

representation, Sarkar contends that several factors in the 1980s broke film's Partition-silence, such as the rise of *dalit* (untouchable) politics and religious militancy. Chapter Six of the book focuses on the television mini-series *Tamas* (*Darkness*), originally aired on the state-owned network Doordarshan. The series depicts the violent effects of Partition through the experiences of Nathu, a lower-caste worker, and his family. In his analysis of the series, Sarkar suggests that the narrative of *Tamas* not only absolves the average Indian citizen of the violence and trauma brought by Partition, it places the blame on India's national leaders and colonial forces and policies.

Whilst examining the period immediately following Partition, Sarkar asks the question, "if contemporary films did not represent what was clearly the most momentous event in modern South Asian history, what were they doing instead?" (49). Sarkar's question points to his unique methodology—his analysis considers both what stories are being told and which stories remain untold. In doing so, he argues that cinematic discourse is constituted by both its "expressions and silences." For example, in the Bengali films of the 1940s and 1950s, Sarkar argues that narrative preoccupation with poverty and homelessness is the trace of Partition mourning. Later, the author makes a convincing case of these traces of mourning, looking at refugees both as spectator and film subject. Sarkar contends that India's mourning is as much about what has happened in the decades since Partition as fantasies of what could have happened. In his words, he is interested in "a kind of mourning work that helps us dream about futures and communities" (page 43).

Like most of the books published on Indian cinema in the past few years Sarkar cannot escape situating his analysis within globalization discourse. Yet, even while engaging with the effects of globalization on Indian cinema, he never loses sight of Partition. Rather, when he engages with globalization and its effects on Indian cinema and television, it is to further an understanding of the changing and multiple effects of, and reactions to, Partition.

Also, similar to many of the books now being published on Indian cinema, the book's greatest strength may be its specificity. This is a comment not just on the book itself, but also on the landscape of Indian film studies. The field has grown beyond its earlier, often pejorative, writing, and now beyond the taxonomies and surveys that were published in the 1990s. Instead, books such as Bhaskar Sarkar's have a narrow focus, in this case Partition, and an important one at that.

FILM

Invisible City

Dir. Hubert Davis

NFB, 2009.

Regent Park Film Festival

Nelson Mandela Public School. 7 November 2009.

May Chew

Hubert Davis's *Invisible City*, screened at Toronto's Regent Park Film Festival (RPF) this fall, opens with a crucial image; it is a bird's eye view, which situates in its foreground a handful of ramshackle, tired apartment buildings that comprise the heart of Regent Park, Canada's largest and oldest housing community. Somewhere towards the back, the hazy line of Toronto looms silently. As this image and the rest of Davis's documentary goes on to suggest, there is a hard, yet unspoken line drawn between these two planes, a line that characterizes Toronto's resolute blindness towards its West end neighbourhood. It is precisely this "invisibility" that the film then attempts to uncloak, by actively foregrounding Regent Park residents and giving them a platform—albeit never a wholly unencumbered one—from which to speak.

The film follows intermittently two Regent Park residents, Mikey and Kendall, through three years of

their lives, as they stumble—sometimes blindly, sometimes brazenly—from adolescence towards adulthood. Though attention is given to the hardships of life within the confines of their inner-city neighbourhood, the film suggests that the real struggle comes in Mikey and Kendell's fraught navigations of the larger city "outside," and its forms of juridical, political, emotional, and even physical alienation. This transitional period of the protagonists' lives is deliberately juxtaposed against the changes faced by the community itself, which is presently undergoing the contentious fifteen-year "Regent Park Revitalization" plan that will see most of its existing structures gutted and replaced. As the film returns to the opening bird's eye shot, it becomes apparent that, from this aerial vantage point, the Regent Park buildings resemble Xs—marked eerily for demolition. The grievous point emphasized here is that perhaps the only instance Regent Park registers on the city's socio-political cartography is when it is on the brink of dissolution.

Invisible City, however, is neither a mournful elegy nor a rash and clumsy call to arms. Instead, the film is Davis's deft attempt to crack open up a space for dialogue, by firstly inserting subjects and perspectives often egregiously misrepresented or else wholly left out of official urban discourses. While the film is at times successful at returning the gaze and using strategic evasions and silences to interrogate the imposed "invisibility" of its subjects, it is really the embedding of the film within a firm community context—such as the RPPF—that really provides the ample grounds for reciprocal exchange.

Davis's documentary, which will make its broadcast debut on TVO next February, has been making the festival rounds since this spring. In November 2009, it closed the 7th annual RPPF, where it was received in a fitting homecoming of sorts. Unlike the city's usual festival fare, RPPF remains staunchly driven for and by its community. Organizers put in every effort to ensure that RPPF remains as accessible to the community—within and even beyond Regent Park—as possible: there are screenings, panels, and

media arts workshops geared towards residents; screenings are free; childcare is provided; and each festival also highlights films produced by local residents. RPPF's sole venue—a modest, makeshift theatre in the auditorium of the nearby Nelson Mandela Public School, decorated with children's artwork, and filled to the brim with foldout chairs and eager mixed crowds of residents and nonlocals—is both a marker of the festival's budgetary constraints, as well as its political effort to remain a central, relevant, and accessible presence within Regent Park.

The powerful dialogic tension arising from the situation of this particular film within this particular festival is startlingly demonstrated in a sequence where Davis's camera, on revisiting Mikey and Kendell's old stomping grounds, takes the viewer inside this same auditorium in the Nelson Mandela P.S.. This moment serves primarily two significant functions. For any viewer, the filmic space here becomes ripely expanded beyond the hermetic parameters of the screen into a larger site of encounter and collusion. For the Regent Park residents in particular, this moment signals at least a temporary break in the often impenetrable spectral selvage of filmic representation. This moment is in fact reflective of the many ways in which the film, particularly situated within this festival, demonstrates the effectiveness of community screens—mediating planes which provide the means by which community residents can represent themselves both to themselves as well as to larger audiences. Of course, there will always be tensions and moments of near failure; for instance, the film notably falls short of probing beneath the deleterious veneer of the "Revitalization" project in order to really address the effects of the redevelopment on the residents' lives. In more general terms, while realising the importance of beginning from the local, one at the same time waits impatiently for such community screens to rupture their own enclosures and go on to infiltrate wider terrains. This said, RPPF at least provides an abundant starting ground for such fraught and necessary negotiations.