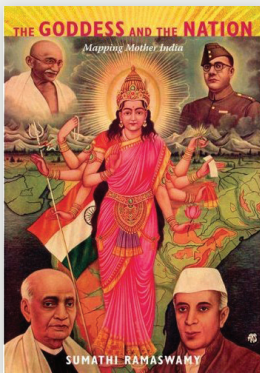


words fit on the St. Lawrence about as well as they fit in Michigan. As a final note on the overall aesthetics, the thin, semi-matte coated stock on which the map is printed feels at odds with the subject matter. Its lack of weight and its plastic feel does not mesh with the historical drama which unfolds on its surface.

While the panels of inset maps are more attractively done, they are poorly integrated with the base map. Their richer color palette makes the main map look dull in comparison, and contributes to a sense that they belong on another page altogether. They are meant to show events taking place at a small location marked on the base map, but they necessarily move far away from that location as the story unfolds, making it difficult to maintain a sense of context and thus weakening their connection to those spaces.

These weaknesses are not fatal; while they can introduce static into the transmission of Champlain's voice, enough comes through to make for a rewarding experience. *They Would Not Take Me There* is a valuable contribution and a worthy addition to anyone's library. It is a map for human beings, about human beings, in a way that too few are, and gives voice to those living in the geography represented. The reader is drawn emotionally into the story through its creative typography and the thoughtful use of color and scale in the inset maps. *They Would Not Take Me There* is worthy of imitation and will hopefully serve as a source of inspiration to others.

THE GODDESS AND THE NATION: MAPPING MOTHER INDIA



By Sumathi Ramaswamy.

Duke University Press,
2010. 379pp.
152 figures and illustrations, 100 in
color. \$27.95. Paperback.
ISBN 978-0-8223-4610-4.

Review by: Jonathan Lewis,
Benedictine University

Sumathi Ramaswamy's book
traces the initial appearance
and subsequent evolution of

"Bharat Mata" (India Mother), a new deity that emerged in conjunction with India's struggle for nationhood. Significantly, the figure of Bharat Mata was regularly depicted along with a map of the Indian subcontinent, thus (in philosopher Edward Casey's terms) both *standing for* and *standing in for* the nation waiting to be created. The author accounts for the importance of these representations of Mother India by reviewing theories of representation in conjunction with historical

events and key personages in Indian history, in order to provide frames for the images and contexts for their interpretation. The book's chapters each begin with an explanation of how its particular topic contributes to an overall understanding of the image's importance and impact, followed by detailed descriptions of several prominent examples, generally presented in chronological sequence. The chapters also follow a historical sequence, moving from the image's earliest appearance through periods of growing use and into the present period, when Bharat Mata's recognizability has made her a popular feature on contemporary political posters.

Rawaswamy traces Bharat Mata's origins to Bengal in 1904, where a female figure identified as "Mother Bengal" first appeared on posters. Although clearly a deity (she had four arms and an aura), she bore a strong resemblance to an average Bengali woman and was intended as a symbol of that area. Over the next few decades, as Bharat Mata gained in popularity, artists added new features to her depiction: the tri-colored flag of the independence movement, lions, and most importantly, a visual image of the territory she represented. Mother India's success as an icon of national independence was not assured from the outset, however, and many decisions had to be made about her appearance. Although the territory depicted in images of Bharat Mata varied, with some posters suggesting greater territorial claims than others, obtaining consensus on the map of India and its boundaries appears to have been less problematic than settling on the female deity's character and characteristics. For example, although bearing a very strong resemblance to Hindu deities, Bharat Mata had to be a unifying figure, so many posters depicting her took pains to include messages and slogans in the languages of India's religious minorities (p. 21). India was also deeply divided by its caste system, complicating what would be appropriate for Bharat Mata's attire and jewelry. Would portrayals of her as rich make her less attractive to the enormous number of India's poor? Would portraying her as poor adequately convey the exploitative character of British occupation? Should she be young or old? If she was young, just how attractive and desirable could she appear and still maintain her dignity? Also, if she was "Mother" India, should she be depicted as having children? If so, how many, and who might be their father? If not portrayed as a mother, could she still appear to be a maternal figure? If she did represent the struggle for independence, should she perhaps be more aggressive than maternal and be depicted with instruments of battle? As artists grappled with these issues, their chosen solutions often dictated how they incorporated the mapped image of the Indian subcontinent into their designs. Virtually all portrayals of Bharat Mata, for example, include the island of Sri Lanka in some fashion: in many, it takes the form of a flower, in others a vase, and in still others it is simply a

spot of land where Mother India is standing or is about to step. Similarly, during a period before independence was granted and when many outsiders saw the region simply as “Hindoostan,” the cartographed image of India accompanying Bharat Mata usually embraced northern borders that included areas (Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh) whose residents did not wish to be part of India and sought national independence in their own right.

Ramaswamy pays close attention to the relationship between what are to her the defining parts of the Bharat Mata image: the female deity and the landmass of India she represents. Sometimes, the landmass serves as a frame to the goddess’s image, while other times her form is deftly grafted into the landmass and emerges from it. Other images simply show India mapped onto a globe with Bharat Mata standing upon it. Ultimately, the combination becomes so widespread and familiar that the map is either removed to the distant background or dispensed with altogether and Bharat Mata stands in for landmass. She becomes both the sense of a unified nation state chosen by spiritual forces and the physical landmass where that nation is located. Ramaswamy sees this evolution as initially benefiting from the science of cartography, which corroborated the existence of a distinctly Indian region, but lacking a sense of India as more than simply a place. It needed to convey the sense of just what India was as an idea. “India was more than ‘a mere bit of earth,’ more than ‘the dust of some map-made land,’ and more than the lines and contours on a map of the influential colonial sciences” (p. 53). For nationalists, it was progressive to have a readily identified homeland, but difficult to persuade Indians to revere, much less sacrifice or even die for, a map. This led to the foregrounding and further refinement and embellishment of Bharat Mata herself. Over time, this meant making her “ethnically indeterminate and not readily associable with women of any particular region” (p. 57) and light-skinned. More important were the props with which she appeared, including weapons (archaic, such as a spear or sword rather than something more contemporary, such as a revolver), a spinning wheel (a powerful symbol linking the goddess to Gandhi, whose campaign to get Indians to produce their own cloth and thus move them away from importing finished products from Britain expressed values of the home and nation), a flag, and often a lion. Because many versions of Bharat Mata portrayed her as a Hindu goddess, she was sometimes depicted with many pairs of arms, allowing her to brandish a variety of symbolic objects. By the time Indians moved more assuredly toward independence, Bharat Mata had evolved into an unmistakably Hindu form, complicating “attempts to secure a plural and religiously diverse body politic” (p. 71).

It is not until the middle of her book that Ramaswamy moves her discussion away from Bharat Mata toward the more general use of female figures as referents to

nations, most notably Britannia, emblem of India’s colonial ruler. She then moves to review the various Hindu deities available to the “barefoot cartographers” (Ramaswamy’s term for artists who appropriated images of India generated by the “command cartography” of its occupier and used them to subvert that occupier’s attempts at control by incorporating the images into nationalist propaganda) as models for Mother India. Identifying several possibilities, she lingers on the most violent: Kali, said to have emerged from the goddess Durga’s scowling brow and associated with unbridled fury. Kali apparently struck fear into the hearts of some British occupiers, who saw her potential for rallying opponents to British control, particularly through secret societies. Inspired by fear, British authorities proceeded to find any number of farfetched corroborations of their anxieties, further fueling those same anxieties and bringing Kali’s possibilities more clearly to the attention of Indian nationalists. Both Durga and Kali posed challenges to those nationalists, however, as “their more ferocious proclivities were a potential embarrassment in a social climate increasingly governed by norms of bourgeois respectability ... Their autonomy was glaringly at odds with the normative expectation that females were to be always under the control of their male kin” (p. 112). Ramaswamy argues that Bharat Mata emerged as a safe compromise: a respectable symbol of bourgeois motherhood merged with the independence and capacity for assertive behavior of Hindu legend.

Other chapters illustrate how the concept of India as a mother appeared in other artifacts of popular culture, including the important hymn *Vande Mataram* (“I Worship the Mother”), an enormous relief map of the Indian subcontinent (Bharat Mata Mandir, or “Mother India Temple,” in Benaras, Uttar Pradesh, built in 1936), novels, and cinema. These materials document how widespread and deep the metaphor was, and how important popular culture was in communicating the idea of India (both as a concept and as an identifiable physical location) to India’s masses.

Closing chapters contrast the appearance of male politicians alongside the now highly recognizable Bharat Mata image with depictions featuring female activists. While both benefit from their association with Mother India, images of men do so in a distinct way. Depending on the individual and the movement, images of Bharat Mata might show her blessing or receiving men leading nationalist movements into her presence, thus appearing to bless both them and their objectives, or alternatively witnessing and grieving over their violent demise. Unlike most previous images of the mother/goddess, these later images often include considerable bloodshed, typically in the form of a martyr’s severed head being offered to Bharat Mata as a sacrifice to the cause she represented. Because it was to be sons and not daughters who shed blood for the nation, women in posters featuring Bharat Mata were rarely involved in action more dramatic than

leading groups of people in a march and for decades did not appear as martyrs. Indira Ghandi's arrival on the political scene changed this. Being female and highly recognizable made it possible simply to substitute her image for that of Bharat Mata and display her figure within India's outline. Her death led to the only instances of a woman appearing as a martyr, with one grim depiction featuring the outline of India as a ghostly spirit carrying Indira's bleeding body.

In her closing summary, Ramaswamy notes that while British surveys generated an image of India's territory that appeared widely in classrooms and official printed literature, Indians came to see that image differently than did the British because they inhabited the land differently. Captured visually, India became available for inspection and interpretation. Stripped of iconography associated with dispassionate mapping (e.g., lines of latitude and longitude), "the logo-map penetrated deep into the popular imagination, to form a powerful emblem for the anti-colonial nationalisms being born" (p. 290). Yet to be fully effective as an instrument of nationalism, "The map form had to be supplemented by something else in order to do the deadly work of patriotism—and one of the enduring ways of supplementing it takes recourse, again and again, to the anthropomorphic form of the glorious plenteous mother/goddess" (p. 292). While this particular goddess figure was not part of an ancient pantheon, neither was it truly inter-religious: Ramaswamy acknowledges the distinctly Hindu character of Mother India, as well as her safely upper middle class appearance.

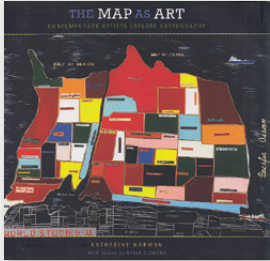
Ramaswamy has assembled a thoroughly researched collection of images sharing a common theme linked directly to the importance of cartography in accomplishing something beyond its usual functions. While in some ways India's appearance alongside a mother/goddess is another way of getting from here to there (that is, from colony to independent nation), looking at popular images of cartography goes beyond conventional thinking about maps and their purposes. For a citizen to understand that he/she is an occupant of a particular territory extending beyond their horizon of sight, they must first grasp the idea of a map and then recognize it as a portion of territory they inhabit: "You see this? It's how land is depicted. And this, this is your land." Ramaswamy's barefoot cartographers shrewdly employed motifs recognizable to the bulk of India's citizenry to move nationalism forward, and to realize the idea of an independent country having a particular form. In doing so, her account pulls together material generated throughout a long period of time and from a variety of sources such as novels, films, and poems. Ramaswamy takes pains to clarify the cultural significance of references occasionally found in images of Bharat Mata, explaining linkages maybe not obvious

to someone less well-versed in the complexities of Indian culture. The book has a confident, self-assured tone fortified by the very large number of illustrations buttressing its central points. If there is one area where the book lapses, it is not one that is overlooked altogether and is in fact touched on in several spots: the dominance of the Hindu form Bharat Mata takes, and her clear link to a particular religious tradition. Despite apparent efforts by various political leaders to portray their nationalist objective as benefiting all Indians regardless of their religion, Bharat Mata links independence closely with the Hindu faith. The abundance of cartographed images in which she appears has the effect of qualifying the territory being depicted: "... this is *your* land" becomes "... this is *Hindu* land." Were there comparable images, or images serving similar ends even if they varied in terms of composition, among Islamic Indians?, among Jains?, Christians? The lack of any section substantially covering that aspect of the topic suggests that Mother India is a concept whose meaning is limited largely to its Hindu citizens even though her appearance and contribution to rallying support for independence has affected other groups. This is particularly important in light of interminable border conflicts with Pakistan and the ongoing struggle over Kashmir, and the question if anyone is currently employing this type of rallying image in these situations remains unaddressed. *The Goddess and the Nation* represents the best kind of popular cultural analysis, one that utilizes everyday yet unconventional evidence to provide insight into serious questions concerning how political ideals become meaningful to masses of people and how individuals who may be illiterate are nonetheless still able to read artifacts of visual culture. The book's back cover identifies fields the publisher expects might be especially receptive to the arguments it contains: South Asia Studies, Visual Culture, History. To that list might be added Religious Studies, as readers familiar with the concept of American civil religion will find here intriguing parallels as well as significant contrasts with earlier work on that subject.

With respect to cartography, *The Goddess and the Nation* connects well with other books such as Matthew Edney's *Mapping and Empire*. Indeed, Edney's observations about the effects of cartographic expeditions mesh easily with Ramaswamy's views on India as an emerging independent country. Simply substitute *nation* for *empire* in this passage from *Mapping and Empire*: "maps came to define the empire itself, to give it territorial integrity and its basic existence. The empire exists because it can be mapped" (Edney, p. 2). As Edney notes about the British, "They mapped the India that they perceived and that they governed. To the extent that many aspects of India's societies and cultures remained beyond British experience and to the extent that Indians resisted and negotiated with the British, India could never be entirely

and perfectly known” (p. 2). *The Goddess and the Nation* both corroborates that observation and helps resolve the shortcomings it describes by providing a view of India from an Indian perspective.

THE MAP AS ART: CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS EXPLORE CARTOGRAPHY



By Katherine Harmon
with Gayle Clemens.

Princeton Architectural Press, 2009.
256 pages, 360 color illustrations.
\$45.00. Hardbound.
ISBN 978-1-56898-762-0.

Review by: Jonathan F. Lewis and William Scarlato,
Benedictine University

The Map as Art is a collection of photographs documenting a variety of artistic creations having maps or cartography as their theme. The works of 160 artists are included, utilizing a variety of media: paint, photography, sculpture, pen and ink, etc. Following the introduction, the book is divided into seven sections, most containing relatively brief coverage of several artists and almost all concluding with a more extended treatment of one particular artist.

In her introduction, Katherine Harmon points out that while there has long been art in cartography, less frequently has there been cartography in art. But “since the 1960s there has been an exponential increase in artists working with maps” (p. 9), a claim documented in part by a timeline identifying major 20th century figures who have produced notable works directly incorporating maps or otherwise inspired by cartography: Salvador Dali, Joan Miro, Marcel Duchamp, Jasper Johns, and Robert Smithson, to name just a few. She offers brief descriptions of some of these individuals’ work, and provides quotations supporting her observations about the manner in which maps encouraged these artists to consider new ways of capturing landscape, space, and atmosphere. These opening passages set up her criteria for selecting examples of contemporary artists engaged in extending these explorations, undertaking new approaches, subverting traditional cartography, and taking risks in an effort to effectively depict inner space; of what she terms *psycho geography*. That term is left unexplained but appears inspired by Baudrillard’s contention that in the contemporary world, unlike previous periods, maps precede territories. According to Harmon, if maps, as traditionally understood, provide visual guides to understanding where things are, then

these new works similarly (or more self-consciously) reverse the relationship by making “a mark on a bigger map, calling out, I AM HERE” (p. 16).

The first section, entitled “Conflict and Sorrow: Maps of Opposition and Displacement,” contains works by eleven different artists, culminating with extended description of Joyce Kozloff’s work in a subsection entitled “A Geography of History and Strife.” Kozloff’s use of maps centers on their connections with conquest and combat. Her nine-foot globe, *Targets*, for example, places the viewer inside a sphere whose surfaces contain “aerial views of twenty-four countries that have been bombed by US warplanes since 1945” (p. 35) while her series *Boys’ Art* documents links between masculinity and the siege of territory. The book’s second section, “Global Reckoning: Maps That Take a Stand,” presents the work of sixteen artists before introducing Landon Mackenzie in a short essay called “The Politics of Land.” A Canadian painter, Mackenzie drew inspiration from the manner in which very early maps conveyed a sense of remote territories to inform contemporary depictions of ancient territorial quests. Her series *Houbart’s Hope*, for example, refers to ship’s pilot Josiah Houbart, who was for a while thought to have discovered an entrance to the long-sought Northwest Passage. Briefly generating considerable enthusiasm, the feature “disappeared from maps in the eighteenth century” (p. 71).

The next section, “Animal, Vegetable, Mineral: Maps of Natural Origins,” displays works by twenty-six artists, and then describes the work of Ingrid Calame in a portrayal called “Constellations of Residue.” Calame’s work moves the scale of mapping to the normally unthinkable 1:1, as she literally traces the various residues of human existence onto paper, primarily those left by the feet of men and women engaged in activities both ordinary (for example, the wear and tear of foot traffic on sidewalks) and exalted (such as found patterns on the aisles of churches and the floors of observatories). The book’s fourth section, “Personal Terrain: Maps of Intimate Places,” offers works from twenty-eight artists, but no culminating artist’s work is featured.

“You Are Here, Somewhere: Maps of Global Positioning” incorporates thirty artists and their work into its pages before moving to “Maps of Presence and Absence,” an essay describing works produced by Guillermo Kuitca. Where Ingrid Calame lifts patterns of human movement in space from existing surfaces and places them onto traditional surfaces like paper and canvas, Guillermo Kuitca, in some of his works, takes maps and transposes them onto the surfaces of everyday objects, embedding them in unexpected objects. Illustrations in this essay include two examples, both involving maps painted on the surface of mattresses. Section six, “Inner Visions: Maps of Invented Places,” is composed of works by seventeen artists, with the book’s concluding section, “Dimension/Deletion: Maps