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**Hostile Borders on  
Historical Landscapes:  
The Placeless Place of  
Andamanese Culture**

**Vishvajit Pandya**

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# Hostile Borders on Historical Landscapes: The Placeless Place of Andamanese Culture

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# Hostile Borders on Historical Landscapes: The Placeless Place of Andamanese Culture

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## ABSTRACT

This paper is an analysis of meanings attributed to contacts between Jarwas and non-Jarwas in the Andaman Islands. Unlike other Andaman tribal groups, the Jarwas are confined to a government-designated area of 765 square kilometres of forest reserve, which is only a fraction of their former tribal land. Since early colonial occupation, government parties have sought out Jarwas on the west coast of the island they inhabit, bringing them gifts to try to establish friendly relations. On the eastern side of Jarwa territory, on the other hand, the Jarwas raid settlements and occasionally kill settlers and police who venture into their territory.

The paper addresses the issue of how the contact event on the eastern side is different in Jarwa eyes from what occurs on the western side. The boundaries are given meanings by the various outsiders and the Jarwas, and these meanings are not fixed. Although contact events are intended to establish 'friendly' relations with 'hostile' Jarwas, no true relationship of trust and understanding has yet been established. This underlines the fact that meanings are bound by cultural, political and historical contexts.

## Introduction

This paper is based on my ethnographic field research in the Andaman Islands over the past 15 years. While some knowledge of the tribal group known as the Jarwas is derived from historical accounts<sup>1</sup> and administrative directives,<sup>2</sup> much of what is known about the 'hostile' and 'isolated' Jarwas and Sentinelese is derived from what are known in official documents as "contact expeditions".<sup>3</sup>



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Although I had been working in the Andamans since 1983, it was not until 1993 that the local Andaman administration allowed me to participate in a series of these expeditions. While I was restricted by various conditions and dictates, I was permitted to be involved in contact expeditions to the west coast, visiting the reserve forest area, and having opportunities to talk with non-tribal people living in close proximity to the 'hostile' tribals.<sup>4</sup>

This paper is an analysis based on observations made when I joined contact expeditions to the west coast, as well as when I visited the eastern side of Jarwa territory. In it I compare present-day contacts on the west coast to historical accounts of such contacts. I also analyse contacts between Jarwa and non-Jarwa on the eastern side. Whereas 'friendly contact' has occurred most frequently on the west coast through specific interactive contact events, its meaning has become undecipherable when considered in relation to the events on the eastern side, where Jarwas come out of their assigned reserve forest and make contact with non-tribal settlers in a manner that is glossed by the administration as 'hostile'.

In the paper I question the accepted interpretations of cultural and historical notions of boundaries, the meanings of contact events, and the historical changes to these meanings that have occurred. In questioning what makes a contact friendly or hostile I attempt to take the perspective, not of one side or the other, but of 'sitting on the fence'. Do the boundaries really exist within which the contacts are occurring?

Reading early accounts and listening to people involved in both friendly and hostile contacts is akin to sitting in a barber's chair. There, discourse and gaze exchanged between the mirrors in front of you and behind you endlessly reflect one another and collapse the distinctions between real and reflected place. It is this concept of 'placeless place' with which I am concerned. What can be learned from a group regarded as hostile and controlled so as to ensure minimum contact with others? Are the Jarwas really hostile, and in a world that is isolated and separate? If we use cultural and historical categories<sup>5</sup> to understand the world that outsiders insist is separate, what lies behind the attributed hostility, the constructed isolation and the imposed separation? Do moments of contact between tribal and non-tribal create a notion of boundary, making historically constructed boundaries redundant?

Most of the verbal/linguistic categories in events of contact remain untranslated and misunderstood,<sup>6</sup> but the actions of tribal and non-tribal participants, particularly in conjunction with observations made by those involved with contact, construct a space within which relations of contact are 'culturally translated'.



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### Issues of Landscape and Jarwa Place

A cluster of 306 islands in the Bay of Bengal make up India's union territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. From 1858 the islands had an historic significance because of their strategic location for the British empire within South and Southeast Asia. Some 450 hunting and gathering negrito tribes of the Andaman Islands make up about 0.32% of the total population.<sup>7</sup> Beyond the boundary of Port Blair, the administrative seat, lies forest that has been steadily cleared for small homes and cultivation. The possibility of exploiting this land attracts an increasing number of people, mainly from poorer parts of south and eastern India, who encroach upon it, often illegally, bypassing the administrative regulations through loopholes created by political uncertainties. Can the influx be controlled? Should it be stopped? These are some of the concerns of the people on the island. Embedded within the range of voices and opinions is the complex problem of the tribal populations who have lived in the forests for far longer than those coming as colonisers, prisoners or settlers.<sup>8</sup>

Jarwas are one of the last remaining tribal groups in this part of the world who have continued to live in the forest without being assimilated to any degree within the larger society. Today, Jarwas are confined to 765 square kilometres of Jarwa reserve forest in the South and Middle Andaman Islands. Since India's



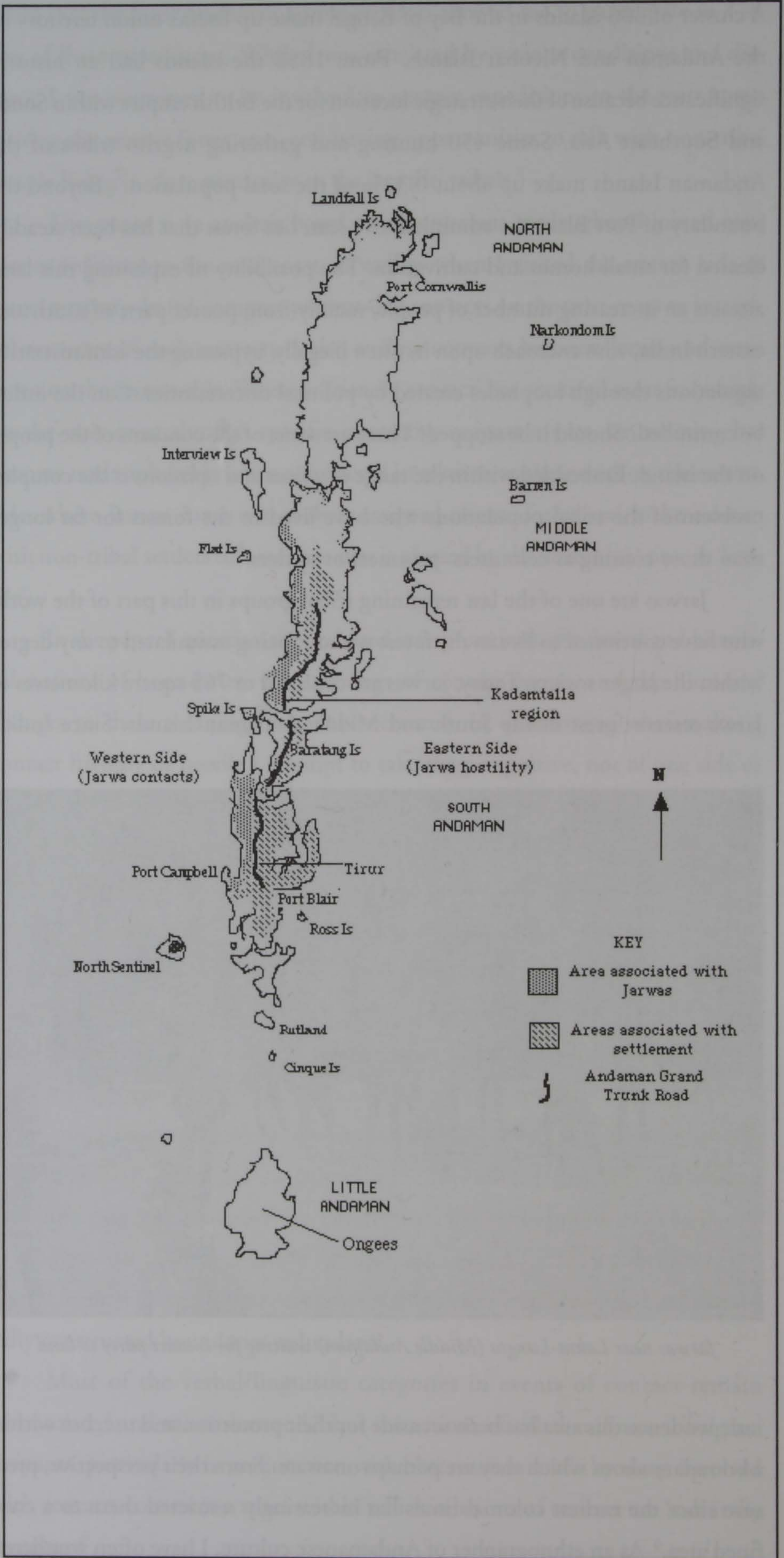
*Jarwas near Lakra-Lungta (Middle Andaman) waiting for contact party to land*

independence this area has been set aside for their protection and use, but within a boundary about which they are perhaps unaware. From their perspective, pressure since the earliest colonial times has increasingly restricted them to a confined area.<sup>9</sup> As an ethnographer of Andamanese culture, I have often wondered



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Map: Andaman Islands and Area Associations





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if the Jarwas appreciate at all that a boundary exists between their world of forest and the surrounding forest that is being invaded by the world. Is this division of place meaningless for them? Is there, rather, an unbounded landscape in which they are expected to give up the traditional pattern, common to hunting and gathering societies, of moving in relation to seasons and resources?

From the point of view of the authorities (both colonial and post-colonial), the Jarwas have a designated and demarcated place<sup>10</sup> which provides them with access to the seashore, the east side of one island and the evergreen tropical forest that covers the longitudinal continuation of the Tirur hill tracts. This forest blends into the settlement areas and small fields worked by farmers. The designated Jarwa area is where the authorities believe the Jarwas should be confined, where they should be observed and which only authorised persons should enter.

This imposition of a territory on Jarwas generates a discourse of power, obedience and authority. This discourse also includes non-tribal populations who are subject to the same authority. Both tribals and non-tribals move across the boundary that is supposed to keep them bound to designated areas.<sup>11</sup>

Signs have been placed to demarcate Jarwa territory. It is intended that Jarwas should understand the boundaries of this territory by reading painted words on boards. However, since neither they nor the settlers comprehend written words, their significance is lost and the signs are meaningless.<sup>12</sup> Along with the signs, a force of Bush Police and a series of outposts exist to control and enforce the protection of people on both sides of the boundary. These Bush Police attempt to keep separate the two worlds into which both Jarwa and non-Jarwa frequently cross. Can Jarwas and non-Jarwas remain separate, since the boundaries and borders are imposed? Crossing the boundary collapses the imposed and culturally constructed division of a Jarwa space and non-Jarwa space. The transgressions across it not only break down the imposed boundary but also create a counter discourse that reflects upon the very way in which the power and authority that imposed the border represent themselves to Jarwas and non-Jarwas.

### The Question of Boundary

A boundary is the symbolic border between one place and another. A boundary exists when a place within it is identified as distinct from the surrounding landscape. In my cultural and historical analysis of contact events, I will suggest that the imposition of the boundary around Jarwa territory not only creates a discontinuity of landscape, but also creates disharmony, dissonance and an historically distinct form of interaction that contributes to making the place a



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placeless entity, where rules are broken, where emotions are mixed, and where roles and intentions are misunderstood. The boundaries create not only distinctions and divisions to confine meanings and movements, but meaning is also engendered when the boundaries are broken out of. This place perpetuates the location of the tribes in a placeless place – like the place between two mirrors which can be reflected to infinity – a place that is there without being really there. It is a site but not a real place on or in a landscape, a site that Foucault calls space of the “heterotopia type” in which all the “real sites that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted”.<sup>13</sup>

Social scientists have approached borders and boundaries as demarcated areas that operate on the principle of exclusion, generating a discourse of power, politics and history in a given place and time. In this model, movement across boundaries is often restricted, limited or denied. The insistence is on ‘within-ness’ and ‘outsideness’. The other view of boundary has been that it creates an overlap, fostering a feeling of ‘between-ness’ and ‘transition across’. A unique place is created between A and B that has something of both A and B in it but is generally separate and distinct. This is a conceptualised boundary<sup>14</sup> that constitutes an ambiguous and liminal place and time. Often interpreted as a grey area where black and white blend, it generates a discourse of ritual and history in which subjects are transformed through transformative movement.

In this ethnographic example, the Jarwas, settlers and administrators are all brought together by contact events, which suggests that boundaries are constructed by the people in the landscape and reflect expansion, contraction and collapse – making the exchanged discourse of and on boundaries highly empowered, a matter of contested identity; making the landscape a created field of power where history, politics, social relations and cultural perceptions become issues of “high tension”.<sup>15</sup>

Boundaries do not have meaning in themselves but their imposition creates meanings for the space on which they are demarcated. Thomas,<sup>16</sup> in his analysis of European and Andamanese contact, conceives of the islands as a nonrepresentable “mirage”, as a “misrepresentation” because the boundaries constitute a “transcultural space” with destabilised and transient territorial spaces. In Thomas’s conception, this “mirage” is comprised of a series of transcultural events and meanings which are representative or counter representative and which refer to spaces that are “between cultures” in a “momentary social vacuum”.<sup>17</sup>

In his comparison of Andamanese contact events with other ethnographic regions and accounts, Thomas treats these contact events as things of the past.<sup>18</sup> However, in the Middle and South Andamans, contact with ‘hostile Jarwas’ is not just something of the past but something that continues in the present.



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These ongoing contact events create not misrepresentation or misinterpretation but rather accumulated reinterpretation and representation of the contactor and the contacted, and question the very transcultural space enclosed in the boundaries.

The Jarwa landscape – including space, history and discourse generated by contact events within and across boundaries – blends political concerns with ritual acts. Power and beliefs, authority and ideas blend in the unfolding of contact events at the boundaries. This blending at the boundaries through contact events has made the boundary synthetic, porous and permeable. The administration wants to impose notions of exclusion on a people who have a tendency to be inclusive. Consequently, the borders and boundaries become like a series of concave reflecting mirrors, distorting the identities, images and intentions of the people on a landscape that is given (natural) as a continuum but segmented (cultural) as a territory. This makes the event of contact at the imposed boundaries a series of reflections involving the ones who contact and the ones who are contacted. The people are reflectors and are reflected in the discourse. Nor should landscape be considered inert, for people in the same landscape give quite different meanings to it, meanings that allow boundaries to make landscapes expressive of contradictory, fragmented ideas.

Such a process is particularly important for tribal people at a placeless place that, over a period, is encompassed by a non-tribal place. It makes the placeless place also a place, allows meanings to transform the imaginary into actual memory, the historical into ritual, and the political into fictional, and permits many other combinations of the types of discourses that are made in a placeless place.



*Typical eastern side landscape, settlement within Tirur hill range*



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Let me give an example. Students at Tirur village school, close to the Jarwa reserve forest, pointed to the hills overlooking the area and said they knew Jarwas sometimes came out of the forest. In July 1991, they went on, Jarwas came out and killed an eight-year old boy who was playing on the fringe of the fields while his sister was minding cattle. On being asked what they thought Jarwas were, the schoolchildren narrated a story based on the image of the trained elephants that – because of lumber operations being adversely affected by the Second World War – were left behind by timber contractors, and over a period became wild in the forest:

Jarwas are like the left-behind elephants in the forest. Jarwas came from some kingdom across the sea and got stranded in the forest here, and over a period they forgot all their civilisation and sociality and became wild.

### The Colonial Situation, Creating the Placeless Place

When the British controlled the Andamans, they developed Port Blair into a seat of administration by using prisoners from mainland India to clear the forests, with Andamanese tribals being employed as guides.<sup>19</sup> This way of organising the work led to frequent attacks by Jarwas on people invading their territory.<sup>20</sup> As a retaliatory tactic, other Andamanese and Burmese forest workers and sepoys were ordered to undertake armed 'punitive expeditions' on the Jarwas.<sup>21</sup> Vacant Jarwa camp-sites in the interior forests were invaded and ransacked. Sometimes they were set fire to. Reports suggest that face-to-face interaction led to fatalities on both sides, and to the capture of Jarwa women and children.

However, most of the coastal area connected to the forests associated with the Jarwas, that is, the forests on the west side of the main island, was subject to a very different historical experience.<sup>22</sup> From 1789 the coast was visited by British colonial ships that, on sighting the Jarwas, would send boats ashore so that the islands could be explored. A description by C.H. Cornwallis dated 19 December 1788 exemplifies the extent and nature of the contacts:

With respect to the best method of opening an intercourse with the people in the rude state in which they have hitherto been described to be, much may be collected from the attempts made by modern navigators on discovery; and it would appear from their regulations that it would be most advisable for you at first to refrain from landing (unless in the case of positive necessity) except at such places on the coast as you may judge from their appearance will successfully answer the objects of your survey ... and in an



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attempt to offer them a social communication, which shall afford them the comforts and advantages of more civilised life, the dictates of humanity no less than of policy require that this should be effected as much as possible by conciliatory means, certainly without bloodshed. It is therefore recommended to you to endeavour by persuasion, presents and other allurements (but not by force or deceit) to prevail on some of the natives to come on board your vessels where kind and attentive treatment of them may remove the apprehensions of the inhabitants in general, and promote an easy intercourse, while at the same time a useful object may be gained in acquiring a knowledge of their manners and customs, and such words and expressions in their language as would facilitate the communication between us.<sup>23</sup>

These attempts to make friendly contact with 'the natives' were generally unsuccessful, and were soon replaced by a pattern of gift-giving and receiving which involved mostly food and implements. Over a period, this led to the Jarwas being brought aboard the ships.

In this process, the ship became a place representing a different site beyond the border created by the seashore.<sup>24</sup> From the Jarwa perspective, it was a new place or space, made accessible by boats that took them across boundaries and into contact with a colonial universe that could be closely observed on the ship's deck.<sup>25</sup> The deck of the ship was thus transformed into a 'heterotopia' which simultaneously represented the two sites of culture created by the boundary set up between the bordering coastline, occupied by the 'unpredictable/unknown' Jarwas, and the ship, controlled by the hierarchical commanding colonial power.<sup>26</sup>

The Jarwas were brought on board by indigenous naval lascars of Indian and Burmese descent accompanied by Andamanese sharp shooters. On board the Jarwas could observe the clothed British naval officers with the same curiosity as their nakedness was observed by the non-tribals. This interaction was reportedly characterised by the outsiders trying not to laugh as they gave gifts to establish relations, while the Jarwas were childishly amused, running around chaotically. Often Jarwas were thrown overboard to swim back to the coast.<sup>27</sup>

The coastline can be regarded as a border between forest and sea that, through the process of gift-leaving and -taking, was contested between the Jarwas and non-Jarwas. It was a place where the two could encounter each other, but never coexist. Contact on or beyond the coastline, on the ship or on the hinterland, characterised by the dichotomies of discipline and chaos, fear and humour, provides a paradigm of the reflected and deflected discourses in which each of the two parties made meaning for and from the other.

Though movement across the space was possible, there was the danger of the unknown for each party. On the one hand, the Jarwas would swim in large



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groups to the ships and try to climb the deck; on the other, sepoys would very apprehensively land on the coastline to locate Jarwa camps, often intending to ambush and capture some Jarwas to 'teach them lessons' for acts they may have done on the forest side of the boundary. Never did intentions, meanings and borders become clear.

On the western side of the island, historical expeditions evolved into punitive expeditions, while on the eastern side Jarwas continued their hostile attacks on the increasing number of outsiders. These two punitive sets of activities did not contribute to the acceptance of a border which would bind and confine differences.

### Contact Events on the Western Side

Colonial accounts of the Jarwas vary, but show a tribal group that is difficult to define, describe or predict. In his 1795 observations M. Symes reports,

Coconut ... is not to be found here; they (the Jarwas) are extremely fond of it; whenever a nut was left in their way by the settlers, it was immediately carried off with much apparent satisfaction. Captain Stokes, who constantly resided on the island, disappointed in his attempts to establish a social intercourse, endeavoured to alleviate their wants by sending, as often as circumstances would admit, small supplies of victuals to their huts, which were always abandoned on the approach of his people, but restored to again when they had withdrawn.<sup>28</sup>

Another colonial account, by E.H. Man, gives a different picture of how the Jarwas presented themselves in contact events.

It has been remarked with regret by all interested in the race, that intercourse with the alien population has, generally speaking prejudicially affected their morals. ... Though there are some grounds for the opinion hitherto held regarding their fearlessness, our more recent relations with them prove that the surprising courage and apparent utter recklessness of life which they manifested in their early encounters with us were due rather to their ignorance of, and disbelief in any foe more powerful than themselves, or with means of destruction more deadly than their own. ... All is regarded as fair in war, and cunning and treachery are considered worthy of commendation; in short the high type of courage common among most civilised, and a few savage nations appears to be totally lacking among the Andamanese; nevertheless, those who evince courage are much admired. ... When appraised of the existence of danger, they usually evince extreme caution, and only venture upon an attack when well assured that by their superior numbers, they can put the enemy to flight, or will be able, by stratagem, to surprise



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and overpower him. At the same time certain traits which have been noticeable in their dealings with us would give colour to the belief that they are not altogether lacking in the sense of honour, and have some faint idea of the meaning of justice.<sup>29</sup>

The fearsome and unpredictable nature of the Jarwas made the administration's contact parties sensitive to a boundary that they crossed only cautiously; and the hostility and difference symbolised by the boundary made it impossible for them to communicate with Jarwas. A gap was thus maintained between the contacted and contactors. The west coast became in effect a landscape that embodied a series of boundaries and meanings: forests, coastline, beach, sea negotiated with boat, sea negotiated with ship, all embodying the notion of limits and lines, across which there was continuous movement of contact and non-contact, friendliness and unfriendliness, moving in (non-tribal) and moving out (Jarwa).

These patterns of interaction have continued since colonial times, across boundaries where the meaning of contact is constituted by continuous efforts of non-tribals to 'move in' and Jarwas to 'move out'. In post-colonial times these boundaries have remained but have acquired an additional meaning, of a place where 'gifts' may be deposited and left for Jarwas.

After independence, the Indian government continued its practice of sending ships, boats and gifts to the west coast to pacify the Jarwas and to make possible the delineation of Jarwa territory. This was regarded as continuing the policy of contact in the hope of instilling trust, friendship and understanding into the Jarwas. The belief was that, once the Jarwas were pacified, they could be brought into the 'mainstream of the society', as had happened with other Andamanese tribals who historically had been hostile and had resisted outsiders coming into the island, but had eventually joined the administration-managed 'Andaman Homes'.<sup>30</sup>

Many analysts have claimed that groups like the Great Andamanese and Ongees have suffered demographic decline, even genocide, because of the push to make them join the mainstream of society via administration-managed settlements.<sup>31</sup> In the case of the Jarwas, however, such claims are not at issue. For the Jarwas, rather, the problem of contact remains constant and unavoidable.

Since the Tribal Act of 1956, which declared the Jarwa forest a protected area, armed guards have left gunny bags of gift items like coconuts, plantains, puffed rice, utensils and scrap metal on the west coast beaches and from the safe distance of their ships have observed Jarwas coming onto the shore and collecting the bags. The border between the two worlds has in some ways been maintained, but rather as a demarcation of space in which representation of the two signified worlds, that of the tribal and the non-tribal, is never simultaneously



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present in the same place. In a way it has been the outsiders' acknowledgement of a boundary they have created for themselves. What has been created is the concept of a landscape without demarcation for the interaction of the two parties. The landscape is a place that belongs to nobody, a place that is placeless – where gifts can be left for recipients who are normally invisible.

It was only in 1970 that Jarwas appeared on the beach and, without any blatant hostility, allowed a government contact party to land. The traditional pattern of power started by the British had never before involved the Jarwas allowing outsiders to land among them, but twenty-odd years of dropping gifts eventually led to a very different perception of the outsiders on the beach of the Jarwa landscape.



*Jarwas and contact party members on the western coast of North Andaman*

While aspects of the contact event remained the same as they were in colonial days (government ships anchored off the coast and sent small boats ashore with contact parties, armed guards and gifts), these gifts, for the first time, were not just dropped but were given hand to hand. As the contact events evolved, the Jarwas were allowed to choose from the boat whatever items they wanted. Innovations in the culture of contact events followed the growing demand to pacify the Jarwas as the numbers of settlers on the island kept increasing steadily.

Nowadays friendly contacts are organised by the government-administered agency for tribal welfare, Andaman Adim Jan Jati Vikas Samiti. Around every full moon, depending on weather conditions, the agency organises a team of people who go by boat to the western coast of the Middle Andamans via Kadamtalla. This pre-appointed contact team includes administrators, a doctor,



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an officer from the statistics department, an anthropologist from the local anthropology survey office and a government photographer.

As the ship reaches the coastline, it starts sounding its horn and the people on board look out for Jarwas moving out from the thickets of the forest. When they sight the Jarwas the ship is brought to a halt. Small motor boats are loaded with gifts, and members of the contact party go in to the sandy coastline, about two kilometres off from the ship. In another smaller boat, members of the Bush Police remain on alert. They are not allowed to land on the beach but watch for trouble.

The boat loaded with gifts of strips of red cloth, coconuts and bananas approaches the beach. Carrying their woven baskets, waiting Jarwas move towards the boat and start climbing over it, scrambling for the gifts brought by the contact party. The Jarwas try first to pick selectively, and then pick whatever they can to fill their baskets. Often several members of the same family join in the scramble, taking away loaded baskets, depositing the contents in a fixed place on the beach, and coming back to collect the next load. On average, about 20 people are contacted at any given spot, but there have been occasions when only women and children are contacted, or when a large group of fifty or sixty is encountered.

Often the Jarwas arrive after the contact party has landed. They have learned the relation of power between the ship and the boat and, as a result, seek to visit the ship for more gifts and have started to expect the contact team on the boat to unload gifts for them, in a way reminiscent of the boat's relationship to the ship in colonial days. Amid the commotion, as they run between the boat and the



*Jarwas scrambling to unload gift items, commotion created by the arrival of the contact party*



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place where the gifts are deposited, the Jarwas sing in a repetitive chant-like tone. No Jarwa ever tries to take from the pile of another family. As all the gift items are unloaded and distributed, the contact party disembarks and moves among the Jarwas congregated on the beach.

When they first catch sight of a ship on the horizon, the Jarwas light a small fire on the beach in anticipation of the contact party's arrival. After they have received the gifts, they roast plantain in the fire and eat it with some coconuts while the contact party is present. Sometimes the food is shared between the contacted and the contactors. Once eating starts, the contact party begins its observations. The nature of these observations will depend on individual interests and orientation and can encompass estimating the number of Jarwas present, and noting any visible sickness or injury and any need for medical attention. Jarwas are photographed, taped and filmed.

Contact also involves the Jarwas' observation of the contact party. The contact parties' skin, their variation in body size and shape, and their clothes are very carefully scrutinised. Sometimes sounds are repeated between the contactors and the contacted to ascertain meaning and understanding.<sup>32</sup> Sometimes, as this process goes on, some Jarwas start slowly picking up their loads of gifts and moving into the forest toward their camp sites. On other occasions, the contact party will wander in with the Jarwas and will be privileged to see where they live. Generally, the contact event is brought to an end within three to four hours, and the visitors wave goodbye to the Jarwas and get back to the ship.

Over a period, the Jarwas have learned that tape recorders and video cameras have supplanted the cameras the contact party used to use. The Jarwas have heard the tapes played back to them, and they have seen how the world looks through the viewfinder of a camera.

These fleeting opportunities for observation have confirmed what was ascertained about the Jarwas by early British expeditions to the islands. However, information gathered and imparted in a short span of time during contact that takes place only three to five times in a year is incomplete. Nothing definite is known for sure. In fact, there is no fixed systematic record maintained of the people contacted, and even the number of Jarwas living in the region is only estimated. It is not even known if the Jarwas call themselves Jarwas or not.

The event asserts the power relations between 'us', the outsiders who have come and accomplished the directed friendly contact with those known as the Jarwas, and the Jarwas themselves. The Jarwas understand the power relations embodied in the contact party, just as they understand and have understood in the past the relationship between themselves, the ship anchored in the harbour and the people who arrive on shore by boat. For the Jarwas, those who come to



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the beach bring things to give, and the power is in the 'gifts' being given and taken.

Those who join the contact party are subject to command and authority. Some join because they have been told to go, and some seek to go. For some it is a fun trip among the 'natural savage' where there is a sense of romance, uncertainty and, above all, exoticness. Without a doubt, Jarwas have noted that the number in the contact party and the quantity of gifts given increase when an important state guest is on the ship. Such guests sometimes supervise the operation, sometimes even coming into shore on the boat for actual contact. Shirtless subordinates on the boat listen to the authority (shirted) figure on the beach, and now the Jarwas themselves command shirtless contact team members to unload the gift items for them.

Often clothes are demanded and torn apart by the Jarwas. We have yet to ask the Jarwas why they tear apart the clothes. Often the Jarwas remove some of the shell and leaf ornaments – the only items they wear – and give them to the contact party; it then may follow that members of the contact party should give away what is on their bodies. Local anthropologists stationed at the Port Blair office of the Anthropological Survey of India explained the situation as follows:

Contact with Jarwas is what we call Participant Observation – becoming one with the native. If we visit the naked Jarwas then we should be without clothes as much as possible. The administration has therefore given instructions that contact party should land with minimum clothes on – but all this is forgotten when we have some high ranking official in the contact expedition since who is going to tell them to please have only undergarments on!

Individuals who have been involved over a period with Jarwa contact do not agree about the objective of contact events. Some feel that regular events instil a feeling of mutual trust and motivate the Jarwas to join the mainstream of society. Others feel that nothing is really accomplished or learned by any of the group involved in the 'drama'.

The government now has a policy of discouraging the practice of bringing Jarwas on board ship and taking them to settlements elsewhere on the islands, as was sometimes done in the past. This policy has evolved from incidents such as that at the end of March 1977 when two Jarwa men were brought to Port Blair, and one was identified as having an old bullet wound. After a brief stay they were returned in the hope that they would carry a message of trust and goodwill. However, soon after (20 April 1977), five poachers were killed by Jarwas from the same region. Incidents such as this show that efforts to break down the bound-



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ary and the meanings attached to it do not necessarily work. Such incidents lead to questions about contact, friendliness, mutual respect and how the Jarwas actually perceive otherness, inclusiveness, boundaries and power. Evidence suggests they understand the relations of power but not the boundaries that, from the authorities' point of view, limit them.<sup>33</sup>

Interesting parallels emerge between the 1861 account of J.C. Haughton and contemporary times. Outlining his administrative predicament when attempting to maintain a non-hostile and orderly relationship with Jarwas, Haughton describes how he started 'capturing' natives in coastal areas and bringing them to Port Blair or even to Rangoon to 'learn' about them and 'teach' them about the outside world.<sup>34</sup> There seems to be a logical continuity between giving (by the observer) and taking gift items (by the observed), and teaching and learning. In fact, the beach becomes a boundary where the visitors and Jarwas act out a drama that symbolises the power relations between them; the role of the Jarwas is to receive things from people who are apprehensive about them but who also want them to be 'friendly' and to 'learn' about the outside world.

Some veteran members of contact parties remember that in earlier days of contact the Jarwas were like mischievous young boys who would not hesitate to take things from contact party members and hide them away. They would often deliberately fart right in front of contact team members, and be thrilled to see team members running away holding their noses. Women would squirt breast milk on the ship's crew or urinate – all very reminiscent of the British colonial situation when order, chaos, humour and disgust blended together. On being pushed away, Jarwas would get extremely physical till they were lowered into boats and taken back to the coastline. More recently, individual Jarwas have been observed asserting that they want more gifts or asking why they did not get a specific item such as piece of metal cutting blade or a nail. On not getting it they hold the individual member of the contact party whom they feel is responsible very firmly, apparently to express their anger and resentment. There have been incidents when Jarwas get into fights and fellow Jarwas – particularly women – have had to intervene and calm things down.

Most of the contact team, being male, have on occasion behaved badly and tried to take photographs of naked Jarwa women. When non-Jarwa women have accompanied contact parties, Jarwa men and women have been extremely curious about them and on occasions physical scuffles have led to women in the contact team feeling as if they were being attacked. The idea of other women (the Jarwa women) being different from the 'contact' women creates yet another division between the visiting group and the Jarwas. A further boundary is set up that makes it possible for others to undertake all sorts of examinations of the



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Jarwas (medical, physical, anthropological). It does not, however, make permissible reciprocal examination by the Jarwas of the others.

Now, a strict code of conduct has been established for contact parties. No individual is allowed to undertake any action that could put the whole team at risk or could jeopardise the relationship established with the Jarwas. No attempt is made to bring Jarwas on board ship or to take them on a trip to show them the world of the contact party. Gifts are no longer unloaded by the contact team and left on the beach for the Jarwas to redistribute later among themselves. It is imperative that the contact party ensures that the Jarwas not only get the gift items but also see who brings them. The Jarwas are allowed to take the gift items on their own.



*Contact party approaching western coastal area*

### **Contact on the Eastern Side**

The situation on the eastern side of the forest (as opposed to the west coast) is different. The eastern side, which has most of the villages, farming fields and forest, has historically been subjected to much commercial pressure. Yet it reflects what has happened historically on the forested western side, where a series of borders creates distortions and refractions in the placeless place created between the observed Jarwas and the observing authority, both colonial and post-colonial – between authority and the authority-less.

Since the completion of the Andaman trunk road (1988) it has been possible for people and commercial traffic to travel by road up to Mayabunder in North Andaman. After a bus enters the Ferargunj district immediately north of the Port Blair region, it stops at Jhirkatang Number Two Checkpost. This is a compulsory stop but usually nobody gets off. Instead, an armed escort from the



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Bush Police under Andaman Nicobar Police Force authority is assigned to travel with the bus. In some buses, the glass windows in the front are reinforced with wire netting.

The driver shows his permit and enters the required information in a log book and, after checking that all the windows are shut, ensures the guard gets a front seat and is comfortably installed. The guard gives an all-clear sign, and the bus moves slowly forward and waits for a barrier to rise. A sign states that one is entering the Jarwa reserve forest. Twenty-three kilometres of the Andaman trunk road passes through Jarwa territory. Drivers of vehicles are expected to refrain from sounding their horns loudly. This is to ensure the Jarwas can continue hunting in the forest without the sound of horns disturbing their tracking.

Buses never travel at night or without a Bush Police escort. Such an escort, provided in the belief that the noise of gun fire will scare Jarwas away, is on hand should they attack the bus or try to stop it. In the past there have been incidents when Jarwas have tried to stop the bus and other vehicles by shooting arrows at the windscreen. When the road was being constructed, the construction workers were often targeted by the Jarwas. Despite various committees' and commissions' ideas about how the road may or may not affect Jarwas, the road is still in use today.<sup>35</sup> At the road's points of entry and exit, non-tribal settlement has been increasing, and it has attracted visitors to local markets, fairs and temples.

The road, the growing settlements and the increasing presence of outsiders on the eastern side have had their own impact on the Jarwa and non-Jarwa situation. The settlers see the Jarwas' reserve forest as yet another area to be exploited, and there is frequent illegal poaching and extraction of resources from it. Small settler communities have local heroes and legends about how they have dealt with Jarwas in the forest – how such heroes have killed Jarwas while hunting wild pigs; how they have made friends with Jarwas, as they claim to have done on the west coast; how they have succeeded in avoiding being killed by fierce Jarwas while collecting materials from the forest.

Some incidents are true, and the injuries and reported deaths of settlers by arrows and the mutilation of their bodies is proof that outsiders do go into out-of-bound areas.<sup>36</sup> Records between 1946 and 1988 report an average of at least seven 'Jarwa hostilities' a year, during which an average of about four individuals died.<sup>37</sup> Between 1983 and 1988, 15 non-Jarwas were killed in 28 incidents, eight of them in Jarwa territory.

Most reported deaths seem to have occurred when non-Jarwas entered Jarwa territory. From November 1993 to January 1994, eleven individuals were reported to have been killed by Jarwas within Jarwa territory. The local police had to recover the bodies in various stages of decomposition and with signs of mu-



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tilation, particularly of the groin area. Deposits of human faeces were also evident at the sites. During the same period the local newspaper, *The Daily Telegram*,<sup>38</sup> reported that the bodies of five missing Wandoor fisherman were recovered at Foul Bay, their jaws broken and their bodies pierced by arrows. In his report, the district police officer explained the practice of subjecting dead bodies to extreme mutilation as a Jarwa way of ensuring that "souls would not roam about in the form of demons but instead would find their heavenly abode".

The Jarwas' hostile acts are not confined to outsiders entering the forest, but also cross boundaries and involve attacks on settlements and Bush Police camps, often on nights when there is a full moon. The Jarwas are reported to go through small settlements, carrying away clothes hanging outside and metal utensils and tools, consuming fruit from planted fruit trees, and destroying fences and thatching. On occasion, they kill dogs and livestock with their arrows. During these incidents, few deaths occur. Sometimes, settlers have been awakened and, in the darkness, have chased Jarwas away or have been shot at by Jarwas.

The Bush Police posts and police patrols, which are intended to keep the two worlds separate, are often the prime exploiters of the Jarwa forest. Like the sepoys and contactors in the boat, the gun-carrying Bush Police cross boundaries and are sometimes therefore the targets of Jarwa ambush. Over the last 10 years, Bush Police camps erected within the vicinity of the Jarwa reserve have become warning posts. Originally set up to protect the Jarwa, Bush Police are seen today as a force to protect the settlers, firing their guns in the air to scare Jarwas away from settler areas. For example, on 20 October 1991 Jarwas attacked the Bush Police camp at Jhirkatang and one policeman was killed. In retaliation and in defence, the police claimed to have fired 300 rounds in the air, in accordance with the regulations. According to local people, however, the policeman killed had been poaching pigs in Jarwa territory. (The authorities were concerned about the intensity and amount of firing and the possibility of Jarwas being hurt or killed, and gave orders that thenceforth the Bush Police should be issued only with blanks. But this order was revoked in 1992, when Jarwas carried out an early morning attack on a Bush Police camp near Tirur.)

To a degree, the settlers around the Jarwa reserve forest are now used to Jarwa raids. They report them when they happen, and claim compensation. What they fear most is the fact that, on occasion, the Jarwas kill people with their arrows. Those who are targeted are popularly believed to be those the Jarwas have spotted in the forest trying to hunt or extract forest products – illegal activities, as settlers are not allowed to enter the reserve forest.

This popular notion is questionable, since it implies that the Jarwas are on the lookout for culprits. In point of fact the Jarwas are not aware of the bounda-



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ries that have been imposed between non-Jarwas and Jarwas. Yet it cannot be denied that Jarwas resent outsiders exploiting their forest, and it is mostly outsider settlements near the forest that they raid.

There are no filed papers of Jarwas reporting damage or loss of life among themselves, and there are no records of settlers hurting or killing Jarwas while illegally entering the Jarwa forest. The settlers tell stories about killing or wounding "wild natives" in the forest, but Jarwas have never left behind an injured person or a dead body as evidence of this.<sup>39</sup>

### Implications of the Two Types of Contact

The Jarwas' habit of raiding settlement areas for fruit and metal scraps corresponds to their habit of taking gifts from contact parties on the western side.<sup>40</sup> The distinction between giving things to Jarwas and things being taken by Jarwas is made by the authorities in relation to the two different events. But from the Jarwa perspective, if you can take on the western borders, why can you not do the same on the eastern borders? In any case, the Jarwas do not perceive borders and boundaries, but rather a continuous landscape in which the power relations and meanings that let them 'take' on one side (the west) apply equally to other side (the east).<sup>41</sup>

In a way, the eastern side and western side are reflections of the interactions between Jarwas and non-Jarwas. The western side is the place where the administration enters with 'gifts' for the Jarwas to take, but on the eastern side the Jarwas cross the administration-created boundaries to 'take' what they can. Events on both sides of the island involve Jarwas taking things, and the boundaries created by the administrative power are incomprehensible to them. Consequently actions and transactions undertaken by Jarwas across the boundaries are misconstrued by non-Jarwas. Since the boundaries are politically, historically and culturally constructed, and continuously reconstructed, the meaning of Jarwa acts has become a complex muddle which needs to be translated. The Jarwas on the western side are friendly and take gifts given to promote 'friendliness', yet become hostile and carry out raids on the eastern side.

Conversely, since Jarwas on the western border are recipients of 'gifts', settlers regard taking things out of the Jarwa forest via the eastern border as justifiable.<sup>42</sup> Settlers see the government giving things to the Jarwas as a means to instil discipline and law within the particular space created by the imposition of a boundary. To construct the meaning and the boundary, the outsider with power (such as the contact party) moves into the Jarwa forest. Yet those with authority and power who cross the Jarwa boundary resent the Jarwas moving out to observe and collect from the settlers' world. This world is created by the imposition



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of a boundary, and the Jarwas make contact across it that is complementary to the outsider. But while such contact creates meaning for the outsider, it creates no such meaning for the Jarwas.

For the Jarwas contact events are constituted by acts of taking. From their perspective, taking the things brought to them as gifts by outsiders who enter the western side of their territory and taking things from the settlers' territory on the eastern side are not differentiated as separate events, acts and meanings. They do not differentiate between being given to and taking.<sup>43</sup> From the non-Jarwa perspective, contact as an event has two different meanings. On the western side, contact and giving and taking are regarded as friendly; on the eastern side, contact and taking are hostile. For the Jarwas, events of contact, whether on the western or the eastern side, have only one meaning, getting things, and this has remained constant over time. For non-Jarwas, contact has more than one meaning depending on the spatial context, denoted by how things are taken in different places.

There is no reason to think the Jarwas see themselves as either friendly or hostile. After all, hostility and friendliness involve more than one individual or one party and are mutually understood. Perhaps the Jarwas should be left alone, with laws strictly enforced that would limit intrusions into their reserve forests. But would such restrictions include the use of the road through the forest? If not, how could its use be controlled? In any case, how can we ensure that what the Jarwas now see as a hostile act can be seen by them instead as a type of contact that, from their perspective, is desirable or even inevitable?

Some groups of people on the island debate whether the Jarwas should be treated as people with special boundaries, or whether they should be brought out and made to join the island's democratic and progressive main stream. Friendliness, hostility, observers, authority, contactors, colonial and post-colonial administrators have all imposed a series of boundaries to keep the world of tribe and non-tribe classified and separated. But those who are classified, separated and signified by imposed boundaries move across them, making them meaningless. Perhaps the Jarwas will eventually become placeless like the Great Andamanese<sup>44</sup> and the Ongees<sup>45</sup> who have been resettled in a place the authorities have created for them.

### Conclusion

The Andamanese tribals have been portrayed since the late 18th century as isolated and primitive, even though the Andaman Islands are in one of the busiest sea lanes in the Bay of Bengal.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, the Andamanese Jarwas are portrayed as 'friendly' or 'hostile' depending on the nature of the contact that defines them,



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and of the outsider's perception of their passage across or existence within imposed boundaries.

Jarwas have always been connected to an outside world by sporadic intrusions and attempts to establish settlements.<sup>47</sup> These moments have been contested and marked by violence.<sup>48</sup> As meanings have been variously assigned to the Jarwas, they too have been constructing the meaning of the other<sup>49</sup> and their 'anthropological knowledge' of the outsider. 'Friendly contact' over almost 200 years is encapsulated in non-verbal communication reinforced by gifts of food, iron, bits of glass, mirrors, nails, knives, etc., and by the 'exchange' of gifts.<sup>50</sup> No new acts have been added to the events of contact and no new meanings of contact with the Jarwas have been deciphered. In the continued practice of contact events, the relationship between various contact experiences and subtle perceptual transformations has been ignored.

While the meaning of contact on the western side of the island has remained largely unchanged, however, contact regarded as 'hostile' on the eastern side of the forest has been given new meanings. The contact situations, continued over a period of time, tell us something about non-verbal communication between groups of people with different constellations of customs, manners and language. Contact events have not brought Jarwas and non-Jarwas together in a shared discourse; rather, they have created different misunderstandings, at least from outsiders' perspectives. For the Jarwas it is neither the variation in contact events nor outsiders' distinct divisions of space and boundaries that creates the meaning of contact. For them, since space or landscape is not divided by boundaries but is "unbounded",<sup>51</sup> acts such as 'taking things' and 'going away' have remained constant, whereas for outsiders they appear unpredictable and meaningless. For the outsiders it seems logical that meanings of acts as well as contacts should remain specific to areas bound in and separated by boundaries.

History and the pattern of contacts are moments of evidence that bring about the existence of a peculiar space, the border between cultures.<sup>52</sup> In other words, time creates space. However, this space is not just geographic. In the case considered in this study, the space that was once contested between the East India Company and the Andamanese is now contested between the Indian administration and the Jarwas. The space created by the sequence of contact events through time is, in a way, 'translated space', a means of organising communication between two cultures by juxtaposing displaced cultural elements, such as material artefacts and people, and a backdrop that includes ships, beaches and settlements.



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### Endnotes

- 1 M. Portman (1899) *A History of Our Relations with the Andamanese*, Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, India, pp 11-2, 19, 51, 116, 701-67; E. Man (1932) *On the Aboriginal Inhabitants of the Andaman Islands*, London: Royal Anthropological Institute, pp. 135-6; J. Ritchie (1771) *A Hydrological Journal of a Cursory Survey of the Coasts and Islands in Bay of Bengal*, London: George Bigg, p. 61; R. Colebrooke (1807) 'On the Andaman Islands', *Asiatic Research*, 4, p. 385; G. Earl (1850) 'On the leading characteristics of the Papuan, Australian and Malayo-Polynesian Nations', *Journal of Indian Archipelago*, 4, p. 9; Anon. (1859) *Selections from the Records of the Government of India* (Home Department), Vol. 25, Calcutta, v. 60; Anon. (1908) *Local Gazetteer: The Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, Calcutta, pp. 13-14; M. Topping (1791) 'Extracts from the log of the cutter "Mary" from Pulo Pinang to the Great Andaman', in *Selections from the Records of the Madras Government*, No. 19, p. 44; F. Mout (1863) *Adventures and Researches Among the Andaman Islanders*, London: Hurst and Blacket, pp. 21-2.
- 2 See Portman, op. cit.; S. Awaradi (1990) *Master Plan 1991-2021: For Welfare of Primitive Tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, Port Blair: Andaman Nicobar Administration; H. Das and R. Rath (1991) *The Tribals of Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, New Delhi: Ashis Publishing House, pp. 101-20.
- 3 J. Sarkar (1990) *The Jarwas*, Calcutta: Seagull Books and Anthropological Survey of India; T. Pandit (1990) *The Sentinelese*, Calcutta: Seagull Books and Anthropological Survey of India.
- 4 In 1983-1984, when I first worked among the Andamanese tribe of Ongees on Little Andaman Island, the Indian government insisted that I should not do research in the Ongee forest, but should work among the small group of Great Andamanese tribes settled on Strait Island by the government.
- 5 A. Radcliffe-Brown (1922) *The Andaman Islanders*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. vii-ix, 85, 134; Man, op. cit., 1932, pp 195-7; Portman, op. cit., pp. 674-76.
- 6 T. Todorov (1984) *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, New York: Harper and Row.
- 7 1991 Census.
- 8 C. Saldanha (1989) *Andaman, Nicobar, and Lakshadweep: An Environmental Impact Assessment*, New Delhi: Oxford and IBH Publishing Company Ltd, pp. 11-12, 31, 48.
- 9 A situation that has been experienced by most of the other hunter gatherer groups of the island.
- 10 V. Pandya (1991) 'From photography to ethnography: Andamanese documents and documentation', *Visual Anthropology*, 4 (3-4), pp. 389-99.
- 11 This invasion, in fact, is not confined to a misreading of boundaries on the eastern side but also on the west coast where fishermen and hunters invade the coastline to continue illegal exploitation of natural resources.
- 12 According to the Andaman administration's master plan (see Awaradi, op. cit.), there is a proposal to paint images of tribal and non-tribal figures on the boards so that both groups can comprehend the significance of the existing boundary markers.
- 13 M. Foucault (1986) 'Of other spaces', *Diacritics*, Spring, p. 24.
- 14 M. Douglas (1966) *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, New York: Praeger; see also, for example, V. Turner (1977) *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Nedembu Ritual*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press; A. Van Gennep (1960) *The Rites of Passage*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- 15 B. Inglis (1977) 'Nation and community: a landscape and morality', *The Sociological Review*, 25, pp. 489-513.
- 16 D. Thomas (1996) *Transcultural Space and Transcultural Beings*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, p. 5.
- 17 Op. cit., p 35.
- 18 G. Denning (1980) *Islands and Beaches: Discourse on a Silent Land. Marquesas 1774-1880*, Chicago: The Dorsey Press; M. Sahlins (1985) *Islands of History*, Chicago:



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- University of Chicago Press; and E. Schieffelin et al (1991) *Like People You See in a Dream: First Contact in Six Papuan Societies*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- 19 R. Majumdar (1975) *Penal Settlement in Andamans*, New Delhi: Government of India Press; I. Singh (1978) *The Andaman Story*, New Delhi: Vikas Publications.
- 20 J.C. Haughton (1861) 'Papers relating to the aborigines of Andaman Islands', *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, 30, pp. 251-8.
- 21 See accounts of 1910 in appendix H, Census of India 1921, pp. 31-9.
- 22 E. Man (1885) 'On the Andaman Islands and their inhabitants', *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, 14, p. 263; Mout, op. cit., pp. 77-8.
- 23 Cited in R. Temple (1990) 'Extracts from the Bengal consultations of the XVIIIth, 1980, century relating to the Andaman Islands', *The Indian Antiquary*, 29, pp. 103-6.
- 24 Denning, op. cit., 1980, pp 18, 124-29; and (1992) *Mr Bligh's Bad Language: Passion, Power and Theatre on the Bounty*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- 25 Lieutenant Colonel Albert Fytche (1861) 'A note on certain aborigines of the Andaman Islands', *Journal of Asiatic Society*, 30, pp. 263-7 (insert F 6 from MSW). He notes that in order to make proper observations and learn about the Andamanese, the captured natives were taken to Rangoon, but this was not very successful. This lack of success was, apparently, mainly due to the fact that the captors' language was mostly imitated by the captives and, in order to learn the language of the tribals, it was important to observe them as a larger group interacting among themselves. Another description of contact events is recorded by M. Symes (1800) *An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava, Sent by the Governor General of India in the Year 1795*, London: W. Bulmer and Co., pp. 131-32:
- Two young women, allured by the temptation of fish, were secured, and brought on board a ship at anchor in the harbour: the captain treated them with great humanity; they soon got rid of all fear of violence, except what might be offered to their chastity, which they guarded with unremitting vigilance: although they had a small apartment allotted to themselves, and had no real cause for apprehension, one always watched whilst the other slept; they suffered clothes to be put on, but took them off again as soon as opportunity offered, and threw them away as useless incumbrances. When their fears were over they became cheerful, chattered with freedom, and were inexpressibly diverted at the sight of their own persons in a mirror; they were fond of singing, sometimes in melancholy recitative, at others in a lively key; and often danced about the deck with great agility, slapping their posteriors with the back of their heel. Wine and spirituous liquors were disagreeable to them; no food seemed so palatable as fish, rice, and sugar. In a few weeks, having recovered strength and become fat from the more than half famished state in which they were brought on board, they began to think confinement irksome, and longed to regain their native freedom. In the middle of the night, when all but the watch man were asleep, they passed in silence through the captain's cabin, jumped out of the stern windows into the sea, and swam to an island half a mile distant, where it was in vain to pursue them, had there been any such intention; but the object was to retain them by kindness, not by compulsion, an attempt that has failed on every trial. Hunger may induce them to put themselves in the power of strangers; but the moment that want is satisfied, nothing short of coercion can prevent them from returning to a way of life, more congenial to their savage nature.
- 26 Ritchie, op. cit., pp. 47-9.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Symes, op. cit., p 135.
- 29 Man, op. cit., 1885, p. 92.
- 30 Portman, op. cit.; V. Ball (1897) 'Visit to the Andaman Home', *Indian Antiquary*, 26, pp. 170-74; L. Mathur (1984) *Kala Pani, History of Andaman Nicobar Islands*, New Delhi: Eastern Book Corporation; Man, op. cit., 1885, p. 262.



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- 31 See Z. Cooper (1990) 'The end of "Bibipoiye" (dog not) Daya in the Andamans', in *Hunter-Gatherer Demography*, Oceania Monograph 39, B. Meehan and N. White (eds), Sydney: University of Sydney; D. Danda (1987) 'Little Andaman and the Ongee', *Human Science*, 36, pp. 66-91; F. Myka (1993) *Decline of Indigenous Populations: The Case of the Andaman Islanders*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications.
- 32 M. Taussig (1993) *Mimesis and Atlerity: A Peculiar History of the Senses*, New York: Routledge.
- 33 See S. Hellard (1861) 'Notes on the Andamanese captured at Port Blair', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 30, pp. 259-63; and Sarkar, op. cit., for details on the captive Jarwas in Port Blair in the post-independence context.
- 34 J.C. Haughton (1861) 'Papers relating to the aborigines of the Andaman Islands', *Journal of Asiatic Society*, 30, pp. 251-258.
- 35 L. Vidyarthi (1976) 'Development plans of the tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands; An action oriented report', *Journal of Social Research*, 19 (2), pp. 74-85.
- 36 Port Blair Police HQ files.
- 37 Sarkar, op. cit.
- 38 Port Blair, 10 November 1993, pp. 1-2.
- 39 Part of the reason for this is the importance given to the burial of the dead body to ensure the production of benevolent ancestral spirits within the Andamanese tribal world view (see V. Pandya [1993] *Above the Forest: A Study of Andamanese Ethnoanemology, Cosmology and Power of Ritual*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 80-1).
- 40 In support of their analysis, settlers say that the Jarwa contact parties make contact only when there is a full moon and when the sea is calm. When the weather is rough around full moon, they attack settlements. It is a fact that most of the Jarwa attacks do occur around full moon. "Jarwas get angry when no gifts are given to them!" Settlers feel that more vigorous efforts should be made to transform the Jarwa and civilise them quickly. Some people from Kadamtalla, Tirur and Ferargunj said to me, "Giving little gifts here and there is not achieving anything. It is just a slow and corrupt way of scheming off money in the name of tribal welfare! In fact, it is making the Jarwas learn to depend on assistance being given by the outsiders". Certain individuals, mainly in Port Blair, are acutely sensitive to the administrative machinery and 'environmental heritage' on the island, and put forward very different reasons for stopping completely all contact with tribes like the Jarwas. In their view, the contact does nothing but destroy the autonomous, healthy and natural existence of the Jarwas as hunters and gatherers in their pristine environment.
- 41 Cf. Man, op. cit., 1932, pp. 120-21.
- 42 Some settlers are reported to run small motor boats from Vandoor, on the outskirts of Port Blair, to show tourists what Jarwas look like. A hefty price is asked for this illegal observation of "natural, naked, wild and fierce natives" by tourists. Boatmen, like the administration's contact party, replicate the contact event by carrying 'gift items' and leaving them on the beach so that the tourists on the following boat can see the Jarwas coming out to collect them.
- 43 See Man, op. cit., 1932, pp. 120, 172; Pandya, op. cit., 1993, pp. 18, 111, 276; Radcliffe-Brown, op. cit., pp. 43, 83.
- 44 D. Chakraborty (1990) *The Great Andamanese*, Calcutta: Seagull Books and Anthropological Survey of India.
- 45 B. Basu (1990) *The Ongee*, Calcutta: Seagull Books and Anthropological Survey of India; Pandya, op. cit., 1993.
- 46 J. Warren (1981) *The Sulu Zone 1768-1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State*, Singapore: Singapore University Press. Also Colebrooke, op. cit., p. 385.
- 47 The problem of keeping the tribes intact in a 'human zoo' has been an on-going debate with those who want to bring the tribes into mainstream India (V. Elwin [1973] 'Do we really want to keep them in a zoo?', in Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *The Tribal People of India*, New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, pp. 8-20).
- 48 See Portman, op. cit.; Temple, op. cit., pp. 109, 113.



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- 49 See J. Fabian (1983) *Time and the Other*, New York: Columbia University Press; P. Clasteres (1987) *Society Against the State: Essays in Political Anthropology*, New York: Zone Books; Tausig, op. cit.
- 50 AAJVS (1994) 'Records of the Jarwa Contacts 1980-1991', Secretariat, Port Blair; Ritchie, op. cit., pp. 48-52; Temple, op. cit., p. 109.
- 51 Cf. M. Casimir and A. Rao (1992) *Mobility and Territoriality: Social and Spatial Boundaries among Foragers, Pastoralists and Peripatetics*, New York: Berg; and T. Ingold (1986) *The Appropriation of Nature*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- 52 Clasteres, op. cit.

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