt sich in ihrer künstlerischen Forschung und Arbeit als Bildhauerin ebenfalls mit den marginalisierten Geschichten der (Arbeits-)Migration der frühen Bundesrepublik, die sie durch die Untersuchung von Materialien aufspürt. In ihren *Gelehrtensteinen* verwendet sie Terrazzo und Waschbeton, Werkstoffe, die sich in den 1950er und 1960er Jahren großer Beliebtheit erfreuten. Der begleitende Essay des Architekturhistorikers **Nicholas Brandes** „Naturalisierte Nation. Zur Materialität der westdeutschen Nachkriegsmoderne in Su-Ran Sichlings Arbeit *Gelehrtensteine*“ diskutiert Sichlings Arbeit dahingehend, ob ein materieller künstlerischer Ansatz nicht auch eine Intervention in die Privilegierung des Inhalts gegenüber der Form in dekolonialen Debatten darstellt.

Weniger mit materiellen denn mit ephemeren auditiven Spuren der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte in der postkolonialen Hafenmetropole Hamburg beschäftigt sich **Katharina Pelosi** in dem Soundstück *Call to Listen - ein post_kolonialer Resonanzraum*. Wie Pelosi im begleitenden Text ausführt, wird Zuhören hier als performative Handlung verstanden, die Erinnerungsräume und damit ein ephemeres Archiv herstellt, in dem sich gegenwärtige Töne mit historischen Ereignissen zu einer Soundlandschaft vermischen. Die Komposition fragt, wie Orte klingen, ob deren Geschichte(n) hörbar gemacht werden können und wie durch Klang die Wahrnehmung und Bedeutung von Orten verändert werden kann. Lassen sich durch das Erstellen ephemerer, performativer Archive dekoloniale

Verschiebungen in der Erinnerungskultur erzeugen? Pelosi interessiert sich in diesem Zusammenhang auch für eine Dehierarchisierung der Wahrnehmung, die das Visuelle gegenüber dem Auditiven privilegiert. Ebenso bevorzugen **Andrea und Matei Bellu** in ihrem Video *Paying a Visit to the Queen – Tracing Dispersion, Looking for Disappearance* (2016) die auditive Ebene – auf das Zeigen wird vollständig verzichtet. In ihrem 10-minütigen Film begleiten sie den südafrikanischen Kunsthistoriker und Künstler Peju Layiwola und die namibische Historikerin Memory Biwa bei einem Besuch der afrikanischen Abteilung im Ethnologischen Museum in Berlin-Dahlem. Zu deren Sammlung gehören auch manche der sogenannten Benin Bronzen – koloniale Raubgüter, die von den Briten 1897 in einem Krieg gegen das Königreich Benin im heutigen Nigeria geplündert und in kürzester Zeit im globalen Norden gehandelt wurden. Fast die Hälfte der Kunstwerke wurde nach Deutschland gebracht. In der Arbeit von Bellu und Bellu intervenieren die Stimmen der afrikanischen Wissenschaftler_innen in das Ethnologische Museum als Ort kolonialer Ordnung, Sammlung, und Wissensproduktion und stellen eine räumliche Neuverteilung zur Disposition – eine Frage, die nach der Veröffentlichung des Berichts von Felwine Sarr und Bénédicte Savoy zu Fragen der Restitution kolonialer Bestände in Archiven und Museen Ende des vergangenen Jahres stark in der Debatte steht und vor dem Hintergrund des Umzugs des Ethnologischen Museums in das demnächst öffnende Humboldt-Forum im Berliner Stadtschloss eine neue Aktualität und Dringlichkeit entfaltet.¹⁷ Umgekehrt dokumentiert der Beitrag von **Isabella Schwaderer und Markus Schlawffke** „(Re-)connecting embodied archives. Künstlerische Forschung im Zinda Naach-Kollektiv“ die Rekonstruktion des fragmentierten, verstreuten und lückenhaften Archivs der Tournee des indischen Menaka-Balletts im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland 1936–38. Mit der künstlerischen Forschung sollen die „mentalitätsgeschichtlichen Verschränkungen, Verbindungs- und Trennlinien“ zwischen Indien und Deutschland herausgearbeitet werden, die die Menaka-Tournee und ihre Rezeption wie nachträgliche Funktionalisierung kennzeichnen. Einen wichtigen Teil nimmt dabei die „Wiederverknüpfung verkörperter Archive“ ein, mit der das Kollektiv versucht, die deutschen Dokumente und die indischen nationalen wie minoritären Erinnerungen an die Tournee zusammenzubringen. Ziel ist eine partizipative Performance, durch die das ephemere Archiv zu einer geteilten Erinnerungspraxis werden kann.

Um die Verschränkung von Erinnerung und Fiktion, Biografie und Historiografie geht es in der künstlerischen Arbeit von **Omar Chowdhury** *Memoirs of Saturn*. Wir dokumentieren einen Essay, der anhand des fiktionalisierten Lebens des Historikers Dr. Shahidul Zaman, einem Verwandten Chowdhurys, zentrale Momente der Geschichte Bangladeschs erzählt. Dieser war Teil der gleichnamigen Ausstellung in Dhaka 2016, die aus Gründen der Zensur geschlossen wurde. Dem vorangestellt ist eine Email, die die politischen Umstände der Schließung adressiert. Das Schreiben wird hier zu einer Strategie, nicht nur das Konzept der Identität, sondern auch der Nation und ihrer Narrative (und die Verwicklung der Kunst in diese) zu problematisieren.

In ihrer Bandbreite gibt die Ausgabe Einblicke in verschiedene künstlerische Strategien und Methoden, die dekoloniale Verschiebungen in der Kolonialität des Wissens und Wahrnehmens forcieren/vollziehen. Als Herausgeber_innen möchten wir die Beiträge als Einladung zum gemeinsamen Nachdenken über die gestellten Fragen verstanden wissen. Gleichwohl sind wir uns bewusst, dass dies – wenn überhaupt – nur ein kleiner Schritt sein kann, mit dem wir hoffen, die Konversation über die Notwendigkeit der Dekolonialisierung weiterzuführen. Damit verbunden ist auch die Hinterfragung der Bedingungen des eigenen Arbeitens, die durch die Situiertheit an deutschen Kunstuniversitäten und die Förderung des Graduiertenkollegs durch die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft strukturiert sind.

Maja Figge

Mit Beiträgen von: Matei Bellu/Andrea Bellu, Imayna Caceres, Omar

Chowdhury, Stefanie Fock, Ali Kazimi, Grit Köppen, Verena Melgarejo
Weinandt, Victoria Nolte, Katharina Pelosi, Queer Frequency Modulation
Collective mit Kara Keeling, Markus Schläffke/Isabelle Schwaderer, und Su-
Ran Sichling/Nicholas Brandes.

Herausgabe der Ausgabe #8: Juana Awad, Maja Figge, Grit Köppen, Katrin
Köppert

- 1 Vgl. Mignolo, Walter D.: „Delinking. The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality“, in: *Cultural Studies*, 21/2-3 (2007), S. 449-514. Mignolo, Walter D.: *Epistemischer Ungehorsam: Rhetorik der Moderne, Logik der Kolonialität und Grammatik der Dekolonialität*, Wien/Berlin 2012.
- 2 Mignolo, *Epistemischer Ungehorsam*, S. 49.
- 3 Mignolo, *Epistemischer Ungehorsam*, S. 50f.
- 4 „(De)Kolonialität ist in erster Linie ein Konzept, dessen Ausgangspunkt in der Dritten Welt liegt. Es entstand in dem Moment, als die Aufteilung in drei Welten zu Fall kam und der Jubel über das Ende der Geschichte und eine neue Weltordnung begann. Seine Auswirkung war jener vergleichbar, die von der Einführung des Konzepts der ‚Biopolitik‘ hervorgerufen wurde, das von Europa seinen Ausgang nahm. [...] Die ‚Kolonialität‘ [...] bietet ein unentbehrliches Gefühl von Trost vor allem für MigrantInnen und People of Color in Entwicklungsländern [...], deren Lebenserfahrungen, lang- und kurzfristigen Erinnerungen, Denkkategorien und Sprachen jenen fremd geworden sind, die das Konzept der ‚Biopolitik‘ entworfen haben, um Kontrollmechanismen und staatliche Regulierungen zu erklären. [...] Die Dekolonialität hat ihre historische Grundlage in der Bandung-Konferenz von 1955, bei der VertreterInnen von 29 Ländern aus Afrika und Asien zusammentrafen. Das Hauptanliegen der Konferenz war die Suche nach einer gemeinsamen Grundlage und einer Zukunftsperspektive, die weder im Kapitalismus noch im Kommunismus zu finden war: Dieser Weg bestand in der ‚Dekolonialisierung‘. Dabei handelte es sich [...] um eine Abkoppelung [delinking, M.F.] von den beiden wichtigsten westlichen Makro-Erzählungen.“ Mignolo, Walter D.: „Geopolitik des Wahrnehmens und Erkennens (De)Kolonialität, Grenzdenken und epistemischer Ungehorsam“, in: *transversal journal* 09 (2011), URL: <https://eipcp.net/transversal/0112/mignolo/de.html> (letzter Zugriff am 11. November 2019).
- 5 Mignolo, *Epistemischer Ungehorsam*, S. 54.
- 6 Ebd. Problematisch an dieser Setzung ist, dass dies unterschlägt, dass es den kritisierten postkolonialen Theoretiker_innen auch um Dekolonisierung geht, was sich nicht zuletzt daran ablesen lässt, dass sie sich teils auf die gleichen dekolonialen Denker_innen wie Mignolo beziehen, deren Überlegungen wiederum auch nicht ‚frei‘ von europäischer Theorie waren, sondern diese produktiv machten – wie etwa an Fanons Auseinandersetzung mit Marxismus, Phänomenologie und Psychoanalyse zu sehen ist. Vgl. Fanon, Frantz: *Schwarze Haut, weiße Masken*, Frankfurt/Main 1985; Fanon, Frantz: *Die Verdammten dieser Erde*, Frankfurt/Main 1966.
- 7 Der Vortrag war als gemeinsame Präsentation mit Yvette Mutumba geplant, die leider kurzfristig absagen musste, und fand am 5. Februar 2018 an der Universität der Künste Berlin statt.
- 8 Lockward, Alanna/Vázquez, Rolando/Díaz Nerio, Teresa María, u.a.: „Decolonial Aesthetics I“, Transnational Decolonial Institute, 22. Mai 2011, URL: <https://transnationaldecolonialinstitute.wordpress.com/decolonial-aesthetics/> (letzter Zugriff am 5. November 2019).
- 9 Broeck, Sabine: „Dekoloniale Entbindung. Walter Mignolos Kritik an der Matrix der Kolonialität“, in: Karentzos, Alexandra/Reuter, Julia (Hg.): *Schlüsselwerke der Postcolonial Studies*, Wiesbaden 2012, S. 165-175, hier S. 167.
- 10 Mignolo, Walter D.: „RE:EMERGING, DECENTRING AND DELINKING. Shifting the Geographies of Sensing, Believing and Knowing“, in: *IBRAAZ* (März 2013), Plattform 005, S. 13, URL: <https://www.ibraaz.org/usr/library/documents/essay-documents/re-emerging-decentring-and-delinking.pdf>.
- 11 Keeling, Kara: *The Witch’s Flight. The Cinematic, the Black Femme and the Image of Common Sense*, Durham/London 2007, S. 27-44.

- 12 Für eine Problematisierung verschiedener Umgangsweisen mit dem kolonialen Archiv vgl. Kuster, Brigitta: „Choix d'un passé. Transnationale Vergegenwärtigungen kolonialer Hinterlassenschaften“, in: Lorey, Isabell/eipcp (Hg.): *transversal texts*(09/2016), S. 45-49, URL: <https://transversal.at/books/choixdunpasse> (letzter Zugriff am 11. November 2019).
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- 16 Trinh T., Minh-ha: „Speaking Nearby. Interview von Nancy N. Chen mit Trinh T. Minh-ha“, in: Bernstorff, Madeleine/Saxenhuber, Hedwig (Hg.): *Trinh T. Minh-ha. Texte, Filme und Gespräche*, München/Wien/Berlin 1995, S. 59-77.
- 17 Sarr, Felwine/Savoy, Bénédicte: „The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage. Toward a New Relational Ethics“, (11/2018), URL: https://restitutionreport2018.com/sarr_savoy_en.pdf (letzter Zugriff am 7. November 2019). Vgl. dazu auch Kuster, Brigitta/Lange, Britta/Löffler, Petra: „Archive der Zukunft? Ein Gespräch über Sammlungspolitiken, koloniale Archive und die Dekolonisierung des Wissens“, in: *Zeitschrift für Medienwissenschaft* 20 (1/2019), S. 97-111.

In a set of para-fictional texts which interweaves the life of cultural historian Dr. Shahidul Zaman with key moments in the ruptured history of Bangladesh, the artist Omar A. Chowdhury, builds a reflexive mirror to examine the nature of memory, of historiography, and the processes of the art system. Recounting the history of an exhibition that was censored and closed down in Dhaka in 2016, Chowdhury constructs a narrative that doubles back on itself along multiple axes of the personal and public as he and Dr. Zaman delve into the uncertainties in the presentation of identity, the recollection of history, and the compromises of political commitment.

From: mail@omarchowdhury.com
To: susan.khan@gmail.com
Bcc: adnan.spare@gmail.com
Subject: Keeping in touch

Dear Susanna,

It's a lovely surprise to hear from you. I'm sorry to hear that you've been sick and I hope you're better now. Thank you for the kind words about the show and for visiting. *Age of Saturn* was very difficult to put on, as it touched so many personal unknowns in me, around my displacement from BD to Australia, my thinking around the place of history and fiction in the construction of identity, and the forms these concerns can take in the art space, amongst art objects/concepts. In any case, it was fascinating to have the show looked at and thought about in that way—which is to say, deeply. I also wish we had more time to talk and I hope there will be time in the future.

I wanted to tell you that the whole show has been pulled down and they've stopped the public distribution of the text. The reasons are myriad and connected but key was a quiet request directly from the current government. Bengal Foundation have complied with the request and have intimated that the government was not comfortable with the show's surfacing of various aspects of the BAKSAL period in the early to mid 70s. Along with this was the bad timing/luck of having the show in the same building as the Daily Star newspaper whose editor Mahfouz Anam has been under sustained attack by the government in recent weeks (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-35594968>) and who the owners of the Bengal Foundation are intimately connected to. And lastly, of course, is the intransigence of those with and around whom the show was made. A bit of a perfect storm, really.

I tell myself now that I wasn't naïve about this happening. Bengals are the only ones with the resources and connections required to help develop and put on the show. But I knew that if it did become hot politically they wouldn't be there. I also knew that, as the country hurtles towards a new authoritarianism, this was one of the last chances I'd get to question the things I wanted to. Yet, when it happened, I wasn't able to

understand it.

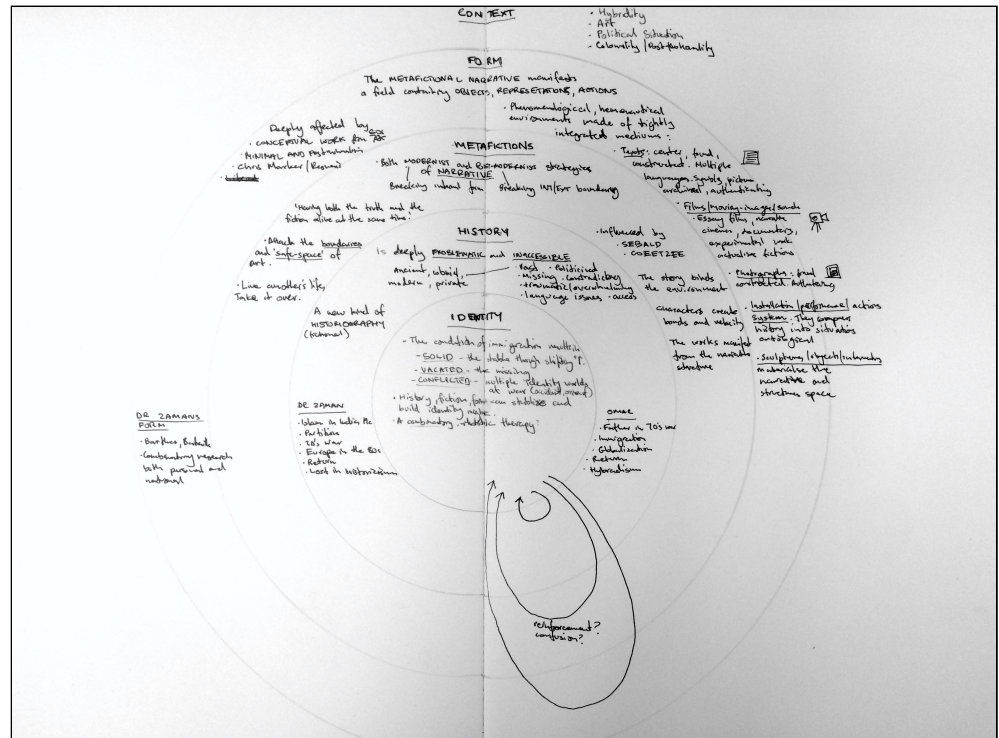
A show hasn't been censored directly like this in a long time. It's unchartered territory for everyone. I can understand Bengal feeling like they have no choice and I know it hurt some key people in the organisation very badly to do this. Farah has resigned her position as head of arts. As for myself, it's been a difficult thing to navigate in terms of my own safety, ethics, and for the future of my practice. As the threat seemed to subside I've thought more deeply about what is the right thing to do, or what's the smart thing to do, and then about what I want to do. I don't know if we talked about this but Coetzee (along with Sebald) were two catalysts for how I began to relate to Bangladeshi history, and ultimately for the approach of the show. Recently, as this has all been happening, I've gone back to read Coetzee's *Giving Offence* and have been thinking hard about the effect of censorship and one's relation or reaction to it. How one reacts to the application of power. A lot needs to have already happened for a state to be able to apply its power like this. Things have to be pretty far along.

I'm an Australian citizen and I'm here on a long-term visa that can be revoked. That would be a disaster. The government has turned uncompromisingly brutal recently and I can't jeopardise the works I want to make in the next six months. I ask myself if I'm being cowardly by not making a bigger, public deal about this, by not altercating in the press both here and overseas. But when I sit and think and feel out what's right by who I am, I know that I want to continue to work. That I want to turn towards the history and work out my thoughts in the context of my relationship to art. I don't want to be distracted, and I don't want to be exiled.

Lastly, I wanted to respond to the issues you raise around the personal nature of your trip here and your "tentative" approach towards the history of this place. There is so much I want to say to this as I've just spent the past six or seven years living a version of this out myself. Various ventures, failures, disasters, confusions, nothingness, successes, and through it all a reluctance to engage with what happened here. Too confusing, too complex, too painful. And everything so partial and tendentious and unstable ... it's easier to turn away and avoid it. I tried and I couldn't do it, I got dragged into the history and even then I tried to avoid the spikes, '47, '71, it's too strong, too difficult to manage with subtlety. At first I just tried to be here. Got a motorbike and just rode around as many streets as I could. Walked and walked and walked the streets, nights, mornings, afternoons. When I couldn't take it anymore, I went to the tea gardens in Hobiganj. I know how shielded I was from this place, both epistemologically (I mean in the very structures of how to think or remember this place) and ontologically. The history is out on the streets, it's all still unresolved and flailing around. The history is debated and fought over with menace and a ferocity that's heartbreaking. But I'd be lying if I said that it wasn't also exhilarating. But things are also changing rapidly. They are rushing through things, trying to put any answer down, impose it, and then move on. The 'they' seems to be nearly everyone. I guess I feel a special responsibility to raise these questions again in all their variegation and uncertainty. That the answers that people have settled on and are trying to bind each other with leads us to more bloodshed and backwardness and disorientation. I'm probably just in an emotional state, but I want to encourage you to not be tentative about your approach. That the time to discuss everything, to remember everything, is now.

I wasn't quite sure how I'd communicate to you what's gone on recently and although long there is much more that I'd like to say. Also, apologies for what I see now is a very personal response from me, everything is very fresh, and I wanted you to see the affect of these conceptual strategies as they come into contact and self-reify in this context.

Regards,



P.S.: I drew a diagram for you which outlines some of the thinking for the Saturn show. It has a number of layers, each connected to the others in n-dimensions which tries to progressively resolve fundamental issues around my, or "Omar's" hybridised identity. Crucially, I see identity as constituting three parts: solid, vacated, and conflicted. Feeling the tensions of their limitation we can begin to understand the volition towards "narrativism" that historical and conceptual lacunae motivates. The solid I consider to be the part which allows for the I, for a person to be there and functional at all. The vacated are all those parts of identity-history that are missing or lost. Immigration, violence, tumult, politicisation can make history, and historical infrastructure inaccessible. Lastly, is the conflicted parts of identity-history where for reasons of dependence, lack of agency, and confidence (parents when one is young) where internal norms and values come into conflict with external norms and values. What I'm proposing is that para-fictional (esp. with reference to the mode and tone of Sebald and Coetzee) and sensorial aesthetics is a way to fill in some of the vacated identity, and reconcile some of the conflicted identity. Initially, in Bangladesh, I felt that just learning more history, as difficult as that was, would solve things, but it didn't. But what did, what gave comfort, was making up and reconstructing what was missing through objects, representations and actions in space. There is something deeply integrative to the model, where there's a combinatorial relationship between the ontological and the cognitive, that's how life is lived through and so I feel we must have the same situation in the gallery space. It's the only things that can rest peacefully in the volatile context that it all ends with.

Memoirs of Saturn

Longing is the agony of the nearness of the distant.

–Martin Heidegger, from "Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?" in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Pfullingen, 1954

I first met Dr. Shahidul Zaman, the political and economic historian, and a cousin of my father, for the first time in New York in 1990. I don't

remember anything about this meeting, I've only been told that it happened. It was about four years ago that we reconnected here in Dhaka with the encouragement of my father. I did not know then that our second meeting, in a characterless apartment building in Wari, would consume my thoughts and my work for the past number of years and produce this show which he and I have jointly (and sometimes contentiously!) conceived. Without the incredible hospitality that Dr. Zaman has shown—into what is an intensely private life—by opening up his home, archives, writings, and spending many afternoons with me discussing both his own life and that of his people and geography, there would be no show.

At first, the story that he told me and which, moreover, I saw laid out on his tables, bookshelves, and from watching the way he spent his time, seemed unremarkable. Just a thoughtful, obsessive man living quietly alone with his historical esoterica. Yet, I couldn't shake off the details he'd reveal: about this thinker that I hadn't considered to be relevant to South Asia, or that Muslim politician from the 30s who now seemed terribly instrumental. I heard him talk about my grandfather and other family members who had been like ghosts to me when I was growing up in Sydney. I was also struck by his aura. He would, no doubt, raise his eyebrows at this, but there was a sense of timeless delimitation when I was with him. A sense of drifting in history and a bodily re-experiencing that unsettled my sensorial certainty. It felt like I was listening to a virtuoso storyteller who traversed ages and different epistemological universes. Compared to my then-dissolute life of waking up next to people I did not know very well, this ambience of the past, of theory, of fictionality and enigmatic narrative was intoxicating. I began to believe in his halting, hushed recollections. I began to believe in him.



Photographer Unknown

Eventually, after discarding the other research (an euphemism) I'd been working on, I decided to do something about what he was uncovering for me. I asked him if he would be open to this and that I'd perhaps have an actor playing his role if I could use his story to make an exhibition, that I would try to reify his autobiography and thinking with objects. Considering how guarded he is with the world, and even many who are close to him, I was shocked to see flickers of excitement behind his rimmed glasses. He agreed and said that he wouldn't mind being photographed or filmed himself, that he'd done things like this at University. He said that he'd need some time to collect together his archives and that he and I should start meeting at a regular time. Those times, our afternoons together in that waning yellow-grey Dhaka light—I remember them. I remember the timbre of his voice like a persistent yet faded dream.

Now

It is as though subjective life in the form of consciousness consisted in being itself losing itself and finding itself again so as to possess itself by showing itself, proposing itself as a theme, exposing itself in truth.

– Emmanuel Levinas, 1968



Photographer Unknown

Dr. Zaman seems to do the same things every day. We filmed him and I swear that we could cut alternate days together perfectly. The same schedule, clothes, the same food, classes, the same archives and libraries, the same desk. The same bus every day! He's actualising the "eternal recurrence." Yet, there was something the matter. I can't say I saw it but I felt it. I thought it: in the notes that he'd spent his years collecting; in the atypical ideas that he pursued; and the unnerving detail of the things he recollected and systematised. There was something significant going on in his quiet approach of a phenomenological politico-economic history which was idiosyncratically personal, even ontological. His was an affective view of what had happened to his country and his family. Unexpectedly, it came into focus through the story of what had happened to him.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays he teaches English and English literature at a small private "university" here in Dhaka. It's essentially a college mill. For the reasons of his history, and the current political situation in Bangladesh, he cannot be offered the professorship that would be commensurate with his learning and experience. I went to a number of his classes and the least one could say is that he is underemployed. What he teaches, with so much care, is not what is needed. Students are more interested in business English. What they want is the employment and safety of commerce. But I assume that the job is convenient for him, with the low contact hours and access to a network of libraries and archives as a researcher. And it's in these libraries and archives that he seems to live out his real life. What he does there was initially a mystery to me. He seems to traverse history physically, running his hands over old newspapers and books and speeches in a concentrated trance. I found him staring out windows and doors often. Yet, there is a very specific and vast repository of narrative that he is trying to pattern-match. He collects photographs, letters, articles, ephemera, and he makes notes. When I first read some of these notes I was shocked.

Some of the notes were just what you'd expect: references, paraphrases,

ideas, links, etc., but there were other things that he was incorporating: the realities and memories of his past. He seems to be as happy to mix stories from his youth, what he has heard about his father, or his laments about his time overseas and juxtapose these with the historical and economic research and thinking that he is collecting. The feeling of these separate pieces, both private and public, both inner and outer, and other unclassifiable things, come together to give a vibration on the page that I found to be very new. He has many large notebooks full of permutations and combinations of the past. He told me that he had begun to write a book but that as time went on the idea seemed increasingly absurd. Yet, even after he gave up on that idea, he couldn't stop the process of construction, he kept on collecting things and remembering and trying to feel out and put down History. There didn't seem to be an exit plan.



Photographer: Enayet Karim Babul

After some time apart from him, I now wonder if that's the whole point. That by living through the process of reassembling his, a history, without a purpose, without an endgame, he is surfacing a kind of Zen or Beckettian ontology of being. This is not something he ever acquiesced to. The only thing he'd say is that his work wasn't about putting together a puzzle, rather, it was about taking one apart and that the history of Bengal (or his own history for that matter) isn't something that you try to see, but something that you try to unsee. Eventually, I found out more about what he was trying to unsee.

Exile

Having borrowed money from his maternal uncles to fly to New York, Shahidul Zaman spent the decade from 1982 to '92 mostly in America (with various trips abroad for conferences and seminars). His proposal to begin a PhD at Rochester was accepted in 1982.¹ He had travelled to India before but never on an aircraft and the initial years were lonely to be sure. Dr. Zaman and Mita had only recently been married and although he left very soon after, he does not remember his time away being particularly difficult. Many men left in those days, and many wives stayed behind for years and years until a visa and airplane ticket would arrive to carry them away. He remembers being quite happy those first years, doing a lot of coursework to catch up, and starting his research into Levi-Strauss and historical Bengal. He marvelled at the resources and the quietness of America and moved in with some other Bangladeshi men and felt like he had gone into a kind of retreat. An escape from what had come before. A moment of respite from being a son, a husband, or even a

father.

Very quickly after arriving he realised that his spoken English was not up to par for teaching and this gave him more time to read and think and write. He would catch the Greyhound to New York and he wandered around and fell in love with Vietnamese food. He found himself in the Lower East Side often, looking “at” these other cultures making a space for themselves somewhere new, and how fast the process was compared to what he was concerned with. He marvelled at the peacefulness, the naiveté of it, compared to what he had known. Soon afterwards he began to make friends in the faculty. He has especially fond memories of playing badminton and discussing fraudulent post-colonial theory with a number of people who became close colleagues over time, the historians: John Sebald, Sophia Myrzavik, and Mohammed Alam. Other than that not much happened until Mita came: “I read, I researched, I ate, I played badminton and I slept. We didn’t have the internet then but American television was mildly interesting.”



Photographer: Rahul Amin Kajoł

Mita Zaman and Atiq arrived late in 1984 and instantly disliked America, especially this quiet college town. She was part of a seven-sibling family and the eery quietness of the parks and their apartment and the roads and even the middle of the city unnerved her. She had studied materials engineering in Chittagong and painted, but when applying to do her PhD in America she was taken aback by how far behind the education that she had was. Especially in the first years, although Dr. Zaman was on a stipend, things were quite difficult financially and she took a job cleaning local bank branches with a contracting company. Within a year or two she had improved her English and took on an admin position with Citizens Bank, some of whose branches she had used to clean. The young family slowly became more secure.

Yet, something happened, or perhaps nothing happened and by the end of 1989, Mita left Rochester along with Atiq and came back to Bangladesh. She also began the proceedings for a divorce. There is a gulf of silence here and I could find out very little. In a way, I didn’t really want to. This wasn’t my work. Dr. Zaman submitted and defended his thesis under the tutelage of Prof. Stuart Daley. He was offered a role as an assistant lecturer working on 20th-century South Asian history. It was “Ershad-time” back home, and everything and everyone seems to have been in deep freeze. His thesis was taken up by Ohio University Press and published in 1990. Two of his articles were accepted for publication. He remembers that it was around this time that he definitively broke away from the phenomenologists, Bataille, and Schumpeter, and became far more

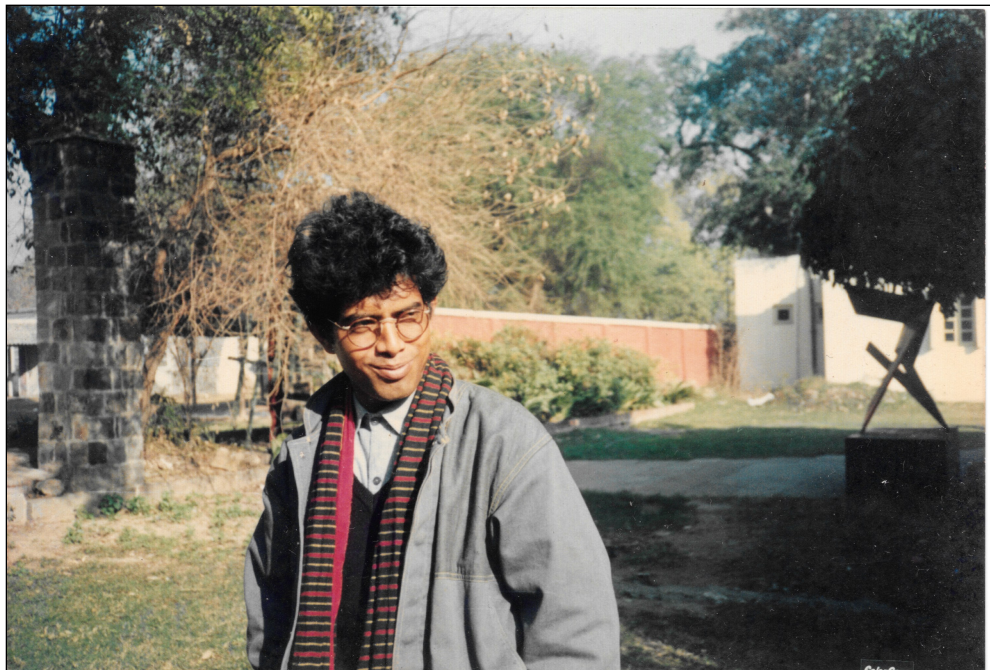
interested in people like Rorty, Said, Foucault, and Barthes. Then, he recounts that he fell into a lethargic sickness. Perhaps it was depression. He didn't seek treatment but began to spend a lot of time alone and in bed. He says that the way that he talked about doing history, and the way he was actually doing history and teaching it, didn't align. Perhaps, he says, history is placed on the earth like a lake, and you can't uproot the impression, the shape, that holds it. I guess he also missed his child and his wife. Whilst still managing to publish widely in the early years of the 90s, Dr. Zaman resolved to come back to Bangladesh. He arrived soon after a democratic government was elected in 1992. There was jubilation in the streets.

Absence and Disillusionment

On hearing about his father Azizur Zaman's disappearance and suspected execution towards the end of 1974, the young Dr. Zaman first went into extended shock and then, along with the rest of his family, settled into a kind of communal forgetting. There was nothing to be done but they tried to do everything anyway. When I try to speak to him about this time, it's not so much that he doesn't want to talk about it, it's that he doesn't seem able to. That perhaps the way of thinking required to talk about this isn't available to him. That there is deep trauma remaining from that time is, I think, self-evident. From members of his family I've only been able to gather a partial narrative, enough to make the combines and other works in the show that deal with these periods. "I don't know what happened to my father. I'm not even sure that he ever really was."

Before the Liberation War, Dr. Zaman's father worked for the Municipal Water Board in Dacca which was, naturally, part of the Pakistani government at the time with headquarters in West Pakistan. Azizur, a devout Muslim, had been very quiet before the war and he had remained quiet during and afterwards. According to Dr. Zaman, Azizur had begun to attend the political rallies of some Muslim parties, as he had sporadically done prior to the war, and that maybe this was behind his disappearance. That perhaps taking a minimal stance, a quiet stance, seemed even more dangerous to the paramilitary group, the Rakkhi Bahini, and Mujib's increasingly autocratic government (who Dr. Zaman's family accuse of his disappearance), than full-throated resistance. One is easier to see. Or maybe it was just a neighbourhood feud. Or just a mistake during the writing of a list. Many mistakes like that were made. In any case, on the evening of the 10th of December, Azizur did not return home. No one had seen him since he had left work at 4 p.m. The people at the local mosque had not seen him for afternoon prayers, which was remarkable to them. Where he once was, there was now only emptiness.

Dr. Zaman began, for a year or two, to rebel but he soon lost interest in the pettiness of his own anger and his natural dedication to study kept him on track through his first years at Dhaka University. Initially he wanted to do science (biology, he now vaguely remembers), but his reading and thinking took him in a different direction and he fantasised about the history of this continent and especially Bengal—of the grandeur, variegation, and complexity of it. He devoured novels and magazines and with his best-friend, Mustafa Golam (now a professor at King's College, London), he began to write poetry seriously. (I've read them. They aren't very good.) His results in class however were impressive and in everyone's memories it seems that there was no residual at all of the trauma of losing his father just a few years before.



Photographer: Dilara Begum Jolly

The years that followed had one surprising blip, Dr. Zaman became, I strongly suspect, very involved in leftist politics. As Zia took over and internal army ructions often brought the country to a stand-still, Dr. Zaman was active in some kind of political subterfuge. The ensuing chaos and Zia's own strange yet practical political inclusivity allowed a thousand parties and groups to bloom (only to be cut down in due course). Dr. Zaman was involved in something. I say something because I can't get him to tell me what it was although friends and some documents I've found certainly hint at violent political activities. He now says "I got mixed up in false consciousness [laughter], but I got out of it." Photos from this period show wild, bushy hair, and a kind of mania in the eyes. A young radical in flight. But that isn't how the decade ended. The army composed itself, or enough were executed into composure, and Dr. Zaman finished his master's degree with excellent results. At the end of the decade he began to see Mita Hoque, a charming yet melancholic young woman from Chittagong, whose father Dr. Zaman had done some research for at the end of 1979. They were married just after New Year's day in 1980 and Dr. Zaman and Mita had Atiqur Azizur Zaman, their first and only child, on the night of November the 23rd, 1980. Pregnancy and the time afterward were difficult for Mita but to others their future seemed very bright.

Prehistory

I was a loyal party member for two decades before 1956 and therefore silent about a number of things about which it's reasonable not to be silent.

—Eric Hobsbawm, "Man of the Extreme Century," *The Guardian*, 22 September 2002.

Before the second partition, Dr. Zaman's family lived in Behrampur in what is now West Bengal. An old Muslim family who were officials of the city going back centuries, the break of the country and their state into two religiously mandated parts was a significant event to say the least. There was tension in the family. The respect for thinkers like Muhammad Iqbal and Syed Ahmed Khan was deep rooted and the fears of a Hindu-led state and of one-person-one-vote entrenching what was felt to be systemic racism were strong. Dr. Zaman's father and grandfather seemed to have been strong proponents of the two-nation theory and were encouraging of the family's move to a Muslim nation. Yet, there must have been some doubt. To break one's country in half out of fear, how can that be done without uncertainty and doubt? It was, of course, not practically easy to uproot themselves but eventually Azizur Zaman received a transfer and they all moved to Rajshahi (in what was about to become East Pakistan)

just before Partition. Initially, they settled near some distant family members who had made the journey earlier. They were able to sell, transfer, and exchange a number of landholdings and fared far better than the majority of those who moved. Dr. Zaman was born in Rajshahi in 1959. Saturn was ascendant. His first memory was of the beheading of a goat, or perhaps a small cow, for Eid-al-Adha.



Ali Murshed

After partition, state control from the west of the country and the authoritarian ideology of the creators of Pakistan seeped into law and the administrative structure. They began to question whether Bengali culture and language belonged in the new nation and how and if it could be assimilated. The dream realised, the costs were being weighed. Fatigue set in when faced with the reality of obligation and compromise. Azizur Zaman began to dim towards political Islam and moved his immediate family to Dhaka in 1957. Dr. Zaman suspects that his father began to lose hope in the rhetoric of the promises of a Muslim nation. We can't be sure. There are no records. Azizur published some poetry in right-wing journals which are coded, melancholic affirmations of Partition. Perhaps it was his faith or his increasingly important government position which restricted him from taking a stronger public position. But the acrimony was deep and the topic was a fraught one between Azizur Zaman and Dr. Zaman's maternal uncles who were strong proponents of Bengali and eventually ardent nationalists and freedom fighters. Ideas had become real.

The last time I spoke to Dr. Zaman he said: "There isn't a line between what is inside you and what is outside, or between what is thought and what is. One must work towards coming to this understanding. It is the right understanding." I teased him about Dōgen (who he loves). The research and re-experiencing that Dr. Zaman fixates on grew out of the seeds of this Muslim discontent and disorientation, the control and abuse of a whole diverse culture by an alien other, and the impacts and repercussions that had on the political and economic events that followed. Ostensibly, one feels a sort of postponement about his life. Yet, that his own and his family's "history" is seemingly so intricate and echoic, and that its affect lives on through documents, ideas, narratives, and bodily traumas is what seems to silently illuminate his life and gives him that tectonic energy one feels in him. The silence is a ruse, because in his very being, he is living out the vastness of history.

Omar A. Chowdhury
Rajshahi, Bangladesh
January 2016

- 1 Shahidul Zaman, *Levi-Strauss's Identity Formation of Groups and Nietzsche's Will to Power in East-Bengal's Subject-Ruler Relationships, 1900-1915*. Proposed Ph.D. Abstract in the Department of History, (University of Rochester, March 1982).The research reads the early history of the relationships between the Colonial Raj, it's administrative systems and individual administrators, and the political leadership of various villages and areas around the Rajshahi region of Bengal. It extends Levi-Strauss's theories of the identity formation of groups using artificial mythemes and Nietzschean readings of power subconscious and volition to interpret letters, notes, news-articles and diaries and other texts to postulate evolving structures and patterns of subservience and domination amongst the key participants.