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April 14

7:30 Song of Ceylon (Sri Lanka: Laleen Jayamanne, 1986)

Song of Ceylon takes Basil Wright's title as a starting point to deal with cultural hybridization as postcolonial inheritance. Ceylon, as a name erased from the map of the world, a neither there nor here body possessed by other bodies, is therefore the place where the anthropological text is performed like a musical score.

Reassemblage (USA: Trinh Minh-Ha, 1982)

This film explores the difficulties of making a film about Senegal. It addresses the "look" from a position that questions the relation between the film maker's point of view and her subject. Emphasis is given here to the women of rural Senegal and to a critical exposition of ethnographic claims to scientific objectives that tend to create an aura of legitimacy surrounding the production of knowledge.

April 21

7:30 Bangkok Bahrain (Israel: Amos Gitai, 1984)

After a brief explanation of how the Vietnam war created Thailand's sex tourism industry, Bangkok Bahrain plunges into Bangkok night life. The film compares "female" Bangkok with sequences in "male" Bahrain, where Thai village men go to earn a living. The subjects in Gitai's documentaries are less individuals than individualized embodiments of predetermined roles -- they are sites defined by the flow of history and international capital. Gitai is among the few film makers engaged in rethinking social documentary. Based on juxtaposition of elements rather than their arrangement in narrative flow, his films are lucidly formalist essays on life and work in the Third World.

9:00 The Neglected Miracle (USA: Barry Barclay, 1985)

The most engrossing and emotionally engaging film about potatoes you are likely to see for a long time. Some of the richest, most resilient plant resources are to be found in the Third World, but of course only the corporations of the wealthy West have the facilities and expertise to manipulate these raw materials in useful ways. The question then arises: who owns these new strains? The film evokes the lives of an international peasantry for whom crops are quite simply the essential life force. Stunningly photographed and edited, this exemplary documentary asks questions which we should all be asking, but somehow are not.