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Memory, Heritage, and Cultural Display in the Former Colonial Port Cities of Elmina (Ghana) and Fort Kochi (India)

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Memory, Heritage, and Cultural Display in the Former Colonial Port Cities of

Elmina (Ghana) and Fort Kochi (India)

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in

Culture and Performance

by

Neelima Jeychandran

2014

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Memory, Heritage, and Cultural Display in the Former Colonial Port Cities of

Elmina (Ghana) and Fort Kochi (India)

by

Neelima Jeychandran

Doctor of Philosophy in Culture and Performance

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Mary Nooter Roberts, Chair

This dissertation discusses how residents, governments, and the international community continue to transform and recast two colonial port cities, Elmina in Ghana and Fort Kochi in India, as heritage sites and museums in order to represent particular histories. These sites act as repositories of memory, venues for community rituals, spaces for exhibitions, and backdrops for artistic productions. This exploration of these ports demonstrates the continued relevance and resonance of colonial heritage in postcolonies and exposes how knowledge of colonialism are produced and disseminated through the media of heritage and museums.

Elmina and Fort Kochi are ideal case studies in part because of their similar historical trajectories, but principally because of their parallel contemporary existences. Both of these towns have been reconstituted as heritage destinations and are now exhibitionary landscapes with

multiple museums, heritage homes, and archeological ruins. Furthermore, both are venues for recurring cultural performances and festivals. Their urban landscapes simultaneously exhibit colonial struggles, modern aspirations, and postcolonial predicaments. By analyzing the revitalization of history in Elmina and Fort Kochi, I show how these cities function as alternative archives that harbor submerged narratives of migration and cultural exchange through unique modes of museum display, both within and beyond the walls of the gallery spaces.

The dissertation of Neelima Jeychandran is approved.

Allen F. Roberts

Janet M. O'Shea

Saloni Mathur

Mary Nooter Roberts, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2014

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Introduction

In contemporary times, colonial buildings and related material culture demonstrate various cultural influences while signifying ideological constructions, power structures, and strategies of politico-economic control. By examining historical landscapes in colonial port towns of southwestern India and coastal Ghana as they are transformed into cultural heritage sites and open-air museums, I shall study the impacts, appeals, and effects of colonialism for local as well as global communities. Taking the Ghanaian fortress of Elmina and Fort Kochi in Kerala and the greater towns surrounding them as case studies, I shall analyze how these sites exist as archives through which histories of cultural exchange and circulation of people are displayed, both within and beyond the walls of museum galleries (Fig 0:1 & 0:2).[1] I discuss the workings of these sites as realms of public history in order to show how different institutions and communities use them to construct and disseminate discourses on colonial culture, early cosmopolitanism, modernity, and transnational flows.

Contemporary interpretations of Elmina and Fort Kochi reveal how histories of colonialism are remembered, performed, and circulated through heritage media. Although, I shall present histories of these two port towns through significant events and postcolonial transformations of their landscapes, my intention is not to present a history in *longue durée*. Rather, analysis of colonial port towns permits an understanding of how they have been and are historicized through display practices that generate very public discourses on colonialism.

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[1] Officially known as Kochi, the name Cochin is the Anglicized version of Kochi and also the name under which the town was known during the European occupation.

Heritage-scapes of Elmina and Fort Kochi foster public histories and memories that people negotiate, interrogate, and reconcile through an array of cultural and artistic performances. As a means to deconstruct authoritarian discourses, the emphasis is on micro-histories that include intersubjective personal recollections, stories, and nuanced memories of people with whom I have interacted in order to demonstrate public recall of fraught histories of colonialism.

The imprints of colonialism and its impacts on contemporary postcolonies are addressed by critically analyzing the workings of Elmina and Fort Kochi. First by exploring and then establishing the connections between the colonial port towns of Elmina and Fort Kochi, their functions as places of colonial memory will be compared (Fig 0:3 & 0:4). Although it was with the Swahili Coast of eastern Africa that the Malabar Coast had most extensive trading connections, exchanges between the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and Malabar were not uncommon. While there are few direct linkages between Elmina and Fort Kochi, their relationships to each other lie in the fact that both served as important sea terminals where ships might dock for months and exchange their cargo with other vessels freighting from different places. Being commercial hubs, these port towns also facilitated the circulation of commodities, sailors, soldiers, traders, missionaries, indentured labor, and enslaved people from inland to distant destinations. Indeed, connections between the two coasts will be considered primarily through the free and forced migration of people. The operations of these port towns certainly illustrate what Arjun Appadurai (1996) terms "scapes," or realms that reflect and facilitate global cultural flows. As colonial port towns, not only did Elmina and Fort Kochi channel flows of people and produce, they were crucial to circulation of knowledge, technologies, and cultural practices. Furthermore, being the foundational sites for new models of European expansion overseas, the

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two fortresses were places where Europeans tried and tested imperial models of structural control, slavery, and related forms of colonial oppression.

The second aspect of this dissertation is its comparisons through which parallels in histories of seaport and town development will be analyzed to find similarities. First, how Elmina served as a center for gold trade and later the infamous transatlantic slave trade will be considered, while facilitation of the spice trade and other trans-Indian-Ocean movements will be presented in contrast and complement. Second, the contemporary existence of the two forts as heritage sites and open-air or widespread museums permits discussion of how surrounding towns retain remnants of colonialism and hence are places that to some degree may fall outside essentialized national imagination. The comparison of present states of affairs of the two heritage sites will focus on their lives as tourist destinations, especially given Elmina's significance as a memory place for visitors from the African diaspora, while Fort Kochi is celebrated as Malabar Coast's cosmopolitan town that showcases cultural connections with Europe. Further, I contrast the different ways in which histories are showcased, narrated, and choreographed in open-air museums, which also serve as venues for biennial arts and cultural events like PANAFEST (Pan-African Arts and Theater Festival) at Elmina and the Kochi-Muziris Biennale at Fort Kochi. Finally, consideration will be given to contemporary artists' interventions at these sites and their methods of intervening and reinterpreting problematic histories through site-specific installations, sculptures, videos, and performance pieces.

Elmina in Ghana and Fort Kochi in India have been chosen because they have similar historical trajectories and spatial layouts and they possess parallel contemporary existences. These two places are palimpsest urbanscapes that concurrently exhibit remnants of colonial

culture, modernity, national predicaments, and transnational connections. Furthermore, the monuments and heritages of these places are the vehicles that link their surrounding towns to global networks especially through tourism. I borrow the term "urban palimpsests" from Andreas Huyssen to illustrate the multiple existences of these two sites. As he suggests, urban palimpsests "implies voids, irregularities, and erasures, but it also offers a richness of traces and memories, restorations and new constructions that marks the city as a lived space" (2003: 84). The phrase "urban palimpsest" defines the existence of these two towns, since the past makes a striking visual presence through museums, heritage buildings, period homes, and archeological ruins. Replete with material traces from the colonial era and diverse cultural displays, the two sites offer open-air exhibitions that re-present colonialism as well as its postcolonial makeover.

While exhibitions and performances at Elmina and Fort Kochi offer an opportunity to investigate multi-textured narratives of colonialism, they also show different ways in which societies deal with their colonial pasts by reusing and reinterpreting them. Moreover, the two places display tensions of globalization and function as cultural "contact zones" (Pratt 1992; Clifford 1997) where different agencies and actors engage sources of power and knowledge. The heritage sites at Elmina and Fort Kochi also illustrate how monuments and memorials can be used to narrate heterogeneous cultural histories of people within the metanarratives of postcolonial nation-states. By focusing on intercultural histories, the heritage sites and museums of these two towns show local linkages to global networks. In the case of Fort Kochi, which is far removed from Indian political and economic centers, the heritage projects and sites advertise the cultural significance and importance of the regional state of Kerala, whereas in Elmina the castle is promoted as a pilgrimage site for African Americans engaged in Roots tourism.

Heritage conservation at Elmina and Fort Kochi demonstrates a pattern through which the local is influenced by the global as very public discourses on colonialism are constructed.

The central objective of this dissertation is to go beyond authoritarian texts of colonial archives to explore how memories and new histories are negotiated in postcolonies through heritage, exhibitions, performances, and contemporary art. While texts have dominated the interpretation of colonial memory, here the focus is shifted from text to representation through material heritage and the invention of traditions, culturally significant places, innovative rituals, and visual and performance arts. As these media are public and target wide audiences more than texts and critical postcolonial literature, an examination of the role of these sites in cultural production is important. Heritage zones generate polyvalent recollections of pasts that are fractured and disjunctive as opposed to a monolithic and linear narration of fraught histories from top-down hegemonic perspectives. Heritage sites and widespread museum-scapes are not static or fixed repositories of memory, but rather are self-perpetuating vortexes of symbolic meaning—palimpsest texts with layers of meaning superimposed over less visible though still perceptible layers of experience and social disturbance.

II. Research Problems and Questions

Previous studies of Elmina and Fort Kochi have been focused on the historic relevance of these places as pivotal to colonial trade. Several scholars have extensively discussed Elmina and its castle's role in the gold trade and later in the deportation of enslaved captives for labor on colonial plantations in the Americas. Similarly, Fort Kochi has been analyzed as a center through which the spice trade was funneled. Yet, the constructed heritages of these towns and their roles

as tourist destinations are understudied. Here counter-histories will be offered by moving away from authoritarian historical interpretations and focusing on other processes of cultural preservation and recall through more visual and tangible materials like architecture, festivals, rituals, and arts. Secondly, complex and over-arching histories and contemporary purposes of colonial port towns will be revisited by considering "body" and "place" as aspects that have often been sidelined in the discussion of events pertaining to the lived experience of colonial histories. Hence, by investigating the mnemonic and mimetic powers of place, special cultural resonances for certain communities can be discussed as to how museums and heritage sites revive their cultural memories.

The infrastructures of the towns of Elmina and Fort Kochi date to the early phases of what some economic historians call mercantile colonialism, and the historical development of these places should not be studied in isolation. Comparative perspectives will aid in mapping European cultural imperialism and the factors that defined the formation of settler and non-settler colonial establishments overseas. Interestingly, the arrival of Europeans on the Guinea Coast and the construction of a trading post steered the formation of a vital port of call for vessels sailing around the Cape of Good Hope to port towns of the Indian Ocean world. In analyzing the larger implications of the establishment of a Portuguese factory at Elmina, it can be noted that a major sequence of events was precipitated that changed the course of regional maritime history. A causal reasoning behind the development and decline of both Elmina and Fort Kochi can be recognized, and when a European power lost control of its factory and trade in Fort Kochi, within a decade or two, the same power lost its properties and dominance on the other side of the world on the Gold Coast, as well. Far-reaching effects and repercussions of colonial trade and

governance are revealed in studies such as the present one, as a sequence of events in one sphere--in this case the Malabar Coast--has impact on the Gold Coast over a long period of time.

By narrating historical accounts of Elmina and Fort Kochi spanning five centuries, contexts for contemporary analyses can be perceived. According to Ferdinand Braudel, "history (is) infinitely extensible (if) it becomes wedded, either freely or not, to a whole chain of events, of underlying realities which are then, it seems, impossible to separate" (1982: 28). Dale Tomich argues that for Braudel, the concept of longue durée does not mean a historical grand narrative; instead, "the longue durée is a historical relation that allows an open and experimental approach to the theoretical reconstruction of long-term, large-scale world historical change" (2008: 2). By showing the connections in colonial histories, a ground is created for deconstructing contemporary displays and performances at Elmina and Fort Kochi so as to discuss how certain fraught pasts are reconciled, appeased, redressed and even recalled.

Through this dissertation, questions such as the following will be addressed: 1) How are architectural heritage and museums at Elmina and Fort Kochi functioning as places of public history that present discourses on colonialism? 2) How are different spaces curated and displayed, transforming towns into vast exhibitions? 3) How do various actors serve as interlocutors of the past, narrating contested histories and fraught memories within discursive heritage-scapes? 4) How do the state and other cultural organizations, by their selective restoration process, make certain places and people visible while effacing others in cultural narratives? 5) How have landscapes and built environments of Elmina and Fort Kochi become key components in (re)creating frames of memory about certain communities for select social groups? 6) How does tourism influence production of heritage sites and artistic productions?

Such queries will be addressed in the sections "Making Memories" and "Visual Representation" of this dissertation.

III. Theories

The present project is influenced by an interdisciplinary body of literature in Anthropology, Archeology, Art History, History, and Performance Studies pertaining to discourses on colonialism, port towns and oceanic trade, memory and the making of histories, museums, heritage, and tourism. Theories of cultural memory and public remembering are crucial to this dissertation. The incisive analyses of Susannah Radstone (2000; 2003), Paul Connerton (1989; 2009), Edward Casey (1997), Pierre Nora (1998), Aleida Assman (2010), Jacob Climo and Maria Cattell (2002) and Mary Nooter Roberts and Allen F. Roberts (1996) on the diverse representations of cultural memories through the public sphere inform my understanding of various manifestations of memories and socio-cultural dynamics. Works of the sort help position my arguments on the workings of the heritage sites at Elmina and Fort Kochi and how they are instrumental to visualizing and exhibiting historical pasts in the present. Important writings by Diana Taylor (2003) and Davesh Soneji (2012) demonstrate how performances are dynamic and organic repositories through which alternative histories are rendered.

Among the works that inform my understanding of the cultural history, archeology and development of the towns of Elmina and Cape Coast are penetrating analyses by Bayo Holsey (2008), and Christopher DeCorse (2001). DeCorse's historical archeology of Elmina, in which he discusses the various levels of interaction between Europeans and African residents is useful

in understanding the townscape and socio-cultural fabric of Elmina over time. Their critical take

on the conservation of the castles at Cape Coast and Elmina reveals the politics behind

revitalization projects. Likewise, Anjana Singh's (2007) social history of Cochin offers a

valuable description of the urbanscape and social structure during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Further, writings by Indian Ocean historians including Dilip Basu (1985) and Frank Broeze

(1989) are critical to knowing the function of forts of the Malabar Coast and their roles

facilitating commerce and territorial expansion into the hinterlands.

Important to my project are discussions of the transformation of historical places as

heritage sites and displays for touristic consumption. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's analysis

(1998, 2006) of heritage as cultural capital of nation-states is particularly important in thinking

about the value and importance assigned to heritage in India and Ghana. Her theories and those

of Michael Di Giovine (2009) are useful to understanding conversion of local spaces into tourist

destinations by ascribing cultural and historical value. The ways that landscapes, built forms and

people are showcased for touristic consumption will be important to this dissertation, as will be

literature on how tourism influences the socio-cultural existence of a place in colonial and

contemporary memory. Sally Ness's (2003) works are useful as she discusses the physical

changes that societies, bodies, and habitats undergo as tourism becomes central to people's lives.

Like scholars such as Michael Hal and Hazel Tucker (2004), Ness recognizes that tourism as an

industry cannot be conceived without other cultural realities such as globalization, diasporic

multiculturalism, capitalism, and transnationalism. Also contributing to my arguments are the

writings of Edward Bruner (2005), Paula Ebron (1999), Sandra L. Richards (2005), and Jemima

Pierre (2009; 2013) who have specifically discussed the impact of tourism at Elmina and Cape

Coast and how new narratives have been staged there to appeal to African American Roots-tour visitors.

Debates in museum studies on exhibitions and "curating cultures"[2] enable me to unpack the deeply textured places of Elmina and Fort Kochi that operate at multiple levels to serve various purposes. Writings by authors such as Carol Breckenridge and Arjun Appadurai (2004), Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (2000), and Pieprzak (2010) have provoked me to think about the ways in which colonial buildings are employed as non-conventional exhibition spaces. The relatively new theoretical concepts of "metaspace" and "diffused museum" play a crucial role in understanding the workings of mega-cultural sites, art districts, and perennial art events. Rather than focusing on the physical realm, the theoretical concept of metaspace defined by Raoul Bunschoten (1998, 2005) permits investigation of the underlying currents that shape a space into a place endowed with meanings. During my research, I employed the theoretical construct of metaspace to explore the commonalities among factors that have influenced the formation of heritage sites at Elmina and Fort Kochi. I also expand the concept of diffused museum, coined by the Italian architect and urban planner Fredi Drugman (1982), to discuss movement from a monolithic entity limited in its area and collections to an active cultural repository.

IV. Methods and Methodology

A cross-continental, multi-sited study will be undertaken in these pages in order to understand the broader dynamics and significance of heritage sites at Elmina and Fort Kochi. For

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[2] I borrow this term from Prof. Mary Nooter Roberts who coined this phrase as the title of an influential course taught in the Department of World Arts and Cultures at UCLA.

this purpose, a combination of methodological approaches will be employed to establish how museums and heritage sites possess multiple existences in postcolonial nations. Since my dissertation is based upon research in Ghana and India, methodological choices have been shaped by George Marcus' (1998; 2011) discussions of multi-sited ethnography. Such an approach is not only time-consuming and extensive, but the very scale of the project can be a major problem in conducting research as well as writing the dissertation. To the degree possible, it was imperative to employ the same research techniques at both Elmina and Kochi where ethnographic investigation was followed by archival research.

Before delving deeply into my research process, the reasons for choosing Elmina and Fort Kochi as research sites must be explained. They were selected after thorough ten-week long research conducted in 2010, during which I explored several port cities in the Central Region of Ghana and also along the Western and Eastern coasts of India. During the initial phase of the pilot study, I narrowed my search to Elmina and Cape Coast in Ghana and Fort Kochi and Kannur in India as potential research sites. In the case of Ghana, since UNESCO named the European fortifications, most of the buildings are well preserved by the local government. Elmina and Cape Coast castles are not only well maintained, but also they attract many tourists, a reality that provided me the opportunity to study performances for tourists, and occasionally by tourists. Unlike Ghana, in India most colonial factories and fortifications are occupied by the Indian Navy or Military and are used as barracks, hence gaining access and conducting research proved very difficult. However, most of the European forts on the Malabar Coast are well maintained by the state government of Kerala. Comparison of Elmina with Fort Kochi proved possible then, since both were early establishments of European trading companies. Initially, the

plan was to study the historical geography of these two port towns and their contrasting

postcolonial transformation into heritage sites. However, my research shifted to analyzing

individual and collective negotiations of colonial memory through performances.

The research approach I take covers both obvious and non-obvious applications of multi-

sited strategies. Expanding on George Marcus' arguments, Simon Coleman and Pauline von

Hellermann note that examples of obvious cases consist of tracing more direct movements of

migration, transnational flows, or history of circulation of objects among others (2011:3).

Whereas non-obvious cases suggest linkages between multiple objects, spaces, places, and

communities. Coleman and Hellermann state that in ethnographic study when such relationships

are not clear, connections between sites are disjunctive in space and time (ibid). Although some

of my research falls within obvious approaches as I examine linkages between Elmina and Fort

Kochi as colonial seaports and trading hubs, there are also non-obvious connections. This is

chiefly because of Elmina's history as a slave port for over two hundred years and its current

status as a site of pilgrimage for the African diaspora. Fort Kochi has a very different

contemporary valence, but the link is that both sites survive as "theaters of memory" where

colonial histories are not only displayed, but also performed for—and sometimes by—visitors.

This multi-sited research is premised on connecting vectors that link Elmina and Fort

Kochi through oceanic trading exchanges. In defining and distinguishing multi-sited research

from other ethnographic practices, George Marcus argues, " If there is anything left to discover

by ethnography it is relationships, connections, and indeed cultures of connection, association,

and circulation that are completely missed that are completely missed through the use and

naming of the object of study in terms of categories "natural" and to subjects' preexisting

discourses about them" (1998: 16). He remarks that while the Malinowskian ethnographic objective has been to analyze subjects in natural units, in multi-sited research, ethnography deals with the inquiry of the development, displacement, and movement of cultures across time and space (ibid: 19). By following Marcus, I show how multi-sited ethnography not only cuts across different geographies, but also in process intersects with different fields such as Heritage Studies, Museum Studies, Performance Studies, Art History, Anthropology, and History (ibid: 20). This dissertation hence is based upon cross-disciplinary, multi-sited research.

In addition, I examine memory not only as a theoretical tool, but also a methodological lens to understand how histories of colonialism as well as the forced, coerced, and free migration of people are recalled, reenacted, and memorialized. Since the castle at Elmina is a place of memory for African Americans and Africans from the diaspora, I have studied various acts of memorialization performed within the castle. In the case of Fort Kochi, I have investigated the two processes of memory making—the reasons behind promoting Fort Kochi as a "Land of Memories," and cultural retention of marginalized memories. Exegeses concerning sites of colonial memory will prove useful to postcolonial literature as they show how heritage sites function as places that generate public memories about colonialism as well as one that incites a private act of memorializing the past.

Here I borrow Mary Nooter Roberts (1996) and Susannah Radstone's (2000) techniques of using memory as a methodological tool for ethnographic inquiry. Building on how Roberts examines the relationships between place and memory, how different memories are presented and performed through the medium of heritage shall be examined. Like Roberts, analyzing the workings of memory and its relation to the past, Radstone notes that revival of memory theories

in the 90s memory boom saw memory being not linked to history, community, tradition, the past, reflection, and authenticity, but to fantasy, subjectivity, invention, the present, representation, and fabrication (2000:6). She argues that an example of evoking memory of the past for contemporary society is through heritage sites that evoke an imagination of the unlived past through the experience of visiting places meticulously preserved or by employing technologies to recreate an experience simulating the past (Radstone 2000; 8). Commenting on Raphael Samuel's arguments on heritage expressed in his earlier edition of Theaters of Memory (1994), Radstone states that while such phenomena of historical imagination are welcomed, such places need to be viewed critically (Radstone 2000:8). Following such a lead, I spoke with locals as well as visitors about their perceived images of Elmina and Fort Kochi as colonial port cities, asking what kinds of imagination they trigger.

To employ memory as methodology, I collected testimonies from people belonging to different focus groups. Additionally, I talked to tour guides and tourists and asked them how the heritage sites at Elmina and Fort Kochi served as reference points to imagine a certain historical milieu. I documented people's thoughts, ideas, notions, and descriptions about how they imagined the history of the place. In the process, I collected a range of narratives, which help me to understand the role of heritage sites in evoking memories of the past. I also spent a significant amount of time conversing with local people in Elmina and Fort Kochi to learn about their personal memories and associations with certain places. The accounts that I received varied because people's recollections of the past varied as they included or forgot things. Each interview was a narrative event, in other words. Especially while narrating information about Africans in Fort Kochi, the memories of older residents of Fort Kochi were very situational,

since they edited their accounts depending upon the context and also the people with whom they were sitting.

While I examined how Fort Kochi was transformed into a memoryscape, I also attempted to excavate forgotten histories and sequestered memories about the African community that once resided there. Since very little historical information is available at the local archives and record offices, I had to resort to people's memories about this marginalized history. I explored processes of selective forgetting, social amnesia, and recollection. To learn about earlier African presence, I had extensive conversations with elders who had resided in Fort Kochi for more than sixty years. Their recollections before Indian independence and their knowledge of the communities living in Kochi were useful. While I learnt about their personal memories, most of the elders also shared their recollections of their friends' and family members' memories about the African community. To learn about the African community, I also collected local accounts of African spirits and documented rituals performed to please African spirits. I was very aware that most of accounts of the past were subjected to personal interpretations and reinterpretations depending upon the context, but this reality reflects the processual nature of memory by definition (see Roberts and Roberts 1996).

The ethnographic information that I gathered and the theoretical lens that I employed shape the contents, chapters, and text of this dissertation. The biggest problem with which I attempt to grapple is the process of narrativizing my analysis to construct a text that is cohesive and has a logical structure. In discussing some of the problems of multi-sited research, George Marcus has rightly pointed out that the challenges of such research lie not only in conducting work in two or more places, but also rests in translating resulting research into writing (Marcus

1998: 14). In order to construct a complex yet discursive narrative, I first present historical linkages between my two research sites. The foundation so created permits two processes of cultural production to be investigated: memories and the making of histories, and visual representations of said histories.

V. Research Process

The inspiration for cross-continental study of port towns stems from my desire to conduct in-depth study of Kochi, where my family lives. Although I am a native of Calicut (Kozhikode), another port city, while growing up I lived in different towns along the Malabar Coast in Kerala, and was fascinated by the histories and cosmopolitan culture that can be found along the coast. Moreover, literature such as Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh* in which he writes of the arrival of Portuguese and Jews and their impact on contemporary culture of Cochin, and Malayalam novelist Sankaran Kutty Pottekkatt's travelogue *Kappirikalude Nattil* or *In The Land of Black People* were texts that stoked my imagination. By comparing the histories and historical geographies of the colonial port city of Fort Kochi with Elmina, I inquire into the sequence of events that shaped the histories of these two towns, as well as the Guinea and Malabar Coasts.

Splitting the ethnographic investigation into two phases, I spent an intensive eight months in India followed by another six in Ghana. During the course of fieldwork, I engaged in interviews and observations supplemented by contextual investigations. As a qualitative ethnographer, I carefully analyzed the sites and took extensive fieldnotes and photographs of different locations and activities. Central to my research was participant observation, and at Elmina and Fort Kochi visitors were observed by following tour groups to learn how guides

choreograph the viewing process. Central to this research are the ways that cultural histories and memories are showcased and performed at the various sites. In order to analyze different performative acts in which various publics engaged within the castle at Elmina, I observed several tourist groups to see how Africans, African Americans, and other visitors identified with the fraught spaces like the dungeons. Both at Elmina and Fort Kochi, I could interview few tourists as most had a tight itinerary; but I learnt more about the tours and the profile of visitors by engaging in extended conversations with tour guides, local hoteliers, restaurant and curio shop owners, and local artists seeking tourist clients. In addition, I conducted detailed interviews with museum officials, heritage conservators, archeologists, curators, urban planners, and project managers instrumental to the creation of heritage zones in India and Ghana.

In conducting ethnographic work at both these towns, I worked independently and did not have any research assistant or translator. In Elmina, I conducted my interviews in English and never experienced difficulty in conversing with locals as English is the national language of Ghana. Apart from interviews, I also engaged in extensive conversations with tour guides at Elmina and Cape Coast castles to learn how visitors, especially Roots tourists interacted with the space of the castle. I am deeply indebted to a few locals who were generous enough to spend long hours with me and share their knowledge and personal memories of living and growing up in Elmina or Cape Coast. I learnt a great deal about the ways in which Elmina Castle has been promoted from Ato Ashun, Director of Elmina Castle. Likewise, Essel Blankson, Director of Education at Cape Coast Castle, not only shared his experience of working as guide and later as an educational officer, but also was also instrumental in shaping my understanding of the significance of the slave castles as places of memory. From Elolo Ghabrin and Kwamena Pra, I

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learnt how the history of the slave trade is performed and Christopher Imbrah and Rabbi Cohen narrated to me the history of PANAFEST and its ideological construction and political interests.

In Fort Kochi, local tour operators and owners of curio shops and boutique hotels were kind enough to talk to me about the heritage transformations of Fort Kochi. Several older residents who have been living in the town for more than seven decades happily welcomed me into their homes and shared their knowledge about the town's history. I closely interacted with Tommy Peters, Mr. Walton, and C. Augustine who shared their knowledge on African spirit worship and African community. K. V. Jopan taught me about the conceptualization of museums and also about the participating Portuguese organization Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and their interests in foregrounding Fort Kochi's Portuguese heritage. Dinesh Shenoy, a local artist and heritage lover, generously shared information about socio-cultural and spatial developments of the town and showed me all the sketches and drawings of various buildings and spaces of Fort Kochi that he created. George Thundiparambil, a local writer, was also kind enough to share with me oral histories and myths of the land. Being a native of Kerala, I conducted most of my interviews in Malayalam, which I transcribed later.

During the course of my ethnographic work in India and Ghana, I had the opportunity to meet local contemporary artists who were interested in investigating and reinterpreting histories. While in Ghana, I had extensive discussions with Bernard Akoi-Jackson who is examining the impact of Dutch and English colonialism upon postcolonial Ghana. In Fort Kochi, I was able to meet Rigo 23, who participated in the first Kochi-Muziris Biennale and created an abstract sculpture to commemorate the spirit of enslaved Africans. I also worked closely with Hochimin P.H. and Dinesh Shenoy, two local artists from Kochi who are visually articulating lesser-known

histories of Fort Kochi. During my visit to London in 2013, I met with the artist Mary Evans, who has been greatly influenced by the history of the slave castles and often inserts abstract images of Elmina and Cape Coast castles into her large-scale installations.

In addition to materials collected during thirteen months of ethnographic work between 2010-2012, I conducted extensive archival research in India, Ghana, Washington DC, and London. Chiefly focusing on materials from European company records, I also looked at various other documents such as port and land records of Elmina and Fort Kochi, as well as travelogues of Christian missionaries and European company officers. I also examined visual materials such as sketches and drawings, maps and old photographs to study the evolution colonial fortifications and surrounding spaces and to understand the morphology of the towns at various periods. During the Indian inquiry phase, I consulted materials at the Regional Archives at Cochin and the Tamil Nadu State Archives (TNSA) at Chennai. While in Ghana, I worked in the Central Region Archives at Cape Coast and the National Archives at Accra. I visited London as the last leg of my research in summer 2013 and chiefly studied the Indian Office Records at the British Library. I also had the opportunity to examine photographs of Elmina and Cape Coast during my summer research fellowship at the National Museum of African Art at the Smithsonian in 2010.

Interested in exploring alternative sources, I closely examined visual materials and documents available in the museums established by local communities in India and Ghana. I found interesting information about the African soldiers who served in the East Indies at the Elmina-Java Museum and Archive at Elmina. Managed by the Ulzen family, this place has a small collection of photographs, letters, archival records, and other objects that record the history of people from Elmina who were called Black Dutchman and their lives in Java. Likewise, in

Fort Kochi, the Center for Heritage and Monuments Studies (CHMS) managed by artist and heritage enthusiast Dinesh R. Shenoy is a place where I gathered extensive visual data. The CHMS has about 400 paintings of heritage buildings in Fort Kochi, Mattancherry, and in other parts of Kerala, and also boasts a strong collection of Dutch, Portuguese, and British maps. The research that I conducted at these two places provided significant information that supports my arguments about colonial port towns, trading networks, and Afro-Asian connections.

My research processes, both ethnographic and archival, have been inductive, as I preferred including unexpected findings and also to allow my ethnographic and archival findings to determine the course of the research. Interested in studying how smaller constituencies and agencies influenced cultural production, history-making, and memory constructions, I have examined local engagement with heritage sites to learn localized interrogation of histories of colonialism. During the course of my research I learnt that I had to plan for unexpected events and information. For instance, while conducting ethnographic inquiry in Fort Kochi, I learned about shrines dedicated to African spirits or Kappiri. This later became a major feature of my research as I began excavating the histories of the shrines in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry[3]. While I narrate how the shrines for African spirits play a crucial role in the recollection of the memories of African community in Kochi, I had to limit my discussions to the shrines found in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry as it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine the Afro-Asian cultural connections found along the Malabar Coast.

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[3] Mattancherry and Fort Kochi are adjacent towns. Historically, while Fort Cochin used to be a fortified European settlement, Mattancherry was the trading hub for other foreign settlers such as Jews, Arabs, and Armenians as well as for merchant communities from India, such as Gujartis, and Jains. Today, while the urbanscape of both towns exists as a continuous territory, during the colonial settlement the Calvathy canal separated the two places. Both towns are today declared heritage zones.

While I stumbled upon unexpected resources and materials, certain unforeseen events also occurred that altered the course of the dissertation research. Initially, I had planned to intensively study the PANAFEST celebrations, which were supposed to take place in the last week of July 2012. However, due to the sudden and unfortunate demise of John Evan Atta Mills, the late president of Ghana on the 24th of July in 2012, the festival was cancelled as a weeklong national mourning was declared. This in turn led to the cancellation or postponement of several organized tours for persons of the African diaspora. The Roots tourists who had already arrived in Ghana moved away from the main towns such as Cape Coast and Accra and their tours were reorganized. The tour operators either took some of the tourists to northern Ghana or to visit neighboring Togo and Burkina Faso. Because PANAFEST 2012 was cancelled, a small-scale celebration was organized in 2013 and a full-fledged two-weeks of festivities are scheduled for July 2014. These unanticipated events did certainly change the course of my dissertation, as I wanted to study the ritualistic performances in which Roots tourists engaged within Elmina and Cape Coast castles. I shifted my focus to speaking with local actors who have been performing reenactment performances of the slave trade for over two decades.

The other unanticipated event was the three-months-long Kochi-Muziris Biennale (KMB) that began in December 2012. Although I learnt about the international contemporary art event in 2011, it was uncertain whether the first edition of the biennale would occur, as a big controversy regarding the organizing committee's misappropriation of government funds erupted, which resulted in requests from certain political and artistic factions to stop the event. Despite all obstacles, the first Kochi-Muziris Biennale did take place. The event provided me with an interesting case study as the KMB restored a few Dutch and English buildings and warehouses in

Fort Kochi to display contemporary artworks in order to reengage with Fort Kochi's rich cultural histories and cosmopolitan past. Moreover, the KMB also invited international artists to create works and site-specific installations that reflected Fort Kochi's unknown pasts. This presented an opportunity to investigate the "cultural turn" that is defining a new image for Fort Kochi. Hence, this dissertation in many ways is shaped by contextual factors that took place in 2012. However, I see this as an opportunity for analysis of events that unfolded and informed various facets of the cultural makeup and social fabric of both Elmina and Fort Kochi.

VI. Structure of the dissertation

Through the introduction and five chapters of this dissertation I establish the connections between Elmina and Fort Kochi and show the parallels in the preservation of the past. This dissertation consists of five chapters, organized into three sections — Points of Entry, Making Memory, and Visual Representations. Since section two is based on ethnographic work, all the chapters in the sections begin with a short epiphanic narrative that captures the very moment that led to the crystallization of the ideas to be presented in the chapter.

My narrative begins with historical background on Elmina and Fort Kochi and their roles in oceanic trading networks. I also narrate how the economic and political damages incurred by European trading companies on the Malabar Coast led to causalities in their operations on the Gold Coast. While histories of these places have been studied, they have never been analyzed in the grand scheme of colonial affairs, in which no events or actions can be considered in isolation. Interested in inquiring into notable contrasts, I discuss how tourism and heritage as collaborative

industries "brand" Elmina as a slave memorial, and characterize Fort Kochi as a living relic of a European past.

Since colonial memories and their visual representations through heritage and arts are the main factors that define the contemporary existence of colonial port towns like Elmina and Fort Kochi, I use such memories as the platform for my conceptual framework. In the second section on "Making Memory," I narrate the various ways in which submerged, oppressed, and silenced memories are recalled in the present.[4] In the third section, "Visual Representation," I analyze how histories of the colonial port towns are reinterpreted through media of exhibitions and artworks. I employ the concept of metaspace to hold the narrative of this dissertation together as well as to establish linkages between various cultural productions and performances.

The first section of this dissertation, "Points of Entry," is structured as a gateway to my approaches, theories, methods, and themes of the dissertation. Here, I address the methodological and theoretical framework of this dissertation. The first chapter, "Histories and Contemporary Circumstances of Elmina and Fort Kochi," presents the biographies of Elmina and Fort Kochi and their contemporary survival as heritage sites, museums, mnemonic landscapes, and performance arenas. I also discuss two critical junctures in the history of Elmina and Fort Kochi: First, the transformation of these towns from fishing villages into colonial port towns and their roles as economic and political hubs for European trading companies; and second, their

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[4] Additionally, the arguments on memory constructions and performances have been greatly shaped by the graduate seminar " Performing Memory" taught by Prof. Roberts. This was the time when I began developing many of the ideas discussed in this section.

revitalization as heritage sites in the postcolonial times that has further altered the character and existence of these towns.

The second section, "Making Memory," is devoted to discussions on memories. In the second chapter, "Mnemonic Landscape: Afro-Asian Connections and the Production of Memories," I introduce Afro-Asian connections by examining the African presence in Fort Kochi that is primarily preserved through memory. I narrate how the landscape is a palimpsest through which the memory of Africans exists beneath layers of cultural texts. Through the third chapter, "Elmina: Tourists, Tour Guides, and Actors in a Theater of Memories," I analyze how the town of Elmina is a memoryscape and discuss various performances through which memories are recounted and enacted at Elmina Castle.

In the last section, "Visual Representation," two chapters present the complex histories of Elmina and Fort Kochi as depicted through museums, exhibitions, and contemporary art works. In "Reinterpreting Colonial Histories through Contemporary Art," I discuss how landscapes are sites of intervention for contemporary artists who are interrogating colonial histories. Additionally, I suggest how contemporary art serves as a medium to articulate marginalized and fraught histories. In the last chapter, "Elmina and Fort Kochi as Open-Air Museums," I contemplate the creation and evolution of the heritage-scapes of Elmina and Fort Kochi and inquire how people use them to reinterpret colonial histories through the media of exhibitions curated to display social power, beliefs, and imaginings.

Chapter I
Histories and Contemporary Circumstances of Elmina and Fort Kochi

Construction of Portuguese trading posts at Elmina in what is now Ghana and Fort Kochi in India proved foundational to the emergence of oceanic trading networks. The development of fortifications at both places illustrates processes of European overseas expansion that began mercantile colonialism. In tracing the connections between these port towns on the Gold Coast and Malabar Coast, similarities in architecture, urban layouts, and political and economical functions during Portuguese and Dutch occupations and later under imperial British rule will be analyzed in the pages to follow. In order to show how colonial trade influenced the socio-political and spatial character of these towns, historical biographies of these places must be considered. Igor Kopytoff's (1988) consideration of the "social lives of things" and Mary Nooter Roberts' (1994) extension of such arguments to study of the "careers" and trajectories of objects in museums will be influential here.

Like other cultural objects, places pass through multiple lives and in the process; they serve several functions and attain different values. Kopytoff posits that in studying the biography of a thing, it is necessary to consider similar questions that arise while studying the lives of people: the beginning and career path, status, and value of objects are important aspects that need to be critically reviewed (1990: 66). Premising her arguments on Arjun Appadurai's and Kopytoff's theories about the cultural life of objects, Mary Nooter Roberts contends that things have their own life histories and that they acquire new identities and meanings as they pass through multiple exchanges, payments, and inheritances (Roberts 1994: 39). Following such

thoughts, despite being half a world apart, the colonial port towns of Elmina and Fort Kochi have passed through similar social and economic phases in their complex—and particular—"social lives." Their connecting histories and linkages are the subject of this chapter.

Both Elmina and Fort Kochi emerged as port towns with the establishment of trading posts by the Portuguese merchants, missionaries, and authorities who later expanded them into large, fortified complexes. Although called a "castle," the European fortification at Elmina is a modified military architecture constructed to protect the factory and the harbor. While the resulting structure at Elmina was smaller than the fort complex at Kochi, they share similar architectural features, spatial layouts, and most importantly, similar historical trajectories and contemporary purposes. The forts fostered adjacent townships in which company employees lived and carried out their businesses. Built strategically as ports of call, Elmina and Kochi afforded docking havens for ships freighting from Europe to Africa to Asia and back, while connecting to the Americas as well. Moreover, their natural harbors proved beneficial for anchoring large commercial vessels. Post-independence, the two fortresses have been reconceived as national heritage and converted into open-air museums, and thus their biographies now address places of memory and venues for biennial art and cultural events.

To compare the histories of Elmina and Fort Kochi and their spatial developments, I follow the methodology applied by Zoltán Biedermann (2009) in his comparative study of the colonial port cities of Colombo and Cannanore on the Indian Ocean littoral. In analyzing the development of fort complexes at Colombo and Cannanore during the Portuguese, Dutch and English period, Biedermann attributes the change in city layout to economic and political factors. By focusing on the urban morphologies of Elmina and Fort Kochi, like Biedermann I study how

similar economic and political events played an important role in shaping the history and townscape of the two port towns. Additionally, factors that influenced the design, construction, and re-construction of the forts and also the erasure of European buildings within the forts and local settlements outside them will be considered. In the colonial port towns of Elmina and Fort Kochi, not only did the architecture of the forts separate the European settlements from the native towns, but it was also designed to be self-sufficient. It is because of these reasons that I call the colonial fortification at Elmina and Fort Kochi a fortified enclave. Analysis of the towns' layout during Portuguese occupation permits reflection on how purposes and layouts changed during the Dutch period. Finally, consideration will be given to the ways that English occupation of the forts and their fraught take-over of both surrounding towns impacted urban landscapes and brought critical socio-cultural changes to Elmina and Fort Kochi.

I. A Biography of Elmina

Elmina Castle, also known as St. George Castle or "Saõ Jorge da Mina,'' is the oldest European structure on the western coast of Africa (Fig I: 1). Constructed by the Portuguese during 1482–1486 it was named after the patron saint of Portugal to seek blessings to protect the castle and the trade. The castle was built from local rock carved out of the peninsula on which it stands, and partially from red burnt bricks shipped from Portugal (Jordan 2007: 51). After a while both the castle and the adjacent town came to be called Elmina. Established to promote and protect the gold trade, the Portuguese exchanged guns, spirits, glass beads, tobacco, and textiles for gold dust (DeCorse 2001:147-48). As the trade generated labor and wealth, it

attracted more people from inland to move to settle near the foot of the castle, thus steering the

development of a local Akan settlement made up of Fanti speaking people.[5] The history of

Elmina Castle illustrates the transatlantic negotiations of power and dependence as well as

investment and the sustainability of European presence on the Gold Coast (Jordan 2007: 50).

The Portuguese were not the only Europeans interested in the gold trade who wanted to

establish factories along the Gold Coast. A fierce competition grew among the Portuguese,

Dutch, Danes, French, and later, the English. The Portuguese effectively used the castle at

Elmina to protect their cargo ships while seeking to maintain an upper hand in the gold trade by

curbing incursion by rival European companies. Although the Portuguese held control of the

Castle and trade for over 150 years, the stiff competition and increasing military power of the

Dutch was a constant threat. In addition, the Portuguese company's depleting finances made it

difficult to maintain a strong garrison to protect the fort.

In 1637, after several failed attempts, the Dutch took control of Elmina Castle and its

town by ousting the Portuguese (Holsey 2008: 30; DeCorse 2001: 23). The Dutch fortified the

major hills surrounding the port to defend themselves from any impending naval attack from

European competitors and to secure inland routes. In all, they constructed five such outposts—St.

Jago, Natglas Schomerus, Java, and Beckenstien—of which Fort St. Jago is the only one still

standing (DeCorse 2001: 30; 55-56). Constructed in 1682, it is one of the oldest military

architectural structures along the Gold Coast that was modeled in accordance with military

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[5] People living in the southern region of Ghana and Ivory Coast belong to the Akan ethnic group, which consists of several sub-groups. The Fante are one of the sub-groups and they are the dominant group in the coastal towns in the Central Region of Ghana.

architectural design prevalent in northern Europe during that period (Fig I: 2). Once the Dutch

secured their position in Elmina, they expanded the castle to suit their needs. For the construction

work, they shipped timber and brick from Amsterdam, thus drafting a Dutch appeal to improve

the castle. Since most Dutch followed Calvinism with its austere precepts and responding

architecture, they converted the late medieval Portuguese Catholic church at the central

courtyard of the castle into an auction market for enslaved persons, and later into an officer's

mess (Fig I: 3). From 1637 to 1872, the Dutch also contributed to other building activities and

infrastructural development of Elmina. Writing of the history of Elmina castle and the town,

A.D.C. Hyland notes that:

> "By the end of the 18th century, across the river, the greater part of the land between St. Jago Hill and the ridge of the high ground beyond was under cultivation, with well laid out plantations and market gardens, some containing pavilions and other small buildings, as well as defined road layout […]. These roads can easily be recognized in the present town plan. The river has been first bridged in seventeenth century, and the bridge rebuilt some eight feet upstream sometime in the eighteenth century. By 1899 there were several buildings between the river and the fork in the road where the track diverged to the fort on the hill […]." (1995: 17).

Elmina Castle came under British control in 1871 when the Dutch sold all their West

African properties to the English. There was a sudden turn of events after the British took

possession of the town. They bombarded the old town outside the castle to curb growing local

resistance against them in 1873, thus precipitating the Anglo-Ashante war of 1873-74 (DeCorse

2001; Jordan 2007). Upon defeating the Ashante army, the British took the Ashante King,

Prempeh I and his family as prisoners and kept them in the castle (Jordan 2007: 51). When the

war ended, the homeless residents were resettled in a more formally laid out area of flat low-

lying land to the west of St. Jago hill (Hyland 1995: 20). As a way of making peace, the British

opened this new settlement to townspeople. Scholars like A.D.C. Hyland and others have argued

that the relocation of the old settlement liberated the people of Elmina from the overcrowded old town as they shifted to a more spacious and hygienic environment. In many ways, the British were thus responsible for the open and spacious new layout of the town.

After the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, the castle no longer generated much profit and was primarily used as a lodge. During World War II, the British trained the West African Royal Frontier Force at Elmina Castle to deploy them in other British colonies including India. After Ghanaian independence in 1957, the castle was put to many new uses, for it housed a secondary school, offices of the Ghana Education Service and District Assembly, and a police-training academy. With Independence, economic opportunities decreased and the town lost its luster. However, conditions started improving after the fort and castle at Elmina were recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Monuments in 1979 as a result of their nomination by Kwesi Myles, a Ghanaian museum professional (Holsey 2008: 160). Gauging the heritage potential and economic value of its forts and castles, Ghanaian authorities transformed them into places of memory of the transatlantic slave trade. As a site that once actively facilitated the transportation of human cargo to the Americas and as the final exit point for millions of Africans during the slave trade, the castle at Elmina is not only a living archive that houses the spirits and memories of the slave trade, but also serves as a pilgrimage site for diasporic African communities.

Although there are many European castles along the West African Coast that were actively involved in the slave trade, Elmina and Cape Coast have become two of the most important "places of return" for African Americans since the rest of the slave castles are dispersed in francophone countries or are located in regions plagued by civil war and political instability. As transnational interest in the castles increased, financial aid from international

organizations flowed in for the restoration of the historical buildings at Elmina. In 1996 a major conservation work was carried out by the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB) along with international organizations like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Shell Oil, the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities, and the Smithsonian Institution. The project also oversaw the establishment of the museum at Elmina Castle.

Currently, another major revitalization is underway called "Elmina Strategy 2015," as a ten year, multi-phased development project initiated in 2005 by the Dutch Government with substantial financial support from the European Commission. With a budget of around ten million Euros, the program aims to preserve the mutual heritage of Dutch-Ghana at Elmina and make the place more attractive to tourists (Steekelenburg 2008: 5). The project was officially announced in 2002 by the Dutch Crown Prince on the anniversary of Dutch arrival in Elmina. The primary objective is to develop a comprehensive urban development strategy, which includes preservation of the town's cultural heritage, improvement of sanitation and town's drainage, provision of better healthcare facilities, and development of the harbor and Elmina shoreline. Although the project has several modules under its large umbrella, a significant amount of funding was channeled into the development module called the "The Elmina Heritage Project" (EHP) now fully realized, while other projects are still under different stages of implementation.

The Elmina Heritage Project has scripted a new narrative on Dutch colonialism that showcases mutual trade exchanges between the Gold Coast and the Netherlands while marginalizing the history of slave trade. Aimed at the protection and preservation of the mutual

heritage of Dutch-Ghana, ten key sites have been chosen for restoration, and the work on all sites was completed by 2007. The projects undertaken were 1) The repair of the entrance bridge and upper terraces of St. George Castle; 2) Renovation and landscaping of Fort St. Jago; 3) Establishment of a tourism information center and construction of an arts and crafts market; 4) Renovation of fifteen historic houses; 5) Construction of stairs to St. Joseph and Java Hill; 6) Facelift of Nana Kobina Gyan square, which was earlier called Trafalgar square; 7) Renovation of the 19th century Dutch chapel and community hall; 8) Renovation of the Dutch cemetery and its surrounding; 9) Expansion of the Catholic Museum; and 10) Renovation of four Asafo posts. Although on paper the structures and spaces chosen for the restoration work were eclectic to add diversity to the townscape of Elmina, all the sites had direct connection with the Dutch. By strategically revitalizing buildings and spaces from the Dutch era and excluding architectural forms built by the Portuguese and English, the protection plan resurrected a visualscape of colonial Dutch settlement, which otherwise had become hardly recognizable in the semi-urban sprawl of Elmina. A remapping project in the name of "mutual heritage" has resulted in renewed histories of Dutch occupation.

Unlike other former colonial nations, the Dutch are currently investing a great deal in heritage restoration activities in former Dutch colonies across the world as a means to establish good cultural relations. According to Gert Oostindie (2005), Director of KITLV as one of the main organizations that conducts extensive research on the former Dutch colonies in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean world, the Dutch government has repeatedly declared its "remorse" for the nation's involvement in the Atlantic slave trade and slavery more generally. Oostindie states that as a way of amending their participation in these gruesome and inhumane activities, the Dutch

have publically acknowledged their guilt through various programs (Oostinde 2005:58). He further points out that unlike the foremost slave-trading nations like Portugal and Spain that are not inclined to condemn their participation in the slave trade, the Dutch sincerely aims to seek repentance. Such statements issued by the Director of the research institution that manages several Dutch conservation programs have provoked others to think about the real intentions of their heritage preservation efforts.

II. A Biography of Fort Kochi (Cochin)

Like Elmina, the Southern Indian harbor town of Fort Kochi is a popular tourist destination for both national and international travelers. As the earliest European settlement in South Asia, Fort Kochi was established to safeguard European maritime interests and to facilitate the spice trade. It later served as the social and economic hub for Portuguese, Dutch, and later for English trading companies. Today, the built environment at Fort Kochi reflects a blend of European characteristics with its well-preserved Portuguese, Dutch, and English buildings, and it is this aspect of the town that makes it a popular tourist destination.

Situated at the entrance of an extensive system of inland waterways, the seaport was an important center for trading, storing, and shipping spices, chiefly pepper (Singh 2007: 18). In 1503—and so exactly twenty years after the establishment of St. George's Castle at Elmina—the Portuguese laid the foundation for the first European structure in what would become India. The place was named Fort Manuel after the King of Portugal. To build the structure, the Portuguese sought help of the ruler of Kochi for manpower and materials. The square fort was constructed out of large palisades filled with earth and flanked with bastions on all corners. For extra

protection, an external wall made of double rows of coconut trees was firmly fixed into the ground and a moat was also dug (Scholberg 1995: 6). Later this structure was refurbished to construct a fort complex inside which included churches, monasteries, warehouses, and civil buildings. The St. Francis Church built by the Portuguese in 1516 was the first European church in India and it remained under the Order of St. Francis until the Dutch takeover in 1663 (Fig I: 4). During the Dutch era, the building was converted to a Protestant church. Because of its strategic location, European trading companies strongly battled to gain control on the port and after repeated attempts, the Dutch managed to capture Fort Kochi.

On the 8th of January 1663, Fort Kochi was taken over from the Portuguese by the Dutch East India Company or Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie (VOC). The Portuguese surrendered the fort and its possessions that included land under its jurisdictions, old privileges, revenues, ammunitions, all movable and immovable articles, and enslaved persons (Der Burg & Groot 1911: 12-14). After the takeover, Fort Kochi became the largest Dutch establishment in the Indian Ocean World after Batavia and Colombo, and it served as an important center in the intra-Asia and international trade as a main sea terminus for VOC vessels freighting between Persia, Surat, Ceylon, and Batavia (Singh 2007: 50). As the headquarters of all VOC activities on the Malabar Coast, other Dutch factories, lodges, and military posts were under the administrative control of the Dutch Governor stationed at Fort Kochi (ibid 28). Modeled in accordance with the Dutch town planning of the era, the urban layout of Fort Kochi was much smaller in area compared to the urban sprawl of the Portuguese phase. The VOC was not interested in building splendid churches and supporting missions, and instead was far more mundane and sought to establish utilitarian structures and spaces (ibid).

In 1663, the Batavia Council that administered the activities of the Indian Ocean trade advised the governor of Fort Kochi to reduce the large Portuguese fort complex into a smaller VOC fort that would be easy to defend while considerably reducing maintenance costs. The Dutch demolished several houses to make the town narrower and easy to be controlled by a small garrison. The VOC fort was a single closed entity--1.5 by 0.8 kilometers diagonally that was surrounded by ramparts and moats (Oers 2000: 55). The fort also consisted of seven bastions named after Dutch provinces, as it was a common practice (Fig 1: 5). The Gelderland Bastian guarded the entrance to the mouth of the river and Stroomburg the port of Kochi and the pepper warehouses of the VOC (Singh 2007: 32-33). Groningen, Friesland, Utrecht, Zeeland, and Holland guarded the road, the harbor, company gardens, and the town (ibid 33). Built in accordance with contemporary principles of military architecture, these bastions were strategically designed to guard the harbor and fort and were located a canon shot away from each other (ibid).

The Dutch settlement at Fort Kochi was a micro-urban setup within a walled enclave that isolated the settlement from the port city. Constructed for mercantile purposes, the buildings were austere. The main structures of the fortified township were the Governor's mansion, warehouses, a shipwright's office, quarters and barracks for soldiers, a Protestant church, a hospital, an orphanage, a school, and a prison, thus taking care of all perceived needs of company employees (Singh 2007: 8). There was also an esplanade, a graveyard, a marketplace, and wells for fresh water. The space within the fort complex was mapped into sections for symbolic and functional purposes (cf. Groll 2002). Although it lacked a formal center, the fortress was segmented into social, economic and political sectors. Since occupation was based

on rank and post within the VOC hierarchy, the highest officials lived in one part of the fort while the garrisons occupied another part of the fort (ibid 34).

During Portuguese occupation, Fort Kochi had not been an exclusively European settlement, but was rather a mixed society with Europeans, Eurasians, and indigenous people inhabiting the fort complex (Singh 2007: 43). After the Dutch conquest, non-European residents were obliged to settle outside the fort walls or in the neighboring island of Vypeen. Although Fort Kochi was designed as a self-contained township, residents were dependent on the surroundings for daily necessities and food supplies. Regular exchanges and interactions resulted between European and local communities. Small-scale traders and peddlers from neighboring localities set up shops outside the fort walls to sell all kinds of commodities: oil, milk, clothes, fruits and vegetables, grains, poultry, and the like. Books, furniture, enslaved persons, and spices were also sold at the markets (ibid). A similar practice also was carried out in Elmina where the locals were allowed to trade their produce and attend to daily needs of the Europeans like laundry and cooking. The walls of the forts at Elmina and Fort Kochi therefore did not really segregate people, rather they were symbolic as well as practical boundaries, which could be crossed and permeated for human needs and demands but also shut down when security was heightened.

In 1795, Fort Kochi passed to English hands as Dutch forces surrendered to the English East India Company (EIC). Numerous discussions were undertaken in EIC circles as to what needed to be done with the fort and how the Dutch residents should be handled (Singh 2007: 184). After the takeover, the British overhauled many buildings and made several changes to the landscape of Kochi to realize an English national aesthetic and so inscribe their presence and

power in Kochi. In 1799, the Dutch commander's house along with the secretary's office and the warehouse were rehabilitated. In 1804, the English razed several buildings within the fort. This was a strategic move on behalf of the EIC, because after the Peace Treaty of Amiens was signed in March 1802, it was decided that the British in India would return the possessions captured from their Dutch rivals.[6] However, in India, EIC officials were unwilling to comply as they did not want to lose a strategic location on the coast with its European fort and a foothold for expansion into the interior. Fearing future problems, EIC officials ordered complete demolition of the fort rather than return it to Dutch rivals (ibid: 217).

"The stupendous quays, shattered into enormous masses by the company's mines of gunpowder, still encumber the anchorage, and make embarkation and disembarkation difficult. Not a vestige remains of most of the public buildings. The magnificent warehouses of the Dutch East India Company, which won the admiration from the rest of the world [...] were the first to be sprung into the air. There is a solitary Tower left-the 'Flagstaff' they call it now-to tell where stood the Cathedral of Cochin, and where the body of Vasco da Gama was buried. His grave has been defiled by us, and its very place is now forgot […] One church-diverted from the Portuguese to the Dutch worship, and later to the Protestant Establishment-is the only one which the Company's Guy Fauxes were pleased to spare. That too is the only building left us whereby to justify our faith in the chronicles which record the ancient wealth and splendor of Cochin" (Paul 1987: 36).

Post-independence in 1948, the town came to be known as Fort Kochi as a reference to the earlier fortified settlement. As the local administration and economic activities shifted to nearby Ernakulam, Fort Kochi lost its earlier sheen and became a sleepy town. In 1991, gauging the potential of the town as a tourist destination, the Tourism Development Board of Kerala declared Fort Kochi a heritage zone and extensive restoration projects were carried out by the

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[6] After the Treaty of Amiens was signed between the French and the British in March 1802, it certainly had major repercussions in English colonies. Anjana Singh notes that since Netherlands was still under the French, according to arcticle-3 England was supposed to return all properties back to the Dutch (Singh 2007: 217)

Department of Tourism, Kerala State; Fort Cochin Heritage Zone Conservation Society; INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage); and the Revenue Divisional Office of Fort Kochi and the Corporation of Cochin (City Council). Other than these institutions, the Archaeological Survey of India continues to protect some of the monuments. Additionally, many historic homes and buildings were restored by local homeowners, hoteliers, and non-governmental institutions and put to various uses. Today on the heritage and tourist map of Fort Kochi, nineteen historical sites including St. Francis Church, Santa Cruz Basilica, Dutch East India Company (VOC) Gate, and spaces like Vasco da Gama square, the parade ground and Dutch cemetery are marked as places of historic interest. The restoration projects not only played a major role in mapping colonial sites onto such a heritage map, but also made the remnants of colonial culture visually prominent by displaying them as *in situ* exhibits for visitors.

III. Connecting Histories and Linkages

The port towns of Elmina and Fort Kochi were connected through a trans-oceanic trading network controlled by European trading companies. The construction of a trading post at Elmina was crucial to Portuguese exploration of a sea route to the Indies. In the initial phase, the Portuguese were more interested in establishing trading posts in West Africa because their primary aim was to exchange and procure goods. The outpost at Elmina not only proved very helpful for ships in replenishing their supplies, but also served an important destination in its own right.

A few scholars have mentioned that Christopher Columbus passed through Elmina. Tour guides at Elmina Castle tell how Columbus consulted the mariner's compass installed in front of

the Castle. The post was also instrumental for Bartholomew Diaz and his crew to sail around the Cape of Good Hope and back. These early explorations were important to Vasco da Gama's journey towards the Indian sub-continent. Gama arrived at Calicut on the Malabar Coast in 1497, fifteen years after construction of Elmina Castle. Since Calicut was already a flourishing trading center, Gama was unsuccessful in convincing the powerful local rulers known as the Zamorins, to sign a trading contract with Portugal. Instead he sailed south along the Malabar Coast to Kochi, then a small town in comparison to the international port at Calicut. Unlike the rulers of Calicut, Kochi's local ruler was happy to sign a treaty and offer them land to construct a fort in return for Portuguese assurance of protection from the constant incursions of the Zamorins of Calicut.

Commodities procured along the Guinea Coast to be exchanged in Kochi included precious metals, ivory, and kola nuts (cf. Machado 2009). Vessels traveling to the Indian Ocean purchased gold from Elmina in exchange for guns, gunpowder, spirits, and other materials from Europe and soon from the Americas as well. Once such vessels arrive on the Malabar Coast, their African commodities are traded for cloth and spices. Textiles from Malabar Coast and other parts of India were soon in great demand in West Africa. When the Dutch trading companies started gaining control of the trans-oceanic trade, textiles produced at Dutch factories in South and Southeast Asia were sold extensively in African and European markets. As the transatlantic slave trade gained momentum, Indian cotton and silk cloth was exchanged to purchase enslaved persons at Elmina and at other port cities on the West African Coast (Inikori 2009: 105).

People also circulated between European trading outposts in Africa and Asia. Company representatives, merchants, missionaries, and mercenaries traveled between port towns. While

the majority of such circulation was between the far more proximate Swahili Coast of eastern

Africa and the Malabar Coast of South Asia, historical evidence suggests that Portuguese and

Dutch company representatives moved from major posts in West Africa to South Asia. The most

important among them was Duarte Pacheco Pereira, a clever and notorious mercenary who

defended Fort Kochi from the army of the Zamorin. Pereira was also responsible for quelling

several local uprisings and was renowned for his military exploits. Impressed with his career at

Kochi, he was put in control of Elmina Castle (cf. Pereira 1967).

While Fort Kochi continued as an important center that facilitated the spice trade, after

the early gold rush Elmina became a primary port for the transatlantic slave trade. At the peak of

the era, the castle and the seaport of Elmina saw hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans

exiting for the Americas. Even before the Gold Coast became a source of enslaved Africans

traded throughout the Black Atlantic, slave trading was very much in practice. Enslaved Africans

had long been sent to Muslim countries in North Africa and the Near East, but the size of such

trans-Saharan trade was far smaller in scale than the vast transatlantic trade (Fage 1992). Figures

are contested, because many captives died during slave-raiding, when they were confined in

dungeons, or during the dreaded Middle Passage. It is estimated that from 1500-1810, some

175,000 enslaved people landed in Europe and on Atlantic islands while ten million or more

were transported to the Americas (ibid: 83).

During the slave-trading era, the Dutch formed an alliance with the inland Ashante

Kingdom to obtain slaves from northern Ghana as well as other West African Kingdoms. Dutch

authorities used the castle to house their captives before they were packed into the holds of ships,

and at any given point during this era, the castle housed from 8,000 to 10,000 enslaved people

(Holsey 2008; St. Clair: 2007). European traders compensated African counterparts with woolens and linens manufactured in Europe and cotton textiles produced in India, as well as silk manufactured in Asia. Firearms, hardware (iron, copper, brass), and spirits (rum, brandy, gin) were among important commodities also traded for human chattel (Fage 1992:89). Considering that the Dutch controlled the textile trade in cotton and silk in the Indian Ocean world, it is no surprise that these commodities were among major items exchanged for enslaved Africans. The great paradox is that the horrid trade brought immense wealth to coastal West Africa, and Elmina became one of the most prominent towns along the Guinea Coast with its European-style buildings, churches, and schools. The infrastructure of Elmina Castle facilitated the slave trade as it served to funnel goods between land and sea. Moreover, the castle provided protection for slave ships anchored offshore.

In addition to serving as important trading centers in colonial oceanic trading networks, Elmina and Fort Kochi played important roles in the structural development of European colonialism itself. Since both places were initial sites of European contact, they served as locations where European models of overseas expansion and control could be experimented upon. During the first phase of colonialism, a primary goal was to obtain raw materials such as gold, spices, and coveted products like textiles. In order to conduct this trade, establishment of military outposts at important ports was necessary, hence the carefully conceived fortifications constructed at Elmina and Fort Kochi. According to Micheal Pacione "the limited extent of European settlement was due partly to the efficiency of local trading networks, but also to the fact that mercantile colonialism was based on private company rather than state enterprises"

(2009: 455). As European trading companies became increasingly entrenched and powerful, they constantly strengthened their trading outposts to prevent attack from land and sea.

While the trade economics influenced the transformation of European fortifications overseas, colonial prototype architecture started defining the characteristics of port towns like Elmina and Fort Kochi. As scholars have pointed out, distinctive colonial architecture that had European function and facilities but constructed using indigenous materials and labor came to characterize important port cities (Drakakis-Smith 2002: 36). Although Europeans were restricted to these outposts till the mid-eighteenth century, with growth of Dutch and English trading companies, trade representatives ventured ever-farther inland to procure quality goods at reasonable prices. With these dynamics of colonial-era political economy in mind, we can now turn to a consideration of how these social forces and historical events are repurposed through today's heritage politics.

IV: Elmina and Fort Kochi as Heritage Sites

Showcasing historical and cultural landscapes as "heritage" is a relatively new concept for developing the global economies of postcolonial nations. The drive to protect local and shared cultural heritage emerged after the first United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) convention in 1977, which promoted the importance of natural and cultural conservation. This convention had great impact around the world, and as in other nations, government personnel and other interested parties in Ghana and India were excited to showcase their archeological ruins, historical monuments, and natural habitats as *in situ* exhibitions. The turn towards preserving heritage became beneficial for many postcolonial

nations as such efforts generated economic returns through eco- and cultural tourism, and such benefits are among the primary reasons why both Ghana and India have ascribed great value to manifestations of their national and community heritage. Moreover, heritage has become an important source for sustainable development and economic growth, and as a medium to demonstrate politic-economic stability both internally and to the wider world.

Scholars studying the political currency of heritage argue that it is particularly important to developing nations as heritage often works as a "soft power" for establishing connections with global institutions and other countries. According to Colin Long and Sophia Ladadi (2010), nations use World Heritage listing to communicate cultural, social, and even environmental credentials to the world. As a developing country possessing a striking record for economic growth and political stability compared to its neighbors, Ghanaian authorities recognized the coastal slave castles as an important cultural asset to restore its connections with the transatlantic African diaspora in ways that contribute to the tourist economy. In a somewhat similar fashion, the state government of Kerala recognizes heritage as an engine for tourism that further serves as a channel to build stronger economic and political relationships with European countries and transnational institutions.

Restoration of colonial architecture and memoryscapes at Elmina and Fort Kochi has localized globalized interaction. Cultural theorist Arjun Appadurai (1996) has demonstrated that global flows of people and trade influence cultural production of local institutions. He argues that as local people engage in social activities of production, representation, and reproduction (as in the work of culture), they participate in the creation of contexts that may exceed existing material and conceptual boundaries of the locality. At Elmina and Fort Kochi, reconstitution of

local places has been mediated by global processes—first by UNESCO heritage protection and later by various international institutions and communities with vested interests in these sites. At both heritage sites, the local is re-imagined in a globalized context and is reproduced, re-interpreted and performed through external mediation.

The heritage conservation drive has recast memoryscapes and created new images and identities for towns like Elmina and Kochi. In studying the "heritage turn," Michael A. Di Giovine (2009) argues that preservation and exhibition of culture creates a new "scape" that cuts across cultures and geographies to facilitate cultural flows. Expanding upon Arjun Appadurai's theories of different cultural scapes, Di Giovine suffixes the word "scape" to the term heritage to demonstrate the formation of a zone that protects and displays culture and invites visitors to view and disseminate newfound knowledge. Similarly, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett asserts that "heritage" is a relic of the past repackaged and showcased in the present (2006: 36). As both scholars have shown, heritage is important to contemporary political economies because modernity has a special interest in the past as it is redefined as a valuable cultural asset.

"Heritage" is not a strict, positivist depiction of the past, but instead a creation thoroughly rooted in the present. In this regard, Bella Dicks rightly notes that events and objects of the past are useful commodities as they can be fruitfully (re)interpreted as valuable for modern consumption (2000: 47). Since Independence in 1948 and 1957 respectively, both Kochi and Elmina have lost their prominence as seaports, and moreover, the economic conditions of these towns have also been relatively poor. However, repurposing colonial structures has given a new life to both as heritage sites. While colonial buildings and precincts have been and are being re-invented and re-generated as signifiers of the past, they have also produced new economic

importance in the present. As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2006) argues, preserving and exhibiting historical buildings gives them "second lives" as tourist destinations.

The growth of tourism industries in developing countries like India and Ghana continues to play an important role in the "conservation" of local cultures—even as we have seen that any such notions are produced through repurposing of memories. Tourism was one of the key driving factors for production of heritage sites at Elmina and Fort Kochi, with emphasis on this term to stress its inventive rather than conservative processes. Tourism is a major export/import industry then, for tourists carry away the souvenirs they obtain in coming to visit and so consume local cultural assets. Heritage and tourism operate like collaborative industries, for heritage converts locations into destinations, while tourism makes them economically viable as exhibitions of themselves (cf. Kirschenblatt Gimblett 2006).

In the present, survival of Elmina and Fort Kochi is very much dependent on the tourist industry. While Elmina has several cottage industries, at Fort Kochi local residents are dependent upon tourism for their livelihoods. In discussing the relationship between tourism and postcolonialism, Michael Hall and Hazel Tucker argue that former colonies have increased in popularity as favored destinations for tourists while the detritus of postcolonialism has been transformed into tourist attractions (2004: 2). Like Hall and Tucker, Sabine Marschall (2004) notes that for tourists, postcolonies constitute a favored destination because they can hope to gain more nuanced understanding of the complexities and contradictions of contemporary life in peripheral places.

As Hall and Tucker note, association of tourism with postcolonies can be a strikingly neocolonial affair, because communities and independent countries are subjected to mediation from a foreign state or organization (2004: 2). In India and Ghana, colonial heritage sites are places where descendants of former colonial nations can exercise a certain kind of influence. Recent heritage development programs funded by former colonial powers demonstrate such oft-altruistic intervention. The Dutch who, in earlier times, occupied Elmina for over 150 years, were responsible for funding the "Elmina Strategy 2015" as an initiative to preserve Dutch heritage of Elmina. Likewise, a similar project was undertaken by the Gulbenkian Foundation (a Portuguese cultural organization) at Fort Kochi in 2008. The Indo-Portuguese Museum was established, as a means to showcase Portuguese cultural influence since the Dutch and British demolished most of the Portuguese buildings. An institute called the Vasco da Gama Research Institute has also been founded to offer lessons in Portuguese language and culture. Because Fort Kochi was among the oldest Portuguese colonies of the Indian Ocean littoral, the Portuguese now funds several local cultural activities. Moreover, the Gulbenkian Foundation along with the local government has played a major role in resuscitating Carnival, following early Roman Catholic festivities celebrated just prior to Lent at Fort Kochi during the 16th and the 17th centuries. Such interest in local heritage development demonstrates a neocolonial interest, perhaps influenced to some extent by intangible sentiments like nostalgia, but firmly based on hard practicalities of global political economies.

Today Fort Kochi and Elmina receive significant numbers of local and international tourists. Being important historical destinations and seaports, schools in and around Kochi and from other parts of Kerala and at times from the neighboring state of Tamil Nadu bring students

to Kochi for educational tours. Likewise, Elmina Castle is often thronged by schoolchildren and visiting the castle has become mandatory for junior high school students, as it is deemed an important aspect of their history reflected in Ghanaian curricula. During my stays at both sites, I have also met students from the United States participating in the semester at sea program, through which classes are conducted on cruise ships.

Conclusion

Information about the development of the port towns of Elmina and Fort Kochi and their transformation as latter-day heritage sites has been presented in this chapter. Although many scholars have studied mercantile colonialism and oceanic trading networks over the years, here historical contexts have been introduced so as to understand contemporary heritage dynamics at Elmina and Fort Kochi. This chapter also serves as a scenographic backdrop to understand the important issues of colonial memory and visual representations of heritage to be considered in subsequent chapters.

Chapter II
Mnemonic Landscapes: Afro-Asian Connections and the Production of Memories

Shrines for African spirits first came to my attention only two months after my arrival in Fort Kochi in 2011. I was sitting in the small library at "Walton's Homestay" on Princess Street, in an old Dutch building that was converted into a bed and breakfast by the current owner, Mr. Christopher Walton. He had a good collection of novels and also a few books on Cochin, which I often borrowed. Mr. Walton would passionately tell me fascinating stories about Fort Kochi where he was born and raised. That day as I was talking to him, he asked me if I knew about local shrines for Africans, which surprised me. I told him that I knew Africans were employed by Europeans to perform various jobs in port cities like Cochin, but I never knew that the spirits of deceased Africans were worshiped. Upon realizing my disbelief, Mr. Walton searched for a newspaper clipping that he had saved and showed me the article on shrines dedicated to Africans in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry. He told me that he had saved the article to show it to guests who are interested in exploring alternate histories of Fort Kochi. That very evening, I went to Mattancherry in search of the shrines that Mr. Walton had mentioned and found a small niche on a wall with cigars and candles in a place called Mangattumukku. Although it looked exactly like the shrine that Mr. Walton had described, I approached the elderly gentleman in the house next to the shrine who curiously watched as I photographed the building. I walked toward the house and asked the man if he knew anything about the shrine dedicated to the African spirit or Kappiri. He then rose from his armchair and introduced

himself as Tommy Peters and said that he has been living in the house for more than eighty years

and that he would be happy to talk to me about African spirit worship.

In this chapter I discuss the ways in which memories of African communities are

preserved and remembered in the port city of Kochi in Southern India.[7] Shrines for African

spirits locally known as Kappiri (black man) or in some instances as Kappiri Muthappan (black

great grandfather) are visible in several places. These are memorials dedicated to the spirit of

deceased Africans. During the European occupation, Portuguese and Dutch colonists brought

enslaved Africans to Cochin to guard forts and perform various manual tasks. Although

fragmented, memories of Africans living in Cochin are circulated and manifested through oral

traditions and ritualistic practices. By employing theoretical concepts of memory, I examine how

the shrines dedicated to African spirits are instrumental in narrating an obfuscated historical past

in the present and ensure the continuity of the memory of African diaspora on the Indian sub-

continent. Using the arguments enunciated by Paul Connerton, Edward Casey, and others, I

discuss the various acts of remembering the African presence in the heritage towns of Fort Kochi

and Mattancherry. Studying the rhetoric that is constructed around the shrines dedicated to

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[7] I learned about Kappiri shrine in Mattancherry and heard stories about Kappiri for the first time during a field trip in 2011, which stoked my interest in studying Kochi's connections with Africa. In order to understand the complex African past of Kochi, I surveyed various Kappiri shrines and talked to worshippers who visited these shrines. Between 2011-12, I carried out extensive discussions with about fourteen individuals from Fort Kochi, Mattancherry, and Vypeen who had knowledge about African spirit worship and were in some capacity connected with the shrines. Four people with whom I had detailed interviews about Africans in Kochi are Tommy Peter, Paandigashalakal Narayanan Kanakan, Kunnathevedu Cheku Austine, and George Thundiparmbil. Their insight and understanding of local history and tradition greatly informed my research. My study on Kappiri shrine*s* is based on the information these locals shared with me and also from my critical interface with a wide array of theoretical and historical texts.

African spirits, I explain how such narrative functions as a field of active memory as histories are constantly made and remade.

Through this chapter, I inquire: How do shrines for Kappiri in Kochi prevail as places of memory that narrate less-known histories of African presence in coastal India? How do memories of African presence coalesce at certain spaces in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry to produce a discourse that is based neither solely on historical facts nor on cultural remembrances? Finally, how do shrines for African spirits provide places of subaltern heritage for presenting and performing relatively marginalized histories often overshadowed by contemporary European cultural heritage projects in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry? These questions arise out of the investigations that I conducted at these sites and as a result, the questions are specifically premised upon discussions about the production of places of memory.

In order to narrate the history of arrival of Africans in Kochi, I first discuss how the oceanic trading systems and the colonial networks caused forced migration of Africans into the Indian Ocean world, which created an Afro-Asian diaspora. I then explain how the memories of Indo-European connections are commemorated at Fort Kochi and Mattancherry through the medium of heritage and museums, while the forced migration of Africans to the Western Indian coast to Kochi and other ports remains obscure and is recalled primarily through rituals and folklore. In comparison to the transatlantic slave trade, forced migration of Africans to the Indian Ocean world occurred in significantly smaller numbers and took place for a longer duration, beginning even before the influx of European trading companies to the region. Scholars studying African diaspora in the Indian Ocean World (IOW) have stated that the biggest challenge in

gaining a deeper understanding of the African diaspora in countries such as India is the effacement of most cultural signifiers that indicate African heritage.

By building on previous researches and literatures on African diaspora in India, I examine the existence of African communities in Kochi and their gradual disappearance due to intense cultural assimilation or possible migration and show how this precipitated an eclipse of memories about the African communities.[8] In a comparative section, Elmina's Indonesia connections are discussed, as are the journeys of a few Africans to Java as soldiers in the Dutch army. While concurring with earlier scholarship on the problems of unearthing information about African communities in the IOW because of their integration into host societies, I argue that instead of searching for a comprehensive discursive trajectory of retention of cultural traits and idioms through media such as performances, rituals, and oral accounts, fragmentary evidence is equally vital in constructing narrative histories.

I. Excavating Memories of Africans in Kochi

One can see a few shrines in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry that are devoid of any religious figures and are noticeable because of their blazing candles and the strong scent of burning incense. These are shrines for Kappiri or African spirits, and are recognizable because of the unsual offerings left at them such as alcohol and cigars. Locals regularly refer to the spirit of deceased Africans in the singular. While Kappiri is the singular expression, Kappirikal is the plural form, which means black men or people. The spirits of Africans who suffered violent

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[8] Scholars at UCLA have been instrumental in studying the African diapsora in the IOW and their cultural retention through arts and performances. UCLA scholars such as Amy Catlin and her late husband Nazir Jairazbhoy in the Ethnomusicology Dept. and Africanist scholars Mary Nooter Roberts and Allen F. Roberts in the Dept. World Arts and Cultures/Dance have researched how African communities in the IOW retain or in some case repress their cultural identities and expressions.

deaths have become represented as one suppressed soul who wanders in the landscape of Kochi. With the deification of the spirits of murdered Africans and their integration into local worship culture, the collective souls of the Africans are often talked about as a singular spirit who endured sufferings and bore the sufferings of the rest.

Shrines for African spirits are strikingly different from altars dedicated to Hindu deities or Christian saints that are commonly found in the streets of Fort Kochi. Shrines dedicated to African spirits are typically unmarked niches on boundary walls or at street corners. Most are constructed in the model of a scaled-down house with a single tapered arch. Presently, the ones found in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry are restored versions of older shrines that had been destroyed due to urban improvement or real estate development drives. In most cases, people living in the neighborhood of these shrines contributed to the construction of new shrines. Although there are several small shrines in and around Fort Kochi and Mattancherry, in only two main places is Kappiri worship very active—the shrines at Mangattumukku and Panayampilly (Fig II: 1 & 2). In what follows marginalized histories and cultural memories of Africans and Afro-Indian communities in this region will be investigated through interactions with elders from Fort Kochi and Mattancherry, as well as close analysis of the deeply symbolic meanings of rituals offered to please the Kappiri.

In the vernacular language of Malayalam, Kappiri means "black man," and Kappirikkal means "black men" or "black people." The word Kappiri is a dialectical variant of the word *Kaffir*, derived from the Arabic word *Qafr* denoting "non-believer"—that is, those who are not Muslims. On the Indian subcontinent, Africans and descendants of Africans are usually referred to as *Habshi, Sidi, Kaphri, Shamal, Badsha, Landa, Kafira,* and *Kaffir* (Jayasuriya 2009: 22).

The term *Kaffir*, sometimes also spelt in English as *Caffer* or *Coffree*, was a rendering of the Arabic word for infidel or non-believer (Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya and Pankhurst 2003: 8). Helen Basu points out that since the Islamic notions of slavery rested on the premise that non-believers could be captured and sold as slaves, Africans and other people were often captured during Arab conquests and raids (2003: 230). She further mentions that despite being considered uncivilized souls by the Islamic ruling and merchant class of India, enslaved Africans in India were not restricted to slave labor, and their status did not prevent them from acquiring high military position and social status (ibid: 231). Such historical realities suggest complexities of what constituted "slavery" as found along the east African coast among Swahili people as well. Shihnan de Silva Jayasuriya notes that in Calcutta, Africans were called *Coffrey,* which could be another variation of the word *Kaffir* (Shihan de S Jayasuriya 2009: 22). In Sri Lanka, the Africans were also referred to as *Kaberis* and according to Jayasuriya, the expression is a corrupted form of the Portuguese word *Cafre*, which in turn is borrowed from the Arabic work *Qafr* (ibid: 31-3). In the case of Kochi, it is not clear whether the term was borrowed from Portuguese or Arab sources. Moreover, in some instances the word Kappiri is also used to refer local men who are very dark in complexion.

Memories of African presence in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry, despite being replete, were also severed from common knowledge and parlance. In other words, knowledge of African communities exists as highly fractured and ruptured memories, which, when reconstructed as historical narrative yields a disjunctive account of the past. However splintered memories of Africans may be, they survive through folktales, local residents' beliefs in the benevolent spirit of Kappiri*,* and through rituals offered to Kappiri shrines. While younger generations may

possess little or no knowledge of Kappirikal or Africans, older generations in Fort Kochi found it amusing that as a scholar I was interested in a subject that was so often dismissed as local myth—perhaps further suggesting ongoing racial discrimination against people of African heritage as documented elsewhere in India. Conducting ethnographic research, I found shrines for African spirits in places other than in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry as well, including Vypeen, Vallarpadam, and Ponjikara thatare separated from Kochi by the ship channel. I found several shrines for African spirits in places such as Paravur, Ernakulam district, and in Edamuttam Thrissur. In Vypeen, I also found small *Kaavus* (sacred groves), which are either enclosed or open spaces with a number of shrines for minor deities. A family or community mostly maintains Kaavus and in some of these, Kappiri is one of the residing minor deities (Fig II: 3).

Often, memories of violent pasts are so buried in the cultural fabric of society that they need to be excavated and dredged from beneath the submerged layers of history to understand their real existence. In the case of Fort Kochi, personal and collective recollections of an African presence are embedded within a narrative of Portuguese burying Africans along with their treasures. That Africans once lived in Kochi must be dug from beneath layers of colonial historical narratives. I use the word "excavating" as an metaphorical reference to the digging involved in archeological work to unearth buried pasts and also as a reference to what Michel Foucault (1969) has mentioned long ago about knowledges and discourses being stratified. Like archaeological pits with their various strata, which indicate facets of cultural accumulation and processes of superimposition spanning many years, knowledge about Africans in Fort Kochi are deeply textured. The verb "to dredge" is also apposite, because in Fort Kochi, the physical labor

of dredging waterways is a constant sight. The water channel that connects the main road where ships are docked and the harbor of Wellington Island need regularly dredging to maintain deep shipping lanes through which large cargo vessels and passenger ships can navigate.

Presently in Kochi, historical parts of the city such as Fort Kochi and Mattancherry exist as living archives with heritage buildings, historical monuments, and museums. While Kochi's cultural connections with Europe are well articulated through such places, linkages with Africa, or with other Asian cultures for that matter, remain largely unaddressed. In Fort Kochi Heritage Zone, histories of European mariners, governors, and other significant officers are memorialized through buildings, street, and public squares named after them. Memories of Vasco da Gama are celebrated and conserved so prominently that the town itself is known as the "land of da Gama." Similarly, Saint Francis Church, also called Vasco da Gama Church because the body of the Portuguese mariner was buried in the church for fourteen years after his death until his remains were taken back to Portugal. Moreover, the public square in Fort Kochi that overlooks Chinese fishing nets and the water channel is named Vasco da Gama Square and is the main venue for public gatherings and cultural performances. In 1992, a stage was constructed and a granite plaque installed in the center to commemorate memories of Vasco da Gama, as inaugurated by the ambassador of Portugal to India.

Like that of Vasco da Gama, the names of former Dutch and English officers are inscribed into the historical landscape of Fort Kochi. Heritage buildings such as David Hall and Pierce Leslie Bungalow divulge narratives about histories of their former owners. Upscale hotels such as Brunton's Boatyard, Bristow's Bungalow, Old Harbor Hotel, and Koder House publicize their establishments by playing up histories of the buildings and their neighborhoods. For

example, the corridors, guestrooms, and restaurants of Brunton's Boatyard present histories of Colonial Kochi through large maps, old photographs, and paintings. At Bristow's Bungalow, the English engineer who constructed Wellington Island and dredged the water channel to accommodate larger vessels is commemorated through a flagstaff and a polished granite plaque that articulate the achievements of Bristow. Likewise, Koder House, a boutique hotel, proudly showcases the history of S.S. Koder, the Jewish merchant who became mayor of Fort Kochi. Although Kerala Tourism authorities promote Fort Kochi as a "Land of Memories," only select memories are highlighted while others are overlooked. Restoration and promotion in Fort Kochi have favored certain places, people, and their pasts while rendering others invisible.

A similar situation exist in an adjacent area articulated through the structures of "Jew Town" and the Paradesi Jewish Synagogue, recognized as a landmark building in the Indian sub-continent. The synagogue is constructed in Kerala-style architecture, with exquisite willow-patterned blue floor tiles from China and glass chandeliers from Belgium. The adjacent bell tower funded by the Jewish merchant Ezekiel Rabbi memorializes the man's contributions. Jew Street is a significant reminder of an earlier presence of a prosperous Jewish merchant class that controlled the spice trade with the Dutch and Arabs. While these and other heritage sites articulate their histories knowledge of coeval Africans is marginalized.

For scholars of memory, history and memory are different but complementary regimes of knowledge that are often in conflict (Nora 1989). As Fort Kochi is currently a heritage zone with a well-preserved built environment, it reflects and represents colonial history as understood and as expedient in postcolonial times. However, shrines for African spirits exist between history and memory. At Fort Kochi and Mattancherry, memories of Africans are articulated through

individual and very personal recollections of the past. In analyzing the different formats through which memory is mapped, Aleida Assmann distinguishes four different frames or dimensions of memory: "individual memory," "social memory," "political memory," and "cultural memory" (2010: 40-43). Individual memory is a very personal recollection that is tied to a subjective experience, while social memory "refers to the past as experienced and communicated (or repressed) within a given society" (ibid: 41). Assman argues that "while the social format of memory is built on inter-generational communication, political and cultural forms of memory are designed for trans-generational modes of communication" (ibid: 42). Both individual and social memory are embodied, and so differ from political and cultural memory that are mediated by histories. The manner in which memories of African spirits are circulated in Kochi shows that the recollections are both individual, insofar as they are performed through ritual practices at shrines, and social as they reflect collective experiences that are both local, with reference to histories of African bondage, and of broader significance with regard to systems of discrimination.

Unlike Aleida Assmann, scholars analyzing the workings of memory in Africa have often preferred to employ the term "historical memory" to suggest more vital and organic memory retention and circulation. Mamadou Diawara, Bernard Lategan, and Jörn Rüsen state that "historic memory involves a complex set of processes that functions on different levels of human activity in everyday life: on the level of official rituals in life, in historical instruction in school and universities, in historiography as an academic discipline, popular culture, in entertainment, monuments and memorials" (2010: 2). Historical memory encompasses personal, national, supranational and universal dimensions, and these same authors claim that historical memory has

the capacity to integrate nearly all realms of human existence including "religions, morality, political conviction, individual and collective identity, cognitive understanding and aesthetic perception" (ibid). Like other memory theorists, Diawara, Lategan, and Jörn Rüsen agree that memory permits occluded and repressed histories to resurface in new circumstances. Similarly, Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin have explored how memory possesses the potential to contest public regimes of history and official narratives of the past (2003:11).

Other debates offer important insights into the workings of memory in contemporary society, and first and foremost among these is Pierre Nora's (1989) writing on *lieux de mémoire* or sites of memory. Edward Casey (1987) also shows that places have the power to stimulate memory, and that they are potently very receptive. Similarly, Paul Connerton illustrates how memory is associated with places (Connerton 1989, 2009). In order to understand the reasons for remembering Africans and Afro-Indian communities as a collective spirit that wanders in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry, I borrow Rosalind Shaw and Paul Basu's theories about how memory of fraught events such as slave trade can resurfaces and inform particular divination rituals in the form of spirits. Shaw notes that while the memory of the slave trade is obscured in Sierra Leone, it is nevertheless "remembered as spirits, as menacing landscape, as images in divination, as marriage, as witchcraft, and as postcolonial politicians" (2002: 9). In what she terms "spirit geography," Shaw notes that the landscape acted as a frame of reference for events of the slave trade for which discursive memory is absent, so that these events are recalled "in the dangerous invisible presences that pervade the landscape itself" (ibid, 50). Expanding Shaw's arguments, Paul Basu inquires about the conflicting regimes of memory—of remembering as well as forgetting slave trade and civil war in Sierra Leone. He illustrates how Sierra Leone possesses a

memoryscape where different memories coexist, overlap, and intersect, and where one form of memory sometimes obscures another by overlapping, but without completely erasing it (2007:233). Basu further notes that Sierra Leone is a living "palimpsest memoryscape" that serves as an indexical code for those able to discern traces of its secrets (ibid, 234).

As in the case of Sierra Leone, where memories of the slave trade—though effaced—reemerge, in Fort Kochi and MattancherryAfricans wander as spirits through memoryscapes recognized by some but not all local people. Edward Casey has pointed out that "place is a *mise-en-scène* for remembered events" because it guards them and keeps them within its secured boundaries (1987: 189). Places have the capacity to unfold the past in the present for its audiences through *performance*, as Casey's theatrical phrase *mise-en-scène* suggests. Places function as interlocutors with the past, permitting the past to be *staged*. In writing about the rhetorical nature of memory places, Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott note that since they propose a specific kind of relationship between the past and the present, they are able to mediate a sustained communal identification (Dickinson, Blair, and Ott 2010: 27). These authors claim that *lieux de mémoire* provide opportunities for the public to imagine links to people and events of the past and, by doing so, to realize connections between past and present (ibid). As sites of memory, shrines for African spirits are crucial to ongoing understandings of Africans in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry, especially as Kappiri wanders about the memoryscape, bestowing his benevolence to those who recall and recognize his burdened collective histories

II. Africans in the Indian Subcontinent

Scholars studying the African presence in India such as Rahul Oka and Chapurukha Kusimba argue that African migration towards the western coast of India, chiefly through the Indian Ocean trade network established under sail following monsoon wind patterns, predates Turkish or Afghani invasions (2008: 207). Emerging ethno-botanical evidence demonstrates a long history of African presence along the coast, as researchers have found baobab trees that are more than eight hundred years old and because domestic consumption of millet and other agricultural products that can be traced to Africa (ibid). Moreover, Oka and Kusimba note that Ibn Battuta cited in his medieval accounts that his ship traveling towards the western Indian coast had fifty archers and fifty Abyssinian warriors who were masters of the Indian Ocean (ibid, 208). Likewise, Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya explains that in the past, Africans, and today Afro-Indians of mixed heritage live in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Bengal, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal (Jayasuriya 2009: 30). Richard Pankhurst notes that in the fourteenth century there was a sizeable number of Africans in Calicut on the Malabar Coast (Pankhurst 2003: 192). Expanding on his findings, Oka and Chapurukha state that by the mid sixteenth century there were 3,000-5,000 Africans along the western coast of India in port cities such as Daman, Diu, Bassein, Danda-Rajpuri, Chaul and Cochin (2008: 208; see also Pankhurst 2003). Presently, many African descendantsents are found along the western coast of India, and are part of the economically disadvantaged segment of the society.

In medieval times, a few Africans held great power and control over territories on the western coast, such as the fortified complex at Janjira. Malik Ambar was one of the most

prominent *Habshi or Sidi* who wielded great military power as the Prime Minister of the

Ahmandnagar Sultanate (Jayasuriya and Pankhurst 2003). While African descendantsents in

places such as Gujarat and Maharashtra were known as *Sidis,* many in the African community in

Gujarat are followers of the saint Bava Gor. Beheroze Shroff notes that according to oral history,

Bava Gor was an Abyssinian military leader who was on a mission from Africa to the Indian

Ocean to subdue evil spirits and black magic practitioners in Gujarat. Bava Gor is also

considered a Sufi saint and today there exists a small community of followers. Shroff argues that

contemporary *Sidi* communities are not descendantsents of royal or military clans such as Malik

Ambar, but that they came to India during a later period of the slave trade, operated by

Europeans, Arabs, and Gujarati merchants (Shroff 2013: 20). In the case of India, not all

Africans found along the western coast of India were enslaved; on the contrary a few powerful

Africans such as the *Sidi* rulers of Janjira established themselves as a powerful clan who

controlled seaborne trade and local access to the hinterland, and were also ruthless slave traders

(Oka and Chapurukha 2008: 218). Later in the mid seventeenth century when the political

climate changed and the *Sidi* dynasty became less powerful as Portuguese and Dutch gained

significant control over the Oceanic trade, a sizeable number of *Sidis* operated in the Western

Indian Ocean as pirates (Pankhurst 2003: 216).

The historian Helen Basu posits that in the nineteenth century, Gujarati merchants who

settled on Zanzibar and along the Swahili coast challenged British abolition of slavery as they

not only owned significant numbers of slaves, but were also actively involved in slave-raiding to

the central African interior as well as the Indian Ocean trade (Basu 2003: 228). Basu notes that

after slavery was formally abolished, the British patrolled the Indian Ocean to check the slave

trade and monitored vessels owned by Gujarati and Arabs. Enslaved Africans so rescued were taken to a shelter a few miles away from Bombay called "African Asylum," which was established by Christian missionaries (ibid 228). Unlike the transatlantic slave trade, that of the Indian Ocean continued into the early years of the twentieth century. In eastern Africa, notions of bondage were more flexible than is usually connoted by the term "slavery," and some attained wealth and power despite their bondage. Indeed, some led slave-raiding missions in the Congo for their Indian or Omani masters in Zanzibar (A. Roberts 2013: 16-17). While enslaved Africans were primarily employed to work in the plantation economy of what is now Tanzania, in India they did diverse jobs and a few commanded great power and respect as sailors and military personnel (Basu 2003: 229). A significant number of Africans also settled in Bombay and worked in the maritime industry as sailors, coal trimmers, firemen, or dock workers (Campbell 2008; Jayasuriya and Pankhurst 2003). The Afro-Indian community in Goa and Karnataka descends from people enslaved by the Portuguese who had either earned freedom or had escaped and moved into the hinterlands of Karnataka (Jayasuriya and Pankhurst 2003; Jayasuriya 2009). Africans who were captured by British authorities from slaving ships visiting Western Indian ports such as Surat and Bombay, might be taken in as domestic servants by local elites, while some served in the British military or police force (Campbell 2008: 17).

In India, the history of African Cavalry can be traced to the 15th and 16th centuries, when they served in armies of the Bengal Sultanate, in the Deccan Plateau, and in the Gujarat Sultanate (Jayasuriya 2003). Gwyn Campbell notes that several Africans from places such as Bombay migrated to Hyderabad in 1863 as the Nizam, or ruler of Hyderabad, established a Cavalry Guard by recruiting Africans (Campbell 2008: 17–18; Harris 1971: 102–3). In examining the role of

Africans in colonial armies, Jayasuriya states that the Portuguese employed a significant number of African soldiers in the territories they controlled (Jayasuriya 2008: 72). She notes that in Sri Lanka, the Portuguese (1505-1658), Dutch (1658-1796), and British (1796-1949) all brought Africans to supplement their forces (ibid). Jayasuriya explains that the subject of the Sinhala poem "Kappiri Hatana" is about the *Kaffir* regiment in the British Army that came to Sri Lanka between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century (2003; 2009). In the early seventeenth century, the Portuguese often sent African reinforcements from Goa to Cochin and Colombo, the two Portuguese strongholds in the IOW (ibid). While fragmentary evidence indicates that African soldiers were present in Colonial Cochin, the positions in which Africans served Portuguese and Dutch military contingents is uncertain. Although an eastern African diaspora can be traced in other parts of India such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Karnataka, where there was relatively low cultural assimilation through marriages (see Drewal 2013), it is difficult to find the diasporic community of Kochi due to social and cultural integration. Additionally, a disassociation with the African past by descendants further contributes to the blurring of historical memory of the community.

Often fragmented information about Africans along the Malabar Coast and in places like Cochin can be found in European sources and in travelogues written by Dutch and English visitors. Documenting the historical events of Cochin, Rev. T. Whitehouse in 1859 described the experience of a French traveler, M. Anguetil DuPerron, who stayed in Cochin in the later part of 1757 and in the beginning of 1758. He referred to Duperron's observation of the inn keeper as an amusing character attended by "two Caffres, and four little negroes of whom one poured out his potations, another wiped his mouth, and the third chased away flies, whilst the fourth fanned

him" (Whitehouse 1859: 25). Duperron visited Cochin towards the end of the Dutch occupation, and during this time, there were about 1,275 enslaved people in Fort Cochin (Koder 1966: 50). In another story, a public servant of the East India Company was implicated in the seizure of Abyssinian slaves—that is, people from the great kingdom of the Horn of Africa.[9] Historian Anjana Singh in her dissertation on social life in Dutch Fort Cochin, mentions enslaved people during the Dutch period, but she does not provide the exact number of Africans among these as the numbers are not known (Singh 2007: 270). In my search for art historical sources about Africans in Kochi, the only visual documentation I have come across is a color drawing from the Dutch period in *Das Buch der Welt* titled "Chinese fishing Nets of Fort Cochin" that depicts Africans with brightly colored textiles wrapped around their waists operating the nets (Fig II: 4). As in the case of most historical documents, information about Africans is typically mentioned in the context of other matters or issues, and so it is very difficult to establish anything about their identity or cultural life.

Studying the demographic composition of Africans in the Indian subcontinent is a problematic research endeavor. Shihan de S. Jayasuriya remarks that a historian attempting to write about the African community and their descendants in South Asia with the help of archival sources such as logbooks, travelers account, court records, treaties, customs documents, and shipping documents, would be unable to distinguish Africans from other people because as a result of conversion, Arabic or Christian names would have been recorded. She concludes that

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[9] The India Office Records show a series of letters about a Company servant who was implicated in the seizure of Abyssinian slaves and some females from an Arab vessel. The British Magistrate of Malabar Coast found the charge baseless and acquitted the officers involved (India office Records, IOR/E/4/920,1818). The Dutch and English sources are the ones that I consulted. Information about Africans can be found in Portuguese sources as well, for instance, secondary literature on port cities in the Indian Ocean world during the Portuguese era that mentions Africans

Portuguese documents from the sixteenth century, Dutch materials, and British East India Company records would be of limited value in tracing Africans (Jayasuriya 2009: 19). In discussing the methods employed to write such a history, Jayasuriya notes that oral histories need to be taken into account, but she also suggests that because many generations of Africans were born in Asia, memories tend to be patchy, as others have found (ibid; see also A. Roberts 2000: 8-9). As archival sources on Africans are fragmentary and inconclusive, I rely more on oral histories narrated by elders and ethnographic observation of ritual practices in order to understand the presence of Africans and the reasons for their worship in contemporary Fort Kochi and Mattancherry.

Analyzing the problematic case of African diaspora in the Indian Ocean world, Edward Alpers remarks that with respect to African migration, the scenario is complicated because of a history of forced migration that began in the eighth and ninth centuries and expanded in the eighteenth and nineteenth as mass slave trade, as well as a modest migration of free labor (Alpers 2003: 22). Alpers argues that the different patterns of migration at various points, which in some cases continued into the twentieth century, makes it difficult to clearly map the process of migration as African diaspora. This problem is compounded by the sheer lack of historical evidence that records the various African migrant trajectories. Helen Basu points out a similar problem. She notes that in the Indian Ocean slave trade, determining particular ethnic identity or even a regional origin can be problematic as individuals from all over East Africa and in some case from other parts of Africa were gathered in important port cities in Swahili Coast and boarded vessels bound to the Indian sub-continent (Basu 2003: 229). The degree to which Swahili was the lingua franca of eastern Africa increases the chances that particular languages

and cultural references were subsumed by umbrella terms like "Swahili." As Alpers suggests, the lack of a well-developed sense of "collective memory" about Africa, or a sense of distinctiveness among Africans in the Indian Ocean world, only complicates the situation (Alpers 2003: 22).

Unlike transatlantic forced migration of Africans to the Americas where retention of cultural elements through performances, spirit possession, and healing practices proved a potent survival tactic (see Cosentino 1995 among many others), in the Indian Ocean context retention and rendition are less clear-cut, in large measure because Afro-Indians have always represented such a tiny slice of Indian demography. In the Indian Ocean world, cultural contexts are more obfuscating because African identity lost much of its salience as people sought to integrate into their host society (Alpers 2003: 31-32; cf A. Roberts 2000). According to Jayasuriya, in the Asian context Africans may have sometimes assimilated and blended more easily into the host societies than in the Americas, which led to a blurring of "African-ness" (Jayasuriya 2009, 11).[10] Intermarriage of African men with local women and their successful integration into local communities has made it difficult to class them apart. As Helen Basu notes that scholars studying African presence in India find that Africans have either stayed completely isolated from host societies or have assimilated to such an extent that their Africanity has been effaced or, probably more accurately, submerged due to ongoing discrimination (Basu 2003-224). In the case of Kochi, despite the presence of Africans in the port city for over four centuries it is difficult to identify Africans or Afro-Indians due to a long history of integration into local societies, and especially into the fishing communities.

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[10] Jayasuriya notes that cultural assimilation of Africans in the Indian sub-continent was less of a problem compared to the Americas where Africans blended with other cultures.

Scholars have also noted that Africans have contributed a great deal to greater South Asian cultures in several ways. Jayasuriya writes that "the Kaffirs contributed to many aspects of Sri Lankan society and they were mercenaries, archers, naval officers, singers and musicians, body guards, domestic workers, laborers, cultivators, watchers in salt depots, etc." (2003: 282). Members of the diasporic African community in Gujarat and Maharashtra are skilled performers and artisans. Henry Drewal (2013) has discussed the intricate quilts produced by Siddi women of Karnataka in length. Tommy Peter recounts that during Portuguese and Dutch occupations of Kochi, Africans as sentries guarded the town of Cochin and its residents from external attacks. He also states that being a strong labor force, Africans were involved in erecting Chinese fishing nets along the coastline of Cochin and in constructing ditches and embankments in and around the town. It is likely that such histories are among the reasons that there are shrines dedicated to African spirits, but further research will be necessary to explicate such culturally complicated matters.

III. Elmina and its Asian Connections:

While the presence of Africans in Fort Kochi is remembered through oral histories and creation of and ritual performances at shrines to Kappiri, the historical knowledge of local residents from Elmina traveling to Java as recruits in the Dutch army and their eventual return after four years to Elmina are memories that have been all but obliterated. However, details of their journey, their lives in the East Indies, and their return are extensively documented. Java Hill, which is currently one of the heritage sites in Elmina, is the settlement where the soldiers who served under the Dutch army lived upon their return to the Gold Coast—now Ghana. Ineke

Van Kessel, who has extensively studied the migration of Africans to Indonesia, notes that "between 1831 and 1872 some 3,000 African recruits sailed from Elmina to Batavia (now Jakarata), the capital of Netherlands East Indies. They had been recruited to serve in the Dutch colonial army, which throughout most of the 19th century experienced a chronic shortage of manpower" (2002: 133). After expiration of their contracts, some soldiers returned to the Gold Coast, others preferred to remain in Java because during their long stay they had entered into relationships with local women and had children (Emmer 2006: 133). This group became the founding fathers of the Indo-African community in the Javanese towns of Purworedjo, Semarang, Salatiga and Solo. In Java, the African soldiers and their descendants became known as "Belanda Hitam"—Black Dutchmen (ibid). The majority of the veterans settled in Elmina where the Dutch Governor allocated plots for them on a hill behind St. George's Castle. They received a pension from the Dutch administration collected once a month from the Castle (Kessel 2002), and as Pieter Emmer notes, they hoisted the Dutch flag on important occasions such as royal birthdays (2006: 134).

Most of the African men recruited as soldiers were enslaved and had little option but to travel to the East Indies, but a few men willingly joined Dutch forces. In Java, African soldiers were counted as part of the European contingent and were given the same treatment as Europeans. Van Kessel argues that recruitment into the Dutch army opened a path towards freedom and social enhancement for the enslaved (Kessel 2002: 144). He further claims that while most of the African recruits started off from a lowly enslaved status in Ghana, they were able to attain a certain kind of power and respect in the Dutch armed services (ibid).

Like Van Kessel, Endri Kusruri (2002) who studies the history of African soldiers in the Dutch army, states that Africans in the East Indies sometimes enjoyed remarkable careers. When they were successful in militaristic encounters, they commanded great respect. The social status that some African soldiers enjoyed also ensured that they could marry and some were known to have relationships with Indo-European women. Unlike in the Americas, African soldiers and their families in Southeast Asia held a superior status and often maintained a distance from the native community. Such social distance was carefully crafted by colonial authorities here as has been recorded many times in other parts of the world, so as to prevent broad insurrection against European powers. After the end of Dutch occupation of Java, most Indo-Africans were repatriated by ship to the Netherlands where their descendants still live. Since the 1980s, a bi-annual reunion has offered an occasion for old timers as well as for the new generation born in the Netherlands to explore their Indo-African roots. Unlike the history of African migration to Fort Cochin, in this case detailed personal accounts of soldiers' travels are available. For example, the history of Manus Ulsen, the great-grandson of the Roelof Ulsen and governor of the West India Company in Elmina from 1755 to 1757, is well documented. His personal accounts provide a great deal of information about the life of Africans in Java. Kessel writes that Ulsen's knowledge of Dutch permitted him to travel freely from Elmina and also to bargain a decent wage (Kessel 2002: 135). The 10th reunion of Indo-Africans in the Netherlands, held in September 2000, welcomed a special guest from the United States in the person of Thad Ulzen, the great-great grandson of Manus Ulzen (ibid: 140).

As in Kochi, later generations of Africans in Java knew very little of their African origins (Kessel 2002: 138). Kessel explains that while memories of African pasts faded away,

generalized ethnic identification was sometimes the only element of African identity that was

passed on to the next generation (ibid). In several families, fragments of information were

handed down, but without much context as some descendants had Africans names, or knew

places such as Elmina or St. George or Ashanti, but without having any notion that these places

might be located in present-day Ghana (ibid). In the case of Afro-Asian communities in

Indonesia, if cultural memories are partially effaced, at Elmina they are crystallized through the

Elmina-Java Museum, which Pierra Nora might understand to be a *lieu de mémoire*. Such places

come into existence when fluid cultural memories evaporate and survive only as a reconstituted

object beneath the gaze of critical History (Nora 1998: 11).

Presently in Elmina, despite the history of the community being etched onto the

landscape, many people living in and around Java Hill do not know the history of the hill and

have no memories of the ex-servicemen who returned from Indonesia. The museum's purposes

include informing those interested in such collective histories. As Paul Connerton argues, "at the

moment when names are assigned to places [like Java Hill], those who do the naming are often

particularly aware of the memories they wish to impose" (2009: 11). The place was named to

honor the contributions of Ghanaians in the East Indies and to memorialize the migration of a

group of men and their successful journey back to Elmina after the end of their service.

Connerton further states that "place-names summon up an immense range of associations, about

history, about events, about persons, about social activities; and historical narratives are given

precision when they are organized spatially" (ibid: 13). Although in the middle of the nineteenth

century, an entire hill close to Elmina Castle was allocated to soldiers and named Java Hill,

aspects of signification of the place-name have become obliterated. When I talked to residents of

Java Hill about the distinctive name of their location, some told me that the place was named because guava trees have long grown on the hill and their name has been misconstrued as "Java." Lucy Cofie, the curator of Elmina-Java Museum told me that when she tried to undertake research on cultural history that it was very difficult to find anyone in Elmina who knows anything of the men who once served in far-off Java.

IV. Worshipping African Spirits

At Elmina cultural memories of Africans are conserved through a museum, and in Fort Kochi the memories were enshrined in recognition of the spirit Kappiri as an alternative method of memorialization. While histories of European communities in India are narrated through institutionalized media such as heritage sites and museums, at Fort Kochi, the history of Africans is circulated in a counter-realm of knowledge production as oral traditions and ritual practices. It is primarily through the shrines to African spirits and the telling of local tales about Kappiri that African presence is preserved in the memoryscapes of Fort Kochi and its surroundings. The local narrative is that Africans were kidnapped from African coasts by the Portuguese to row their ships towards the Indian Coast and to do odd jobs for them once they arrived in the Portuguese settlement. According to local lore, when the Dutch seized Fort Kochi from the Portuguese, they ordered the Portuguese to leave the territory within three days. Before leaving, the Portuguese traders and officers are said to have buried their treasures at various locations. Local people recount that the Portuguese sacrificed their enslaved Africans by throwing them into the pits in which they buried their treasures. Some were buried alive because of superstitious beliefs that the enslaved would protect the treasure and punish any looters.

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Reflecting on this local history, one of my Fort Kochi interlocutors, Kunnathevedu Cheku Augustine (hereafter Augustine),[11] a 60-year old local carpenter remarked that the Portuguese might have offered prayers or other rituals before executing the enslaved, but it is because of the violent manner in which Africans were killed that Kappiri roams in Fort Kochi. Augustine believes that after burying Africans along with their treasures, the Portuguese might have planted trees as markers so as to retrieve the treasures later. This is probably why Kappiri resides in trees, and is why local residents pray and make offerings to stones installed under trees as a means of making truce or pleasing Kappiri. Augustine and others also indicated the probability of Africans either escaping or leaving Fort Cochin without the knowledge of the Portuguese or Dutch, and leading a more covert life on neighboring islands by fishing or doing other work.

Although the story of Africans being killed by retreating Portuguese is what most residents of Fort Kochi recount, a few elders and local history enthusiasts narrate more nuanced tales about the African community. Tommy Peter, an elderly gentleman living in Mattancherry near the Kappiri shrine in Mangattumukku, holds that Africans did various odd jobs in the Portuguese township of Fort Kochi.[12] Some Africans were also employed as soldiers, guarding the Portuguese Fort and patrolling not only the fortified township, but the lands controlled by the Portuguese outside city walls. Peter remembers his ancestors narrating how Africans were vigilant soldiers with spears in their hands, who secured the perimeters of the colonial settlement

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[11] Here I am using the given names to address people from Kerala as the names that comes either before or after the given names in most cases are the name of the land that the family owns.

[12] Tommy Peter is an elderly gentleman of 88 years, whose house is right across the Kappiri shrine in Mangattumukku. Peter grew up in British India and was part of the colonial history of Fort Cochin. His grandfather was a history enthusiast and had documented events of Cochin, which he narrated to his grandchildren. Tommy himself is a history enthusiast and possesses a great deal of knowledge on the history of Cochin. He told me that he learnt a lot by reading from his grandfather's documents, which unfortunately got destroyed over the years due to fungal infection.

from external attack by other Europeans or local rulers. He also states that during Portuguese and Dutch rule, when locals had to enter the fortified settlement for work or for trade, they offered the Africans alcohol or food as a bribe, and at times also cigars or *churuttu* (dried and rolled tobacco leaves). Historian Anjana Singh, in studying the fortified colonial settlement of Cochin, has remarked upon the porous nature of the walled and segregated settlements, which were frequently permeated by locals entering the townships for everyday business (2007: 35). As Africans worked as sentries, paying a gift or bribe in kind such as food and tobacco for allowing locals to enter the fort complex may inform rituals at Kappiri shrines in our own times.

Other than otherwise unmarked niches, Kappiri shrines are also found in several homes in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry. In most cases, Kappiri is represented by a stone that is worshipped by the families in various rituals in which lamps are lit and flowers offered. This symbolic stone, called *Kappiri kallu* (Kappiri stone) in most cases is granite, circular in shape and not more than a foot in height.[13] It is to this signified form of the Kappiri that regular offerings such as grilled fish, liquor, and cigars are made and in some cases, the rituals performed to these shrines are also more elaborate. The stones are usually emplaced or installed under *āñjali* (*Artocarpus hirsutus*) trees. Augustine recounts that near his house, there used to be an *āñjali* tree and his grandmother would ask him to keep a distance from the tree and not to pollute it by urinating and defecating near it because Kappiri lives there. Earlier, such stones used to be part of the lands of local families, which were removed as native families sold their lands or lost them due to real estate development and extensive construction work. Today there are several Kappiri stones in private compounds or in front of houses that are still sites of worship.

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[13] Although circular in shape, there is no relationship between such stones and Shiva Lingam stones.

Rituals performed to Kappiri shrines or stones can be as simple as offering flowers and lighting candles or lamps, but they can also involve performing complex rituals associated with ancestral worship. On special days in the Hindu calendar when offerings are made to ancestors and other guardian spirits, some families offer food and smoked fish to Kappiri. The family of Paandigashalakal Narayanan Kanakan (hereafter Kanakan) believe in the Kappiri, whom they call Kappiri Muthappan (forefather or great grandfather in the Malayalam language).[14] A few other people with whom I spoke in Fort Kochi, Mattancherry, and Vypeen also address the African spirit in this way. Local people note that Kappiri Muthappan is suggestive of the respect and reverence that is used to address somebody who is old or belongs to an earlier generation. I would argue that the practice of using such an expression refers to a deeper affiliation than mere respect or reverence for African spirits. Moreover, it shows how an unacknowledged past with Africa resurfaces through language. Likewise, the treatment of African spirits as ancestral spirits by a few local communities is another demonstration of an unsung connection with Africans manifesting through rituals.

For a few families in Fort Kochi, Mattancherry, and other places, the Kappiri is a guardian spirit. Kanankan holds that the Kappiri protects and watches over his family, and, he says, the shrine in front of his house has helped him and his family. Kanakan believes that the Kappiri take care of his family and he recounted several occasions when Kappiri resolved or averted great crises. Kanakan and his family regularly make offerings to Kappiri Muthappan whenever one of their prayers comes true or when the spirit saves them from difficult situations.

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[14] Kanakan is 68 years old and his family has been living right across the shrine at Panayampilly. They are also staunch believers in *Kappirikal*.

The specific offering is called a *mesa vekkal*, or "offering a table" for the Kappiri, which refers to offering a table full of food, such as unsalted *puttu* (steamed powdered rice), fish, liquor, and cigars. After making offerings to the Kappiri, the family consumes the food as *Prasad.*[15] Kanakan explains that the Kappiri has performed several miracles and has helped people irrespective of religion, and he mentions that the Kappiri has also helped people prosper. Kanakan remarks that, unlike his family, however, most people do not openly admit that they worship Kappiri. Perhaps the concealment of Kappiri worship is because the locals do not want to reveal their faith in an African spiritual force due to a more general discrimination against people of African descent throughout India. Moreover, as people in Kochi follow institutionalized religious practices, the ones who also participate in nontraditional rituals can be easily scorned.

Like Kanakan and his family, people today pray and make offerings to the Kappiri shrines to please the African spirits and ask for their help in resolving financial, health, marital, or family problems. People also pray and make offerings to Kappiri to clear obstacles and solve pending issues like a debt, a conflict, or simply to clear hurdles in the workplace. Kanakan points out that on any given day an average of twenty people pray to the shrine at Panayampilly. Tommy Peter recounts that day laborers and small-time vendors such as areca nut sellers light candles as a way of showing gratitude to Kappiri when that they make good sales. Peter also notes that people come especially on Tuesdays and Fridays to offer garlands to the shrine at Mangattumukku. In some Hindu houses in Mattancherry, lamps are lit on Saturdays, but in Fort

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[15] *Prasad* is the food prepared by devotees and offered to Hindu gods. After offering the food to deity, the food becomes sanctified and is later consumed by devotees as part of a religious tradition.

Kochi and its neighboring places there are no special worship days and people may recognize the African spirits irrespective of their religion. While Muslim devotees offer incense sticks, Christians offer candles and Hindus light oil lamps, and the latter may also smear the black ash deposited by burning candles or lamps on their foreheads. People also make votive offerings when their wishes come true. Arrack and cigars, and at times fried fish, are presented to the shrines as well. Beggars and passers-by usually consume these offerings, but the worshipers hold the belief that the Kappiri appears and consumes his offerings, thus blessing them for those who eventually eat them as *prasad*.

The locals believe that Kappiri appears after nightfall to consume the offerings. During my research, while some referred to other people who had seen Kappiri after nightfall, most said they had never seen the spirit in person. Kappiri is usually seen leaning against a tree smoking a cigar. Often the gods of African-inflected religions of the Americas smoke cigars, as do the Gede of Haitian Vodou. Surely there are more hidden histories here. Indeed, the indicator that Kappiri is around is said to be the smell of a cigar. This is a story that older people remember being told by their mothers and grandmothers, who would frighten them with stories of Kappiri to keep children from venturing into unsafe surroundings during the night.

Another story tells of how Kappiri, when pleased with somebody, can offer them riches. The older generations recount stories of their friends being punished by a Kappiri for petty acts of thievery, or for consuming excessive alcohol and smoking. Locals also believe that Kappiri punishes people searching for colonial treasure, and they often narrate cases of people being struck by deadly illness after a treasure hunt. Yet another story that was frequently told to me was that a tall male skeleton with handcuffs was discovered when an old Portuguese/Dutch

building was demolished in Fort Kochi a few years ago near Parade Ground on Napier Street. The locals assume that the remains were of an African slave. Nobody knows what happened to the skeleton, as it was neither handed over to the police nor was any further investigation done. Local residents believe that the remains were rather buried. George Thundiparambil, a writer who grew up in Fort Kochi, tells how as a boy and later as a young man he heard numerous stories about Kappiri. He recounts how his grandmother and other older family members would often tell of the wandering spirit of the African who roamed Fort Kochi and Mattancherry smoking a cigar and making random appearances after nightfall in deserted locations. Thundiparambil notes that he was often warned by the elders not to travel alone at night to certain parts of Fort Kochi as Kappiri resides there.

Most people described Kappiri as a tall, black, well-built man smoking a cigar. They are familiar with his appearance through stories heard from friends and relatives who had seen the spirit of the African. According to the descriptions of people who have seen Kappiri, he is more than six feet tall, with fierce reddish eyes. Some would provide more details and most often while the physical characteristics of Kappiri are the same, people offer contrasting explanations of the costume that the spirit wears. According to some, Kappiri appears smoking a cigar, makes a rattling sound, and wears an old hat, coat, and pants perhaps obtained from or associated with his European master. Others report seeing him in an ankle-length robe, perhaps in reference to the *kanzu* of Swahili and other east African men. Interestingly, a few also noted that when the spirit appears wearing long robes he does not smoke a cigar but always conveys a message.

In Fort Kochi Kappiri is usually seen during the full moon either standing under trees or lying on the wall next to the Dutch cemetery, but in Mattancherry and in places around Fort

Kochi Kappiri usually appears in places with heavy undergrowth. Most of the adults with whom I interacted remember the elders in their family warning them about Kappiri lurking in their backyards. And about thirty years ago when most houses had expansive gardens with trees, there was a constant concern of Kappiri hiding in the thick vegetation. In contrast to Fort Kochi, older residents of the fishing village of Vypeen noted that they remember their relatives sighting Kappiri on the beachfront and also fishing in brooks and backwaters. Pusphpan is an elderly gentleman living in Vypeen who served as a captain of a deep sea fishing boat notes and who told me that he had seen Kappiri sitting on the beach. Unlike in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry, in their neighboring islands Kappiri usually appears wearing a long robe and communicates in Arabic. The locals believe that Kappiri appears to convey messages or help good people when they have either lost their way or to rescue people from dangerous situations, and vanishes immediately after helping them.

Locals in Fort Kochi hold that Kappiri can be either nice to people or mischievous in trickster-like fashion. Tommy Peter notes that as a young man he had often heard stories of Kappiri stealing food or displacing people who were sleeping in their houses and moving them to the beach or into the woods. Peter believes that local rowdy youths may have been behind some of these acts, but locals often believed that it was the work of Kappiri. Augustine remarks that there are two types of Kappiri—a good one and a bad one. The good one directs lost people to find their ways in the night, and when he is pleased with someone, he might even offer a treasure. In contrast, the bad spirit plays mischief and scares people by hitting or whipping lonely walkers in the night. Kappiri is also said to play tricks on people, and there have been instances when people sleeping in their homes wake up under trees or at the waterfront in the morning.

Although Kappiri does such tricks to scare people, the locals believe that the spirit is essentially harmless in nature.

For most local people, the nameless, most often figureless, and seemingly abstract Kappiri is a protector. It is important to note that Kappiri assumes this role mostly by people belonging to lower castes of society, such as Ezhavas and Arayar Hindu communities. The very integration of African spirit worship into a pantheon of minor deities in places such as Vypeen is also very interesting. In *Kaavus* in Vypeen, shrines for Kappiri can be seen along with shrines for other deities such as Kutticaattan, Vishnumaya, and others. In such instances, the figure of Kappiri is integrated into the Hindu pantheon of sub-deities or minor gods. In some cases, Kappiri is treated as an incarnation of either Shiva or Vishnu and referred to as the dark and ferocious spirit rather than as the African spirit.

In comparison to Fort Kochi and Mattancherry, there is intense Kappiri worship tradition in Vypeen and in certain localities in Thrissur district Kappiri manifests himself through possession rituals. Although in most Hindu temples, a round granite consecrated stone represents the African spirit, in one temple in the Thrissur area, regular offerings are made to a large digitally rendered image of a fierce-looking man with iconographic elements of most Hindu gods, but standing in chains and shackles (Fig II: 5 & 6). Moreover, in these temples during *uthsavam* or the annual festival, an exquisite floor drawing or *kallam* of a similar image is rendered using colored rice powder in front of the shrine for Kappiri. Such images play a significant role in ritual contexts as they index the African spirit and aid in invoking Kappiri in the body of the temple oracle through a ritual dance called *thullal.* Performing *thullal,* the oracle goes into a state of possession and transforms into Kappiri and speaks in a dialect, which

includes Arabic words. As a Kappiri, the oracle performs miracles, cures mental illnesses, makes prophecies, and leaves the state of possession by announcing to onlookers that it is time for him to return to Africa. It is primarily through possession rituals, shrines and local myths about Kappiri that the memory of African presence is maintained in the memoryscape of Vypeen.

Unlike in Vypeen, memories of Africans or Afro-Indian communities in Fort Kochi live through local lore as well as shrines dedicated to African spirits and ritual practices directed toward Kappiri. Blair, Dickinson, and Ott posit that memories are embodied in living societies and that they are not only subjected to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, but are also appropriated and manipulated in many other ways (2010: 8). People understand Kappiri to be an afflicted spirit seeking salvation and wandering in the memoryscapes of Fort Kochi and neighboring areas bringing them benefits of various sorts, but occasionally visiting them with trickery. From a non-local perspective, Kappiri seems to embody a host of ambivalences about brutalities of the past, discriminations of the present, and possibilities for the future.

V. Memory of African Settlement in Fort Kochi

In postcolonial Kochi, while memorial shrines for Africans have been erected in certain places, memories of where the Africans of yore actually dwelled have been erased. Records indicate that there was an African settlement called Kappirithuruthu (now known as Thuruthi) in Fort Kochi.[16] However, the present residents of this place have hardly any knowledge of any

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[16] The place Kappirithuruth is spelled in various ways in different documents. At times it is spelt Kappiri Thuruthi and in some instaces Kapiri Island. The word "thuruth" in Malayalam means a small piece of land enveloped by water.

African community once living there. In the pages that follow, I analyze the complex relationships among place, memory, and erasure through the case of Kappirithurth in Fort Kochi. Paul Connerton points out that "many acts of remembering are site-specific"(2009: 7); however, he also cautions that site-specificity can be ambiguous. At Fort Kochi, while the memories of events associated with European histories are often site-specific, people living in Fort Kochi have no memory or knowledge of the place called Kappirithurth or Kappiri Island, which, as the name indicates may well have been where Africans and Afro-Indians once lived. Records from the Corporation of Cochin show that there was an island named Kappiri Island or Kappirithurth at least until 1966. In the Fort Cochin Municipal Centenary Souvenir book brought out by the local administration to commemorate its hundredth anniversary, mention is made of the formation of the Cochin municipality by adjoining lands and islands in and around the Fort complex. Contributing to the Souvenir, M. Abdul Rahim, who was Municipal Commissioner at the time, lists all the lands and islands that were part of the Cochin municipality, including Kapiri Island near Calvathy Canal (1966: 90). The place also appears in the map of the Fort Cochin Centenary Souvenir and in another instance in the book, there is a photograph of a street view with a row of tiled houses that bears the caption "Slum clearance scheme at Kappirithuruth" (Fort Cochin Municipal Centenary Souvenir 1966, 125). Nowadays, this place is known as Thuruthy, dropping reference to Kappiri and other African connections.

Paul Connerton also suggests that "place-names can function as more than markers of place, and if they are semantically transparent […] they are powerful enough to evoke incidents of the past" (Connerton 2009: 10). As the very name Kappirithurth or Kappiri Island is semantically transparent, it surely is evocative of a certain past. Today, most of residents have no

memory of the place ever being called Kappirithurth and vouch that the name of the place has always been Thuruthy. Forgetting the history of the place and its previous name may be an effort to cover and erase an uncomfortable past, although it could also be that reference to Africans and Kappiri is simply irrelevant to those now dwelling on the island.

The linkage between the African community and the place once called Kappirithuruth is something that only a handful of people in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry know anymore. During one of my conversations with K.J. Sohan, the former mayor of Kochi, he noted that Kappirithurith is most likely the place where African slaves and their descendants lived during the Portuguese and Dutch occupation and where they continued to live when the British gained control of Cochin. Like K. J. Sohan, Tommy Peter and Augustine noted that Kappirithurith could have been an African settlement, as it was situated outside the fort complex and located such that, despite being in close proximity to the fortified European settlement, it was separated from the European enclave by water on three sides. Living not very far from Kappirithurth, Tommy Peter recounts that as a young man, he saw people who looked like Africans in that vicinity while attending Mass. Peter remarks that as Africans married local women and became integrated with local communities, their descendants would possibly have stayed in Kappirithuruthi post-Independence, thus explaining the name of the area. Local residents narrate that in the 1960s and 1970s, Thurithy was a marshy land where boats were constructed and they do not have a clear idea of the community that may have lived there except for the fact that they probably belonged to the fishing community and were predominantly Christians. Since only a few people know the linkages between the place Kappirithuruth and its possible relationships to earlier African communities, this remains as an unknown or unremembered past of Kochi.

African heritage is associated with specific landscapes in Kochi and the spatial locations of the Kappiri shrines may be significant. In analyzing the relationship between place and recollections, Keith Basso shows that place-making is a way of constructing histories and inventing and fashioning novel versions to present how what has happened in the place can be relevant to current events (1996: 6). According to Basso, "what is remembered about a place guides and constrains how it will be imagined by delimiting a field of workable possibilities" (ibid: 5). The shrines for Kappiri and their placement at certain locations suggest historical connections. George Thundiparambil notes that most of the shrines in Fort Kochi are found outside the boundary of Portuguese Fort Immanuel. He believes that Kappiri can also be seen as spirits that guard the fort's borders, boundaries, and thresholds. Thundiparambil explains that in Mattancherry, most of the shrines are found at places where there used stones that demarcated the territory of the fortress. Likewise, Tommy Peter recounts that at the Kappiri shrine of Mangattumukku, there used to be such a border stone. And, it was on the border stone that candles used to be lit for the Kappiri. Both Thundiparambil and Peter affirm that shrines for Kappiri are also found near former boundary or border stones that marked European plantations. Belief in and worship of Kappiri could just as well be a landscape phenomenon. And, also because Africans served as sentries guarding the perimeters of the fort in Kochi, their worship could be seen as a case of venerating a territorial or border spirit.

In and around Fort Kochi, most of *Kappiri* shrines consist of otherwise empty niches in walls and are found at street intersections. Analyzing the relationship between place and memory, Paul Connerton notes that the importance of street intersections should not be underestimated (Connerton 2009). Kanakan, whose house is right across from the Kappiri shrine

at Panayampilly, notes that the shrine is at the intersection between land and water, as there used to be a small water-let that separated the landmass. This and other aspects of local recognition of Kappiri and memoryscapes of Africanity remain unexcavated facts that I hope to "dig into" in post-dissertation research.

VI. Artistic and Literary Renditions of Kappiri

Today, historical and cultural memories of Africans in Kochi are being articulated through several creative projects. The former Mayor of Kochi Corporation, K.J. Sohan, suggests that shrines for African spirits should be considered local heritage and be included in the heritage and tourist maps of Kochi. Further, African spirits have also become a subject for various artistic interpretations. A site-specific installation by Rigo 23 that symbolically referenced the history and violent murder of Africans was commissioned to be displayed at the abandoned boat jetty in Calvathy Canal by the Kochi-Muziris Biennale in 2012. In early 2013, local artist Hochimin P.H. created an abstract expressionist sculpture representing Kappiri that is currently in Bastion Bungalow as part of the initiative of the State Archeological Survey and the Tourism Ministry to represent little-known histories of Kochi.

In addition to heritage and art projects, Vipin Vijay, a Kerala-based filmmaker who makes alternative movies, is currently working on a film in which stories of Kappiri become the central plot. In Vijay's film, the central character is Mikhail Ashan, a tailor living in a small island near Fort Kochi who is convinced that Kappiri guards Portuguese treasure. He believes that there is treasure beneath his own house and starts digging under it while performing regular rituals to Kappiri to please him; however, as the protagonist fails to unearth the treasure, he

leaves the island and eventually commits suicide. Although such artistic exploration of Kappiri is subject to interpretation, such projects play a crucial role in keeping memories of Africans current.

Even before filmmakers started addressing such subjects, local writers were weaving Kappiri into the plots of their novels, and there are also a few books in the Malayalam language about the lives of Africans in Cochin during European occupation. For example, in his English-language novel *Maya* (2008), Kochi-based writer, George Thundiparambil employed Kappiri as the central character as well as the narrator of the story. The book received positive reviews and appreciation, especially for the treatment of the character of the African slave. Shashi Tharoor, the former UN Undersecretary General who is currently a Member of Parliament (MP) in India, praised *Maya* as a fascinating work and said that "it was a compelling reading and flashback of past, an extremely well researched novel."[17] Publicity that the author and the book received in certain ways brought the subject of enslaved Africans to contemporary consciousness, not only through media attention, but discussion generated in the literary circuits of Kerala. Blending historical accounts with fiction, Thundiparambil renders a picture of the lives of enslaved Africans of the Malabar Coast, their journeys, and their suffering.[18] By letting his imagination fill the gaps of the fragmentary historical evidence that he found in libraries in Germany and archives in Portugal, Thundiparambil provides a discursive narrative about a community whose history is unwritten and memories largely forgotten.

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[17] http://news.outlookindia.com/printitem.aspx

[18] George Thundiparambil has done research about Vasco da Gama's voyage, slavery in the Indian Ocean world, and Africans in South Asia for over seven years and compared them with his own memories of the legends and stories he had heard about *Kappirikal* to see if he can draw a connecting thread.

In his novel, Thundiparmbil employs Kappiri as the spirit interlocutor living in Fort Kochi for over four hundred years. Kappiri recalls his journey from Africa, his arrival in Cochin, and his life there as a man enslaved. By setting the novel against a background of current political and cultural issues of modern Fort Kochi, Thundiparmbil critically addresses current events such as the celebrations planned by the State Government of Kerala to mark the five hundredth anniversary of Vasco da Gama's arrival on the Malabar Coast. In 1998, the Kerala and Goa Governments had planned to commemorate the arrival of the Portuguese armada captained by da Gama, but after protests from various factions critical of funding festivities to celebrate colonialist oppressors, the Governments abandoned the idea and instead decided to conduct small-scale events in Calicut, Fort Kochi, and Goa. In *Maya*, Thundiparmbil presents the context of the celebration through Kappiri's perspective, as the spirit does not understand the purpose of the celebration of circumstances that proved so oppressive to his community.

According to Thundiparambil, the novel *Maya* is also the tale of Kappiri's journey towards redemption across many centuries. In six chapters, Thundiparmbil speaks through Kappiri to move back and forth between past and present contexts of Fort Cochin. The author notes through Kappiri's voice that the spirit is waiting for emancipation even as he straddles both worlds, African and Indian. The historical plot of *Maya* begins with da Gama's voyage to Kozhikode (Calicut). Thundiparmbil recites the story of the arrival of the Portuguese and the sequence of events that followed, always through Kappiri's voice. The author states that he has made Kappiri the central character because his stories are still vital though based in the distant past. In this way, Thundiparambil subverts historical accounts of Vasco da Gama's triumphant arrival and inverts the power dynamics through which history is recounted from the perspective

of the powerful conqueror. In the novel, Vasco da Gama's activities and moves are judged and critiqued by the African, in other words.

Although elements of George Thundiparambil's story are fictitious, he has woven historical information about enslaved Africans into his narrative. For instance, there is evidence that some Africans married women of lower castes from fishing communities and other humble circumstances. Such marriages were often considered inter-caste or inter-community alliances and the couple usually converted to Christianity as the overarching religion of Portuguese colonialism. In his novel, Thundiparambil elaborates upon the nature of such connections and recounts the contexts of Afro-Indian marriages through the lives of some of his characters. He explains that in Fort Kochi, descendants of such unions bear surnames names such as Rodriguez, Morris, Bracken, and Abbernath—again, as in their conversion to Christianity, suggesting that colonial references supplanted those more specific to the African and Indian persons who married.

Conclusions:

Through this chapter, I have shown how memories of Europeans in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry have a pronounced visibility as they are preserved through heritage sites and museums, but knowledge of African community exists as marginalized memories. I have also briefly discussed the history of forced and free migrations of Africans to the Indian Ocean world. Very little historical evidence is available about the African community of Kochi, so their social marginality is compounded as they have been neglected in mainstream historical studies. Although histories of enslaved Africans have been long buried within stratified layers of socio-

cultural texts, African memoryscapes are preserved through alternative processes of cultural conservation including rituals and beliefs directed toward Kappiri, a spirit who personifies collective histories. Africans may not be featured in institutional discourses, but they are alive in rituals performed at shrines erected to Kappiri, in stories told of his sightings along the borders or at the thresholds to contemporary communities in Kochi, and in contemporary novels, films, and works of visual art.

Ironically, while European histories are ossified in the postcolony, alternative traditions concerning Kappiri thrive as living history for working-class people who look to the spirit for guidance, healing, and protection. Some may dismiss or criticize such stories and practices as mythic, and in addition, memories of enslaved Africans are fractured, distorted, and situational in many instances, making their relevance as marginal as Kappiri himself. Yet even though the arrival, survival, and the violent murder of Africans during the Portuguese and Dutch eras in Kochi are virtually unrecorded, shrines dedicated to Kappiri keep memories of Africans alive even as the non-Africans who maintain and visit the shrines hope that their lives will be improved by the spirit's interventions.

A personal vignette will conclude this chapter and demonstrate how African histories in Kochi continue to be silenced. During my research, a few elders of Fort Kochi pointed out people they believed to possess African heritage, but they cautioned me not to talk them about the matter as they do not publically acknowledge their African roots. Such disassociation, non-acceptance, and underlying racial discrimination are further reasons for the suppression and even disappearance of memories of enslaved Africans. Moreover, despite knowing of Kochi's connections with Africa and the presence of an Afro-Indian diaspora, most local historians prefer

to keep these facets of Fort Kochi's intercultural history out of public discourses meant to attract the commerce of cultural tourism. One day while conducting research at the Kerala Historical Archives and Library in Ernakulam, the librarian offered to introduce me to a local historian whom she thought would be of great help to me. She could see my disappointment in not being able to find conclusive information about the African settlement, so she called the historian, described my project, and asked him if he might suggest materials to consult. Informed that he was happy to speak with me that evening, I phoned and explained my project. After listening to my research objectives, he replied in a rather stern tone that people know of Cochin's connection with Africa and the presence of an African community, but that I should leave the subject unexplored. He did not elaborate, but his message was that such topics do not merit attention as they are not conducive to the public good. For these very reasons, I find it important to examine and write about prayers, shrines, and works of art dedicated to African spirits, as they are indicators of histories that some may prefer be left untold, but that remain important to those engaged in such practices, to say nothing of memories of the enslaved Africans once brought to live and die in Kochi.

Chapter III
Elmina:Tourists, Tour Guides, and Actors in a Theater of Memories

     I remember my tour of Elmina Castle vividly. It was the summer of 2010 and my first visit to the castle as part of my reconnaissance trip to Ghana. I was taken around with a group consisting of a few Nigerians, three Europeans, and a Ghanaian family. Felix Nguah, our guide, introduced himself in the courtyard of the castle and gave us a brief history. From there we were taken to the dungeons for enslaved women and when he began narrating the stories of the transatlantic slave trade in those confines, it was no longer a straightforward rendition of history. The accounts were nuanced as he started explaining the conditions under which enslaved people were kept in the dungeons and the conditions under which they lived, survived, and how some of them also perished. As a visitor, I was receiving a history of Elmina Castle as a slave fortress through Felix's narration and the way he navigated us through passageways and intermittently made us stand and feel the emotional power of places. Once inside the dungeon for men, he asked us to imagine living in the room and defecating on the same floor where we slept to help us conceive the gravity of the awful situation under which enslaved people lived for months before they boarded cargo vessels. As the tour continued we were taken to the Governor's quarters, the officers' mess, the Portuguese Church, and finally we were back in the courtyard where we had started the tour. There Felix showed us two dark rooms called the "Condemned Cells," which were for troublemakers. He took us into the first dingy cell with a small window in the iron door and then closed the door from outside and in a barely few seconds, I could feel the stuffiness of the room. Felix led us out in about thirty seconds or so, and then took us to the adjacent room with a very heavy iron door. He again closed the door and

asked us to imagine being imprisoned in the darkness with no window or any outlet for air and most importantly living without food and water. It was a strange feeling and I was glad that Felix opened the door quickly, as it was claustrophobic inside. Once we were out, Felix explained that the room with the small window was the condemned cell for Europeans and the one with no windows was the condemned cell where Africans who challenged Europeans were thrown in punishment for their disobedience. Felix then informed us that we were at the end of the tour and told us that there are shops in the castle premise if we wanted to buy books or souvenirs. But before he took leave, he concluded his tour by emphasizing that the castle is not just a monument, but it is a memorial to the history of the transatlantic slave trade.

This first guided tour and the many subsequent ones that I took and observed made me think not only of the ways in which histories are narrated, but also how places like Elmina Castle are recast as monumental sites of memory (Fig III.1). In this chapter, we shall consider how memories of the slave trade are retold, recalled, reconciled, and reenacted through a diverse range of performances at Elmina. By studying the act of making memories through commemoration rituals in which visitors to Elmina Castle participate, how histories of the slave trade are choreographed will become apparent. Theoretical perspectives on place and body memory will be examined to understand how communities with traumatic pasts deal with places associated with their histories. The aim is to analyze how different bodies negotiate histories of such places and deal with knowledge of such difficult pasts. The significance of Elmina as a place of memory will emerge.

In academic discussions, renewed interest has been shown these last years as acts of

memory-making are understood as performative in nature.[19] Scholars such as Joseph Roach

(1996) and Diana Taylor (2003) have demonstrated that performance repertoires function as

dynamic means to transmit deeply rooted cultural expressions. Mary Nooter Roberts and Allen

F. Roberts (1996) have showed how indigenous communities in Africa make histories via the

mnemonic devices of traditional knowledge systems and then articulate them through

performative processes of recollection directed toward the local-level political goals of particular

performance events. They assert that memory is embodied and grounded in the present whereby

the very process of generating memory is a performance in that moment. Recently, books and

edited volumes such as *Performing Memory in Art and Popular Culture* by Liedeke Plate and

Anneke Smelik (2013) examine memory as not just a social and cultural act, but as performative

opportunities. Plate and Smelik study acts of memory by inquiring into processes of making,

constructing, enacting, transforming, expressing, transmitting them through arts and popular

culture (ibid). The present chapter will build upon such insights as place is recast as a theater of

memories at Elmina, with all theatrics so implied.

By marshaling discussions on how pasts are repurposed and performed, restoration of

Elmina Castle will be considered, as well as its eventual transformation as a site of memories and

commodified "heritage." In the case of Elmina, one event triggered another, and like a chain

reaction, the castle and adjacent town became an important destination in slave-route and Roots

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[19] The arguments of this chapter have been primarily defined by the discussions and readings of the graduate seminars taught by Prof. Janet O'Shea and Prof. Mary Nooter Roberts. The graduate seminars "Theories of Performance," and others taught by O'Shea enabled me to rethink how postcolonial identities are constructed and performed for touristic purposes. And also how different actors in postcolonial nations perform the pasts through different avenues. And as mentioned before Roberts "Performing Memory" seminar played a significant role in helping me think how fraught memories are performed.

tourism. A series of collateral events such as the Pan-African Historical Theater Festival (PANAFEST) further popularized Elmina as the site for the commemoration of the transatlantic slave trade. In this chapter, I shall discuss how a range of performances plays a significant role in constructing memories of the slave trade, especially for persons of the Black Atlantic diaspora.

I. Presenting and Performing "Slave" Heritage:

If the heritage sites at Elmina are archives through which histories of the slave trade are preserved, then what characterizes the place as a theater of memories is a sequence of performances that are organized and performed for and by tourists. Borrowing Diana Taylor's arguments, performance repertoires play significant roles in articulating historical knowledge. At Elmina, histories of the slave trade are narrated and performed by tour guides and local actors through various performative acts. Tours of the castle are given by guides employed by the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB), as well by other licensed persons accompanying tour groups. They provide performative renderings in which histories of Elmina Castle and the Gold Coast more generally are not merely narrated, but recounted in such a fashion as to create profound impact on all visitors, but especially on the many African Americans who visit in the course of Roots tours. Indeed, local residents, tour guides, and tourists collectively engage in memory-making.

Most tourists visiting Elmina do so through organized "slave trade tour" packages.[20] The question arises as to how the town of Elmina and its heritage buildings have become such

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[20] Tour operators use different catchy phrases to advertise their tour packages to visit slave heritage sites. While some name their tours as "Slave Trade Tours." Others like the Kensington Tours find interesting names such as "West African Slavery Requiem."

popular destinations for Roots tourism. Bayo Holesy states that coastal castles of Ghana became significant sites on the heritage map of transatlantic slavery after Ghanaian Regional Minister Ato Austin visited the United States in 1989 and Ghana received 5.6 million dollars for the preservation and conservation of natural and cultural habitats (2008:161-62). Holsey notes that this event altered the destiny of colonial fortifications along the Gold Coast, because earlier there was no desire to commemorate the transatlantic slave trade or highlight Ghana's connections to the African diaspora. Citing a GMMB report, she suggests that initial restoration and preservation of the castle reflects a contrasting discourse concerning the place. Until then, the GMMB had promoted the castles to Ghanaians as monumental European buildings that reflected local cultural encounters with Europe.[21] Restoration of the castles in the 1990s followed by the initiation of PANAFEST prompted creation of a discourse on the slave trade based on castle histories. Arguably, the interest in the castles shown by diasporic Africans and other international attention were responsible for the transformation and re-presentation of Elmina and Cape Coast as places of pilgrimage.

Jemima Pierre further suggests that fiction and academic literature as well as other media also played critical roles in repurposing Elmina and Cape Coast castles as poignant places of return (Pierre 2009). Like Pierre, Holsey contends that the search for Black identity and places of origin stimulated by Alex Haley's *Roots* (1976) and the hugely successful TV series based upon

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[21] Bayo Holsey cites from the Cape Coast Castle report, which says that "Cape Coast Castle is a Ghanaian landmark, huge and picturesque. One mighty wall overlooks the shore, where clumps of sea-washed rocks are interspersed by soft, brown sand. Fishing crafts are drawn up on the beaches as they have been for four hundreds of years. Another wall oversees the busy life of the town, hazed by the smoking of the day's catch. The interior of the fortress has plenty of room for a major display of the nation's life. And Elmina, a relic of the earliest Portuguese landings along this coast, has a history that certainly would be a draw. Columbus as a young man is said to have learned navigation here. Later as "Admiral of the Ocean Sea," he supposedly stopped here to take on provisions for his great voyage of discovery (Holsey 2008:163).

it contributed to new attention to the castles (Richards 2005). Since the castles were the final exit points for unthinkable numbers of enslaved Africans, they have became the most important *lieux de mémoire* for African Americans in order to reconnect with their roots through pilgrimage tourism. With Elmina and Cape Coast boasting architecturally impressive structures, these castles have become iconic sites of slave-trade heritage.

As physical structures, the castles permit engaged visitors to experience memories and memoryscapes of the transatlantic slave trade in more tangible ways, thus making imperceptible, yet difficult pasts very visible in the present. However, scholars like Paula Ebron contend that other material realities influence longing for return. In her view, African American nationalists have long maintained that Black people should return to African spiritual identities in order to escape the grip of Western materiality and commercial greed (Ebron 1999: 912). Similarly, Saidiya Hartman (2002) examines the role of the castles in the exploration of Africans roots and asserts that the buildings and their environments have also become sites for renegotiation of present experiences of dire oppression. Visibly and through tour guides' narratives, clear emphasis is given to diaspora narratives of slavery, as opposed to Ghana's own complex histories of slavery discussed in associated academic texts and other literature.

Close analysis of African American commemoration of slavery at Ghana's castles also reveals other aspects of memorialization. The presence of an influential African American expatriate community in Ghana dating from the mid-1950s is a significant contributing factor. As President Kwame Nkrumah established close ties with African American communities, his Pan-Africanist vision—building upon earlier efforts by Marcus Garvey—reverberated throughout Africa and the United States (Pierre 2009; 2013). During a visit to the Unites States, Nkrumah

gave an open invitation to African Americans to visit Ghana as "the motherland." This led to the migration of politically active and highly educated African Americans to Ghana, and during this initial period, African American experience of slavery became a topic of great interest. In later immigration, the Ghanaian government focused on histories of the slave trade as a major linking factor helping to develop international relationships with the United States and other countries with African-heritage communities.

Several other constituencies have played crucial roles in transforming Elmina into a significant place for tourists to visit and experience histories of the slave trade. In analyzing the conversion of a place into a tourist destination, Sally Ness has pointed out that an array of reasons is responsible for such a change. She compares the tourism sector to a matrix that has no particular trajectory and a place with a multidimensional flow of bodies, which in turn changes the density and composition of the matrix. By acknowledging that there are multiple bodies, institutions, and issues, that promote tourism, Ness demonstrates how a society, from individual to communities to institutions, creates the phenomenon (2003: 10-13). In the case of Elmina understood as such a matrix, the town has not been transformed into a tourist destination because of any single factor; rather, the place has been designed and designated as a slave heritage site by a gamut of actors pursuing their own, various goals. Additionally, through their enactments a spectrum of people has influenced the transformation of Elmina's memoryscapes and especially that of the castle.

Elmina's heritage-scape is promoted and popularized as a place of return by various agencies through media such as newspapers, television, travel books, and travel websites. UNESCO's Slave Route Heritage Program initiated in 1994 was instrumental in mapping the

castle at Elmina as a significant destination in such a "Roots route" (cf. Clifford 1997). Along with the Ghanaian state and UNESCO, commercial enterprises like aviation and cruise-ship industries also play crucial roles in repurposing Elmina as a Slave Route Heritage destination. During my six-month stay in and around Elmina, I frequently encountered tourist groups from cruise ships docked at Tema port visiting Elmina Castle. Local commercial and cultural interests, combined with the African Americans' common desire to undertake pilgrimage to the slave castles of West Africa all contribute to such avid interest. In analyzing how race and identity are staged at the slave castles in Ghana, Jemima Pierre notes that such fraught subjectivities are often portrayed as the peculiar property of diaspora Blacks (2009: 63). At the castles, memories of colonialism and slave trade are recounted from and for the perspectives of transnational African diasporas and not so obviously from or for those of Ghanaians. This kind of construction is not restricted to the castles, but is seen in the organization of the homeland tours to visit Ghana. The majority of African Americans who visit Elmina Castle are Roots tourists, who have purchased tourism packages that blend ordinary pleasures of commercial tours with emancipatory experiences as they are given to reflect upon their troubled histories and heritage as they deal with ongoing social and cultural ramifications of the transatlantic slave trade.

Since Elmina and Cape Coast castles are important sites for pilgrimage, Roots-tourist expectations often clash with on-the-ground reality as when, for example, some African Americans and Africans from the diaspora feel that they should not be charged an entrance fee to the castles since they are sacred places that hold the memories and spirits of their ancestors. Ato Ashun, who is the GMMB Officer In Charge of Elmina Castle, notes that there have been instances when Roots tourists have become enraged because of such a necessity. Likewise Essel

Blankson, the Educational Director of Cape Coast Castle who had also encountered angry

pilgrims explained to me that on such occasions he tells the visitors they are exempted. Blankson

notes that "once the tour of the castle is over, I politely point out that the maintenance of the

castle and the salary of the tour guides comes from the money collected as entry fees and it will

be kind on their part to acknowledge the fact and help us continue with the upkeep of the castle,

as well as offer the free guided tour."[22] He also remarks that in most cases, Roots tourists are

forthcoming once they understand such realities, and they are then happy to pay the entrance fee.

Roots tourists may also feel that the potency of the place is being compromised by turning the

castle into a sightseeing destination for anyone who wishes to visit. There have been extensive

discussions on the academic front by Edward M. Brunner (2005), Sandra L. Richards (2005) and

Christine Mullen Kreamer (2006) about African American concerns about the commoditization

of the castle, but it is difficult to state particular reasons since these matters are far more complex

once one is *in situ.*

Currently, Cape Coast Castle has attained more prominence than Elmina Castle as a

result of Barack Obama's family visit in 2008 during his Ghana tour, although the phenomenon

may be short-lived. The President's visit generated large-scale coverage in American media,

especially with The Cable News Network (CNN) ace reporter Anderson Cooper's program that

inquired into the history of the slave trade, and his interview with Seestah Imakhus about the

efficaciousness of Cape Coast's dungeons. Cooper also had a long interview with President

Obama inside the castle in which he questioned the importance of his visit. Before plans were

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[22] Essel Blankson narrated this to me during one of the extended conversations regarding giving guided tours for roots tourists.

officially announced, a major row erupted between the local councils of Elmina and Cape Coast, about which castle the U.S. President should visit. Residents of Elmina were angry when it was declared that Obamas would only be visiting Cape Coast, despite Elmina being the earliest European building on the Guinea Coast and also the site of first contact between Europeans and those whose descendants would become Ghanaians. People in Elmina made an appeal to late President John Evans Atta Mills to reschedule Obama's itinerary to include a visit to Elmina. Essel Blankson, who gave a tour of Cape Coast to the First Family of the United States, noted that there were rumors that members of the Elmina Council might stage a demonstration in front of Cape Coast Castle during the visit. According to museum officials, a visit to Cape Coast Castle was preferred due to security reasons. Being an old town with congested roads and other community activities at the very foot of the castle, it would have been very difficult to regulate traffic and commerce at Elmina. Since the Obamas visit, Cape Coast Castle has become the preferred site for commemorative rituals for Roots tourists who hope to experience what the President and his family so eloquently described. An event like the visit of the first African American president of the United States can have significant impact in shaping the heritage of slave castles and associated memoryscapes, then.

II. Welcome Home Tours/Roots Tours/Pilgrimage Trips

Most visitors from African diasporas who arrive at Elmina Castle have subscribed to homeland tours also known as "Roots tours," "welcome home tours," "pilgrimage tours," and so on. Travel agencies in Ghana and elsewhere find interesting and innovative ways to package trips to countries in West Africa as journeys to the homeland of African Americans. In analyzing

Roots tourism, African American anthropologist Paula Ebron argues that a major commercial element is involved in the conceptualization of such tours. In an engaging case study, she considers commoditization processes of the "back to the Roots" tour organized through a contest sponsored by McDonalds as an advertizing ploy in African American neighborhoods. In discussing her own participation as an observer who did not win the contest but who was permitted to accompany those who did, Ebron asserts that "the most intimate memories of reunion with the place many African Americans imagine as 'Mother Africa' were moments anticipated by clever marketing strategies moments" (Ebron 1999: 912). She further claims that the dreams of diasporic communities matched by transnational business goals and income-generating aspirations of African national governments have produced a certain West Africa commodified as a cultural object of global significance. Ebron states that "in this process, Africa became sacred and commercial, authentic and spectacular" (ibid). In my experience, such arguments are accurate insofar as economic benefits primarily facilitated by the tourism industry determine the "packaging" of Elmina and Cape Coast Castles as important places of return through which nostalgic persons of African heritage may grapple with tragic histories of the transatlantic slave trade.

Tour operators in Ghana, the United States, the Netherlands, and the Caribbean facilitate Roots tourism packages. Itineraries are designed such that after their arrival at the international airport of Accra, tourists usually spend the night in the capital city. Elmina and Cape Coast Castles are the first destination and symbolically charted to be visitors' first interface with the Motherland of Africa. After visiting the castles, trips are also made to other historic sites in Elmina and Cape Coast. The tourists are then taken to Kakum National Park, about thirty

kilometers from Cape Coast. Recent development of the park as a site for eco-tourism and the

construction of a canopy walkway were undertaken in coordination with refurbishing the forts

with funding support from USAID. Apart from visiting the castles and other historic slavery sites

such as Assin Manso, an intermediary slave market and the last stop in the slave route where

enslaved Africans from the hinterland were gathered, most tour package also offer trips to other

cultural destinations in Ghana such as Kumasi the erstwhile capital of the Ashante kingdom, and

the weaving town of Bonwire so that tourists can see how *kente* textiles are woven. Tour

operators offering longer, two-three week packages also take tourists to sites such as Mole

National Park and the village of Larabanga in northern Ghana with its historic 15th century

Mosque that reflects Sudanese architectural idioms.

Other sites often included in tourist itineraries are the stilt village of Nzelezu, which is

also in the UNESCO World Heritage list and the town of Ho in the Volta region. One of the

experiences that most tour operators advertise is a visit to an "authentic African village" to see

"traditional" ways of *Akan* living. A few also organize a "traditional" naming ceremony for

tourists in the house of a local chief as a means to "reintegrate" people into Motherland culture—

whether or not their own, particular ancestors originated in Ghana (Fig III: 2). Roots tours are

designed and marketed by promising visitors "a complete African experience," as utopian

impossibility as that may be. Jemima Pierre, who has extensively studied "Roots tourism,"

explains that certain places are constructed as "sites of pilgrimage" for African Americans to

visit in search of their origins. Similarly, Paula Ebron has noted that African American

transatlantic imaginaries of history and memory are influenced by commercial sectors like the

travel industry and corporations that sponsor such tours (1999: 911). She notes that in such

tours, transnational trends and ideas about culture and identity converge with the strategies of multinational capitalist interests. And by primarily marketing African identity and homeland as mediums accessed, experienced, and reckoned at Elmina and Cape Coast, Roots tourism becomes the major factor in transformation of the characteristics of these places.

In 1999, a Japanese Buddhist organization called Nipponzan Myohoji conceived a global-scale transnational peace project called "The Interfaith Pilgrimage of The Middle Passage." The project aimed at retracing the Middle Passage by a reverse journey starting from the East Coast in the United States and passing through Senegal to culminate in Cape Town, South Africa (Sutherland 2007). The purpose was to heal the pain caused by the transatlantic slave trade and to bless and pray for the souls of the restless and traumatized specters wandering in the dungeons of the slave forts. In this yearlong pilgrimage, the pilgrims walked back through the "Door of No Return," thus returning to slave markets and other *lieux de mémoire* associated with the slave trade.[23] Although the group never visited Ghana, their ritual enactment at the House of Slaves on Goree Island in Senegal is quite similar to performances choreographed by various tour operators at Elmina and Cape Coast. Rhetoric constructed around retracing paths of their ancestors and reentering through the Door of No Return are important performative acts for Roots tourists (Fig III: 3).

Another prominent aspect of Roots tours and, in some instances, guided tours given at Elmina and Cape Coast Castles, is the performativity embedded in narrations of histories. Analyzing the semiotics of tours given at the castles, Sandra Richards has rightfully argued that

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[23] The Door of No Return" has become a trope of Roots catharsis, whether or not the door so designated ever served the function, at least to the degree now emphasized, in the buildings being visited. This is strikingly the point at Goree, where it is not at all clear whether the door was used as now understood, but in many ways it makes no difference because the greater "truth" is served in Roots tourists' performances of loss.

like theater actors, guides deliver scripts given to them and perform to produce desired audience responses. She notes that guides construct their narrations according to particular places, indigenous linguistic practices, and the composition of touring groups (Richards 2005: 627). Ato Ashun, during an interview with me noted that depending upon the racial composition of a tour group, he may or may not include certain histories.[24] He explains that most Roots tourists are very somber during their tours and a few also become very agitated and angry. Ashun pointed out that if he notices tourists have become emotionally moved by hearing about awful conditions in which enslaved Africans were imprisoned at the castle, he may tone down the narrative by divulging less information about the terrible state of enslaved people. He further notes that being a senior educator at Elmina Castle, he and his staff prefer that visitors of European heritage not participate in the same tour, especially on occasions when Roots tours include large numbers. In the past, there have been instances when Roots tourists have expressed anger towards other visitors and accused them of the cruelties visited upon their ancestors. Ashun expressed that the staff had to step in to diffuse any such situation. Similarly, Essel Blankson told me that some African American tour groups prefer to be shown around the castle by their own tour leader rather than a castle employee, and that such a person then plays the role of a spiritual guide leading the people back to their Roots.

Although most Roots tours are commercial ventures, they are packaged and promoted as solemn journeys. They are either called "study tours," "pilgrimages" or a "*sankofa*."[25]

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[24] The complexities of race as defined in the United States versus how such distinctions are understood in Ghana—or anywhere else in the world—are beyond the purposes of the present dissertation.

[25] The *Akan* word *sankofa* means to go back and get what one has left. The concept of *sankofa* is often employed in the context of Roots tourism and to construct the narrative that those of the African diaspora should return back to their "homeland" to reestablish bonds and experience what they have left behind.

Paradoxically, the prices of these trips are not humble. On an average priced between $ 3,500-5,000 USD for a person in 2012, depending upon the number of days and mode of transportation, such are not for everybody. A few tour operators offer additional cultural activities and entertainment such as drumming and dancing. At times, night trips to the castles or a theatrical reenactment of the slave trade either at Elmina or Cape Coast Castle are offered. Several tour operators also facilitate a "reintegration ceremony" for Roots tourists as mentioned, usually in the house of a local chief where people are given *Akan* names followed by a "traditional" feast and performances finely tuned to meet expatriate palates and felt needs.

One of the Roots or Homeland tours that I closely studied was organized by Gilo Koswal, who also goes by the name Nana Mbroh II. He divides his time between his native Suriname, the Netherlands, and Ghana. He has been felicitated with the title of "Nana," which signifies social eminence and serves as one of the "chiefs" of Koramanste, a small village near Annamabou some thirty kilometers from Elmina. Since 2006, Koswal has organized such trips to Ghana for Africans of the diaspora, and especially Suriname and the Netherlands, following a sense popular in these places that the primary heritage of Afro-Surinamese people is Akan, despite the multiple African origins shared throughout the Black Atlantic. When I met Koswal in 2012, he was leading a group of forty people from Suriname. Like most Roots tour organizers, Koswal aims to provide his group an experience of Africa, but he emphasized that he wanted his visitors to familiarize themselves with mundane life in Africa in order to understand commonalities with living in Suriname and its Dutch diaspora. For instance, when tourists arrive in Ghana, a trip to either Cape Coast or Elmina Castle is first on their itinerary, but he gives them a day to acclimatize to African life by breaking their journey to spend a day in small towns en route to the

coast. According to Koswal, most visitors either become very emotional or angry when they are taken to the castles immediately upon their arrival, so he allows them to deal with present realities of Ghana that are not so different from life in Suriname, so as to appreciate the place in a bigger context and not just leave with a bitter feeling about the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade. He notes that in the past, as some of the visitors have become very agitated in the castles it has been necessary to create a more holistic experience for tourists to redirect emotional energies.

A "reintegration ceremony," organized for the group at Koramantse was among the moments I was invited to observe. After visiting the castles and other places such as Kumasi, Mole, and Ho, the entire group assembled in Koramantse for a naming ceremony that is explained as part of reintegration. To some small extent, visitors would be assimilated into local society through such procedures. Since the village of Koramantse is understood as an important point of origin for diasporic populations in Suriname and Jamaica, a ceremonial reintegration to life in the village is the culmination of their scheduled trip to Ghana. This was a glorious occasion for both the visitors and the villagers as feasting and drumming and dancing followed the rituals (Fig III: 4).

While most Roots tourists participate in some kind of performance as an act of connecting with memoryscapes—however fantasized they may be; visitors also engage in creating and capturing memories of places through the touristic ritual of taking photographs as souvenirs. Tourists also stop by shops inside the castle to buy souvenirs such as books, postcards, and other items. It is also worth noting that a few Roots tourists often become annoyed when their tour is interrupted by a detour to the castle shop. Ato Ashun notes that he remembers

instances when Roots tourists have told him that they are not here to "buy things" and that he should have first finished the tour before ushering them inside the museum shop. Perhaps analogies to places such as theme parks with which they may be familiar, where experiences are overtly commoditized, may be awkward when Roots tourists are seeking "authentic" experiences of heritage.

III. Acts of Memorializing the Transatlantic Slave Trade:

Elmina's historical association with the transatlantic slave trade and the projection of this narrative by various state and non-state actors is the primary reason why African Americans and Africans from the diaspora visit the castle. The mere ascription of Elmina as a slave heritage site is not the main reason that has transformed the place into a memoryscape of heritage meaningful to different persons and communities including those seeking to benefit financially; rather, an array of memory-making and memorialization processes have galvanized Elmina as an important *lieu de mémoire*. Performances—whether organized by the Ghanaian state or choreographed by tour guides and local actors—play vital roles in defining the ritual significance of the castle and its adjacent town as a meaningful memorial for the slave trade. Inside Elmina Castle, African Americans and Africans from the diaspora engage in various acts of collective mourning, remembering, and praying as means to reconnect with their ancestors. Such recall usually involves lighting candles, singing or chanting, and even laying flowers or prepared (hence purchased) wreaths on what has become an active shrine inside the dungeon. It is such individual and collective performative ways of memorializing the slave trade and enslaved Africans that lend potency to the castle at Elmina as a site of memory. The subject of succeeding sections will

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be how *lieux de mémoire* and the memoryscapes of which they are focal points gain significance through various performances.

Visitors to memory places often engage in commemorative rituals and performances usually orchestrated by tour operators and guides. Performance is the mode through which the visitors actively connect with *lieux de mémoire* and in turn retain and embody memories of the place. Following the philosopher Edward Casey (1987), collective journeys of multiple bodies lend potency to such places. Further, for visitors, the very act of choreographing their bodies through spaces to places and then interacting with them is what contributes to their memories.

In Castle tours offered to visitors from the diaspora, for example, guides pause at particular places to create opportunities for tourists to "feel" the tragedies experienced by enslaved inhabitants in days of yore. Guides usually turn the lights off in the dungeon for a few minutes and then invite visitors to touch and so feel the textures of the walls so as to somatically share the circumstances in which enslaved ancestors suffered. Such corporeal interactions with place play a crucial role for Roots tourists in translating the gravity of the castle, which may otherwise appear as a nicely preserved European military fortification. For this same reason, when the castle was being refurbished to encourage Roots tourists to visit, an outside café popular with local people was eliminated to avoid any association with frivolity. Place-based choreographed movements and historical narrations are not only powerful expressive methods for meaning-making or sense-making, but also foundational to development of new memories for visitors.

In writing about the potency of places of pilgrimage, Paul Connerton notes that journey to the sites constantly shapes the sites themselves, making them dynamic and alive by marking

their significance (2009: 17). Similarly, in analyzing the rhetoric and performances of places of

public memory, Blair, Dickinson, and Ott (2010) suggest that because place stimulates memory

but is not transportable, particular performances are required of the people who would seek to be

its audience. In the case of Elmina, African Americans make an arduous and costly voyage, not

just to see the castle, but to know and feel the place, perform cathartic rituals there, and so pay

respect to their ancestors. The dungeons of Elmina and Cape Coast Castles have become an

especially highly charged performative space for African American tour groups as they

participate in collective rituals of mourning. There have also been instances when African

diaspora tourists have become possessed while inside the dungeons at Cape Coast Castle during

a collective praying session.

As mentioned before, the performative acts in which visitors engage a place of memory

like Elmina Castle provide a significant step in the process of retaining and embodying

memories. The same performative acts also ascribe new meanings both for visitors and the place.

Casey notes that by moving in or through a given place, the body imports its own past into its

present experience and implaces it in the spatial context (1987: 194). The very architectures of

memory places are encoded with multiple meanings and symbolisms. At Elmina Castle, the

dungeons and Door of No Return are symbolic sites for emplacing memories through

choreographed acts. Although at Elmina Castle, visitors cannot freely walk through the "Door of

No Return" since a grilled door seals it to prevent people from entering who have not paid for

tickets or who might bother tourists in their eagerness to sell souvenirs, the location is still a

significant spot for ritualistic performances, as people want to register their presence (Fig III: 5).

One of the most common forms of framing memories is the act of taking photographs in front of

the door to represent the gravity of enforced confinement followed by expulsion from the Homeland. The "Doors of No Return" at both Elmina and Cape Coast Castles are very important for African Americans who often exit and reenter in a poignant fashion to mark their tearful coming "home."

Memory places, like other mnemonic devices or practices, can be activated by interacting with them, and the senses that are evoked function as cognitive cues in triggering remembrance. In analyzing how Luba people of the Democratic Republic of Congo construct body and place memory, Mary Nooter Roberts and Allen F. Roberts note that people use mnemonic devices following complex socio-political knowledge systems (Roberts and Roberts 1996). Their arguments are useful in considering how certain places function as mnemonic devices for communities that have—or, as important with regard to heritage sites like the castles, *long* to have--close cultural associations with them, and how key gestural and semantic codes pertain to collective memories of the past, however idealized and imagined such pasts may be. Expanding on the Robertses' thoughts, the castle at Elmina serves as a large-scale mnemonic device that is instrumental to preserving histories and memories of the transatlantic slave trade, even as it fosters new memories to be created through pathos experienced in situ and conveyed to loved ones back home through narratives of "reintegration" and other key moments as captured in photography and made tangible by other souvenirs.

Like the Robertses, Marianne Hirsch (2008) investigates different ways that memory is translated and transferred. Her writing examines the transmission of traumatic memories of the Holocaust inter-generationally and trans-generationally through visual materials such as photographs. Feeling connections to pasts and emotions experienced by visitors at memory

places like Elmina Castle are similar to the "postmemory" or "vicarious witnessing" that Hirsch discusses. Postmemory is the connection that descendant of survivors of traumatic events experience when they encounter vestiges of lives they have not lived but that are nonetheless dear to them. According to Hirsch, postmemory is not a movement, method, or idea, but rather a structure of inter- and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience (2006:106). In related fashion, in writing about embodied memory, Susannah Radstone and Katherine Hodgkin (2003) note that painful memories either of the self or others that are directly experienced or not, witnessed or not, leave their marks on the mind as traumatic embodied memory. Following such reasoning, at a place of dire torment like Elmina, inter-generationally transmitted body memories influence how the castle is experienced by disasporic African visitors.

The fundamental function of Elmina Castle as a *lieu de mémoire,* then, resides in how it invites people to interact with its various features. As tourist guides narrate and enact them for and with visitors, they invoke, incite, and invent memories. Again according to Edward Casey, "if body memory moves us—is the prime mover of our memorial lives—it moves us directly into places, whose very immobility contributes to its distinct potency in matters of memory" (1987: 215). To understand this further, one may analyze the various acts, performances, and rituals that African Americans perform inside Elmina Castle and especially within the dark, dank confines of its dungeons and those of Cape Coast Castle. Most often, African Americans and Africans from the diaspora are urged to remove their footwear while entering the men's and women's dungeons, as they are sacred places where one may pay respect to ancestors. Some with whom I interacted noted that walking barefoot was also a way of establishing direct, tactile connection to

the very floors where enslaved ancestors remained for painful days before being transported across the Atlantic on slave ships.

The most common performative act witnessed at the castle was bringing flowers or wreaths and placing them either in the men's or women's dungeons. Individuals and groups from the African diaspora also light candles and offer prayers as suggested and sometimes as led by tour operators. For Roots tourists, visiting the castle is a most solemn pilgrimage and they are sometimes urged to be attired in white, again, by those organizing their experiences. Ato Ashun notes that at Elmina, the African American tour group called Enimiyan performs elaborate rituals such as pouring libations in the dungeons and participating in a collective prayer. Enimiyan participants also break open a bottle of gin, either in the castle courtyard or in the dungeons, as an offering and also to symbolically emancipate the bonded souls of their ancestors. Other Roots tourists collectively evoke memories of the slave trade and pay homage to their ancestors as a means to reconcile the impact of traumatic postmemories.

During my conversations with tourists, it was very evident that, naturally enough, African American and African visitors to Elmina Castle possess stronger sensorial memories and images of the place than most other visitors. A sense of place depends upon complex interplays of visual, auditory, and olfactory memories. What most of the visitors to the castle dungeons recollect after their visits are the sensual and corporeal connections to the place so viscerally felt within their confines, and it should be stated that such emotions are by no means limited to visitors of African heritage. While most with whom I spoke recounted the dark and blinding sensation experienced while entering the dungeon and the striking tropical sunrays that pierced their eyes upon emerging out of the dungeons, a few revealed that they had experienced a deeper

corporeal sensation, which seemed to linger vividly. More receptive visitors are often affected by the smells of the dungeon, the rough and uneven ground—and especially as guides may add distressing details of how the level of dungeon floors rose as offal and detritus accumulated, wall surfaces without windows or passages for air, and the resulting suffocating stuffiness caused by insufficient airflow. Since most visitors feel claustrophobic in the congested space of the dungeon, made the worse as lights are suddenly doused, they are able to feel affinity with the grim conditions of the enslaved once packed in terrifying (but calculated) numbers into the tiny confines of the dungeons.

Visual scholar Griselda Pollock, who has studied the workings of sites of holocaust memory, notes that "Auschwitz is thus not simply a site, a place, a topography. It signifies an encounter with death, and as such stupefying absence, the destroyed millions who signified furthermore, the destruction of one of the civilizations of Europe" (2003:176). Similarly, Rabbi Cohen, who is the secretary of PANAFEST, explains that the mourning African Americans who visit the castles feel for people who lost their lives is matched by reverence for the resilience of their ancestors who survived the Middle Passage. As he adds, it is just such a feeling of triumph in overcoming the troubles experienced by their ancestors that exhilarates most of the visitors from the African diaspora as they visit the castle.

III. Elmina as a Theater of Memory:

A significant aspect of *lieux de mémoire* like Elmina Castle is their power to evoke emotions as they are presented and displayed for visitors by tourist guides in particular fashions so as to articulate narratives of the past. In describing the ancient Greek practice of memorizing

detailed features of places to recall complex orations or other data, Francis Yates explains how such places functioned. Through what Yates calls "mnemotechnics" things to be remembered are associated with visual images syntactically marked or placed at specific locations in an imagined building to retrieve them by walking through them with the mind's eye, as we might say, during lengthy oratorical discourses (1966: 4). During the Renaissance, a similar technique was employed by Giulio Camillo to create a theater of memory for the King of France. Yates notes that Camillo's creation marked a remarkable transformation of the art of memory employed by the Greeks, for in Camillo's design, the function of theater was reversed so that "the solitary spectator will stand where the stage would be and look towards the auditorium, gazing at the images on the seven times seven gates on the seven rising grades" (Yates 1966: 130-132, 137). Although Camillo's project was never realized, his ideas about framing images in places to represent and signify larger concepts became a key component for constructing places of memory. For example, Leideke Plate and Anneke Smelik (2013) note that memory is not only re-call and re-collection, but implies re-turn, re-vision, re-enactment, and re-presentation as the past is understood through narratives, images, sensations, and performances (2013:6). In what follows, choreographing the past for tourists visiting Elmina will be critically examined.

Elmina Castle is a memory theater in its own right, because the large structure of the castle and its various memoryscapes that figure in tourist-guide narratives become associated with specific events, histories, and intended experiential outcomes. As in Camillo's imagined memory theater, places inside Elmina Castle are distinctively marked by carefully composed and curated signboards, plaques, and commemorative objects. Moreover, the Castle is presented to sensitize visitors about particular narratives and historical occurrences in order to generate

deeply emotional responses. In Camillo's theater, while certain narratives are foregrounded others were discounted or pushed to the periphery. Moreover, the way in which visitors are taken around Elmina Castle demonstrates importance given to certain histories while others may be downplayed or neglected altogether. As we have seen, most important to experiencing the castle are men's and women's dungeons, cells for the condemned, and the Door of No Return, with the opulence of the Governor's residence standing in obscene opposition. While in operation during the slave trade and later colonial period, other places were of undoubted importance such as the gunnery, officer's mess, surgeon's room, and important if little-known features of the castle such an escape tunnel available only to European personnel; but these do not tend to appear in current tourist narratives. As with other places that may or may not instigate memories in any given circumstance, potential remains for some of these to find places in future narratives told to inform the needs and desires of new histories.

For theorists such as Raphael Samuel, popular memory is a realm of knowledge that falls within unofficial knowledge of the past. He contends that both official and unofficial knowledge articulate the past in the present through various forms of representations. According to Samuel memory is "history's nether-world, where memory and myth intermingle, and the imaginary rubs shoulders with the real" (2012: 7). Samuel notes that unlike history, memory draws its sustenance from the spoken rather than the written word, and, one may add with reference to the work of Pierre Nora (1987) alluded to elsewhere in this dissertation, any given "official" history is always subject to subversion through creation of counter-histories composed of different memories.

At Elmina Castle, oral histories influence narratives articulated by tour guides. Although

they are often criticized for being theatrical and delivering historically incorrect information, one can argue that they narrate stories they have heard, elaborating upon them from what they perceive of a given audience's desires and needs. For instance, one of the stories that tour guides usually narrate is how the Dutch Governor of Elmina chose enslaved women for his sexual pleasures. Such a story, however easy to believe, probably cannot be proven and may be questioned, yet Ato Ashun, the Senior Museum Educator at Elmina Castle, holds that this is an example of oral histories that he remembers as the elders of Elmina often recounted them. He noted that since Castle authorities had concealed such events, they certainly remain undocumented, yet they inform popular understanding of abusive authority.

Theorist Raphael Samuel has analyzed alternative networks for collective production of historical knowledge through excavation of suppressed or temporarily irrelevant memories (as discussed in foreword by Bill Schwarz 2012: ix). Samuel's significant work, *Theaters of Memory,* is a sustained effort to study alternative forms of knowledge in visual presentation and the practices of popular performance, through which pasts are dramatized to meet present needs (ibid: x). Throughout his writing, Samuel argues for expanding historical culture, in which the work of inquiry and retrieval is progressively extended to all kinds of spheres that would have been thought unworthy of notice in the past, as whole new orders of documentation are coming into play (2012: 25).

As we have seen, in Elmina town and its castle, the series of performances in which visitors participate transforms the place into a theater of memory. Other than collective and individual acts of remembering and mourning, visitors participate in choreographed acts of mourning for the horrid afflictions and losses of the transatlantic slave trade. Performances vary

from very individual acts of posing for photos in certain places to more complex group rituals and festivals performed inside the courtyards and dungeons of the castle. Indeed, Elmina and Cape Coast have been used for staging local rituals, and festivals commemorating the slave trade such as PANAFEST (Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival) and Emancipation Day celebrations. Elmina and its castle are closely associated with the biennial cultural event PANAFEST that is primarily organized to attract African diasporic visitors. According to The PANAFEST foundation, the festival aims to celebrate the strengths and resilience of Africans and applaud the achievements of Africans in spite of their traumatic socio-cultural histories. It is designed to help Africans to reconnect with their strengths and thus inspire eternal vigilance so that such important events may never be forgotten, even as visitors rededicate themselves to fully assuming their own destinies in recognition of the lessons of shared histories.

When PANAFEST was founded it was fully funded by the government of Ghana or the National Democratic Congress (NDC). However, after 1999 support from the government declined significantly and now the PANAFEST Foundation is dependent on corporate gifts to host the festival. The foundation must constantly struggle and the list of festivities has been reduced as a consequence. From 1998, an Emancipation celebration held on the 31st of July to mark the abolition of slavery was added to annual events sanctioned by the Ghanaian government. Anthropologist Jennifer Hasty points out that Emancipation Day is based upon a similar Jamaican festival, which Ghanaian ministers felt could contribute to the Pan-Africanism movement.[26] The program begins with a candlelight march through the town of Cape Coast

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[26] On a diplomatic visit to Jamaica in 1998, Ghanaian President Rawlings *witnessed* the celebration of a popular holiday, Emancipation Day, commemorating 1 August 1834, when slaves were liberated in the British colonies. Witnessing the holiday enthusiasm of black Jamaicans and conferring with his presidential aid Kofi Awoonor, the well-known poet and Pan-Africanist, Rawlings had the idea that such a commemoration should be "repatriated" to

leading to the castle, followed by cultural programs culminating in a reenactment of the slave trade at midnight. As the clock strikes twelve, the Emancipation Proclamation is read and a fire is lit to symbolize the dawning of a new phase of liberated histories. In analyzing the Emancipation Day and PANAFEST, Hasty notes that in the staging and circulation of Pan-Africanism, the Ghanaian state inserts itself between the local and the global, controlling global flows by filtering them through the state apparatus en route to regional localities and out again (Hasty 2002: 49).

The PANAFEST festival hosts a sequence of events that span ten days, ranging from conferences for youth and women to more ritualistic events (Fig III: 6). Elmina, Cape Coast, and Accra are the main locations of the events. Scholars like Bayo Holsey (2008), Jennifer Hasty (2002), and Sandra L. Richards (2005) have discussed performances featured in PANAFEST through which ritual is employed as a main medium to "reintegrate" tourists back into African society, following Pan-Africanist ideals. While these authors have analyzed larger celebrations and the theater and dance performances that are highlights of the festival, less-obvious ritualistic performances organized by the PANAFEST Foundation also help visitors to experience aspects of the Middle Passage and mark their own glorious returns to the Homeland. For instance, the Symbolic Boat Ride is a ceremonial ritual organized for African American visitors through which they are transported to Elmina Castle from Cape Coast by boats. The trip serves as a brief corporeal and symbolic experience to assist understanding the travails of the slave trade. When visitors disembark at the Elmina Castle, they receive a ceremonious welcome by the elders and the traditional council and are graced with white ash. The elders also wash the feet of the

Africa, particularly to Ghana, where most of the slave forts still stand. Returning to Ghana, Rawlings assigned Emancipation Day to the Ministry of Tourism, charging the ministry to organize a yearly schedule of events to attract African American and Afro-Caribbean tourists (Hastly 2002:48).

pilgrims to seek forgiveness for their own ancestors participating in the slave trade. It is through these symbolic gestures that atonement is enacted.

PANAFEST is not the only festival organized at Elmina to welcome Roots tourists. In 2007, a major initiative called the Joseph Project was launched by the Ghanaian Government to encourage African Americans and Africans from the diaspora to visit Ghana to embrace their Roots and establish strong cultural as well as economic collaboration—with emphasis on the latter. This project was initiated by the New Patriotic Party government (NPP), but it was not realized as envisioned. In 2007, Ghanaian President John Kofi Agyekum Kufuor and the NPP saw the Joseph Project as a means to counter efforts by former President Jerry John Rawlings and his National Democratic Congress's (NDC) efforts to support Pan-Africanism through PANAFEST. Like PANAFEST, the Joseph Project aimed to attract African American visitors to Ghana to strength African cultural ties, but primarily to benefit commercial ventures by attracting wealthy African Americans and Africans of the diaspora to Ghana. In 2007, the Joseph Project was scheduled at the exact same time as PANAFEST and because of the amount of funding channeled to the Joseph Project in this politically motivated duel of festivals, PANAFEST lost much vigor.

The people with whom I talked at the PANAFEST Foundation stressed the political competition through which the Joseph Project was founded by the NPP, while NPP supporters in Elmina held that the Joseph Project was created because PANAFEST had become reduced to a ceremonial event that was no longer economically successful. With reference to the biblical story of Joseph in their mission statement, the NPP recounted that despite being sold into slavery by his own kin, Joseph not only prevailed, but became powerful and rescued his family during hard

times. The NPP constructed the rhetoric of slavery as an unfortunate event through which

Africans were forced into slavery, but they have become triumphant in their far-away lands--thus

sending a symbolic and welcoming message that Ghana hopes for assistance from successful

African Americans.

Launched during the 50th year of Ghana's independence, the Joseph Project presents a

similar set of events as PANAFEST once did, through which African Americans are honored

upon their "return" to the Homeland. Tours, ceremonial welcomes, and other events like a

healing concert was organized to welcome African Americans, following the precepts outlined in

the Joseph Project mission statement meant to reconcile and emancipate people of African

heritage. The Ministry of Tourism and Culture was responsible for organizing the events. The

castle at Elmina and the grounds in front of St. George's Castle were among the main venues for

the ritual performances. The inauguration ceremony was presided over by the President of

Ghana, and relatives and families of renowned Africans in the diapora were invited to

participate. For instance, the inaugural event was attended by Bob Marley's wife Rita Marley,

and also by descendents of Marcus Garvey and George Padmore, two important figures in the

Pan-Africanism movement. Moreover, the NPP also invited chiefs from South Africa and Mali.

The ritual welcome and reintegration process of the Joseph Project included tours to slave

castles along the coast, the locations of former slave markets, and to villages to show returning

African Americans something of the cultural life of Ghana. Celebrations were organized at

Assin Manso and a memorial wall was created for visitors to engrave their names in witness to

their "return," in exchange for a fee of about one hundred dollars. As the site of the inaugural

ceremony, several ritualistic events were performed in front of Elmina Castle. These included

construction of a ceremonial "Door of No Return" made of wood, through which visitors might pass to mark their re-entry to the Homeland. After inaugural speeches and recognition of families of renowned Africans, visitors walked through the symbolic threshold and upon the exiting, they were graced with white clay (*ehyerow)* to symbolize spiritual victory. Later a sheep was slaughtered as an offering to the ancestors[27]. This was followed by ceremonial partaking of *eto,* a delicious dish of pounded yam mixed with palm oil. As a theater of memory, Elmina Castle serves as a stage for enacting memories of the slave trade through ritualistic performances, including very recently invented performances directed to issues of atonement and reparation important to contemporary African American politics. Production of a new spectrum of memories results, keeping Elmina and its historic associations with the transatlantic slave trade up to date.

IV. Enactment Performances:

In this section, we shall consider enactment of aspects of the slave trade performed by local theater and dance groups within Elmina and Cape Coast Castles. These are mostly performed for Roots tourists or foreign delegates visiting Ghana. Enactment performances are scripted, rehearsed, and meticulously choreographed performance repertoires.

Reenactment of the Slave Trade by Elolo Gharbin: Elolo Kwame John Gharbin (hereafter Elolo) and his theater company called Central Resurgence are based in Cape Coast and regularly perform three different theatrical enactments of the slave trade for Roots tourists and at cultural

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[27] The white body paints also bring and reflect blessing by ancestors and other deities.

events, either inside Elmina and Cape Coast Castles. With the global economic crisis of 2008, Elolo's group started receiving fewer and fewer requests for such performances, when in the past during the tourist season he usually received fifteen or twenty requests. In 2012, when I met Elolo, his troupe had only received two bookings. Mostly performing for African Americans, Central Resurgence tailors its performances to the size of the group and its preferences.

Elolo and his group started performing their enactments in 1993 (Fig III: 7). During the early days, they staged "The Truth" as an adaptation of a poem of the same title written by Efo Kodo Mawugbe. Elolo improvised the poem to suit his theatrical formats, and he also created dialogues, music, and choreographed dances. Elolo reflects that "The Truth" was a simple performance that presented the arrival of Europeans on the Gold Coast and how they forged friendships with local people. The performance depicted how Europeans became ruthless rulers who began enslaving and trading humans to meet the fast-paced needs of plantation economies of the Americas, and especially those associated with sugar production.

After a few showings, Elolo revised the script and changed the title to "The Plain Truth." The new script offered more detailed theatrical representation of the slave trade and included stage directions for the actors. About sixty minutes in duration, "The Plain Truth" has music, dances, songs, and narrative segments all woven together. Although fashioned more like musical theater, Elolo reflects that incorporating music and dance into the theatrical enactments of the slave trade shows the audience the richness of *Akan* culture in which drumming and dancing are integral to ceremonies, while further reference is made to popular performance idioms locally known as Concert Party (see Cole 2001). Vignettes portraying idealized *Akan* cultural life are built into the play, as a scene in which local chiefs in full splendor welcome first Europeans

accompanied with their retinues of drummers and dancers.

In the past, Elolo and his group staged three different kinds of performances for Roots tourists that ranged from a very theatrical presentation to a more ceremonial enactment. The three enactments are "The Plain Truth," "The Slave," and "Solemn Homage." Unlike the other two, "Solemn Homage" is a choreographed ritual specifically addressed to Africans from the diaspora and held inside the men's dungeon, either at Elmina or Cape Coast Castle. "The Plain Truth" is the most frequently staged enactment. Elolo remarks that while it and "The Slave" are intended to enact aspects of the slave trade, "Solemn Heritage" is meant to reconcile such histories with deeper impacts of the slave trade for African and African American visitors.

The narratives of Elolo's performances are largely based on the scripted histories recounted by tour guides at Elmina and Cape Coast Castles. Elolo remarks that he did not rely upon local oral histories, as *Fanti* elders did not want to talk about their ancestors' possible roles in the slave trade. In enactments, Elolo recounts events after arrival of Europeans, beginning with the construction of the castle at Elmina by the Portuguese, then the arrival of Dutch and other Europeans and the development of the slave trade industry. Elolo ends the performance by narrating how racism and racial indifference continue today in many ways. About twenty-five actors usually take part of the performance, which is bilingual with a spare use of *Fanti* words, perhaps as a gauge of "authenticity" for non-Fanti-speaking expatriate tourists. Styled as a period drama, Elolo employs elaborate costumes and props to evoke the ambience of the era, and because it is performed in the courtyard of the castle, the very architecture provides a powerful backdrop. Elolo also weaves local dance forms such as *Kete* into the enactment. Moreover, he also has a "dance of anger" choreographic sequence, in which a flag-thrower from a local Asafo

Company performs the art of flag-throwing, as a ritualistic feat performed by trained members of such a company.

The second performance in the repertoire that Elolo and his troupe perform is "The Slave," written by Elolo with multiple scenes and acts. This elaborate play was shown for the first time at Cape Coast Castle in 2001, and since then several times at both Elmina and Cape Coast Castles from 2006-2008. "The Slave" is usually performed for the reverential night celebrations of 31st July. Elolo explains that he wrote the play to present a detailed history of the slave trade for his audience. This performance is rarely staged now as the production is too costly due to the number of actors and the props employed. While performing inside the castle, Elolo uses the courtyard, the rampart, and the flight of steep stairs that leads from the courtyard to the old European quarters as his troupe enacts each episode. Towards the end of the play, for example, "enslaved" persons are dragged to the dungeon, and the tourists follow where the play ends as the enslaved pass through the Door of No Return. A third scene depicts the Middle Passage. Elolo notes that three possible endings are used depending on the requests they get from tour operators. In a full-length performance, Elolo employs elaborate props such as wooden guns, whips, shackles and chains, ornate umbrellas, and chairs. A drum ensemble renders the background musical and sound scores.

The third performance in the repertoire is "Solemn Homage." This is a choreographed ritual that permits visitors to feel that they are remembering traumatic histories of the slave trade while paying tribute to the ancestors. Elolo explains his troupe creates an environment for visitors to experience collective recall, mourning, and release. A pious environment is choreographed so that people from the diaspora can pray to the ancestors who lost their lives, but

also to the brave souls who survived the transatlantic journey. Elolo explains that after a tour of the castle, visitors assemble outside the men's dungeon where the performance unfolds. Visitors are asked to enter the dungeon barefooted, and the performance begins with the tour guide narrating the history of the dungeon. Next, Elolo joins the group to narrate a history of the transatlantic slave trade. In his narration, Elolo mentions how the Europeans still seek to hide the oppressive past.

Elolo then prays with the visitors and observes a moment's silence in memory of people who have suffered from the transatlantic slave trade. Then a flute is played while the group stands in a circle holding hands and praying. Other rituals follow. A local fetish priest arrives and sits in the dungeon with a clay pot or gourd with white clay to ritually anoint visitors with white marks. As the white clay mark is a sign of spiritual victory, two lines are rubbed onto the wrist to mark symbolic triumph. Elolo notes that he included white chalk to indicate to African diaspora visitors that they have been successful in returning to their Homeland. Visitors then pay a tribute and usually offer money to the priest. Elolo notes that this ceremony started as a single person's narrative and now they conduct a more elaborate performance with musicians and a priest.

"Solemn Homage" is a twenty-minute performance, and Elolo remarks that unlike "The Plain Truth" and "The Slave," it is a means for African Americans to remember their ancestors as well as to establish a connection with the dungeon, as it bears traces of the slave trade and was the only part of the castle occupied by Africans, as the rest was occupied by Europeans. The rough walls, uneven ground, and darkness contribute to creating a ritual environment. Elolo notes "Solemn Homage" is a highly moving act and most times, visitors participating are overwhelmed by emotions. "Heritage" purposes are well served, then, including the political

economies of performance.

Enactments Performed by Kwamena Pra: Odomankoma-Kyerema (divine master drummer) Kwamena Pra and his troupe also perform choreographed enactments of the slave trade for tourists. Unlike Elolo who is a theater director, Kwamena Pra is a musician with his own band, and he also teaches drumming to local and international students. Kwamena Pra has incorporated several dances and drumming sequences into his performances in Elmina and Cape Coast Castles (Fig III: 8). Being a "divine drummer," Kwamena Pra is frequently invited to play for very important rituals, festivals, and other ceremonies. He notes that he is known as a divine drummer because of his ability to summon spirits of deceased people and also to communicate with them during ritual ceremonies. Kwamena Pra often leads the drumming ensemble when important chiefs from Ghana and other parts of Africa visit Cape Coast. He is also the lead drummer for the Chief of Cape Coast and also for Asafo Company No-2 in Cape Coast.

Kwamena Pra and his troupe started performing enactments of the slave trade in 1985. At the time, the director of the Center for National Culture (CNC) at Cape Coast Efo Kojo Mawujbe requested Kwamena Pra to organize a performance for visitors from the African diaspora. Unlike Elolo, Kwamena Pra has only one piece that lasts about forty-five minutes. The ceremony is bilingual in *Akan* and English and consists of twenty to thirty actors most of whom also play in his drumming group. Kwamena Pra wrote the script in a prose-poetry style, with musical and dancing interludes. He points out that the duration and the number of scenes in the performance are determined by the requests he receives, so that an engaged audience receives a longer presentation. Despite a set structure, then, Kwamena Pra's troupe often improvises because tour

groups are running short of time or other factors, but irrespective of the situation, the ending of the performance remains the same. Kwamena Pra asserts that his script is based on events narrated in historical texts as well as incidents that are retained in oral traditions. Being a drummer, his performances include elaborate drumming sequences and his actors mime, deliver dialogues, and dance. Different sets of drums produce ranges of rhythms and intonations to evoke varying moods. Drumbeats are cue shifts of scene and signal change in temporal frames. Depending upon the duration of the performance, the number of drums changes because longer performances require an elaborate drumming ensemble with at least three pairs of drums.

A full-length enactment staged by Kwamena Pra's group includes six scenes. The performance begins with a village in which actors present local lives before the arrival of Europeans as people engaged in cultivation, fishing, and other activities. In a second scene, the arrival of Europeans is dramatized. An actor sights a ship and informs the community. Although Kwamena Pra is not the narrator of the story, he inserts himself into the performance now and then by playing the role of the master drummer who summons people and informs situations. A third scene depicts Europeans gifting the locals mirrors, rum, and other goods and requesting land to construct a fort. Next, Europeans construct the castle with local help. A quick shift follows as the violent capture of Africans and the enslavement process is depicted. Drumming accentuates the intensity. In the last scene, enslaved Africans are taken into the castle's dungeons and then to board cargo vessels. Although a minimum of props such as wooden guns, chains, and shackles are employed, elaborate period costumes are worn to great effect.

Kwamena Pra usually stages his work in the main courtyard of either Elmina or Cape Coast Castle. Towards the end of the performance, actors direct audiences towards the dungeons.

Men and women are separated like enslaved people, along with actors portraying slaves. Once inside the dungeons, actors and tourists sit on the floor for a few minutes. And all the while, slavers stand and give orders. Next, audiences are led out of the dungeons toward the Door of No Return. Usually after their exit through the Door of No Return, visitors from the diaspora pray and pay homage to their ancestors. After this brief ritual, they pass back through the Door of No Return and drummers and dancers welcome them with vibrant numbers to celebrate their return and lead them back to the courtyard where they sing and dance. Kwamena Pra holds that these activities mark the emancipation of the souls of diaspora visitors.

During the enactment a code of conduct is observed. Drums are not played in the dungeons as they are places filled with spirits and he does not want to call to or disturb them with the drumming. Kwamena Pra remarks that being a spiritual drummer, he has the responsibility of seeking permission from the spirits who reside in the castle and also to appease them before a performance. Some spirits are very angry, aggrieved, and still in pain, so he plays an appellation for them before the commencement of the performance. Although he never mentions this to his audience, he pays homage before the enactment through a sequence of rhythmic drumbeats. Kwamena Pra maintains that unlike other theatrical representations of the slave trade, his performance is more palpable as his African American audiences undergo deeply emotional experiences. Due to Ghana's difficult economy of late very few bookings are made as the number of tour groups visiting Ghana has been considerably reduced.

Both Elolo Kwame John Gharbin and Kwamena Pra's performance repertoires are deemed historical enactments, but are also instances of memory-making acts. Diana Taylor states that "performances function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory and

a sense of identity through act of reiterated, or what Richard Schechner has called 'twice-behaved behavior'" (Taylor 2003: 2). Enactments of the slave trade performed for Roots tourists evoke memories of the slave trade and remind stake-holding audiences of violent histories of subjugation. Moreover, the enactments of troubled histories within slave castles offer opportunities for audience participation. In discussing relationships among memory, performance, repertoire, and the body, Davesh Soneji notes that knowledge can be made present through acts dramatizing subaltern or marginalized experience (2012: 18). Expanding on Taylor and Soneji, I suggest that the repertoire of slave-trade enactments constitutes a substantial, yet unexplored archive of the slave trade as understood by and performed for contemporary audiences, even as "heritage" actors make their livings from these same dramatizations of collective imaginaries.

In writing of U.S. Civil War enactments, Rebecca Schneider points out that the performance of re-presenting, re-producing, and re-telling histories through artistic productions produces "living histories" or histories in action. She adds that such productions are popular in the twenty-first century because of the rampant commoditization of memory (2011:2). According to Schneider, actors and audiences connect with the past through temporal slippages. Visitors from African diasporas slip into a different temporal zone at Elmina or Cape Coast Castle, and it is through this "slippage" that they experience something of the period. As Schneider notes, "the physical collapse of time" plays a significant role in envisioning and establishing direct links with historical moments facilitated through well-choreographed performances.

As a final insight with which to view Elmina Castle as a theatre of memory, the theory of surrogation proposed by Joseph Roach may be called upon. Surrogation is a process through

which societies compensate for loss of cultural memories in the absence of individuals who can narrate firsthand experiences (Roach 1996: 2). According to Roach, for communities suffering from consequences of violent loss such surrogates can serve healing functions. Diaspora Africans are inter-generationally far removed from living memory of the slave trade, and in many ways particular knowledge is irretrievable. Dramatic enactments at the castles may substitute as processes of collective catharsis. Here, the work of surrogation provokes imagination of the slave trade that can serve as a reference point to address deep wounds of slavery and ongoing racial oppression.

Enactment performances construct visual and tactile—that is, embodied—imaginations of the slave trade. Elmina emerges as a sacred site for those seeking its release, while for others (mostly local), the same production of "heritage" provides much-needed income. Discussing ways in which visuality plays a central role in the tourism industry, David Crouch and Nina Lubbren (2003) point out that tourism is all about visual consumption. They argue that image-making activities of the tourism industry, as well as the tourists themselves, generate very particular senses of place, especially through choreographic productions like those discussed here that make a place spectacular. Souvenir photographs of cathartic events at Elmina and Cape Coast Castles abound on tourist websites and travel blogs. If enactment performances aid in constructing surrogate imaginations of the slave trade, visual cultures are responsible for spreading the image.

Conclusion:

Elmina and its castle as tourist destinations present a cultural matrix constantly shaped by

changing factors. The castle is the setting for tourists from the African diaspora, tour operators, and local performers to stage their individual and collective understandings of the transatlantic slave trade. Tourists are not passive receivers of cultural information; instead they dynamically interact with the memoryscapes of Elmina Castle. Similarly, expatriate and local tourist agents, guides, and theatrical impresarios contribute to the castle's perpetual invention, even as they make their livings from the devices of "heritage" production. Corporeal connections with chosen locations within the castle not only enable tourists to conceive the enormity and gravity of the transatlantic slave trade, but also play important roles in grasping how ruthlessly exploitative forces of colonialism operated in the past even as those of neocolonialism do in our own days. Finally, performances organized and enacted by local theatrical and musical groups range from very personal and somber commemoration of the slave trade to more dramatic performative interpretations leading to an exuberant sense of survival.

In conclusion, then, the castle at Elmina and its surrounding town are *lieux de mémoire* where African identities and histories are reviewed, thus transforming them into a dynamic field of cultural production where Africanism, Pan-Africanism, and traumatic memories of the past are revived even as "heritage" is inexorably invented to meet contemporary felt needs. Purposeful histories and poignant counter-memories become enmeshed at Elmina to produce knowledge of the past—however imaginary—that is discursive and dynamic. My central argument is that choreographed acts make identity politics a viable enterprise for people to undo and reshape official histories to their own advantage. Elmina is a "theater of memory," then, where an array of dramatizations through guided tours, enactments, commemorative rituals organized for Roots tourists, and the mega-events of PANAFEST and the Joseph Project play

significant roles in *producing* Elmina as a most important place of memory for the people of the

African diaspora.

Chapter IV
Reinterpreting Colonial Histories Through Contemporary Art

In previous chapters, we have considered the emergence of Elmina Castle and Fort Kochi as important seaports in oceanic trading networks and their eventual transformations into colonial, economic, and political hubs. Reconstitution of the historical geographies of Elmina and Fort Kochi as postcolonial heritage sites and exhibition zones has also been examined, in order to analyze multi-textured memories and imaginaries of colonialism. The objective of this chapter is to analyze how memoryscapes at Elmina and Fort Kochi serve as frames of reference for contemporary artists seeking to reinterpret histories and contest earlier—and, to an extent, current—hegemonic discourses. Ways that the historic zone of Fort Kochi is becoming the venue for one of the Sub-continent's largest contemporary art events will provide a further means to reexamine colonial histories and representations.

Contemporary art is sometimes said to thrive within the white cubes of metropolitan galleries with all the class-oriented snobbishness so implied, yet it often contests authoritarian models and destabilizes hegemonic narratives. Through public sculptures, performances, and site-specific installations, fraught historical, political, and social issues are addressed, giving them greater visibility. Colonial regimes employed the media of art as a propagandist tool to construct "primitive" images of the colonized world and cultivate such an imagination about "Other" cultures (among many others, see Landau and Kaspin 2002). Artists working for European trading companies and later for the British regime strategically constructed visual imageries of uncivilized societies of the non-Western world to legitimize colonial rule. In

postcolonial times, contemporary artists have intervened and responded to earlier constructions of colonial subjects by challenging earlier visual idioms. The artists whose practices and works will be discussed in this chapter critically inquire into colonial histories, excavate unknown pasts, challenge earlier forms of representation, constructions of race, and forced migrations of colonized people.

Although the personal histories and artistic processes of some colonial artists, artisans, cartographers, and draftsmen have been documented, very little academic attention has been given to contemporary artists deconstructing colonial notions of representation and presenting new historical understandings. While museum curators may articulate interpretations and debates about contemporary art through the exhibitions they mount, few critical discussions exists within academia. Furthermore, however well founded the popular sense may be that all contemporary art appeals to an elite commodity culture and is promoted by capitalistic cultural institutions, such a position decreases scholarly study of political motives for such expression. The emergence of academicians who also practice as curators is certainly shifting the ways that critical discourses are generated. Moreover, many place-specific art events such as biennials and triennials not only promote protest art because of its attractively edgy qualities, they often showcase works that rethink histories, often in resonance with subaltern, bottom-up logics of revision. In addition, the popularity of public art installations is also changing earlier notions of contemporary art as a domain of elite interest only.

By studying the works of contemporary artists from India, Ghana, Portugal, and the United Kingdom in detail, I shall narrate how they undertake historical and ethnographic investigations to contest problematic histories and address present social issues. While discourses

on how contemporary artists employ historical methods are very limited, there are some interesting perspectives on certain artists taking the role of an ethnographer. Following the insights of anthropologists George Marcus and Fred Myers (1995), one can question how artists render new interpretations through reflexive approaches. Art historian and critic Hal Foster's (1995) counter-argument will also be considered as he contests Marcus' arguments about contemporary artists' reflexivities and new approaches.

I. Historical and Ethnographical Inquiries by Contemporary Artists

A number of leading contemporary artists across the globe have been involved in questioning colonial histories, oppression, constructions of native bodies, and decolonizing narratives about "exotic" cultures. Through their works, they have investigated repercussions of colonialism in present socio-cultural structures of postcolonial societies. Dipti Desai, Jessica Hamlin, and Rachel Mattson contend that today's artists are conceiving histories, not as distant and irrelevant events, but as connected to present lives, as living knowledge that merges past and present (2009: 10). Critiques of colonialism and its constructions through art gained momentum in the 1960s and also now seen as the subject of inquiry for many artists worldwide. Artists made significant interventions regarding colonialism and its representations in the '80s and '90s including radical performative acts. Consideration of a few international achievements of the sort will provide context for closer examination of works created by artists working at and around Elmina Castle and Fort Kochi. First, a most provocative example of this is how performance really set precedence for critically unpacking discourses on/of colonialisms and also about issues concerning representations.

In 1992, Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña, in their performance installation "Two Undiscovered Amerindians," lived in a golden cage for a few days and showcased themselves as the exotic and undiscovered Amerindians from an island in the Gulf of Mexico that had somehow been overlooked by the Europeans. Gómez-Peña would sit in the cage and perform so-called "traditional tasks," as he mocked anthropological descriptions of "natives" by engaging in mundane activities such as lifting weights and watching television. Meanwhile, Fusco encouraged viewers to feed Gómez-Peña bananas they could purchase from her, or to pay her a far steeper fee so that the "native" would raise his "loincloth" and show his genitals. Presenting themselves as exotic species worthy of protection, two museum security personnel (also part of the act) guarded them. In front of the cage, a didactic chronology explained the history of exhibiting non-Western people in Western museum contexts. Fusco and Gómez-Peña's chief purpose was to critique colonial narratives of discovery. Analyzing their performance, Diana Taylor argues that "the artistic performance challenged the cultural performance, the way history and culture are packaged, sold, and consumed with hegemonic structures" (2003: 67). Not only were these contemporary artists interested in questioning colonial representations, they also critiqued the colonial anthropological project that studied and in an important sense, *produced* native bodies and cultures.

In a more understated but equally stimulating way, the internationally renowned British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare presents political dimensions of colonial constructions of Africa and Africanity through works that may signal events associated with histories of Africa or make more general symbolic references to African imaginaries—both held by Africans themselves and imposed upon them by hegemonic forces—through the colorful designs composed of "African"

textiles largely designed and produced outside the Continent, most famously in the highly prized wax prints of Indonesia. Shonibare also explores issues of race and class through painting, sculpture, photography, and film. Having described himself as a "post-colonial hybrid," Shonibare questions the meaning of cultural and national definitions of *being* African.

Through strikingly vibrant and large-scale installations, Shonibare engages viewers to think about the issues of colonialism and whose "Africa" is at play. For example, Shonibare's public installation "Ship in a Bottle" displayed outside the new Sammy Ofer wing of the National Maritime Museum in London.[28] In this large installation, Shonibare has created a scaled-down version of Admiral Horatio Nelson's vessel the H.M.S Victory, so famous for its successes in the Battle of Trafalgar, but with a twist. Although Shonibare retains all the elements of the ship, the sails are made up of wax-print African textiles in Shonibare's signature style, in this case in reference to the colonial textile trade and how greatly European commerce benefited from African consumption. Further, the sails also represent the voyages of Victory as a cargo vessel that carried enslaved Africans. This ship is placed inside a closed glass bottle with a red imperial seal. Initially displayed in Trafalgar Square, the work was moved to the Greenwich neighborhood of London and unveiled on the Maritime Museum's 75th anniversary in 2012. Shonibare exemplifies artists who are attempting to unfold fraught histories of colonialism, trade, and the conquest of Africa through their provocative projects.

In contrast to Shonibare's works that publically challenge histories, Indian contemporary artist Pushpamala N.'s (hereafter Pushpamala) works offer critical visual commentary on

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[28] See http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/apr/23/yinka-shonibare-ship-bottle-greenwich

colonial projects of documenting bodies of "native" peoples of India following 19th-century

notions of how physiology and physical anthropology contributed to the dire discriminations of

social Darwinism (see Pinney 1998, Poole 1997, among many other sources). Pushpamala

collaborates with Claire Arnie to subvert colonial photographic practices. In their "Ethnographic

Series" Arnie reenacts ethnographic presentation by posing as the subjects documented, thus

enacting colonial stereotypes of "native" bodies in order to subvert the discriminatory politics

behind such ethnographic constructions.

Like Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco-Fusco, Yinka Sonibare, and Pushpamala N.,

artists whose works are analyzed in this chapter challenge colonial histories to unravel and

reconfigure their problematic constructions. [29] Some of these artists have questioned the histories

of Elmina and Fort Kochi and also intervened in contemporary cultural realities of these places

by capturing various facets of colonial existence as subjects of their works. While others directly

address matters such as the spice trade of southwestern India, colonial buildings, slave trades,

and Afro-Asian heritage. In order to understand the artistic process and methods of inquiry

employed by these artists, two investigative approaches employed by artists will be considered:

the historical and the ethnographic (cf. Schneider and Wright 2006; 2010). I argue that these

contemporary artists approach their subjects with an enhanced sensitivity and respond with

urgency, immediacy, and vitality that inform their powerful reinterpretations. They are neither

solely bound by ethnographic nor historical modes of inquiry; rather they deploy them only to

reshape them according to the demands of contexts and forms of their choosing. A few like Mary

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[29] Although several contemporary artists are invested in this line of inquiry and have produced significant works, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss all their works.

Evans and Dinesh Shenoy employ a combination of ethnographic and archival methods to study their subjects in order to render them through their own depictions.

In questioning the authority and the license assumed by historians as the supposedly ordained interpreters of history, Dipti Desai, Jessica Hamlin, and Rachel Mattson show that histories have been narrated, performed, enacted, and sculpted by artists interested in presenting pasts through their own new frames, making new meanings as they do (2009: 8). In demonstrating the significance of visual language, these authors demonstrate how contemporary artists explore, critique, and comment upon pertinent issues (ibid). Dipti Desai posits that the emergence of critical theory in the 1970s and the social and political climate of the period prompted artists to focus on exposing hidden, hierarchical, social, and economic relations governing art institutions as well as address important social issues of environment, displacement, and locally constructed social stratifications such as caste and race. As discursive purposes became more important than aesthetic considerations in the construction of some (but not all) artworks, contemporary art became a public forum through which artists could articulate common concerns and initiate dialogue.

II. Excavating and Installing Marginalized Histories:

If contemporary art is an alternative channel that provides scope and flexibility to challenge earlier histories, then exhibitions and site-specific installations are the sites through which artists articulate and visually present problems and outcomes of representation. Many exhibitions have looked at colonialism through a critical lens to question authoritative—and *authoritarian*—histories. For example, "Port City: On Mobility and Exchange" (2007) at the

Arnolfini Center for Contemporary Arts in Bristol, England, explored how port cities historically

and in the present are places of entry and migration as Bristol was during the British imperial

occupation of Asia and Africa. Likewise, a recent exhibition, "Time, Trade and Travel" (2012)

seen at the Stedelijk Museum Bureau of Amsterdam and the Nebuke Foundation in Ghana

presented "two-way" processes of exchange between the Netherlands and Ghana. The exhibition

functioned as a platform for contemporary Ghanaian and Dutch artists to present their

interpretive knowledge of pre-colonial *Akan* culture. In addition, artists critically examined

colonial legacies of both the countries and their traces in continuing hierarchical relationships. In

this collaborative project, Ghanaian and Dutch artists as cultural mediators interrogated

processes of exchange between two worlds articulated by complex oceanic trade networks. In

somewhat similar ways, artists participating in the Kochi-Muziris Biennale made reference to

archeological sites and memoryscapes of Fort Kochi to revisit colonial histories, even as they

excavated unknown accounts or, in some cases, imagined their own.

Sites of iterative exhibitions like bienniales create alternative spaces for artists to show

their works without at least some of the constraints of profit-driven commercial galleries.

Subaltern histories and marginalized narratives may be expressed as new discourses are

generated and epistemologies produced. A discussion of formats and the potential socio-cultural

significance of biennales is necessary at this juncture in order to grasp how the Kochi-Muziris

Biennale of 2012 could be a platform where unknown or less-know histories and memories are

given monumental shape through public art endeavors. In analyzing the emergence and

development of art bienniales, Elena Filipovic, Marieke Van Hal, and Solveig Øvstebø (2010)

argue such events produce unconventional and unregimented spaces for display of contemporary

art. Although some critics may consider biennales to be frivolous popular cultural events reminiscent of theme parks, carnivals, or festivals, the ways that bienniales may foster experimentation should not be dismissed. Certain freedoms are offered to artists, curators, and spectators to grapple with serious issues like politics, race, ethics, identity, globalization, and postcolonialism in art-making and exhibition processes. Hence, the bienniale is also a site that allows experimentation, free expression, and concurrent representation of different ideologies.

The Kochi-Muziris Biennale (KMB) of 2012, recognized as India's first such event, is redefining and reshaping landscapes and memoryscapes of Fort Kochi. Spread over nine venues in Fort Kochi, the inaugural KMB of 2012 showcased artworks by renowned Indian and international artists in heritage buildings, disused structures of historical importance, archeological sites, and in public spaces. The KMB also attracted art enthusiasts from all over the world to the erstwhile colonial port city, providing opportunities for visitors to engage the complex histories and cultures of the town through the Biennale's conceptual and protest art. Paintings, sculptures, installations, video-arts, conceptual arts, graffiti, and performance art addressed various subjects pertinent to historical and contemporary "heritage" contexts of Fort Kochi and India more generally (Fig IV: 1).

The KMB's curatorial team headed by Bose Krishnamachari and Riyas Komu used installation art and site-specific projects to uncover and present silenced histories of the place. As a means to garner local support and interest, the KMB team promoted the event as a "people's biennale," thus expanding interaction between the public and contemporary artists. Through its collaborative public art projects, the KMB is redefining the appeal of Fort Kochi and surrounding communities by adding contemporaneity and examining the histories as interpreted

in the present through the arts. In particular, the biennale offered an alternative avenue to interrogate the complex cultural milieux of European occupation. Moreover, the KMB fused oft-diverging vectors of contemporary art, marginalized histories, and cultural display to create provocative conversations. Renowned Indian artists Vivan Sundaram and Subodh Gupta and international artists Aman Mojadidi and Rigo 23 examined topics such as the spice trade, arrival of European imperialists, inter-religious exchanges, and migration.

Vivan Sundaram: Through a work entitled "Black Gold," Vivan Sundaram narrated histories of the ancient seaport of Muziris and the colonial port of Kochi as important centers of pepper trade. In this installation, Sundaram reimagined the geography of Muziris and mapped its layout using pottery shards collected from the Pattanam archeological site where excavations are being carried out to learn more about Muziris (Fig IV: 1 & Fig IV: 2). To create this work, Sundaram collaborated with the archeologists involved in the Muziris excavation. Special permission was obtained from the Kerala State Archeological survey to use the excavated materials in the art installation. At seventeen by thirty-five feet in width, this was a relatively large installation through which Sundaram constructed a scaled-down imaginary version of the city that was destroyed by a massive flood in the 14th century. "Black Gold" was accompanied by a video projection in an adjacent room where synchronized projectors cast visuals on the floor where peppercorns and molten golden fluids were seen flowing through the imagined cityscape of Muziris. Sundaram's installation used the seeming certainty of the unearthed shards to imagine an expressive sense of the lost port city.

***Subodh Gupta*:** Next to Sundaram's work visitors encountered an equally dramatic installation by another renowned Indian artist, Subodh Gupta. Suspended at a forty-five degree angle, a large wooden fishing canoe contained household utensils and other ordinary objects such as chairs, mattresses, a refrigerator, and a bicycle (Fig IV: 4). The untitled work suggested different inbound and outbound flows that the port had witnessed for centuries. Allusion was made to the arrival of different communities from across the globe seeking to profit from the flourishing spice trade in its pre-colonial and colonial phases, as well as a wave of rampant outbound migration to the Middle East from Kochi in post-independence days as people have sought employment due to economic crises the state has suffered. Like Sundram's work, Gupta's installation instigated debate about global-exchanges, oceanic-trade, early cosmopolitanism, inter-culturalism, and migration to and from Fort Kochi over the centuries.

***Aman Mojadidi*:** In his installation called "What Histories Lay Beneath our Feet" at Kochi's Cabral Yard, Afghani artist Aman Mojadidi created a fake archeological excavation site named *Khana-E-Bashary* (Humanist House) Heritage Project (Fig IV: 5& Fig IV: 6). The artist traced histories of his family and their affiliations to Fort Kochi and the very site of the installation for the Biennale. His "excavation site" narrated the history of an Afghan saffron trader, Zaman Mujaddidi (b. Kabul 1777 – d. Cochin 1857) whose land the colonial British Government forcibly seized, and how he was sent to jail when he protested. The artist provoked viewers to reflect on the fact that Mujaddidi, who spent four years in Cochin Jail where he wrote important political and philosophical works, was purposefully effaced from official histories and popular memories. In order to show the politics of archeology and what elements are preserved and written into histories, Mojadidi created an excavation pit on the grounds once owned by his

ancestors. Through his direct reference to problematic documentation of history, especially in the context of colonialism, Mojadidi made a most moving statement.

Rigo 23: Like Mojaddidi, San Francisco based, Portuguese artist Ricardo Goureia, known by his artist's name Rigo 23, creates works that excavate unknown or less-known histories of Fort Kochi. His installation "Kochi Tower" at the abandoned boat jetty at Calvathy Canal represents Afro-Asian connections important to the present dissertation. Rigo 23's piece will be considered in greater detail than other installations. For "Kochi Tower, " Rigo 23 suspended three large works created out of reclaimed materials from the girders of an abandoned boat jetty (Fig IV: 7 & Fig IV: 8). Swaying in the ocean breeze, these three large-scale constructions faced the ship channel. Representing historical events and characters, the first referred to Vasco da Gama's local translator, Nambudari. According to local lore, da Gama chopped off Nambudari's ears in a fit of rage and replaced them with dog's ears. Rigo 23 salvaged a three-wheeled auto rickshaw and attached large ears to it to create a work whose absurdity carried over to the violent excess that da Gama permitted himself.

For the second element of "Kochi Tower," Rigo 23 created a hollow boat-like structure using bamboo to which some 240 lanterns were attached so that when illuminated at night, they cast complex kinetic reflections on the water. The work symbolized the ship Miri that was carrying pilgrims to Mecca when it was attacked and sunk by the Portuguese as a most threatening message to Muslim traders who controlled the coast and the spice trade. Portuguese brutality, especially in slaughtering Muslims seeking to fulfill their most holy devotional responsibility, was meant to precipitate terror and to demonstrate their fearful power to any

operating in the Indian Ocean world who might seek their ouster or otherwise compete with their incipient hegemony. Presumably, the lanterns emitted the light of lost souls, following poetic imagery well known in Muslim mysticism.

The third installation presented a large, faceless wooden depiction of the African spirit Kappiri discussed at length in chapter II. The abandoned boat jetty at Calvathy Canal where Rigo 23 exhibited his work is adjacent to Thuruthy or the former Kappirithuruthu, the African settlement of long ago where people erect shrines to Kappiri and invoke his spirit to intervene to solve problems of their everyday lives. Rigo 23 told me that during his initial site visit, he immediately fell in love with the location at Calvathy Canal because the place was in a state of extreme disrepair with no floors and walls, and yet, it made a powerful impression with its still-standing triple arches. He added that unlike the white cubes of idealized galleries, the derelict boat hanger and jetty were loaded with meanings and traces of those who had toiled there, and for him, rather than ruin, the place articulated an opposite discourse of inclusion and transparency. The site provided to Rigo 23 is a visceral place then, where nothing is hidden or kept away; rather, everything is open and honest. Rigo 23 notes that since his installation celebrated the underrepresented and invisible, the place made perfect sense to him because it is located right on the ship channel, yet is tucked away from the main road and unknown to many present-day residents of Fort Kochi.

Each individual work in Rigo 23's "Kochi Tower" installation narrated a very important event in the colonial histories of Kochi. Spending about a month in Fort Kochi, the artist not only researched such histories, he collected oral narratives from local people. His first installation showcased the violent side of Vasco da Gama, who is hailed in Eurocentric accounts as a great

explorer. While the locals in Kochi know such "official" accounts of Vasco da Gama's voyages and how they remain valuable to "heritage" tourism, they also narrate undocumented stories of the man's eccentricity and brutality. Rigo's second installation presented another remarkable history that challenges Portuguese histories of Cochin and its political economy—the dastardly attack on a host of unarmed Muslim pilgrims setting forth for the most joyous moments of their devotional lives that effectively ended Muslim control of the spice trade, even as it announced the unholy violence of European hegemony.

Rigo 23's third installation was the headless wooden figure of Kappiri.[30] To create this work, the artist sculpted wood salvaged from the frame of an old Chinese fishing net found near Fort Kochi. Rigo 23 told me that he was fascinated with the remains of the frame and what it suggested of earlier industry, and he was also interested in the history of the Portuguese introducing this fishing technology to the Kerala coast from their trade enclave at Macau on the south coast of China. Rigo 23's Kappiri is a faceless figure with a long slender torso and equally slender arms and legs. The artist explained that he did not give Kappiri a face because under colonial regimes, enslaved Africans were nameless and undocumented, and their identities remain largely unknown except for the knowledge that they were captured from African coasts and brought into the Indian Ocean World to perform distressingly hard labor. As a means to represent such toils and travails, he gave the figure long legs and arms. During creation of the work, Rigo 23 was unaware that during the Portuguese and Dutch periods, enslaved Africans

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[30] In many ways Rigo 23's large-scale public installation of the African spirit or Kappiri is more like a Hindu festival *murti* that is removed from the shrine and displayed for the public. The efficaciousness of the work and its significance for some is a question that I plan to follow-up in post-dissertation.

operated the heavy Chinese fishing net. Rigo used old wood particularly to show the wear and tear of time, but other traces of unknown histories were made evident as well.

Reflecting on his complex installation, Rigo 23 explained to me that his intention was to create a work that resonates with multi-textured histories and so produce a "travel in time" device, as he called it. His works are echoes of histories, he continued, because they narrate histories that did not make it to the record books and archives, but are still recalled as oral narratives. In entitling the installation "Kochi Tower," Rigo 23's intention was to reverse the dynamics of the Belame Tower of Lisbon. An outlandish Baroque structure, the tower was constructed to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Portuguese discoveries such as those of Vasco da Gama's visits to Kochi. "Kochi Tower" was an ephemeral structure meant to narrate alternative histories to received panegyrics of Portuguese triumphalism. In a very progressive move, Rigo 23's installation will reverse the path of Vasco da Gama's voyage, as it will be reassembled and exhibited in Belame Tower for three months in 2014.

In order to reengage with Kochi's transnational past and unravel histories, the Kochi-Muziris Biennale revitalized and reclaimed select Dutch and English buildings and warehouses in Fort Kochi to showcase artworks. The framework of the events not only provided contemporary artists opportunities to investigate histories of Fort Kochi, but they also encouraged the local public to reflect on and challenge earlier histories as well as how historical documentation selects and deselects narratives worthy of representation. Moreover, the culturally and historically rich landscape of Kochi not only unveiled new and alternative avenues for showcasing the style of conceptual and protest art that dominated the featured works, but it also opened up new possibilities for reception of contemporary art in India.

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III. Presenting and Performing Histories of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

In this section, works by two contemporary African artists will be examined to understand how they deploy images and objects that reference the slave trade in order to visually present histories from subjective positions of the oppressed. While the senior Nigerian artist Mary Evans uses simple ephemeral materials to create thought-provoking pieces, emerging Ghanaian artist Bernard Akoi-Jackson employs performance to critique colonialism. Despite their divergent artistic approaches, the works of these artists can be placed in conversation with each other as they unveil larger issues of colonialism, race, and their postcolonial ramifications. Interestingly, while there have been extensive discussions about the role of African and African diasporic writers' treatment of slavery, critical interventions by African visual artists have been mostly discounted or dismissed. Contemporary art is a prominent site of discourse-production, as African and African diaspora artists question, contest, and subvert dominant images and imaginaries of colonial constructions of race, ethnicity, nationalism, and other forms of social identity.

Mary Evans: London-based Nigerian artist Mary Evans began exploring issues of Black cultural identity and hybridity very early in her career. Evans' artistic practice is informed and influenced by her personal understanding and experience of race as an African immigrant living in London. [31] Through a diverse range of works and mediums, she explores topics such as slavery, forced migration, colonial oppression and racial discrimination. Evans' works are

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[31] Cultural constructions of race differ from place to place and time to time, and it must be noted that Black British theorists contributing to Critical Race Studies express how their experiences differ from those of African Americans and other communities of the Black Atlantic.

stylistically very different from the artists of the Black Arts Movement (BAM) whose iconography revisited colonial depictions of enslaved people. Like painters from BAM, Evans employs African symbols, motifs, and figures, but her departure from their modes is evident in her use of lighter and more sober colors and the construction of her composition. Christine Eyene (2012) argues that unlike other Black artists who address the subject of slavery, Evans' treatment is very different as her art is non-confrontational in nature, yet it captures the attention of viewers through its subtlety. Often monochromatic, at times with a tint of color, her works are very restrained and she consciously opts for a simpler composition as a method to subtly, yet profoundly convey her messages. Evans chiefly articulates her ideas through aesthetic and conceptual modes of figurative representation.

Mary Evans' body of works critically presents the slave trade through abstract representation of significant historic places, people, and images associated with the transatlantic slave trade. Her artistic methodology involves collecting images from colonial archives of West African coastlines, slave castles, slave ships, slavers, auctioning docks and enslaved bodies and then reinterpreting them through her minimalistic compositions and juxtapositions. As these images have played a significant role in defining and imagining Africa and African body types by and for people who do not share African heritage, Evans documents these representations, which she later reproduces in different media. Mostly working with craft paper and other readily available materials such as paper plates and doilies, Evans uses these everyday materials to present a nuanced rendering of the slave trade. Her technique involves either drawing or stenciling figures and cutting them and re-pasting them, usually onto a different colored background or surface. There is an innate impermanent quality to Evans' work, as most of her

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artworks are produced out of ephemeral materials, which in the literal sense are not usually preserved. Moreover, her large-scale installations are very site-specific and made specifically to transform the architectural-scapes of the exhibition arena.

Because of Evans' repetitive usage of certain African imagery, there is a certain predictable and inevitable quality to her works. Stereotypical figurative rendering of Africans and silhouettes of slave castles recur in her works. For instance, in many of her previous works and installations like "The Door of No Return" (2010) and "Blighty, Guinea, Dixie" (2007), she has employed stylistic representations of Elmina Castle.   "Blighty, Guinea, Dixie," is a video and photographic installation, and under each picture is a kaleidoscope holding images of Elmina, Cape Coast, and Kumasi. This piece was part of the exhibition titled "Port City" at the Arnolfini in Bristol on the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade. The title "Blighty, Guinea, Dixie" refers to nicknames used in the 18th century to refer to Britain, modern day West Africa, and the southern states of the USA, respectively. Likewise, for the installation "The Door of No Return," which was a significant piece specifically constructed to alter the Victorian space of the South London Gallery, Evans again employs images of Elmina Castle. An Evans installation envelops and alters the very nature of the Victorian façade that is a dominant feature of most of the galleries in London. By pasting brown craft paper onto the walls using wall-paper adhesive, Evans transforms the very color of the place. She prefers to use this sort of paper as its color signifies racial hybridity and diaspora to her, and is also a means to move away from canvas, which for many protest artists is understood as an elitist medium. The large-scale works of crude craft paper can be only used once, and metaphorically, Evans' installations die with the ending of their exhibitions. For Evans, the very act of reproducing and creating images based

upon the slave trade is an embodied act through which she recalls her own experience of racial issues, and her works provide sites through which she can explore her subjective racial present as a Black artist living and working in London.

For a solo exhibition in 2012 entitled "Cut and Paste" seen at the Tiwani Contemporary Art Gallery of London, where work by African and Black British artists is often displayed, Evans created three major works: "Held," "Liverpool Street" and "Gingerbread." Although Evans had worked as an artist for over twenty-five years and had participated in several group exhibitions and art shows, "Cut and Paste" was her first solo exhibition. The title refers to Evans' preferred artistic process, which involves cutting out her drawings and pasting them onto different surfaces. Although not explicitly stated in the exhibition text nor in the catalogue, the central theme of the exhibition was the transatlantic slave trade. Other than the three pieces to be discussed here, her "Willow Plates" series rendered nuanced aspects of transatlantic slavery through constructions of blue monochrome craft paper applied onto doilies like a design on a willow plate to reference trade and consumption. Again, one could see the silhouette of Elmina Castle.

Also displayed were Evans reflective series of mixed media prints on paper plates. Playing with dominant representations of enslaved persons and slavery in literature and visual culture, Evans critiques them by aesthetically altering the images. Some of the works in this collection were "Recollection of a Negress" after Blake, "Recollection of Sojourner Truth," and "Recollections of Equiano," to name a few, which were all narrative vignettes. The images on the plates were realistic depictions of enslaved Africans, rebels, abolitionists, and African thinkers and radicals. According to Evans, the "Recollection" series commemorated brave

Africans who have been largely forgotten and she mentioned to me that she created the works to celebrate the life of real people who survived and fought against slavery.

The monumental central piece of the exhibition was "Held," an ephemeral, site-specific installation in which figures cut from brown craft paper were directly pasted on the white walls of the Tiwani Gallery. As a version of an earlier installation by Evans called "Hold" (2006), "Held" was much larger in scale and fused with the architectural layout of the gallery to create a mural-like appearance (Fig IV: 9). The composition consisted of drawings of architectural structures and silhouettes of figures of distinguishable African physiognomy, all placed at particular angles. Evans told me that she "wanted to give the impression of the huge hulking architectural edifices holding up a building, but made from flimsy brown paper." Transforming the architectural-scape of the gallery, the brown craft paper reproduced the vaulted ceilings of the dungeons of the Elmina and Cape Coast Castles. Cut-outs of enslaved men and women were to be seen sitting, stretching their legs, squatting, and standing as if expecting something to happen. Such ethereal figures appeared suspended in time and space.

Positioned at right angles to the installation "Held," Evans placed her seven-and-a-half-minute long video "Liverpool Street." Day-to-day activities and routine life of Liverpool Street in Elmina are to be seen, as the busiest street that leads through town to the Castle. Very raw in treatment, Evans shot the film on a visit to Elmina from the vantage point of the pleasant outdoor eating area of Bridge House Restaurant—as a favorite of tourists visiting the castle—that faces the castle at the end of Liverpool Street. In an attempt to capture the immediacy of an overcast sky as people wrapped up their business before the rain, Evans turned the recording button on and documented all the activities on Liverpool Street and the busy waterway next to the

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restaurant until the skies erupted in a heavy downpour. The lighting is dim, and the video almost looks like black-and-white footage. Viewers see the silhouettes of men and women hurrying to reach home before the rain while the audio engulfs the audience in the cacophonous noises of everyday life: of cars honking, street vendors shouting, and children crying.

In narrating her experiences at Elmina to me, Evans explains that while shooting the video she sought to capture the moment, but what struck her was the name Liverpool Street. She reflects that it was only when she started thinking about the ironic histories so implied that she could see a whole new set of connections as a member of the African diaspora living in Britain with a street named for an English port city bustling with everyday life in Elmina. Liverpool was hugely important to the British slave trade, for shipyards there produced the vessels that plied the waters of triangular trade from Europe to West Africa to the Americas and back (Cummins 2006). Evans' states in a interview to Eyene and also to me that this seemingly simple but tragic link between two locations via a street name connected elements of Evans' own identity (Eyene 2012: 49). Evans positioned the video "Liverpool Street" at right angles to "Held" in order to create a direct relationship between the two pieces. Evans remarks, "I wanted to create a flow between the static quiet of "Held" and the dynamic loudness of 'Liverpool Street'" (ibid). Because of the light of the soon-to-be-rainy day, the figures in the video appear as shadows, much like the phantom figures in "Held," thus referencing specters of the slave trade and its aftermaths.

A third work is Evans' installation "Gingerbread." For this work, she baked about 400 edible gingerbread men with a cookie-cutter and arranged them inside the diagram of the stifling hold of a slave ship (Fig IV: 10). Such schematic images are among the most powerful of the

transatlantic slave trade and were used by abolitionists to campaign against the horrifically inhumane practices of slavery. The "Brookes" was a late-18th-century slave ship that sailed from Liverpool to the Gold Coast and on to Jamaica in the infamous triangular trade (Rawley and Behrendt 2005). "Gingerbread" was placed in front of "Held" and "Liverpool Street" in a complex positioning that echoed the journey of enslaved Africans.

Evans notes that baking the gingerbread men refers to the labor for which Africans were forcefully transported to the sugar plantations in the New World. She points out that the very ingredients of the gingerbread, sugar, molasses, ginger, and flour were crops produced by slave labor. The curator of the exhibition, Christine Eyene, suggests that mixing and baking the gingerbread transforms the ingredients historically traded against human lives as Evans participates in the process of creating edible gingerbread man. Certainly, there was an added element of consumption. However, there is more to Evans' unseen performance of baking the ginger biscuits that the audience learns from the exhibition labels and brochure. For Evans, creating the installation was a phenomenological act of grappling with horrifying histories of slavery. Evans recounts that while baking the biscuits, the ones that broke were discarded, while the perfect ones became part of the display. She explains that likewise in the transatlantic slave trade, enslaved persons who perished were thrown overboard while those who were fit were sold to plantations where many quickly died from grueling labor, thereby requiring ever more chattel to be brought across the dreaded Middle Passage. The Gingerbread installation is an allegory for survival and resistance, while the perishable—and comestible—nature of the cookies add nuances of how easily lives were broken and "eaten" by those privileged to enjoy the "sweetness" of profit.

In Evans' installations several cues provide explicit and implicit reference to slavery, confinement of enslaved Africans in Elmina and other castles, and the transatlantic journey. Her choice of the word "held" was a very conscious decision, because in the transatlantic slavery, people were held against their will at various places before they reached their final destinations, and the castle is where thousands were so confined before they were shipped to plantations. Often, places where enslaved humans were kept were called "slave holds" or "pens," borrowing from farm terminology as places where beasts of burden were kept. During the era of transatlantic slave trade, human cargo was held in the holds of ships. In an interview with the Nigerian curator and art critic Bisi Silva (2012), Evans notes that during her visits to the slave castles of Ghana, she experienced the same feeling as she did at Dachau and Auschwitz—"as though the places were physically depopulated yet full of ghosts" (Eyene 2012: 48). The color of the brown craft paper and the linoleum floors resemble the faded color and rough surfaces of the dungeons of the slave castles. The piece looks as if it could stay in-situ forever, yet it is temporary, fragile, ephemeral, easily destroyed.

All three Evans installations are different but connected in certain ways. For instance, the similarity between "Gingerbread" and "Held" is that if brown figures are placed on the diagram of a slave ship in "Gingerbread," in "Held" they are pasted onto the walls. Fragile figures are repeated and uniform in both. "Held" displays perspective while "Gingerbread" is schematic. As Evans points out, in thinking about actual scenarios of the slave trade, the "Gingerbread" scenario was the next scene after "Held." Christine Eyene notes that both the works emphasize the ephemeral nature of memory. If enslaved Africans were mere cut-outs in "Held," they were further reduced to ciphers on the schematic diagram of a ship's hold in "Gingerbread." Held is a

phantasmagoric image of anonymous, shadowy specters of a fraught past. In her visual narratives of slavery, Evans' works move beyond mere representation to a realm of deeper signification that silently, yet powerfully reminds the audience that the shadows of Empire are still visible in the present social labyrinth, and that there are still large issues with which we have yet to deal.

Bernard Akoi-Jackson: If Mary Evans' works are subtle visual reinterpretations of slavery, then Bernard Akoi-Jackson's performance pieces are a critical take on the ongoing impact of colonialism in today's postcolonies. Akoi-Jackson is a Ghanaian artist and writer who interrogates "hybrid post-colonial African identities" through site-specific installations and performances. Responding sensitively to the complexities of his national histories and cultural contexts, he creates artworks that recognize persisting impacts of colonialism upon West African societies. Experimenting with different genres, he moves among dance, poetry, installation, photography, and video to produce works that are absurd, yet very critical of contemporary pretense. Influenced by The Theater of the Absurd movement (see Esslin 2004), Akoi-Jackson uses humor, loud costumes and theatrics to critically present the current state of affairs in Ghana and in other West African countries.

Two pieces by Bernard Akoi-Jackson will be considered here: "REDTAPEONBOTTLENECK" (with absurdity already in its run-on title), and "Seeing Red (II): Walking Gold into Red on a Piece of 'God's Own Country.'" Akoi-Jackson has performed this piece in Jamestown, the former English settlement in Accra, the capital of Ghana. To narrate the trajectory of his repertoire, Akoi-Jackson often titles a performance as versions of his very first performance. Since, the Kochi piece was a re-enactment of the very first performance it is

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titled as "Seeing Red (II)." Both pieces were presented and performed in the exhibition "Interstices," a collateral event of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale in India, which I curated as an aspect of my dissertation project. Although the two works were very different in style and presentation, in many ways they were in conversation with each other as they were artistic critiques of the colonialist agenda of territorial appropriation, trade, and commerce. Moreover, through pun and comedy, Akoi-Jackson ridiculed colonial models of governance that have been adopted by postcolonial nations without sufficient recognition or reflection.

"REDTAPEONBOTTLENECK" was a performative installation in which visitors were invited to participate and experience "red-tapism," the cumbersome and complex regulations observed in all too many bureaucratic government circumstances. The term "red-tapism" has its roots in British colonial administration, when a red ribbon was used to tie bundles of official documents for transportation or archiving.[32] Akoi-Jackson's installation had three parts: a red desk with red office stationery and a red chair, twenty-eight green wine bottles arranged in a triangular shape in front of the desk, and a monitor in which video clips of participants performing the piece was shown. Placed in the entrance corner of the Hallegua Gallery in Kochi was a simple wooden table covered with a red tablecloth. Objects commonly found in government offices were placed upon the table, but all were the hue of red-tapism: stacks of red files in a red tray, a red telephone, and red paper, a red stapler and red pen-holder with red pens. A red logbook and large red folder with stacks of papers that performance participants were encouraged to perpetually arrange and rearrange. Moreover, to signify the bottlenecks caused by

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[32] See: http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=red+tape

the inefficient processes and inebriation associated with colonial enterprise (see Fabian 2000),

Akoi-Jackson placed empty wine bottles with red ribbons wrapped around their necks in front of

the desk and in direct vision of the participant-performer. A short text placed near the installation

carried a note from Akoi-Jackson inviting visitors to perform these tasks.

To create an interface with red-tapism, Akoi-Jackson invited audiences to sit down and

read from an undecipherable instruction sheet that provided the description of a job that could

not be done (Fig IV: 11). The text was printed such that there were no spaces between words and

no punctuation:

"TASKTOBECOMPLETEDINTHESHORTESTPOSSIBLETIMEFIRSTPUTONTHEREDOVE
RALLIFYOUSOWISHENTERYOURNAMEANDTIMEOFCOMENCEMENTOFTASKINLO
GBOOKTHENUNTIETHELARGEPAPERANDBROWNENVELOPESTACKCAREFULLYSE
PARATEALLBOTTLENECKFROMREDTAPEPLACEALLBOTTLENECKONYOURRIGHT
ANDALLREDTAPEONYOURLEFTNOWONEAFTERTHEOTHERPLACEALLREDTAPEIN
TOBOTTLENECKWHENALLISDONETAKEALLREDTAPEOUTOFBOTTLENECKNOWP
LACEALLREDTAPEONYOURRIGHTANDALLBOTTLENECKONYOURLEFTREARRAN
GEALTERNATINGLYREDTAPEANDBOTTLENECKINTOONELARGEPAPERANDBROW
NENVELOPESTACKTIEASWASDONEBEFORETHELARGESTACKENTERYOURTIMEO
FCOMPLETIONOFTASKINLOGBOOKAFTERTHISPICKUPASEALEDWHITEENVELOPF
ROMTHEPILEINTHEREDFOLDERREADTHELETTERYOUMAYREGISTERYOURCOMM
ENTSINTHELOGBOOKTOOIFYOUSOWISHTHANKYOU."[33]

While at first glance the instructions looked like a series of letters—perhaps a code, but

not immediately decipherable—the text started to make sense when an audience performer read

it slowly.

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[33] The instruction read like this: "Task to be completed in the shortest possible time. First, put on the red overall if you so wish. Enter your name and time of commencement of task in logbook, and then untie the large paper and brown envelope stack. Carefully separate all bottleneck from red tape. Place all bottleneck on your right and all red tape on your left. Now one after the other, place all red tape into bottleneck. When all is done, take all redtape out of bottleneck. Now place all redtape on your right and all bottleneck on your left. Rearrange alternatively, red tape and bottleneck into one large brown paper envelope stack. Tie them as they were before into the large stack. Enter the time of completion of task in the logbook. After this, pick up a sealed white envelop from the pile in the red folder. Read the letter. You may register your comments in the logbook too, if you wish. Thank you."

Below the instruction sheet was a pile of fifty red sheets of paper onto which were pasted the word "REDTAPE," and fifty brown paper envelopes with the word "BOTTLENECK," placed on top of one another in an alternating sequence. This bundle was neatly tied with a red satin ribbon. Audience members were asked to sign-in and enter the time they commenced the assigned task of separating the pile of "REDTAPE" sheets from "BOTTLENECK" envelopes, only to be asked to reassemble them. Absurdly enough, the task implied perpetual incompletion, and audience actors were instructed to sign out in the logbook and enter the time that they had failed to finish sorting and assembling the papers. Akoi-Jackson then handed the performers "letters of disappointment" reading "See how time consuming bureaucracy can be?"

Bernard Akoi-Jackson's work is a critical commentary on bureaucracies that promote excessive paperwork and unnecessary rules. Through his performance installation, the artist addresses practices of red-tapism that colonized peoples were obliged to endure, while addressing systemic problems as colonial models are retained in contemporary, supposedly postcolonial public administration. Satirical commentary casts a jaundiced light on the state of affairs in many of today's developing nations. Informing the absurd replication and tedium of government offices, Akoi-Jackson pasted on the wall the words—"democracy," "occasions" and "bureaucracy." By participating in performative acts, the audiences get a taste of bureaucratic futility.

Scholars studying structural practices such as colonial governmentality and its ramifications in postcolonial societies have demonstrated that failure to create new modes of governance is a main reason for the extreme problems that many postcolonial nation-states face. During British imperial rule, important political documents and administrative papers were kept

in files tied with red tape—both literally and figuratively. Reports and official responses were collected and archived, amassing unfathomable amounts of paperwork. Red-tapism also nourished corruption, especially in the immense vice-regency of British India. According to Akhil Gupta (2012), red-tapism and its persistence in the present-day Indian polity instigate many forms of structural violence like poverty and an ineffective system of grievance-redressal. From one former subaltern to others half a world away, Akoi-Jackson's performative installation provokes audience participants to question endemic red-tapism, which, unfortunately, is a reality that citizens of Ghana and India are tolerating more than contesting.

Bernard Akoi-Jackson's second piece is again a critical narration about colonialism, and its widespread trade networks and commerce. "Seeing Red (II): Walking Gold into Red on a Piece of 'God's own country'" is a participatory performance that the artist re-enacted for the Kochi-Muziris Biennale. In this piece Akoi-Jackson walked through the streets of Fort Kochi and Mattancherry in the idealized attire of an Asante Chief (Fig IV: 12). Wrapped in *Kente* cloth, he painted his body gold and wore head accessories similar to those that *Akan* chiefs wear during important rituals (see Ross 1998). He also had a headband in which cowry shells were strung together with cheap imitations of Victorian coins. Although alluding to the costume of an *Akan* chief, what was strikingly different was the manner in which Akoi-Jackson wrapped his *Kente* as a short skirt, underneath which he wore another textile that was an imitation of Dutch wax print or "Holland" as it is called in Ghana (and so similar to the fabrics that Yinka Shonibare deploys in his installation pieces, as mentioned above). In his hand Akoi-Jackson carried a mirror and a bottle of schnapps. His costume and accessories referenced aspects of colonial trade history and slavery in the Gold Coast that he and his audiences found apposite in India.

"Seeing Red II" lasted for about forty-five minutes, as Akoi-Jackson slowly walked the streets of Fort Kochi and Mattanncherry followed by a small crowd. His performance had a sense of immediacy to it as he disrupted traffic and captured the attention of locals and tourists with his colorful and absurdly out-of-place costume. The local Malayali audiences were curious to look and photograph "the African" leading a small procession. Local artists and art enthusiasts were invited to assemble in front of the Dutch Palace in Mattancherry and then follow Akoi-Jackson to inform curious onlookers that they were part of the procession of an African king. Starting at the Dutch Palace, Akoi-Jackson slowly paced through the Spice Market in Mattancherry, which had been the hub of the spice trade for centuries. Gathering a significant crowd, he then entered Jew Town in Mattancherry that was filled with tourists. There was utter commotion. Walking through the historical parts of town symbolically enacted walking through lanes of a memoryscape. About fifteen-minutes into the performance, the entire party walked from the Jew Street into Hallegua Gallery.

The second act of the performance unfolded inside the gallery. Akoi-Jackson welcomed and thanked the audience. He spoke of his performance and the significance of objects he carried with him that referred to the slave trade and the colonial legacy in Ghana. Commodities so absurdly trivial in our own times, like mirrors and schnapps, were exchanged for enslaved captives. He also explained that textiles so commonly tailored as colorful clothing in most African countries that they simply seem "African," were influenced by batiks from Indonesia as a commercial enterprise established by Dutch colonizers. Akoi-Jackson then talked of how insidious colonialism was and how its effects are still felt in Ghana and India. He drew parallels between the Kerala Coast in India and coastal Ghana to discuss how Kochi as the site that

facilitated the international spice trade and Cape Coast and Elmina were the hub for African gold and slave trades that contributed so mightily to the growth of European countries. Towards the end of his performance, audience members were encouraged to express their displeasure with the current state of affairs by writing comments on small pieces of red paper, leaving their thumb prints as signatures in gold, silver, or black ink. These accounts were then hung on a string and became part of the exhibition.

Bernard Akoi-Jackson's performances are critical interpretations of power structures of colonialism that were premised on commerce, territorial expansion, control of sea-scapes and oceanic trading networks—all practical goals, that is—and yet were so terribly absurd in daily and ultimate circumstances. His performance questions discourses that are constructed to validate colonization. While the installations allude to repercussions following British colonial models for administration in postcolonial Ghana and India, his performance further unveils the commercial apparatus of colonial industry. Akoi-Jackson notes that critical absurdity and pun are the best methods to provoke people to think about such issues that would be derisory had they not been so cruelly destructive—as they still are.

IV. Archiving Obliterated Histories:

Previous sections have considered how contemporary artists question colonial historical discourses through their creative productions; the focus of this section will be how two artists from Kochi approach archives of local histories. Hochimin Palamootil Hanifa (hereafter Hochimin) is an emerging sculptor who in April 2013 created a large granite public sculpture

that commemorates the spirits of deceased Africans.[34] Through this monumental work, Hochimin tells the story of enslaved Africans and their lives in Fort Kochi during Portuguese and Dutch eras. A second artist is Dinesh Shenoy, based in Mattancherry and whose oeuvre consists of architectural paintings rendered in monochromatic sepia. Both artists inquire into and visualize little-known or forgotten histories of the place.

Hochimin Palamootil Hanifa: Hochimin's granite sculpture "Kappiri " is twelve feet in height. The artist refers to the lives of Africans and their sufferings through this work of abstract expressionism. Commissioned by the Kerala State Archaeological Department and the Lalitakala Akademi (the government institute to promote visual arts), the work was achieved during a camp organized by these two institutions that invited artists from Kerala and other parts of India to create sculptures to be exhibited in the gardens of the restored Bastion Bungalow. A new museum about the history of Fort Kochi is scheduled to open in 2015, and the commissioning was part of that project. As the purpose of the artist camp was to shape diverse histories of the place, Hochimin wanted to represent histories of enslaved Africans in Fort Kochi, and their collective deification as Kappiri.

The "Kappiri" sculpture in unpolished, punctured stone has three parts—a semicircular base holding a slightly slanting block from which a swirl emerges in the center. The head or top of the sculpture has an inverted semi-circle, flattened to create a firm base from which three swirls stem out. Two are highly polished granite unlike the central swirl and areas below, which

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[34] Hochimin was named after the Vietnamese communist leader Hồ Chí Minh. It is a common practice in Kerala, especially in communist families to name their children after Communist leaders or Marxist writers and philosophers. Being a communist, Hochimin's works are greatly influenced by Marxist ideologies.

are left rough though punctured (Fig IV: 13). A similarly knotted swirl thrusts outward from the center of the sculpture. Hochimin explained to me that these elements represent tongue-tied lack of communication and are direct references to unspoken histories of enslaved Africans. This symbolic gesture suggests how certain people and communities were not permitted to question colonial authorities as they bore extreme hardships, and also to demonstrate how History is mostly silent about voices of the oppressed.

Through his abstract sculpture, Hochimin gives visible presence to enslaved Africans who lived in Fort Kochi and guarded it, as well as some who served in the colonial army. As we have seen, cultural memories of the African community of Fort Kochi are recalled through shrines to the African spirit Kappiri and associated narratives relate that he is present and assists contemporary problem-solving. Influenced by Communist ideology and political thought that are features of contemporary Indian life, when Hochimin was invited to create public sculpture for the garden of Bastion Bungalow, he wanted to commemorate the lives of oppressed Africans.

***Dinesh Shenoy*:** As an artist, Shenoy's intention is to document lesser-known or forgotten histories of Fort Kochi. Unlike others who are questioning colonialism and its aftereffects, Shenoy's works are uncritical presentations of colonial and indigenous architecture of Kerala. Falling between painting and illustration, his works visually preserve architectural styles of the region that are soon to be effaced. Practicing as an artist for thirty years while pursuing the present project the last twelve, Shenoy mostly creates sepia in oil, while experimenting in other media now and then and regularly accepting commissions to produce works that are more decorative in nature. Shenoy cynically noted during a conversation that he "cannot survive by painting these historical buildings, and I don't intend to sell them, because they are my

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permanent collection. So, I make abstract paintings and sell them to generate income." Shenoy added that he began painting buildings because of his love for old structures, and this later became his main artistic focus.

Shenoy documents religious and secular architecture and selects buildings that demonstrate features of traditional Kerala construction as well as Indo-Portuguese, Indo-Dutch, and Indo-Islamic stylistic variations. As an artist-researcher, Shenoy is always on the lookout for unusual structures that are little known or in extreme states of disuse, disrepair, or are being demolished. His permanent painting collection features renditions of synagogues, mosques, churches, and Hindu and Jain temples, and an equally important collection of houses belonging to different communities in Mattancherry such as Paradesi Jews, Gowda Sarasa Brahmins, Gujaratis, Kutchi Muslims, and Konkanis.

Shenoy's passion to document the architectural history of Kerala motivated him to found the Center for Heritage and Monuments, a small gallery on the second floor of his residence in Mattancherry (Fig IV: 14). Inaugurated in December 2010 by K.K.N. Kurup, former Director General of Kerala State Archeology, Shenoy's center is the only place in Kerala with an impressive collection of architectural drawings and paintings of Dutch, Portuguese, and British monuments in and around Kochi. With an inventory of about five hundred paintings, museums and cultural institutions in Kerala often borrow Shenoy's paintings for their exhibitions. Shenoy's gallery is open to the public and is becoming a noted tourist destination. Aside from his center, Shenoy's works are also found in the Hill Palace Museum, Arrakkal Palace Museum, and many private establishments, cultural centers, and hotels. Although always painting in monochromatic sepia, the scale of his canvases varies from very small to very large. One of

Shenoy's significant works is a twenty-foot painting depicting scenes of Kochi Port, commissioned by the Old Harbor Hotel as a boutique establishment of Fort Kochi.

Shenoy captures the character and detail of old buildings. His artistic inquiry involves intensive research into the construction style of a building and thorough study of surrounding landscape. For this purpose, he photographs buildings from various angles to examine elevation and spatial placement. His approach is also ethnographic, as he spends days living in the building or in the neighborhood that he wants to paint so as to understand his subject. According to Shenoy, it may only take about eight days to finish a painting, although the process is more challenging when buildings are not in good shape. In such cases, he compares the architectural features of the building with similar structures to understand their stylistic commonalities. If buildings have already been demolished, he collects photographs and compares them with archival images. The artist remarks that his aim is to present a more "realistic" depiction of the buildings, and if the original windows, tiles, or pillars of a building have been replaced, Shenoy examines the construction and tries to represent its original features.

Shenoy paints heritage buildings in sepia to lend a vintage and period look, with reference to conventions of earlier photography. Sepias was one of the techniques employed during the colonial period to document townscapes of cities, even as they were depicted as "ancient" and in "ruins" for ideological reasons meant to showcase colonial "progress." In Shenoy's oil paintings, the buildings are the central focus while the foreground and background are left plain. Devoid of any human presence or flora or fauna of any kind, Shenoy's works are unlike paintings that present the landscapes of buildings. In a few instances, Shenoy does paint

objects like a rickshaw or bicycle to show the scale of the building, however. Shenoy states that this is his way of demonstrating his "neutral" position as an artist.

Despite this "neutrality," the artist holds that from the monuments one can understand the culture and lifestyle of a community. For instance, the way some construction is done, a lot can be understood about how spaces were shared and how people lived in those spaces. Religious architecture in particular are interesting case studies as they demonstrate cultural acculturation, where dominant Hindu styles were employed to construct Christian, Islamic and Jewish worship centers. Especially in a place like Fort Kochi and Mattancherry, architecture is one of the main sites through which intercultural exchanges are visibly manifested. He further argues that in-depth study of buildings can reveal how immigrant communities adapted to local environments and adopted local traditions.

Shenoy's passion for documenting built forms plays a vital role in preserving cultural histories of coastal Kerala. Several buildings that Shenoy has painted have either been demolished or renovated to suit modern trends and demands. While the State Government of Kerala has decided to protect heritage buildings that showcase rich architectural traditions, only a handful of buildings has been chosen for protection, and with no efforts being undertaken by heritage agencies or conservation departments, Shenoy's paintings may be the only visual records that exist.

Urban renewal and overdevelopment propelled by the real estate boom in Kerala have greatly impacted many historical townscapes, but there are cultural reasons behind the demolition of certain heritage buildings. In modern Kerala, fundamentalist religious institutions

seem bent to wipe out traces of exchanges between and syncretism among religions practiced locally. Shenoy's works show that retaining memories of earlier relationships among Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, and Christianity is of critical importance since very old mosques and churches are demolished to construct new ones in their places to redefine religious identities. In the case of mosques, there is a deliberate attempt to remodel the structures that reflect the beginnings of Islam along the Kerala coast. In particular, with increasing influence of the radical Wahabi movement and with funding from the Middle East flowing into the state of Kerala, old mosques that represent cultural assimilation between Hinduism and Islam are being razed. A good example is the seventh-century Cheraman Masjid in Kodungallur (Muziris site), which many historians and archeologists believe to be the first mosque built in India. Such systematic erasure is also seen regarding Christian religious architecture, as old churches are being rebuilt through funds from international, fundamentalist religious organizations. In contexts of cultural effacement like these, destruction of sites and structures make Shenoy's paintings the more significant evidence of earlier intercultural borrowings and sharings.

Conclusion:

In this chapter, we have considered how contemporary arts are important to production and dissemination of discourses on colonialism, race, and postcolonial subjectivities. Artists such as those featured here employ various media and experimental art-making practices to excavate histories and unknown narratives of under-represented cultures, as well as unacknowledged problems that citizens of postcolonial countries face. Ethnographic inquiries are directed to these

problems. Although, a few art historians like Hal Foster (1995) have critiqued such an approach by artists, inquiry of the sort is very important to instances in which histories have been untold, deliberately suppressed, or buried. Such art-making processes and questionings provoke audiences to think and react about stories they have been told through imagery presented.

All the artists discussed in this chapter are experimenting with different media to reflect upon various facets of colonial histories of Africa and Asia, generating renewed historical and cultural awareness. As George Marcus (1995) has pointed out, contemporary art is an instrument for expressing cultural meanings and histories. By moving away from textual renditions and giving primacy to visual syntax, discourses are more visible and vital as these artistically inclined cultural interlocutors play crucial roles in relaying and reinterpreting fraught colonial histories.

Chapter V
Elmina and Fort Kochi as Open-Air Museums

In previous chapters, historical linkages between the colonial port towns of Elmina and Fort Kochi have been discussed, as well as their transformations into "heritage" sites and tourist destinations in recent times. Ways that contemporary artists are reinterpreting histories of these places have also been broached. Here, how these same historical towns are becoming open-air museums will be our topic. By considering the heritage buildings, monuments, historical places, archeological ruins, and museums as an expansive collection of colonial cultural sites, one can examine how discourses on trade, interculturalism, forced and free migrations, and enslavement can be reconfigured for today's local and expatriate audiences.

With reference to literatures in museum and critical curatorial studies, deeply textured-scapes of Elmina and Fort Kochi can be understood to operate at multiple levels serving different purposes. Two relatively new theoretical concepts will play a crucial role in analyzing the workings of Elmina and Fort Kochi as large-scale exhibition spaces and heritage sites. The concept of "diffused museum," coined by the Italian architect and urban planner Fredi Drugman (1982), shifts any facile assumption that museums are monolithic entities limited in area and defined by collections, to recognizing them as dynamic cultural repositories that defy conceptual, spatial, and temporal boundaries. Further insights for examining the townscapes of Elmina and Fort Kochi are to be found in Eilean Hooper-Hill's (2000) propositions concerning "post-museums" characteristic of the new millennium. The objective of this chapter is to address how the towns of Elmina and Fort Kochi as large-scale exhibition arenas, also operate as active

archives that narrate official and unofficial histories of colonialism. In order to show how certain

spaces have multifarious existences, I deploy the theoretical concept of "metaspace" to

demonstrate how historical preservation has not only created a certain kind of permanence, but

also generated cultural events that contribute to the dynamism of these towns.

I. Elmina and Fort Kochi as Open-Air Museums

With their colonial fortifications, period homes, cemeteries, churches, museums,

waterfronts, and abandoned boat jetties, the historical towns of Elmina and Fort Kochi can be

understood as open-air museums that showcase histories of colonialism on the Gold Coast and

Malabar Coast. Following examples such as Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia or Old Mystic

Seaport in Connecticut, open-air museums are enclaves with well-preserved buildings and

related facilities where visitors are given opportunities to see the cultural life of a particular

milieu as actors enact everyday lives of local people. While no actors showcase the past in such

ways, Elmina and Fort Kochi are nonetheless similar to such establishments.

As exhibition spaces, Elmina and Fort Kochi are different from ordinary museums. But

are they so different from the very definition and understanding of a museum? Art historian

Donald Preziozi has noted that "the museum is a theater of anamorphic (and autoscopic)

dramaturgy; a place in which it is not so easy to tell which is the spider and which the web,

which the machinery and which the operator. It is a place at the center of our world, our

modernity, in the image of which those worlds continue to proliferate" (2004: 82). Expanding on

Preziozi, Marisa Nakasone (2012) argues that a museum is a multi-mediating space where people

can navigate and interact with cultures and histories, and above all, a museum is a theatrical

space where the power of spectacle is negotiated.[35] In this light, the townscapes of Elmina and Fort Kochi are museums insofar as they are places where people can interact and navigate their ways through and around built environments to learn, recall, enact, perform, and reinterpret colonial histories.

Museum scholars advocating for reorganization of architectural and schematic structures of museums generally support creation of places that are fluid, dynamic, and multi-dimensional, and that disseminate and provoke narratives that are non-authoritative and polyvocal. In this light, the open-air museums at Elmina and Fort Kochi function as unconventional museums as they perform pedagogical roles by showcasing cultural histories. A significant difference from most conventional museums, however, is that in both towns, cultural pasts are not vacant relics, but rather lively, inhabited places where historical buildings are functional units of present-day life.

The style of display employed in showcasing memoryscapes of Elmina and Fort Kochi marks the reinvention of the paradigmatic museum by exemplifying a trend that museum scholar Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (2000) call the "post-museum phase." Here, I want to give some texture to this characterization, showing how the label works exactly. The "post-ness" refers to the function, organization, and reach of museum displays in postcolonies. Elmina and Fort Kochi dismantle earlier forms of colonial discourse and present counter-histories. According to Hooper-Greenhill, post-museums will demonstrate disintegration of the very structure of the museum and the singular narrative that they have tended to construct around an object. Instead, precedence will be given to multi-vocal discourses (2000: 152). Her arguments challenge earlier notions of

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[35] See: http://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/museum/

museums in postcolonial nations like India and Ghana, which have often been described as disorganized places of interest only to tourists bent on confirming imaginaries of exotic peoples, places, and periods.

Museum scholars such as Tapati Guha-Thakurta (2004) and Saloni Mathur and Kavita Singh (2007) have extensively discussed how museums in India were often regarded as a failure as they do not adhere to the conventional codes display. Mathur and Singh have conducted extensive research on the vibrancy and unconventionality of museums in South Asia and how they serve multiple purposes for different publics.[36] Hooper-Greenhill's assertions resonates with Mathur and Singh's studies and their arguments are useful with respect to countries like India and Ghana as the last decade has witnessed the emergence of alternative museums and art spaces that have moved away from the overpowering architecture, intimidating gallery spaces, large collections, fancy displays, and monolithic discourses about objects little detached—if at all— from colonial ideologies. Again according to Hooper-Greenhill, the post-museum phase will be defined by the emergence of non-conformative museum environments that may lead to the disintegration of collection-based museum set-ups outside major European centers (2000: 153). Elmina and Fort Kochi exemplify the post-museum, since presentation of histories, memories, and cultural rituals is not restricted to the walled spaces of museums, but instead spills outside architectural frameworks. Moreover, displays are not primarily articulated through label texts

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[36] I am greatly indebted to Prof. Saloni Mathur and Prof. Kavita Singh for introducing me to the field of "Museum Studies" as a graduate student in India. For a full year between 2006-2007, I worked as a research assistant for the project "Museology and the Colony: The Case of South Asia funded by the Getty Institute "and led by Prof. Mathur and Prof. Singh. This experience really helped me in understanding the dynamics of museums in India and how they served the public. Continuous interactions with Prof. Mathur for over six years and participation in seminar courses offered by her played a crucial role in shaping my knowledge about the function of museum and museum like spaces.

rather, caretakers of the monuments and local people serving as interlocutors narrate their own histories. At these places, histories are not fixed, but are subjected to re-interpretations in the present to suit audience needs for "meaningful" experience while fulfilling the guides' economic needs through fees and gratuities.

Historical displays at Elmina and Fort Kochi are dispersed and fused with their townscapes, thus juxtaposing old and new. In comparing typical museums with unconventional museum spaces and practices in Morocco, Katarzyna Pieprzak argues that these latter practices have brought display, collection, preservation, and education to the streets and have redefined the place of museums within the urban fabric (2010: xxiv). She holds that such places move beyond reductive and exclusionarily powerful art institutions to encourage people to reflect upon and participate in displays on more intimate levels. Like the souk markets of Morocco that Pieprazk discusses, the open-air exhibition arenas of Elmina and Fort Kochi are inclusive places where histories unfold in the present to reflect current cultural and economic realities of these towns. The exhibitionary arenas of Elmina and Fort Kochi provoke viewers to think about colonial pasts, not in isolation from the present, but as events that have had long, lasting impacts on local societies.

The recasting of locations, historical geographies, and urbanscapes as large-scale exhibitions is sometimes known as museumification. According to Michael A. Di Giovine, such processes "can be understood as the transition from a living city to that of an idealized re-presentation of itself, wherein everything is considered not for its use but for its value as potential museum artifact" (2009: 261). At Elmina and Fort Kochi, displays are certainly not idealized or taken wholly out of context, and a visitor cannot miss the contemporary realities of

these towns, however the monuments may showcase valuable historical artifacts. Di Giovine argues that within the museumscape, artifacts can be in varying degrees of materiality, and can encompass buildings, tools, industrial centers, markets or parklands (ibid). Such a process of renewal is activated through dialectical reaction as inhabitants participate in reviving and maintaining old cultural aspects for their value to everyday contemporary pursuits (ibid: 262). Like Di Giovine, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) argues that when a place is transformed into display mode invisible and often unnoticed places like streets, harbor fronts, cemeteries, and other mundane locations gain new existence as exhibitions.

While tourism plays a crucial role in the transformation of heritage cities into open-air exhibition arenas, state support must be in place for any such initiatives. In both Elmina and Fort Kochi, local governments were instrumental to museumification of the towns. In her studies of heritage and memory-making processes in the Indian city of Chennai, Mary Hancock argues that the state forefronts certain monuments and memorials to project a sense of the city as attractive to local and expatriate inhabitants and visitors (2008: 3-4). She demonstrates that in the postcolonial cityscapes of Chennai, heritage is displayed like in an exhibition. If state played a crucial role in the construction of heritage at Fort Kochi, at Elmina histories were re-presented and re-arranged from a diasporic African perspective. Museum scholar Christine Mullen Kreamer points out that the museum committee wanted to emphasize the Ghanaian perspective while designing the exhibition and the tour, however they were under huge pressure from the local African American expatriate community and also from the directors of the international organizations who funded the project to highlight the Middle Passage and diasporic experiences (Kreamer 2006). In the case of Elmina and Fort Kochi, the process of "heritage-making" revived

several historically and culturally important sites resulting in the conversion of the townscapes into museum-like environments. Today both these towns thrive as open-air museums.

To unpack the workings of Elmina and Fort Kochi as open-air museum spaces, here theories proposed by various museum scholars concerning non-conformative museums will be considered. Art theorist Joshua Decter argues that in instances in which museums are dispersed, a de- or re-territorialization occurs that moves the museum into the body of the city, broadening its potential to engage in unusual and unexpected interventions and interplays with its surroundings (2001: 83). In such instances, the museum becomes discursive as it engages in innovative dialogical relations with other institutions, locations, places, people, and events in the city. The program of this new type of museum might be redistributed through the material texture of the city so the city becomes the host of the discursive museum, and vice-versa, the discursive museum a host for the city. An interpenetration of urban identities can result, as can an exchange of cultural positions, an interface of public interests (ibid, 85).

Italian scholars have also discussed the opening of museums to transform cities themselves into "diffused museums" *(museo diffuso)*. The architect and urban planner Fredi Drugman (1982) proposed the concept, explaining that in a diffused museum, instead of an emblematic building, historical places and monuments are dispersed throughout historic cities. In extending Drugman's concepts, Viviana Gravano suggests that "the dispersed museum implies a close link between alterity and familiarity, the usual and the extraordinary, the everyday and the unique. Thus the dispersed museum comes to be seen as an open form which proposes a deep relation between territory, community of inhabitant, and visitors" (2013: 115) Like Gravano, cultural theorist and curator Romina Quarchioni (2011) expands upon Drugman to note that

some cityscapes exist as "widespread museums" expressing continuities between cultural heritage and landscape.[37]

In a diffused or widespread museum, displays liberate objects to have their own dynamic lives subjected to different interpretations. Although Drugman and other scholars who follow him cite examples of diffused museums, they are mostly in Europe. The open-air museums of Elmina and Fort Kochi present characteristics of the diffused museum, since their exhibitions not only demonstrate relationships with colonial pasts, but how remnants of the colonial pasts have been and are inhabited and re-presented. Moreover, at Elmina and Fort Kochi the dividing lines between art and non-art, cultural heritage and cultural lives, are blurry and often overlap to create displays within the expanses of city territories.

At Elmina and Fort Kochi, *in situ* exhibition of material culture from the colonial era is dialectically opposed to the trophies of colonial conquests showcased in museums in the West. As Katarzyna Pieprzak (2010) has noted in the case of Morocco, the historical part of town operating as an alternative museum had the potential to invite nonhierarchical organization of knowledge and to cross the cultural divide between popular and elite. She notes that rather than working from top down, these work from ground up, drawing on individuals and memories as starting points. In open-air museumscapes, there are no strict curatorial paths or educational

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[37] See Romina Quarchioni's (2011) short online article:
http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCkQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.euto.org%2Fpages%2Fnews_story_downloadfile.asp%3FID%3D238&ei=wts0U9-hNcmwyQG6hYHoDA&usg=AFQjCNFVy2nPsAWvYnnoac9VUSO8LIi8bA&sig2=EbJMpoEGqcyMT1rvjO-H9g&bvm=bv.63808443,d.aWc

write-ups; instead, discernment is achieved by navigating and interacting with places and people, and histories narrated are personal understandings of colonialism as deemed useful to present-day intellectual, spiritual, and practical needs.

II. Museums in Elmina:

Elmina is an open-air museum, with a few formal museums as landmarks. Inside Elmina Castle, a small museum was created by the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board with the help of the United States Agency for International Development, the United Nations Development Program, and the Smithsonian Institution.[38] Constituted inside the former Portuguese church, the exhibition's objects, maps, and photographs present the history of the transatlantic slave trade as well as life in Elmina (Fig V: 1). In addition, a small exhibition on the second level of the castle presents information about "Elmina Strategy 2015," a heritage development program sponsored by the Dutch. Adjacent to the Governor's living quarters are paintings by local African artists that visitors may purchase. Although these displays are relatively small, the very structure of the castle is the most important object displayed.

Other than the Castle and the museum inside it, there are three small museums in Elmina town. Located on the main road to Takoradi is the Elmina-Java Museum (EJM), managed by the Ulzen family whose members currently live in the United States and the Netherlands. Established in 2002, it is a community museum that showcases the histories of people from

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[38] Sincere thanks are extended to Dr. Christine Kreamer, Associate Director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African Art, for her assistance and mentoring concerning this project in which she was an instrumental participant.

Elmina and other parts of the country who were recruited as soldiers and served in Indonesia. Dutch scholar and curatorial consultant of the museum Ineke Van Kessel notes that between 1831 and 1872, some 3,000 African recruits sailed from Elmina to Batavia (now Jakarta). Through a permanent exhibition, the museum unfolds their stories in the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army. Since many served in Java for considerable periods, they married local women and raised families. The Indo-African community was called Belanda Hitam or "Black Dutchmen" in the Indonesian language. The EJM curator Lucy Cofie, who is related to the Ulzen family, told me that before joining the museum she had no idea such a community existed, and did not know that her family name is Dutch.

Although consisting of only two rooms, the EJM is a very significant museum as it preserves histories of little-known Afro-Asian connections. Photographs, letters, archival records, and other objects in the museum collection were donated by descendants of the Belanda Hitam Community and by museums in the Netherlands (Fig V: 2). Most visually arresting amongst the displays are black and white photographs of people from Elmina posing with their families in Java, attesting to cross-continental migration and cultural intermingling. Also displayed is a replica of the uniform of the black soldiers of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army, and genealogies of people in Elmina with Dutch ancestry. According to Lucy Cofie, the objects only present a few facets of complex cultural exchanges between Africans and Indonesians. She notes that often when Ghanaians with Dutch names who are unaware of such connections walk into the EJM, they are surprised to learn of such historical linkages. Although the history of the Belanda Hitam community is interpreted from Dutch archival sources, Cofie

hopes to mine histories about her own family and those of other descendants. However, her attempts so far have been futile, as knowledge about the community seems to be lost.

Aside from the Elmina-Java Museum, a second institution is the Catholic Museum of Elmina, located in a small building inside the premises of St. Joseph's Church. Established as a part of the Elmina Heritage Project, religious objects from the Church are displayed in several wooden showcases in two rooms. It is difficult to navigate the little museum's cramped galleries that unfortunately, are suffering from lack of maintenance. The museum receives very few tourists, as it is located on top of the hill facing the Dutch Cemetery. Other than these two small museums, a third small institution is the Historical Diaspora Museum that occupies a small room in the One Africa Guest House run by Seestah Imakhus. The central installation of the museum is a wall of remembrance that recounts different phases of the transatlantic slave trade. This guesthouse is something of a memory place for African diaspora visitors who share the memories and experiences presented. Elmina's colonial buildings, churches, archeological ruins, period homes, and local shrines contribute to the town's "diffused museum." The Dutch Cemetery, Java Hill, and the empty land in front of the Elmina Castle are among significant sites. Although vacant, they are not empty signifiers; rather they refer to important historical events that caused early transformations of the town's landscape.

Perhaps Elmina's most striking cultural displays are its Posuban shrines, which are elaborate structures with dynamic cement figures presented in complex proverbial and historical configurations (see Ross 2007). *Posuban* are erected by Asafo Companies among local people of Fante ethnicity as among the means by which they compete with rival companies through lavish displays of prowess, wealth, and purpose. For instance, the vividly portrayed ship on Shrine No.5

of the Abissi Company connects that company to the naval force (Fig V: 3). *Posubans* serve devotional needs of their companies, but they are also museums in their own right, and tourists are usually welcome to photograph them for a fee that includes a company member's explanation of the histories and relationships realized in the structures' cement sculptures. As Doran Ross (ibid) has revealed through decades of close study and documentation, *posubans* contribute a great deal to the greater "diffused museum" of Elmina. Locations of everyday activity do as well. Benya lagoon swarming with colorful fishing canoes and motor launches, the salt ponds, and the fish market are all tourist attractions within the open-air museum of Elmina. Moreover, labor associated with fishing such as making canoes, painting them, weaving fishing nets, and smoking fish in large ovens are all quotidian activities packaged as "to-see things" for visitors.

The castle at Elmina, while being an important historical building is also a place of memory, especially for African diasporic communities, as discussed elsewhere in this dissertation. As Sharon Macdonald (2009) might add, the castle is also a site to recall and negotiate pasts of and for such communities, but of and for local people as well. Borrowing a well-known phrase from Mary Louise Pratt (1992), James Clifford (1997) has suggested that museums function as "contact zones" that bridge among communities while providing places for contested histories to be debated. Clifford adds that museums are power-charged places as they use their organizing structure and collections both to reflect *and* to construct historical, political and moral relationships (ibid: 438). Elmina Castle and its small museum are just such a contact zone where diaspora visitors can establish connections with their ancestors and their pasts, even as local people serving as guides help them invent new histories and elements of "heritage," as we have seen.

Interactions I have had with Carlton Duncan, an African American and a Jamaican who volunteered as a tour guide at the Elmina Castle during his Study Abroad program, were very helpful in understanding the importance of the castle as a contact zone. Reflecting on his first trip to Elmina in 2009, Duncan exclaimed that the experience was a turning point in his life in several ways. After his first visit to Ghana, he has made yearly trips to learn about his personal history and trace his family's African ancestry. Living in Jamaica as a boy, he had seen early forts and plantations—now heritage sites important to tourism—and he has been trying to grasp the history of the triangular trade from a very young age. Moreover, since Duncan's Jamaican grandfather was a follower of Marcus Garvey, he has been trying to grapple with the repercussions of slavery through Garvey's return-to-Africa movement and related pan-Africanist politics. Experiences like Duncan's reveal the potential of Elmina Castle's memoryscape to provoke reflection upon pasts and futures, even as he and other visitors experience aspects of the present through the entire town as an open-air, "diffused" museum.

In analyzing new modes through which museums function as places of cultural exchange, Elaine Gurian notes that "sound, smell, and environmental setting will gain an ascendency as methods of interpretation; and objects will become, not the *raison d'être*, but rather just one element in a complex presentation" (2006: 176). While the castle serves very different purposes from those it did as a slave *entrepôt,* its interior spaces and places remain very potent. Many visitors believe that in order to maintain the sacrosanct essence and spiritual efficacies of the castle, it must be left untouched and undisturbed. Even minor additions such as light fixtures in the dungeons and name plaques displaced within the castle did not go well with some Roots

tourists, as they felt its sanctity was compromised as places of terror and brutality were transformed into exhibitions.

At Elmina Castle, narratives are focused more on the unseen or invisible, rather than visible traces. As Jacques Derrida (1968) has pointed out, what is present always raises questions about what is not, and vice-versa. He and others have employed the concept of the trace to discuss how certain places are haunted by what is absent. Although, Derrida chiefly uses this concept to discuss erasures in text and resulting palimpsests, fraught places within the castle similarly speak to absence. Christina Howells (2013) explains that according to Derrida, a trace involves the inscription of meaning. Traces are simulacra of presence through which the present becomes a sign of a sign, the trace of a trace. Following such logic, Elmina Castle signifies absent presences, since discourses are constructed around imperceptible and erased subjects. Studying the significance of memorials and museums constructed at Holocaust sites, Griselda Pollock argues that what pilgrims come to experience is not the visible. They do not come to be informed because what the place signifies is already "overknown," and unbearably so as both recuperable memory and the etched lining of memory that is trauma (2003: 177). What transpired within Elmina's dungeons is similarly "overknown" by African Americans, and in the darkened void (when guides dowse the lights), presence is experienced in the traumatic absence of all those lost to the heinous trade.

In this light, the manner in which the Elmina Castle is presented as "heritage" to Roots pilgrims reflects characteristics of an exhibition practice that Stephen Greenblatt has termed "resonance"—"the power of the displayed object to reach beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world, to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which it has

emerged and for which it may be taken by a viewer" (1991:42). For Greenblatt, a resonant exhibition provokes the viewer to raise critical questions about things, places, and the relationships they convey through their original uses and the cultural and material conditions that made their production possible (ibid: 45). Resonance is similar to the "punctum" that Roland Barthes (1981) described as the feeling that pricks or pinches a spectator when he/she sees a photograph that is resonant with painful memories, as was one of his now deceased mother. Both resonance and punctum awaken the senses of viewers and provoke them to critically view an object. Places like Elmina Castle force visitors to experience things beyond the physical limits of their walls and the featured objects displayed at such sites. It is because of the resonant quality of these places that they are considered important monuments of memory.

In 2000, a plan was devised to increase the number of visitors to Elmina Castle through creation of a "multi-media spectacle." The objective was to create a heightened experience for tourists with an audio-visual presentation of the town's histories, as well as those of the castle in particular and the slave trade more generally. The international electrical company Philips was offered the contract, and with the support of the Ghanaian Ministry of Tourism and the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, a feasibility study was conducted. Although the project has never been realized due to financial reasons, reviewing the multi-media design reveals social dynamics at play. The idea was to use the castle's courtyard as a theater where videos, slides, and other kinds of projection would be complimented with smoke and other effects. Sensory illusions would permit visitors an opportunity to experience a "realistic" rendition of history reminiscent of theme parks. In addition, Philips planned to employ theme lighting with torches and background music to create an atmosphere and also to technically induce certain smells,

vibrations, and other dynamic effects. Further, the team also planned to create explosions and tactile sensations so that audiences might "feel" the impact of cannon balls when the castle was under siege. In the report Philips staff—or "imagineers" as they are known in the worlds of the Disney Corporation— stated that their intention was to make historical renditions as realistic as possible by tapping all human senses. The entire operation was to be fully automated so as to transport the audience to a different world with a touch of the button. If certain Roots tourists decried addition of lighting to the castle's dungeons and labels to its walls, one can imagine what reactions such a surreal plan might have instigated. Perhaps a "diffuse museum" can be altogether *too* diffuse for some.

III. Museums in Fort Kochi, India

In addition to churches, period homes, and warehouses that showcase Portuguese, Dutch, and English architectural styles, the open-air museumscape of Fort Kochi boasts two small museums—the Indo-Portuguese Museum (IPM) and the Maritime Museum. The IPM showcases the Christian religious heritage of the Portuguese period. Established with the help of the Portuguese Calouste-Gulbenkian Foundation, the Diocese of Cochin organized religious artifacts and precious objects in its possession in a newly opened building within the premises of Bishop House in February 2000. The museum is constructed right above the location of the old Portuguese Fort Immanuel to commemorate Portuguese cultural influence at Fort Kochi. All the religious exhibits from various churches including liturgical items, an altar, insignia and ceremonial items, and other sacred objects made of gold and silver are displayed in the museum's five rooms on a single floor (Fig V: 4). Also exhibited in a small room are a few

cultural objects from the Portuguese era and a large map of Portuguese Fort Kochi etched on

tiles. By focusing more on religious influences, the IPM's display also refers to an era in which

Catholic Missionaries had a great influence on social and political control of the place.

Unlike the Indo-Portuguese Museum, the display at the Maritime Museum presents the

political and naval history of Kochi. Established in 1989, the museum is located within the base

camp of the Indian Navy at Fort Kochi (Fig V: 5). It is constituted inside two large granite

military structures that the British used to store munitions during World War II. The maritime

history of the Malabar Coast and the evolution of the Indian Navy are narrated chronologically

through dioramas, model ships, naval charts, maps, and photographs. The first section showcases

how Indian seafarers and vessels connected the Sub-Continent with the Arab world and ancient

Greece and Rome. Significant events in the history of the Malabar Coast are referenced in a

separate room that also features life-size models of historical figures like Vasco da Gama and

Kunjali Marakkar, these latter having been naval officers of the Zamorin or ruler of Calicut who

controlled the Malabar Coast and were very powerful (Fig V: 6). Other sections of the museum

include information on the development of the Indian Navy after independence followed by

small didactic displays on "Ship Building," "Navy in Action," and "Life in Navy." This is the

only museum in the state of Kerala that presents the maritime history and culture of the Malabar

Coast.

Soon a third museum will be opened in Fort Kochi, for one is being created inside the

Bastion Bungalow. Although declared as a heritage monument, this spectacular Dutch structure

was in a state of disuse and disrepair until the Kerala Government announced its plan for

constituting a heritage museum there that will open in 2015. According to J. Rejikumar, the

director of the State Department of Archaeology, the new museum will narrate the history of Kochi through a range of exhibits and audiovisual technical aids. Additionally, the museum will have an archival gallery that will showcase records, manuscripts, and maps of Kochi. The Bastion Bungalow museum will also feature an open-air theatre to host weekly performances, and a sculpture garden, library, and gift shop will be additional highlights of the museum. For the sculpture garden, site-specific works in granite that refer to historical moments of Kochi are being commissioned. According to the mission statement, innovative and interactive display methods will be employed to make the exhibition more interesting and participatory.

Period homes and churches also contribute to the heritage and cultural displays at Fort Kochi. Houses such as Vasco House, Koder House, and Pierce Leslie Bungalow are part of the thematic display. As part of the urban curation, the coastline and Fort Kochi beach, the parade ground, and other public spaces are maintained by the local city council. In addition to its built heritage, Fort Kochi has now become an art district by hosting the Kochi-Muziris Biennale (KMB), which is expected to play an increasingly significant role in redefining the contemporary arts culture of the town. Murals, installations, abstract sculptures, and makeshift exhibition spaces have made the historical landscapes of Fort Kochi more vibrant. Further, contemporary art galleries including the Kashi Art Gallery, Buddha Gallery, David Hall, and Open Eyed Dreams known for exploring alternative media contribute to the exhibitionary character of Fort Kochi.

Cultural centers and commercial enterprises that are very museum-like places add their energies to Fort Kochi, producing what Arjun Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge might call a "cultural complex" (2004). For example, Greenix Village is advertised as a one-stop cultural

place in Fort Kochi as a large building that includes a small museum display of photographs and large figures attired in costumes of Kerala's performance genres such as Theyyam and Kathakali. A large wooden vessel locally known as the "snake boat" because of its slender body, is featured in the center of the gallery. Greenix Village also houses a contemporary art space called the Buddha Gallery, a performance space, a curio shop, and a restaurant. It is popular for hosting daily shows of traditional performing arts of Kerala. Visitors to Greenix village may also see and participate in activities such as weaving and pottery-making. Additionally, a training space permits visitors to participate in the local martial art *Kalaripayattu.* As advertised, the goal of Greenix Village is to offer a "traditional" Kerala experience to foreign tourists visiting Fort Kochi, as well as its heritage of European cultural influence.

Several curio and antique shops in Fort Kochi adopt a model similar to that of Greenix Village for exhibiting and selling material culture. The influence of museum display is very evident in the way these enterprises have designed, packaged, and even named their shops, while some bill themselves as museums and galleries to attract tourists. These local entrepreneurs call their shops "museums" to enhance their credibility as more "genuine" places in a street packed with similar shops. For instance, The Museum Company sells souvenirs and crafts from the northern Indian states of Jammu and Kashmir (Fig V: 7). During a conversation, the owner noted that so naming his shop has benefited his business as customers are more confident about their purchases and less likely to bargain. Likewise, a few shops in Mattancherry have named their enterprises as museums, and some even have ticketed entry, with such fees returned when visitors make purchases. In analyzing a similar context in Morocco, Katarzyna Pieprzak (2010) notes that museum-like spaces have burgeoned in local marketplaces with increased tourist

influx, and local vendors recognize the potential of the name and model of museums to attract customers. A similar phenomenon is at work in Fort Kochi. The owner of another such shop remarked that he promotes his antique store as a museum because his merchandise is of museum quality, unlike other similar establishments at Fort Kochi.

Scholars Arjun Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge note that while, initially, display strategies of colonial exhibitions influenced the museum format in India, later museum displays had such great impact on popular culture that it created the Indian phenomenon of "exhibition-cum-sale," in which one is invited to view as well as purchase objects on display. A constellation of factors contributes to such museum-festival-sales that promote a specialized cultural complex where objects and experiences weave together visual pleasure with ethnic and national display, while whetting consumer appetites (Appadurai and Breckenridge 2004). In the art stores and antique shops of Fort Kochi, local people showcase heritage following a similar exhibition-cum-sale format, thereby taking bazaar mode of presenting and selling things to a new turn. In traditional Indian *bazaars* or *mela,* seeing is central. Fort Kochi tourists are invited by attendants sitting outside their shops to enter inside and look at things they might purchase, but "for the pleasure of the eyes" without a fee, as though no further pressure to buy will be applied. Nowadays some spice shops not only have historical information on the spice trade displayed in glass cabinets or showcases, but offer opportunities to taste them. A few shop owners have named their enterprises "East India Company" or "Dutch Company" as a sales strategy to attract more visitors. The idea is to cash in on the history, but also to convince visitors through their branding and displays that they are more "genuine" traders of spices than their competitors. Significant to our thesis is how such efforts, however self-serving they may be, contribute to the

dynamic nature of "heritage" as it is recalled, applied, and adapted to gain local livelihoods, even as tourists enjoy learning about souvenirs that they will take home. These "trinkets " function, then, as centerpieces of the narratives they will create around their experiences in far-off Fort Kochi. The objects live on as focal points for memory, pride, and "I remember how" stories.

The blending of museum exhibition with commercial exposition especially in developing countries like India makes it difficult to draw boundaries (Appadurai and Breckenridge 2004). And why *should* economic opportunity be separate from local history-making and expatriate tale-telling? The open-air museumscape of Fort Kochi reflects offers its visitors a stimulating blend of historical buildings, galleries, museums, and period homes interspersed with curio and craft shops.

In her review of contemporary outlooks of different Indian publics towards colonialism, K.E. Supriya (2004) studies the museum inside Fort St. George, Chennai, as the erstwhile center of the British East India Company's political and economic activities. By analyzing how Indians interact with the museum's colonial exhibits, Supriya suggests that postcolonial Indians craft complex and textured ideas of British rule in India. She further states that in postcolonial nations, preservation of built structures and objects stimulates production of public and private forms of memory that are restorative, for disturbing pasts are not refused or rejected, but rather reworked to achieve equilibrium in the present. At Fort Kochi, however, colonial occupation, trade, and eventual dominance and rule, are not necessarily portrayed and read as oppressive histories. Rather, visitors often view Fort Kochi as a place that benefitted and developed due to European interactions and trade exchanges. Colonial pasts are romanticized, and interest to know and engage is encouraged by the tourism industry. Visiting and interacting with colonial heritage

demonstrates a nostalgic desire on behalf of Indian tourists who seek to unravel histories of colonialism. From numerous conversations I have had with Indian visitors, fascination for colonial times was evident. Informing any such postcolonial nostalgia is frustration with the current state of affairs in the country because of rampant corruption and incompetent governance. As we have seen in other chapters, however, counternarratives to any such romantic interest are provided by Kappiri as he haunts any pretense of halcyon days of yore.

IV. Display and Discourse

The relevance and resonance of Elmina and Fort Kochi as diffused museums reside in how they function as realms of public history and as places where "heritage" is invented even as contemporary histories are made. Public History is a relatively new field, and according to The National Council on Public History (NCPH) in the United States, "public history describes the many and diverse ways in which history is put to work in the world." [39]In explaining who are "public historians," the NCPH designates "museum professionals, government historians, archivists, oral historians, cultural resource managers, curators, film and media producers, historical interpreters, historic preservationists, policy advisers, local historians, and community activists, among many other job descriptions." Considering the leverage that the field of public history ascribes to the contribution of general public, at Elmina and Fort Kochi local accounts of the pasts clearly fall within this realm.

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[39] For more information on public history refer: http://ncph.org/cms/what-is-public-history

Public history has two aspects, the first concerning how history can be made public through spaces such as museums, monuments, and heritage sites, the second, and active public participation in reinterpreting established histories so as to produce new, more vital, and sometimes contestatory ones of the sort discussed throughout the present dissertation. Through insights offered by progressive scholars such as Ciraj Rassool (2000) and Paul Ashton (2009), how histories of colonialism are performed and presented in the open-air museumscapes of Elmina and Fort Kochi can be considered in the remaining pages of this chapter. In examining the cultural workings of public history, heritage, and identity in South African contexts, Ciraj Rassool (2000) notes that museums, archives, and archeological sites deserve critical analysis, especially in places as politically fraught as his native South Africa. These are active sites for retention and invention of cultural and historical knowledge. Following such reasoning, the open-air museumscapes of Elmina and Fort Kochi do not present conserved or fossilized forms of history; rather, they are public places where archival and other forms of history are contested and reshaped. In short, these places articulate histories that have relevance in the present, through continuous narrative trajectories with recourse to the past to generate discourses in and of the present.

Nowadays, as paramount importance is given to discourses produced by diffused museums rather than solely to displayed objects, one can examine discourses produced at Elmina and Fort Kochi. As remnants of colonial establishment, these places not only make metonymical references to colonialism, they generate new discourses on relationships among colonizers and colonized people. Because of their functions as places intended to narrate colonial history and to be sources of public history, the production of discourses at these spaces should be critically

analyzed, as Gyan Prakash (2004) suggests. Colonialism and its constructions loom as specters within the discursive spaces of the museum. Following Prakash, I would ask if there are narratives that are sequestered, or that need to be *de*constructed at Elmina and Fort Kochi, even as we continue to consider those that are fostered and invented there.

As port cities that facilitated centuries of trade and cultural connections, Elmina and Fort Kochi also served as entry points for Christian missionaries who altered religious landscapes of the respective regions, making their histories much more textured, complex, and fraught. However, what is depicted and articulated within the museums and their expansive urban realms are rather simple narratives about Portuguese arrival, the presence of other European interests along the coasts, the Dutch ousting the Portuguese, and finally, English takeover of both ports. In the case of Fort Kochi, the rhetoric of coercion and subjugation is oddly absent, although there were never smooth relationships between local people and the Europeans. At Elmina, discourses of the slave trade are the central narrative, but with specific focus on the African American diaspora with little attention to regional or other transnational relations. Surely, more complex histories are relevant than what is readily presented to the public at these places.

While structured narratives about Elmina and Fort Kochi are mostly constructed by the institutions that have designed the museums and heritage sites of the two sites, as we have seen, such accounts are tweaked and reinterpreted by locals from their lived experiences and according to their own political and economic goals, thus generating polyphonic discourses on colonialism. At Fort Kochi, tour guides and home-stay owners often re-script and recount histories through contemporary forms of narration. A case in point is that of the Vasco Home-stay, which, according to popular belief, was the late-15th-century residence of Vasco da Gama. Although

there is no historical evidence, the owner and local tour operators consider the place to be the house of the Portuguese mariner. The current owners of the house advertise the home-stay facility as a place where one can experience and learn about Vasco da Gama's life in Kochi. [40] There are other cases in which colonial history has been transformed as a result of popular postcolonial memories and interactions with heritage locations. Local residents who run home-stays or own curio shops are not only creating new cultural narratives that further their economic interests, although such purposes are served. Such protagonists interrogate the past, keep and invent memories, and otherwise contribute in essential ways to the "diffused museums" of Elmina and Fort Kochi.

If in Fort Kochi histories are sold to tourists by evident stakeholders, at Elmina current realities of the town surrounding the castle are sold along with histories. Usually at Elmina, local people acting as impromptu tourist guides are happy to narrate their versions of the history of any monument or interesting site for tourists for a few Ceedis, the Ghanaian currency. At times, there is compulsion to hear such opinions, since young men wait in the castle parking lot and other convenient place whence they follow tourists around, offering their "profound" knowledge for a reasonable fee. Especially at Asafo Shrines, tourists are obliged to pay for information about, visits to, and photographs of the Posubans, as well they should. Compensation is expected and deserved, in other words, but there are usually no fixed prices for such informal encounters and bargaining is expected within reason, as long as dignity is preserved on all sides. Another

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[40] The website advertise the residence of Vasco da Gama till his death in 1524 on the Christmas Eve. Refer: *www.vascohomestay.com.*

instance when tourism enmeshes with contemporary existence in Elmina is when foreign visitors are approached by local youths to sponsor their soccer teams. The history of their soccer team and its glorious past will be narrated, as well as the squad's sad decline due to lack of sponsorship. The young men will produce a list of donors and their plan of action upon raising a successful amount. What would be called "hustles" in other global contexts are therefore part of the totality of diffused museums like that of Elmina.

V. Metaspaces and Diffusion

In analyzing how audiences experience museums, Mary Nooter Roberts notes that "the encounter between the spectator and the object is experienced as a performance" (Roberts 1994:77). Expanding on the performative dynamics of the museum galleries, Roberts suggests that a museum "provides labyrinthine spaces for the enactment of performances, with their complex geometries of interiority and exteriority, of time and space, and subject and object" (ibid). Extending such thoughts, the open-air museumscapes of Elmina and Fort Kochi are labyrinths that offer numerous avenues to present and perform five hundred years of histories in kaleidoscopic compositions.

As a last means to understand the constant transformations of Elmina and Fort Kochi, the concept of metaspace (Bunschoten 1998) may be added to the insights of the "diffused museum" (Drugman 1982) and the more general sense of scapes that we have considered at length. Various sorts of performance define Elmina and Fort Kochi as they create new meanings and interactions within and for the places. The concept of metaspace helps construct a larger theoretical

framework through which one can understand the social processes that make diffused museums so dynamic. The concept metaspace refers to how a single location can host several social processes simultaneously. In the virtual field of the Internet, for example, metaspace is understood as a connection of networks, each of which transmits information and hence, that can serve as a nodal center for continuance of a program. Following the lead of German architect and city planner Raoul Bunschoten (1998; 2005), cultural theorists and urban planners have redefined this virtual term to demonstrate how in an urban environment, metaspaces have the potential to assist and foster several cultural processes and performances.

Elmina and Fort Kochi possess the characteristics of a metaspace. According to Bunschoten, such complex places present movement, stasis, permanence, temporality, ephemerality, and a gamut of fixed and non-fixed characteristics. As a member of the CHORA group of architects, Bunschoten designs innovative plans for transforming urban environments. For Bunschoten, a metaspace exhibits knowledge management processes, but it is also a vehicle enhancing the search for meaning in the dynamic chaos in which we live (1998, 2005). Since metaspaces are characterized by their transformative status, they also possess an element of temporality (ibid). Bunschoten proposes that "urban curation" can produce dynamic, transformative metaspaces. Apt examples are biennial art fairs like that of Fort Kochi, through which host locations transform and in turn are transformed by public sculptures, performances, and art installations. As we have seen, in many postcolonial cities, residents organizing community festivals, political parties organizing cultural meetings, as well as hoteliers, shop owners, and street vendors reconstitute the city.

The open-air museumscapes of Elmina and Fort Kochi constitute centripetal metaspaces even as they can also be thought of as "diffuse" in their centrifugal reach: through "urban curation" they are constantly reconstituted in "heritage" development programs and cultural events. Bunschoten further argues that such urban complexities can be understood as an "urban gallery"—a fluid form that generates different ways of participating in it (2005: 59). In other words, "urban galleries" facilitate the convergence of discourses of different demographics, while simultaneously commemorating and instigating divergent cultural memories, histories, performances, and narratives.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, then, the port towns of Elmina and Fort Kochi are metaspaces insofar as they are in a state of constant flux of input and output. While existing as "heritage sites"—as that phrase is defined through dynamism rather than stasis, these historical towns are defined by recurrent cultural events and seasonal activities following tourist demands. In the case of Elmina, biennial cultural events like PANAFEST and the annual local festival Bakatue celebrated to mark the beginning of the fishing season are important periodic events that transform the character of the town for a week. Likewise, in Fort Kochi, the Kochi-Muziris Bienniale, the annual Cochin Carnival, and tourist seasons contribute to the character and appeal of the place. While Bunschoten's argument focuses more on transient activities, the makeup and currency of Elmina and Fort Kochi as heritage sites, places of memory, and exhibitions balance permanence with transience and all the creative processes so implied.

Fort Kochi and Elmina present a diverse range of exhibition avenues such as museums, art galleries, antique shops fashioned like museums, and cultural centers that exist alongside historical locations and archeological monuments in a very small radius. The heritage and open-air exhibitions at Elmina and Fort Kochi are not frozen in time; rather, they are continuously evolving as living archives for tourists as well as for locals. Histories and memories are constantly reviewed and revised. Heritage buildings and associated sites are not frozen, de-contextualized relics: they are active, transformative media that reproduce and re-conceive histories of colonial voyages, initial land grabs, domination, and oppression, as well as subaltern resistance, courage, and final expulsion of colonial masters.

Epilogue

Today, colonial heritage and maritime trade are drawing the interest of conservationists, and, in the case of Fort Kochi, of Indian corporations as well. For instance, in 2004, shares of the English East India Company (EIC), which was a dissolved in 1874, were purchased by Sanjiv Mehta, an Indian businessman from British owners. Mehta re-launched the EIC as a luxury goods brand that sells high-end coffee, tea, spices, chocolates, textiles, and other commodities. These items can be purchased at a store in London's Mayfair District. The Company's website advertises that:

> The products use only the highest quality ingredients and all have a
> "remarkable connection" to history of The East India Company,
> some of these connections you can read more about on this site.
> These products breathe life into the history of The Company and
> enable our customers to feel a sense of belonging and connection
> through the centuries. [41]

The India business giants Mahindra and Mahindra bought a major stake in this enterprise and a quote on the store's website captures the new beginning of a colonial company with the words:

> *It's not a new beginning,*
> *It's a connection to heritage*
> *It's a continuation of a long tradition*
> *It's always been in our time.*[42]

In this light, colonial heritage as a medium not only re-scripts histories and showcases cultural identities, it also becomes a means to generate economic returns for corporations of the postcolonies. The colonial maritime trade and histories are repurposed and repackaged in

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[41] Cited from the EIC website. Ref. http://www.theeastindiacompany.com
[42] Ref. http://www.theeastindiacompany.com

different ways by formerly colonized people for their own benefit, in other words, Elmina and Fort Kochi are good examples of how histories of colonialism have been reinvented, reinterpreted, and contest authoritarian discourses while serving contemporary needs.

This dissertation is a study of how histories of European colonization are (re)presented and articulated through the media of heritage and museum programming in the port cities of Elmina and Fort Kochi. We have seen how the movement of people and products has shaped cultural histories. In inquiring into how memories of cross-cultural exchanges between coastal cities of Africa and the Indian sub-continent are preserved and remembered, updated and invented, I have shown that material culture, performances, and rituals serve as vital sites of cultural retention and redirection. Since Elmina and Fort Kochi served as important sea terminuses that linked Africa with South Asia through trade networks, the histories of these connections have been examined through artistic representations. Through such diverse investigative analyses, this dissertation contributes to expanding studies of Afro-Asian connections.

The objective and idea of this dissertation in many ways can be summed up using the concept of "Afro-Indianis" as defined by Allen Roberts (2006: 6). In examining how African geographies are connected with other places through oceanscapes, trade routes, and migrations both forced, coerced, and free, Roberts posits that other African worlds like the IOW should be also explored beyond the Middle Passage and the slave trade of "Afro-Atlantis" (see Thompson 1999). Building on Arjun Appadurai, Roberts shows how process geographies link people through social, political, and economic transactions, and he further states that if Afro-Atlantis is a process geography created by centuries-long cultural exchanges of people, material cultures,

cosmologies, music, and other components, such analysis should not be limited to the Atlantic world, but rather should be expanded to the IOW as well. Like Roberts, scholars such as Edward Alpers (1997) and Richard Pankhurst (2003) have noted that for several thousand years, coastal cities in Africa have had trade linkages with cities in the Indian-subcontinent. Not only have traders moved back and forth between *entrepôts,* they also ventured far inland at times to establish settlements, thereby channeling a flow of commodities as well as cultures. The future prospect of this dissertation rests within the scope of analyzing "Afro-Indianis" so as to expand the focus on triangular connections in amorphous and fluid process geography in order to discuss widespread African influences and cultural expressions. In short, this dissertation is just a preview of a bigger picture of the vast and yet-to-be-explored linkages between Africa and the Indian sub-continent.

Mercantile colonialism and later British imperialism provided historical and politico-economic bridges between such seemingly different case studies as those of Elmina, Ghana, and Fort Kochi, India, considered in detail here. Since the connections between India and Africa can be traced through the movements of people, an attempt was made to discuss the spectrum of "Afro-Indianis" by narrating personal experiences of people. During the course of my research, I met many people in Elmina, Cape Coast, and Accra in Ghana and in Kochi in India who expanded my notions about cultural connections. Although I briefly discussed memories of African presence in Fort Kochi, an in-depth analysis needs to be conducted to explore the artistic expressions, rituals and cultural performances of Afro-Indian communities to gain a better understanding of the socio-cultural histories of African diaspora in India. For instance, further

studies of contemporary artworks, films, and literature will reveal how the memories of Africans in the IOW are perpetuated through or created for different contemporary realms.

Studying connections between Indian and African coastal cities is a difficult task, primarily because of the nature of investment in time and money that is involved in conducting multi-sited field research. This is not the only problem, for such comparisons often risk being decried by political factions and intelligentsia, especially in India. Notions of "heritage" can differ radically, in other words. At this given juncture, for example, one is forced to review how some Indians imagine Africa and Africans after the unwarranted vigilante attack on African women from Uganda in New Delhi led by Delhi Law Minister Somnath Bharti along with a moral brigade. Africans living in Khirki Extension of South Delhi were accused of operating a drug and prostitution racket. Although the New Delhi Police refused to arrest the women, the Law Minister took matters into his own hands and forcefully held them in custody. [43]

A major political drama unfolded after this incident, as African Envoys met the Ministry of External Affairs at New Delhi concerning safety of African nationals in India. The incident also spurred national debates on India's connections with Africa and also issues of race. This is by no means the only recent narrative concerning Afro-Indian connections, especially when India shares good relationship with African countries including Ghana. The new presidential palace in Accra was built from a generous loan given by the Indian government. Although, there are discussions about the increasing influence of India on Ghana, the relationship between both

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[43] See http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Midnight-raid-Delhi-court-directs-police-to-file-FIR-against-Somnath-Bharti/articleshow/29045844.cms and http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/african-woman-forced-to-give-urine-sample-in-public-during-bharti-s-raid-harish-salve/article1-1173943.aspx

the countries goes way back to the days of Jawaharlal Nehru and Kwame Nkrumah, who played an important role in the formation of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961, which today is an important power bloc. The point here is to recognize that as inevitably the case in politics, whether local, national, or international, complexities preclude any easy assessment of Indian inventions of Africans and vice-versa.

Aside from Afro-Asian studies, this dissertation also contributes to studies of memory, heritage, and cultural tourism by presenting how different cultures remember and review their colonial pasts, even as they invent new histories to meet contemporary politico-economic needs and goals. Cultural, political, and economic factors determine the destiny of colonial heritage in postcolonies, and certain narratives are highlighted while others are sequestered. Since several theoretical concepts have been employed to establish similar workings of the two sites, in future I plan to expand on a few them. The concept of metaspace and diffused museums can be employed to understand how built heritage fuses with urban landscapes to create cultural zones that serve multiple functions and parties. I plan a research model to study how other historical port cities in the IOW are transformed into heritage sites and diffused museums to display colonial histories, national identities, and transnational affinities. Since old port cities like Zanzibar and Mombasa along the Swahili Coast in East Africa, and Pondicherry, Tanquebar, and Goa in India are places where heritage coexists with postcolonial development, a detailed study of these places will be helpful in understanding how old and new forms of cultural heritage coalesce to form metaspaces and transform these places into diffused museumscapes. Moreover, an opportunity to examine the process of refabulation to understand how people rethink and

reimagine places and performances through histories of their own making is another area to investigate in future (on "refabulation" of African cities, see Roberts and Roberts 2007).

Post-dissertation, I plan to study some of the new heritage projects undertaken by the State Government of Kerala, such as the Muziris Heritage Sites and the Spice Route Heritage project, both aimed at resurrecting the long history of the Kerala coast's global linkages. The State Government of Kerala has envisioned the ambitious Muziris Heritage project in 2006 as an effort to excavate, preserve, and showcase the rich cultural heritage of Muziris as a pre-colonial seaport that had trade connections with ancient colonial port cities in the IOW. The project will establish fourteen museums inside surviving heritage structures to narrate the cosmopolitan history of Muziris. Additionally, a site museum in Beypore will be created as part of the Spice Route project to present the techniques of constructing indigenous dhows (sailboats) that were crucial in facilitating trade between the Malabar Coast and the Swahili Coast in Africa. In the future, these projects will serve as important sites presenting exchanges and migrations between Asia and Africa, whether forced or free, via maritime trade routes.

To conclude, while this dissertation is about how process geographies meet and the ocean plays an important role in redefining the histories and landscapes of colonial port cities, it is also about how memories of such interactions are remembered, memorialized, invented, and enacted at Elmina and Fort Kochi. Through five chapters, an array of crosscurrent histories and memories connecting Elmina on the Gold Coast of west Africa and Fort Kochi on the Malabar Coast of India have been established.

APPENDIX A

Some of the Heritage Sites in Fort Kochi

1. Santa Cruz Basilica

   The Santa Cruz Basilica is one of the eight Basilicas in India and the second oldest Diocese of India. In 1505, the king of Cochin granted permission to the first Portuguese viceroy, Dom Francisco de Almeida, to build a church. The original structure of the church has been lost due to several reconstructions.

2. St. Francis Church

   St. Francis Church was built in 1503 and it is the oldest European church in India. After his death in Kochi in 1524, Vasco da Gama was buried in this church.

3. The Dutch Cemetery

   The Dutch cemetery was consecrated in 1724, and is probably the oldest in the country. The epitaphs and tombs, numbering 104, carry the names of hundreds of Dutch and British nationals.

4. Bishop's House

   Originally, the Bishop's House was built as the residence of the Portuguese Governor in 1506. In 1888, Dom Jos Gomes Ferreira, the 27th bishop of the diocese of Kochi, acquired it and it became known as the Bishop's House.

5. Chinese Fishing Nets

   Chinese fishing nets are believed to have been brought to Cochin by the Portuguese from Macau. An alternative speculation is that Chinese explorer Zheng He was responsible for introducing them to Cochin between 1350 and 1450 AD.

6. Fort Immanuel

   Fort Immanuel, named after the then Portuguese monarch King Immanuel, was built in 1503 and reinforced in 1538. It was the first European establishment on the Indian sub-continent.

7. Vasco House

   Vasco House is believed to be the house where Vasco Da Gama stayed during his visits to Kochi, up until his death in 1524. The house, built in the Portuguese style, is an example of the blending of vernacular and European architecture.

8. Bastion Bungalow

   One of the seven bastions in Fort Immanuel, the Bastion Bungalow was built in 1667. Before being converted to Bastion Bungalow, it was known as the Stormberg Bastion.

9. David Hall

   The Dutch East India Company built David Hall around 1695. It was the residence of the renowned Dutch governor, Hendrick Adrian Van Rheede. However, the building gets its present title from a later occupant, a Jewish businessman named David Koder.

10. Old Harbor House

    The Old Harbor House was built in 1808 by tea brokers Carrit Moran and Company. It became the residence of the officials of the tea firm before being converted into a hotel.

11. Old Lighthouse Bristow Bungalow

    This building was the official residence of Sir Robert Bristow, founder of Cochin Port, as well as a lighthouse. After his death, the bungalow was used as lodgings for senior officers of the port. In 1980s, the bungalow was converted into a hotel.

12. Koder House

    Koder house, a Portuguese mansion of the 1800s, was bought and renovated by Samuel S. Koder in 1905. Koder, who ran the Cochin Electric Company, was also the Honorary Consul to the Netherlands, and it was he who began the Cochin wing of the Free Masons. The house has been converted into a boutique hotel.

13. Brunton Boatyard

    Established by George Brunton, Brunton Boatyard served as an important ship building facility till World War II. Like other old buildings, today the place is a high-end hotel.

APPENDIX B

Some of the Heritage Sites in Elmina

1. St. George Castle

    St George Castle, also known as Elmina Castle, was erected by the Portuguese in 1482 and was the first trading post built on the Gulf of Guinea. Initially established as a trade outpost, the castle later became one of the most important centers on the route of the Atlantic slave trade.

2. Fort St. Jago

    Fort Sao Jago da Mina, also known as Fort Coenraadsburg, was built in 1652 to protect Elmina Castle from attacks.

3. Java Hill

    Located at north end of the town, Java Hill was the settlement of the African officers who served the Dutch in Java, Indonesia.

4. Nana Kobina Gyan Square

    After the Dutch handed over the possession of Elmina to British, there was fierce resistance against the British, which led to the bombardment of Elmina and to the exile of Elmina Chief Nana Kobena Gyan to Sierra Leone. In order to memorialize the resistance, a large statue of Nana Kobina Gyan was installed at Trafalgar Square as part of the development of Elmina by the Dutch, and the square was renamed Nana Kobina Gyan Square.

5. Dutch Cemetery

    The old Dutch Cemetery in Elmina town dates back to 1806 and is one of the oldest cultural heritage sites in the town. The cemetery is surrounded by silk cotton trees, which are over a century old. A number of former governors, eminent Elminans, and Elmina's King Nana Kobena Isyan are buried in the cemetery.

6. Asafo Shrines

    Asafo companies are traditional voluntary groups responsible for the defense of their town against invaders. These companies were politically engaged in the selection of chiefs and identified religiously with their particular military shrines. These shrines served as gathering places and centers of activity for Asafo companies.

7. Elmina-Java Museum

The Elmina-Java Museum is dedicated to the history of the Belanda Hitam. Belanda Hitam were the soldiers recruited in the 19th century to serve in the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army in Java. The museum is funded by the Edward A. Ulzen Memorial Foundation.
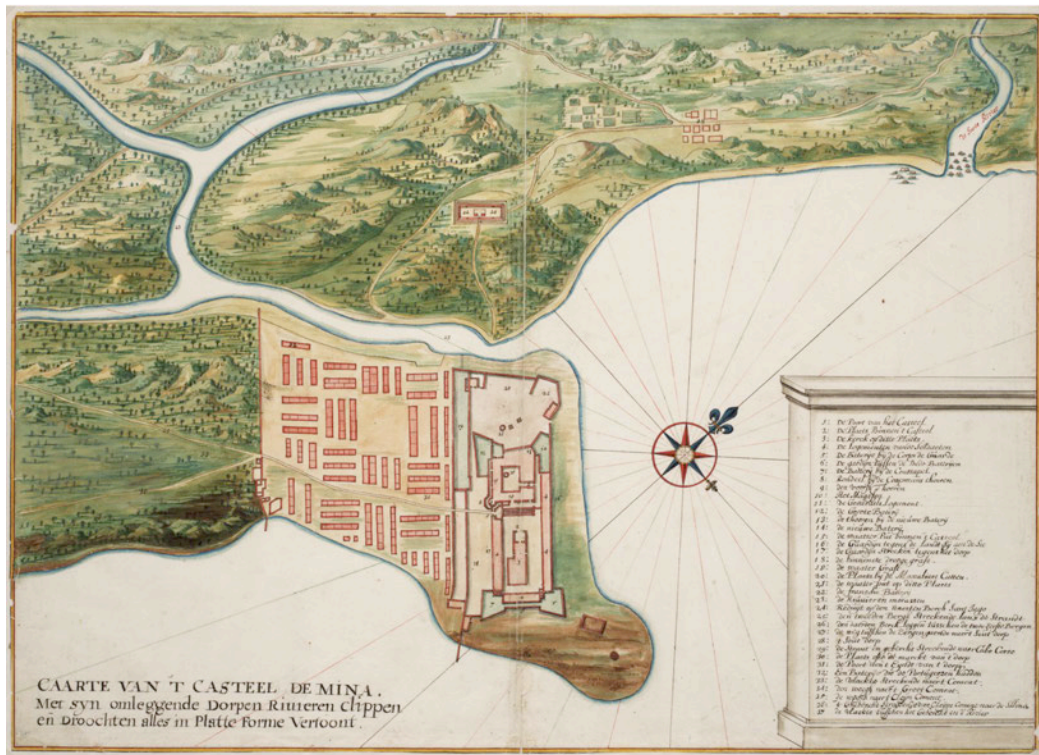
FIGURES

0: 1 Urban landscape of Elmina and its harbor as seen from Fort St. Jago. Photo by author. 2012.

0: 2 Townscape of Fort Kochi. Overlooking the harbor is Aspinwall House, a former English warehouse, and Brunton Boatyard, the former head office of a Victorian ship building company.
Photo by author. 2012.

0: 3 Seventeenth century Dutch map by Johannes Vingboons that shows St. George Castle, the harbor, Benya lagoon, and the local settlement. (Public domain)
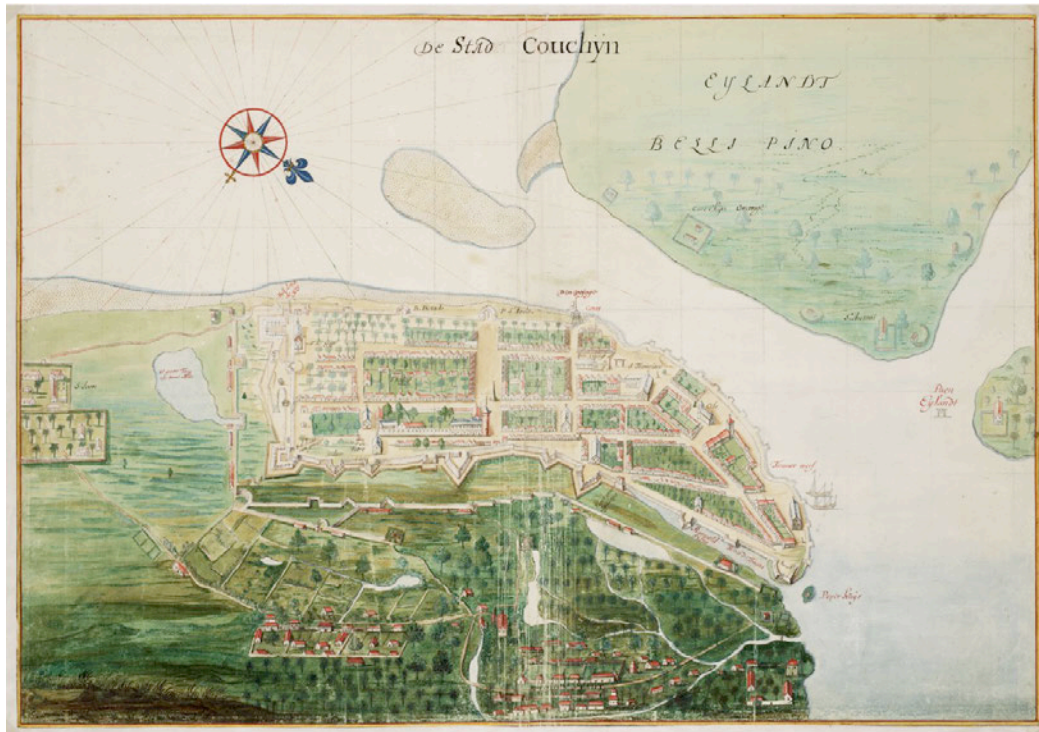
0:4 Seventeenth century Dutch map of Fort Cochin showing the fortified European settlement, harbor, and company gardens in the neighboring islands. (Public domain)

I: 1   Fort St. George Castle and two well-preserved European buildings on Liverpool Street.
Photo by author. 2012.

I: 2 Constructed by the Dutch in 1682, Fort St. Jago protected St. George's Castle from invasion. One of the oldest military architectural structures along the Gold Coast, it was modeled in accordance to the Baroque military architecture. Photograph by author. 2012.

I: 3 Interior of Elmina Castle with central courtyard and Portuguese Church. Iron railing
    features symbol of the Dutch West India Company. Photo by author. 2012

I:4   Exterior of St. Francis Church, first European church in India, built in 1503. It remained in the
      Order of St. Francis until arrival of the Dutch in 1663. Photo by author. 2012.

I: 5   Built in 1667, the Bastion Bungalow on River Road is an Indo-European building and the only remaining structure of the once extensive Dutch fortifications. Photo by author. 2012.

Il : 1 The Shrine for African Spirit at Mangattumukku, Mattancherry. Kochi. Photo by author. 2012.

Il: 2 Kappiri Shrine at Panayampilly, Mattancherry. Kochi. Photo by author. 2012.

Il: 3 A *Kaavu* or a small Hindu temple with several shrines to minor deities including Kappiri in Vypeen. Kochi. Photo by author. 2012.

II: 4: Africans seen operating a Chinese fishing net at Cochin in the *Das Buch der Welt.* Stuttgart, 1842-48. (Public domain)

II: 5 (top) & II: 6 (bottom) Kappiri Temple in Thrissur area with the image of fierce looking man.
Photo by author. 2012

III: 1 Visitors in front of the condemned cells during a guided tour of the Elmina Castle.
Photo by author. 2012.

III: 2 Essel Blankson explaining the naming ceremony ritual to a group of Roots tourists in a village
near Cape Coast. Photo courtesy of Essel Blankson. 2011.

III: 3 Essel Blankson narrating the importance of the Door of No Return to a group of students from the United States. Photo by author. 2012.

III: 4 Ceremonial foods being cooked by Roots tourists from Suriname at Nana Mbroh's house in the village of Koramantse. Photo by author. 2012.

III: 5 Tourists in front of the Door of No Return at Elmina Castle. Photo by author. 2012.

III: 6 Cultural Performances at the Jubilee Stadium Cape Coast during PANAFEST 2013.
Photo courtesy of Elyan Hill. 2013

III: 7 Elolo Gharbin's theater company performing the enactment of the slave trade during
PANAFEST 2013. Photo courtesy of Elyan Hill. 2013.

III: 8 Kwamena Pra's trope performing the enactment of the slave trade in the courtyard of Cape Coast Castle. Photo courtesy of Kwamena Pra.

IV: 1 An old building in Fort Kochi with wall art painted by local group of artists during Kochi-Muziris Biennale in 2012. Photo by author. 2012.

IV: 2 (top) & IV: 3 (bottom) Artist Vivan Sundaram's Installation "Black Gold" and a close-up image that show gateways and streets created out of pottery shards. Photo by author. 2012.

IV: 4 Indian artist Subodh Gupta's installation in the Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2012.
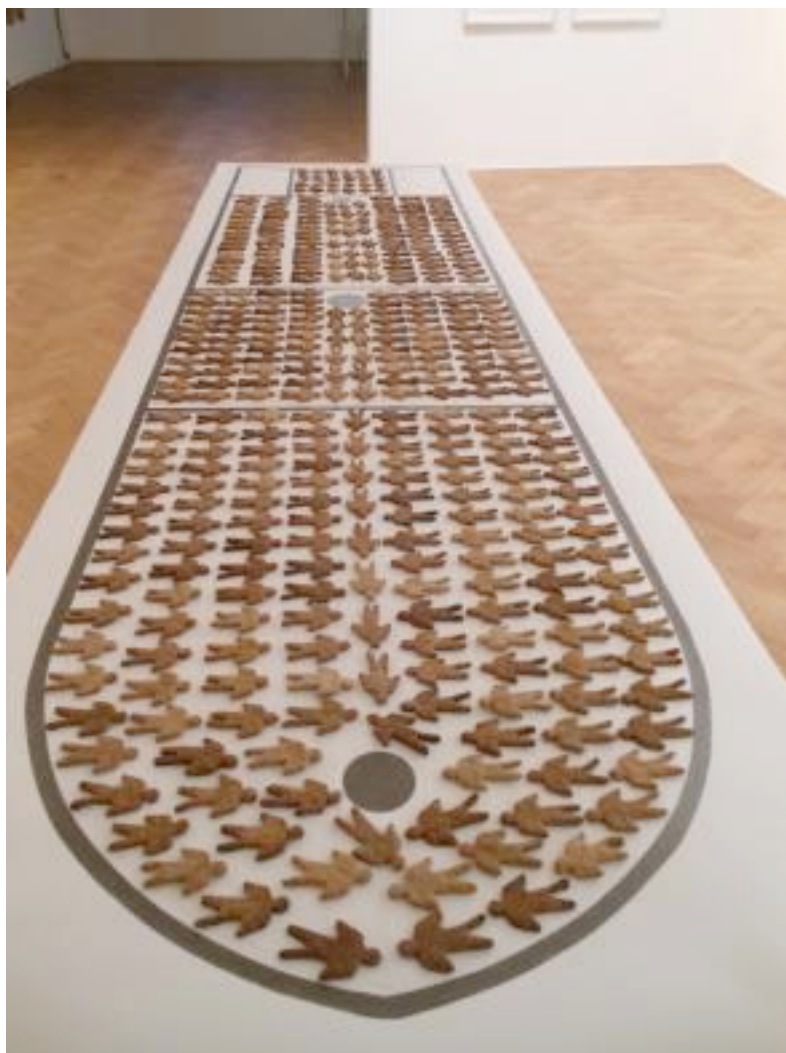Photo by author. 2012.

IV: 5 (top) & IV: 6 (bottom) A heritage project created by artist Aman Mojadidi with an excavation pit to represent how certain histories are buried for the Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2012. Photo by author. 2012.

IV: 7 (top) & IV: 8 (bottom) "Kochi Tower" an installation by Portuguese artist Rigo 23 at the abandoned boat jetty at Calvathy as part of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale. The suspended wooden figure represents Kappiri. Photo by author. 2013.

IV: 9 Installation titled "Held" by Mary Evans featured at the Tiwani Gallery in London. Photo courtesy of the artist. 2012.

IV: 10 Installation titled "Gingerbread" by Mary Evans featured at the Tiwani Gallery in London.
Photo courtesy of the artist. 2012.

IV: 11 Kochi based artist Sebastian Varghese participating in red-tapism at Hallegua Gallery.
       Photo by author. 2012.

IV: 12 Artist Bernard Akoi-Jackson posing as an *Akan* chief walking through the spice market at Mattancherry. Photo by author. 2012.

IV: 13 Artist Hochimin P.H's sculpture that represents Kappiri displayed on the grounds of Bastion Bungalow at Fort Kochi. Photo courtesy of the artist. 2013.

IV: 14 Artist Dinesh Shenoy in his gallery at Mattancherry. Kochi. Photo by author. 2012.

V: 1 Display of the small museum inside the Elmina Castle. Photo by author. 2012.

V: 2 One of the small galleries of Elmina-Java Museum with old photographs and a life-size model of an African soldier. Photo by author. 2012.

V:3 A *Posuban* or shrine of a local military company collectively known as the Asafo "Company." Photo by author. 2012.

V: 4   Christian religious figures displayed inside glass cases at Indo-Portuguese Museum.
         Photo by author. 2012.

V: 5 Exterior view of the Maritime Museum at Fort Kochi. Photo by author. 2012.

V: 6   Life-size models of Vasco da Gama along with the Gujarati Pilot who is supposed to have shown the way to the Malabar Coast displayed at the Maritime Museum. Photo by author. 2012.

V: 7 An antique store cum curio shop advertising themselves as a museum at Fort Kochi. Photograph taken by author. 2012.

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