# New Cosmopolitanisms: South Asians in the US

*Gita Rajan and Shailja Sharma*
*Editors*

**Stanford University Press**

*New Cosmopolitanisms*

ASIAN AMERICA

The increasing size and diversity of the Asian American population, its growing significance in American society and culture, and the expanded appreciation, both popular and scholarly, of the importance of Asian Americans in the country's present and past—all these developments have converged to stimulate wide interest in scholarly work on topics related to the Asian American experience. The general recognition of the pivotal role that race and ethnicity have played in American life, and in relations between the United States and other countries, has also fostered this heightened attention.

Although Asian Americans were a subject of serious inquiry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they were subsequently ignored by the mainstream scholarly community for several decades. Recently, however, this neglect has ended, with an increasing number of writers examining a good many aspects of Asian American life and culture. Moreover, many students of American society now recognize that the study of issues related to Asian America speaks to, and may be essential to, many current discussions on the part of the informed public and various scholarly communities.

The Stanford series on Asian America seeks to address these interests. The series will include works from the humanities and social sciences, including history, anthropology, political science, American studies, law, literary criticism, sociology, and interdisciplinary and policy studies.

Gordon H. Chang
Editor

# New Cosmopolitanisms

SOUTH ASIANS IN THE US

Edited by

*Gita Rajan and Shailja Sharma*

# Contents

# Acknowledgements

# Contributors

GITA RAJAN is Associate Professor of English at Fairfield University, currently teaching at Hamilton College as Jane Watson Irwin Visiting Chair on Women's Studies. She is coeditor of *An Introduction to Cultural Studies: History, Theory, Practice;* and of *Postcolonial Theory and Changing Cultural Contexts.* She serves as US editor of *South Asian Popular Culture.*

SHAILJA SHARMA is Associate Professor of English at DePaul University. She has published work in a variety of venues, including *Twentieth-Century Literature*. She is currently working on a book on citizenship.

IFTIKHAR DADI is Assistant Professor in the department of History of Art at Cornell University. He is coeditor of a volume of critical texts, *Unpacking Europe: Towards a Critical Reading;* he is also an artist working in collaboration with Elizabeth Dadi, and his work has been widely exhibited.

VIDYA DEHEJIA is Barbara Stoler Miller Professor of Indian and South Asian art at Columbia University. Previously she was Chief Curator, Deputy Director, and Acting Director of the Freer and Sackler Galleries, Smithsonian Institution. Her recent publications include *The Sensuous and the Sacred: Chola Bronzes from South India; India through the Lens: Photography 1840–1911;* and *Devi, the Great Goddess: Female Divinity in South Asian Art.*

JIGNA DESAI is Associate Professor of Women's Studies at the University of Minnesota. She is the author of *Beyond Bollywood.* In her current project,

she is focusing on the significance and function of popular Hindi cinema, especially for second-generation Asian American youth.

DANA IYER is a psychologist in private practice in southern California, having received her doctorate from the New School for Social Research. She is an Adjunct Professor at Argosy University. Her research focuses on eating disorders and teasing.

NICK HASLAM is Associate Professor of psychology at the University of Melbourne, having received his Ph.D. in social and clinical psychology from the University of Pennsylvania. He has published widely, with his current research interests being primarily in psychiatric classification and lay people's beliefs about the nature of social categories.

KAREN LEONARD is Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Irvine. She received her PhD from the University of Wisconsin. Her recent publications include *Muslims in the United States: The State of Research*, and *The South Asian Americans.* Her current research deals with the Social history of India and Asian Americans in the United States.

*New Cosmopolitanisms*

# New Cosmopolitanisms: South Asians in the United States at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century

GITA RAJAN AND SHAILJA SHARMA

## *Introduction and Definitions*

Institutional markers of a sub-discipline: journals, the naming of -isms or academic categorizations as studies, the rise of model scholars to act as voices of that branch of knowledge have been some traditional, academic ways to broach subjectivities and their constructions. In this collection we explore and discuss the meaning of a new kind of subject construction informed by globalization—the new cosmopolitan subject—and all that it entails in life experiences for South Asians within the nation-space of the United States. For over a decade now, diasporic and postcolonial subject constructions have been studied at the nodes and intersections of newer forces such as globalization and cosmopolitanism. In the social sciences, migration experts guarded their scientific turf through statistical and empirical ethnography, and used theories of nationalism and world systems to explain globalization. In the humanities, this line of questioning has largely been pursued through tropes of cultural identity, porous national borders, and revived fervors of nationalism. Broadly speaking, scholars in both the social sciences and the humanities locate their inquiries into the globalized subject and the processes of globalization, the intersections of technology, travel, and labor, and the privileges/deprivations of citizens within the sphere of cosmopolitan modernity. It is time to reexamine the relationship of diasporas and the globalized, networked world in light of the dialogues presented for a decade

almost in *Public Culture* and *Diaspora*, and following the rapid applicability of British Cultural Studies to almost any subject, but especially globalization, as indicated by debates around the many articles in *Theory, Culture and Society*.

As part of that project, our aim is not to examine discrete, bounded, and finite diaspora groups settled in the United States as much as it is to look at what we call New Cosmopolitanism. By using this term, we want to signal its difference from traditional diasporas so as to locate that new cosmopolitanism in a contemporary formation that results from the confluence of globalization (trade, migration, media, money, and culture), but also indicate its affiliations to traditional diasporic formations. We use the adjective "new" to distinguish it from the historical uses of the term cosmopolitanism, even though in some respects the new partakes of the historical meanings, especially in its links to privilege. As Brennan defines it, cosmopolitanism is an ambivalent phenomenon, both in its imperial incarnation, and in its ethical dimension.[1] Its ambivalence is grounded in national-imperial (in Brennan's discussion, often the United States) sentiments whose boundaries complicate the aspiration to world citizenship. However, our argument posits the new cosmopolitan subject as precisely not being grounded in a nation-state or in a class (intellectual or working class). She instead occupies a range of fluid subject positions, which can be trans-class, trans-local with competing value systems. For example, a new cosmopolitan subject could be a gay South Asian-American activist, a store owner, or a filmmaker, all enacting a range of new and changing subject positions. Consequently, we want to examine the ground that South Asians inhabit, ranging from the older immigrants to the newer ones, across first, second, and third generation populations whose life styles and life choices reveal an interesting blend of diasporic and cosmopolitan traits.

Theorists of traditional diasporas like Robin Cohen, Khachig Tölölyan, and Safran, have posited diasporas as stable, fixed populations. Though consisting of people displaced through choice, violence, trade, or imperialism, they nevertheless are bounded both in space (at a distance from their homeland), and through their bipolar relationships to the homeland. However, we define new cosmopolitans as people who blur the edges of home and abroad by continuously moving physically, culturally, and socially, and by selectively using globalized forms of travel, communication, languages, and technology

to position themselves in motion between at least two homes, sometimes even through dual forms of citizenship, but always in multiple locations (through travel, or through cultural, racial, or linguistic modalities). It is these new forms of shifting choices and complex relationships that emerge from what were earlier "knowable" as diasporas that we call new cosmopolitanism. In a kind of shorthand, one could call them diasporas in motion, where motion could be physical, cultural, ideological; motion, moreover of people or by capital, technology, media forms, or culture. It is necessary to repeat, but also mark entities such as technology, media, and culture, for example, because these are the momentary and fragmentary locations that people inhabit in our rapidly globalizing world. New cosmopolitanism thus creates and defines itself by occupying in-between spaces of identity, culture, and communication, spurning fissures both along the lines of ethnic nationalism as well as the old assimilative logic of host cultures. One way of understanding this class of people may be through the metaphor popularized by Manuel Castells of the "network" that describes the newest form of globalization (Castells 1996).

These networks are mutable and linked to contemporary manifestations of globalization, constructed in the shifting space between older definitions of diaspora and traditional cosmopolitanism. Our present inquiry into this class of people called new cosmopolitans rests upon the work of immigration historians and cultural critics (Appadurai, Robertson, Rouse, Scholte, and Bauman). In addition to Roger Rouse's study of Mexican immigration through "transnational social spaces," also pertinent here is Bill Ong Hing's *Making And Remaking Asian America Through Immigration policy: 1850–1990*, which looks at the influx of Asians into the United States. In this critical anthology we define new cosmopolitanism as a set of practices linked to migration and globalization, distinct from earlier theories of diaspora and its transnational cultural formulations and affiliations. This new cosmopolitanism is marked by both elitist, highly educated, technologically driven, and a politically conservative population, which seeks to intervene in both the country of settlement and in the homeland equally, and by an increasing number of the working class, that is, with little education, with more liberal political views, and a marked interest in transnational popular cultural forms like Bollywood. This other group of South Asians, moreover, also includes people who form an expendable workforce, who have no political access to

citizenship, but occupy nonetheless, the hybridized, overdetermined, multicultural, and multiracial spaces of urban America. The difference between the historical use of the term "cosmopolitanism" and the new one we posit lies in the particular nature of the current conjuncture. We examine how the globalization of capital and travel have worked to create a growing class of immigrants whose modalities of migration and settlement overturn older ways of thinking about home and abroad (for example in the United States, this middle to upper class consumer has an easier access to the materiality of homeland culture via foods, places of worship, etc.), as well as its accompanying high and mass cultural practices.

Our particular focus is the South Asian population in the United States in this contemporary conjuncture, which defines itself as somewhere between traditionally diasporic and a cosmopolitan floating class of people selling its skills to the highest bidder in the global marketplace. The term South Asian is both widely used but is also problematic because the region comprises at least six countries—India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan—that do not identify themselves as a bloc, and are in fact riven by political rivalries and religious-political tensions. Nevertheless, given the shared histories, language, and culture among them, the patterns they have unwittingly formed in settling alongside each other in the United States, and how this proximity and their perceived racial difference from other Asian Americans has made "South Asian" an accepted and acceptable nomenclature, we find it appropriate to use the term even as we recognize its imprecise nature. Thus, although the United States census or demographic data has no category called "South Asian," we choose to employ this self-reflexive term because of its regional-cultural specificity. Most often, the term is used in conjunction with, or in place of Indian-Pakistani, or to denote people of the Indian subcontinent generally. It is this population and its cultural affiliations and habits that we examine under the phenomenon of a new cosmopolitanism in scholarly discourses and from within public and media representations.

Our second caveat in examining this phenomenon has to do with class and how, in turn, class is read with regard to South Asians in the United States. Traditionally, the post-1965 migration of South Asians to the United States has been selectively read as predominantly being a highly educated, "middle class," partially assimilated, population (Prashad 2000). However, this elides both the complexity and variety across the class spectrum that marks South

Asian migration and ignores their uneven placement and assimilation within US society. And, such a characterization obscures their similarity to other Third World élites who entered the United States after 1965. In terms of class and new cosmopolitanism, we argue that since new cosmopolitanism is a network of relations between home and abroad, native and diasporic, it allows different classes to partake in it at different levels. In other words, the term new cosmopolitanism does not privilege one class over the other, even though the word "cosmopolitanism" has traditionally evoked an élite, transnational connotation. Although we interrogate the automatic association of cosmopolitanism with class privilege in terms of historical linkages, we do recognize that the term itself slides among many different meanings ranging from Kantian, to Marxist,[2] and our contemporary one in usage.

A critique of this élitist and less than progressive sense of cosmopolitanism is apparent in the work of many scholars, most prominently that of Timothy Brennan. *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now* (1997) examines not just historical and contemporary cosmopolitanism, but also its connections to imperial and postcolonial cultural production. He pitches his critique of cosmopolitanism as a double-sided term, which offers both a vision of world citizenship and is a category that avoids "class historical engagement" (p. 31) by simultaneously embracing a language of authenticity and hybridity. This applies particularly to the case of South Asians in the United States because they have been progressively studied as diasporic, and sometimes as exilic and/or migrant (voluntary or enforced), viewed as postcolonial, then as urban and cosmopolitan, and now as a group occupying the problematic spaces created by globalization.

The late 1990s saw a sudden visibility of South Asians in technology, finance, around discussions of native versus foreign labor, as well as in cultural fields of cinema and popular music. This mini-phenomenon of the perceptible presence of South Asians waned with the concomitant bust. However, this phenomenon highlighted the somewhat anomalous way in which South Asians inserted themselves into American culture and its economy, even as it brought to the fore contradictory nationalist impulses in the United States about the relationship of globalization and technology, particularly now as India becomes the focus of the outsourcing furor. Therefore, although our use of the term cosmopolitanism is historically charged, particularly in its connotations of class, (Kant's cosmopolitan was a traveler, but never a worker, and the Soviet cosmopolitan was never a fellow traveler), it denotes

the educated, worldly, highly mobile population that has made San Jose, Houston, Boston, and New Jersey its home. Yet, the positions of sanctioned and privileged visibility of these South Asians exist in tandem with the neo-orientalist constructions of South Asians in US terrains of academic and popular culture. This can be seen for example, in the academic presentations and publications about Bollywood or the large numbers of literary works by/about South Asians, and more visibly in how Apu from *The Simpsons* co-exists with the high-profile role of Parminder Nagra (of *Bend it Like Beckham* fame) as Neela Rasgotra on *ER*, or the glamorous hype surrounding the rich nuptial scene in Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding*.

Such a multilayered presence of South Asians is one of the legacies of history because South Asia has occupied a clichéd (exotic) and somewhat obscure place on the fringes of American culture. But, South Asians have also occupied invisible identities as doctors and engineers that blended into majority cultures of the United States. These exoticized and benign framings have also coexisted, particularly in the United States, with images and rhetoric of South Asian abject poverty and failed socialism. Paradoxically, the media's crisis mode of presenting this latter image of South Asia has changed in the last decade, as South Asians found themselves being reinserted hurriedly, incompletely, and in many ways, questionably, into this New World Order. The rapid realignment of global economies, the frenzied hunt for technology workers, and the visible shift in cultural hegemonies from center to margin (and sometimes margin to center) has brought South Asia and its diaspora into a visibility unprecedented since the 1950s, when it served as a test case for postcolonial modernity. Silicon Valley is the most visible location of both the actual labor and the tangible wealth of this new tech-driven immigration. Other, equally important but less visible varieties of South Asian labor include students, artists, priests, intellectuals, economists, managers, stockbrokers, taxi drivers, and small shopkeepers. And yet, their apparent success is fraught with complex contradictions surrounding privilege, education, and the two-way flow of labor, culture, and capital. It is this range of class and educational backgrounds that remains obscured in most public representations of South Asians now living in the United States.

How do we understand this movement of South Asians to the United States as linked to other parts of the globe? Does it provide us with a model for decoding the place human capital plays within the rearticulation of global economy? Do the rapid transfer, amalgamation, and reformulation of people

and culture offer us a new perspective of the citizen-subject? Does such a citizen-status allow us to redefine traditional ways of understanding the nation-state and transnationalism to look at people beyond their political profile as citizens to their cultural role as new cosmopolitans? Do the scale and speed of the recent waves of immigration mean that this group is anomalous? That is to say, is there a difference between traditional migrants and the new cosmopolitans, because not all migrants are cosmopolitans? How can we read these South Asian presences within popular and public culture as embedded within the nation, that is, are they part of a national culture— however haphazardly multicultural it is—instead of harking back to diasporic nostalgia? And finally, what are the shifting relationships between class and privilege that account for this group's success, which coexists with a level of invisibility? These questions serve as a heuristic device to examine the presence and life-conditions of South Asians in the United States, and allow us to define the meaning of new cosmopolitanism.

## Theories of Diaspora, Globalization, Modernity, and Migration

In theories of diasporas, notably those of Robin Cohen (drawing heavily on Safran) (Cohen 1997, p. 26) and Tölölyan (1996, pp. 20–1) the emphasis is equally on the traumatic history of dislocation or expulsion, as in traditional diasporas of Jews, Africans, and Armenians, on the effects of the homeland on the diaspora (by maintaining religious linguistic homogeneity), or on how the homeland strengthens itself through its diaspora, as in the case of the national struggles of Israel, Armenia, and Ireland. In all of the above cases, however, the homeland and diaspora are always distinct, in a way that is clear, complete, and absolute, notwithstanding the strength of emotional attachments to the homeland, which, barring some historical trauma, generally weakens over generations. In all the cases cited above, diaspora populations remain physically removed from the homeland, except in the cases of (i) vacations or family reunions, (ii) pilgrimage as in the *aaliyah* that Jews make to Israel, and (iii) exceptional circumstances such as war, independence struggles against imperial powers, etc.

Cohen cites an alternative type of diaspora, which is based upon the sojourner model (pp. 85–9). He describes the circular migration of Chinese traders to and from South East Asia in the last two centuries, where members of a clan or family would take turns to live abroad, in exile as it were, before

returning and letting another member emigrate to keep the business or trade running. This model is paradoxically different from the ones discussed above because it emphasizes both the circular and *temporary* nature of migration as well as the *permanent* presence of Chinese in South East Asia. Its link to our topic comes from its structure of constant motion between home and abroad visible in traditional diasporas (Tölölyan 1996), as well as its economic nature. The new cosmopolitans too seem conscious of functioning as South Asian Americans in the United States. However, it is important to point out that the sojourner model remains distinct from contemporary new cosmopolitanism of South Asians in that sojourners retained, for the most part, a distinct linguistic, ethnic, and cultural identity, based on their ultimate return to the homeland. New cosmopolitans do not depend upon geographical location or the eventual return home to maintain or practice a distinct South Asian identity.

Manuel Castells, in *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996) uses the term, "network" to talk about the new phase of modernity and globalization. Castells argues that since the 1970s, global capital (or as he calls it, informational capitalism) has structured time, distance, and space in a completely new way. In this networked world, technology profoundly influences the structures of state and society, identity, and culture, which are conceived of not as discrete blocks (here traditional ideas of the nation-state come to mind) but as fluid entities, which are in a state of flux. In Castells's network society, identity becomes one of the central ways to define self and community. But because identity is reliant on different networks: social, financial, cultural, and technological, it becomes a matter of self-definition and is always subject to change. This line of reasoning allows Castells to move away from the economic determinism of traditional Marxist theory, but he also sees an opening for a more varied set of groups, networks, and identities than were previously thought possible. New cosmopolitanism, then, becomes one way of thinking about replacing the diaspora/nativist model with a much more fluid set of identities.

Zygmunt Bauman in *Liquid Modernity* arrives at a similar understanding of contemporary reality through the vocabulary of modernity by using visual metaphors to describe the ways in which people move about the world, inhabit nation-states, even if it is temporarily, in the act of producing and consuming goods and services such that people now exhibit a tendency to "flow," "spill,"' "run out," "splash," "pour over,"' "leak," "flood," "spray,"

"drip," and "ooze," (2000, p. 11). These words bring to mind the dynamic nature of the subject beyond the established sense of place as one did in the older models of a more concrete or "solid" and cosmopolitan modernity. He links these metaphors most closely to the exercise of power, to say "Power can move with the speed of an electronic signal—and so the time required for the movement of its essential ingredients has been reduced to instanteniety . . . power has become extraterritorial, no longer bound, not even slowed down, by the resistance of space" (p. 11).[3] Other scholars, including Arjun Appadurai, have attempted to understand the meaning of a movable modernity that underlies the questions we want to pose. Appadurai's phrase, the "optics of globalization" is helpful in indicating who gets defined as belonging to nations and having citizenship and which groups get highlighted through older models of regionality in global studies or area studies. Though migration from South Asia has been ongoing for over a hundred years now,[4] and quite vigorously since the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act, the question before us is whether the last decade's migration has significantly changed the older models of arrival, settlement, assimilation, and the population's public profile within the United States. And if it has, is this true for all diasporas of this period, or is it anomalous? We suggest that the contemporary South Asian population is normative because it is clumped together in social stratifications and formations explicable under traditional categories of diaspora, identity, and nationhood. But, it is also anomalous because major internal divisions that dispute such classification challenge those older categories. For example, even as the tech diaspora is visible because of its place in the upper tiers of US society, it is different in very real terms from the East African Indian motel owners or the 7–11 store owners who are invisible, and have gone largely unremarked and unassimilated. The question takes on a special urgency in the wake of the economic failures in the technology sector and, in a more pressing context, in the way in which South Asians are singled out by governmental institutions and their functionaries after September 11, 2001. It is the children of the petit bourgeoisie in their upwardly mobile phase who are more strictly analogous with the South Asian diaspora in the United Kingdom and their working class histories, while the children of the PMC (professional-managerial classes) are more securely assimilated and less clearly ethnically marked.

Appadurai points out the need for a model that supercedes diaspora and assimilative hybridity, to one that includes "floating populations, transnational

politics within national borders, and mobile configurations of technology and expertise" (p. 5). This statement bypasses obvious binaries of home/here and abroad/there to refocus attention on the mobility and partial presence of subjects instead of a point-to-point movement. This phenomenon, called variously "nomadic," cyclical, or flexible employment, forces us to employ different heuristic devices in the construction and dissemination of the "knowledges of globalization" (Appadurai p. 4), and consequently ask who occupies such new cosmopolitan spaces. Globalization is a complex term that has changed meaning over the long term.[5] According to John Tomlinson, there is an urgent need to understand the "complex connectivity . . . globalization refers to [in] the rapidly developing and ever densening network of interconnections and interdependencies" that in *Globalization and Culture* he calls "characteriz[ing] modern social life . . . [in all] the multiplicity of linkages" (1999, p. 2). Globalization implies proximity made possible for South Asians by travel, migration, education, and employment in general. It conveys an increasing immediacy now that technology and technology transfer, world markets and global labor move effortlessly and seamlessly as the engine of globalization which locates, relocates, and redefines people, allowing what we see as a new cosmoplitanism. Connectivity means experiencing distance differently, particularly in the context of technology, global capital flows, and cultural exchanges. The difference between this kind new cosmopolitanism and older modes of globalization engendered by the NAFTA or GATT treaties, for example, is that the scale and types of communicative flows were much slower and more controlled. Thus, the difference between here/there, us/them, home/abroad, was much more stable and recognizable as distinct. Consequently, in those earlier contexts connectivity signaled the safety and guarantee of physical distance in dealing with strangers, while in the context of a new cosmopolitanism, South Asians are jostling along with the masses in the United States.

Although most of these theoretical frames are helpful in speaking of migrant and/or resident populations, it is Rouse's incisive examination of the Mexican population's assimilation that is especially apposite. Rouse envisions a new model in which "continued movement back and forth and the concomitant circulation of money, goods and information have linked the various locales so tightly that they have come to form new kinds of social space—multi-local social settings that span the boundaries of the nation-states involved" (1995, p. 354). But instead of using the paradigm

of "multi-local settings" to valorize a dated postmodernism, Rouse correctly points to the way in which "ascriptions of identity" to any given immigrant group tends to reinforce class-based inequalities. Thus, it allows us to uncover the fault lines between divergent groups of South Asian immigrants and the tensions of trying and failing to build identity around ethnicity (the predominant American model) instead of *class.*

Similar distinctions have to be drawn around Asian American nomenclatures. Lisa Lowe, in "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian American Differences," situates Asian Americans in the United States and elliptically acknowledges the different histories, cultures, and nations within the blanket (even facile) term *Asia*. She writes, "Asian American discussions of ethnicity are far from uniform or consistent; rather, these discussions contain a wide spectrum of articulations that include, at one end, the desire for an identity represented by a fixed profile of ethnic traits, and at another, challenges to the very notions of identity and singularity which celebrate ethnicity as a fluctuating composition of differences, intersections, and incommensurabilities. The latter efforts attempt to define ethnicity in a manner that accounts not only for cultural inheritance, but for active cultural construction, as well" (1991, p. 27). Lowe's *Asia* works as a shorthand to signal the hyphenated Americans of Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese descent, for example, peoples whose histories of war and labor are again quite dissimilar to the South Asians. Thus, although Rouse and Lowe assess and capture the complex, coexisting phenomenon of a visibly marked and transparent identity of two large immigrant groups, their paradigms or explanations do not quite fit the South Asians in the United States. Similarly, insightful though it is, Prashad's (2000) arguments about the top-heavy nature of South Asians immigrants coming from and into the middle to upper classes do not fully address what we see as a new cosmopolitanism. These theorist do not, for instance, foreground the tensions within South Asia; tensions between religion and nationality as in India and Pakistan, or between linguistic ethnicity and nationality as in India and Sri Lanka, or between Pakistan and Bangladesh, or even broach the complex tensions within a single national group that exists in South Asian communities, which are central to understanding their patterns of assimilation/settlement within the United States. Finally, in terms of citizenship debates that these new models engender, Aihwa Ong's definitions of cultural citizenship (1999) and flexible citizenship (2000) are useful in understanding the class/mobility nexus

that characterizes new cosmopolitanism. In discussing the idea of cultural citizenship, Ong uses the Foucauldian models of "governmentality" to show how class is read in terms of race in the United States as a "whitening" or "blackening" effect on new immigrants, thus re-situating them within comprehensible, local, categories. However, the net effect of this is to allow forms of citizenship praxis to certain already privileged populations, while denying them to others. And more importantly, under the rubrics of assimilability and difference, it excludes any discussion of the role class plays in the "Americanizing" of new immigrants.

## South Asians in America

Yet, the quest for a new nomenclature should not blind us to the continued existence, indeed the exacerbation, of older models of power and knowledge. The work of Rumbaut and Portes in *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America* points out that many groups of immigrants, including South Asians, still follow the older models of European immigration and assimilation. By this they mean to define the classical, early twentieth-century model of immigration, assimilation and social mobility across three generations. In this certain East Asians and South Asians are the exception, not the rule, to new immigration into the United States, which as a result of its *origin* (predominantly Hispanic and Asian), its *class* (predominantly working class and/or refugee), and *national* US multicultural policies, especially in the area of primary education, has resisted assimilation (2001, pp. 4–7). Instead most contemporary immigrants' children undergo what they call "segmented assimilation" (p. 7). A large part of the explanation of South Asian exceptionalism in this regard, as Prashad has pointed out, rests on the class status of South Asians allowed into the country, and some of it rests on their bilingual abilities, in which they are distinct from other immigrants from Mexico and East Asia. As the recent issue of *Amerasia* on South Asia notes, "The 'culture' of Indian-America . . . is manifestly marked with the wishes, aspirations and prejudices of certain class instincts"(p. x). Class became a flash point within South Asians in the United States as well, when Kanwal Rekhi, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur and angel financier, spoke out in favor of restricting immigration from India to only educated professionals. In distinguishing between desirable versus undesirable immigrants from South Asia, his remarks uncovered the fault lines of educational and class privilege as

well as racial and economic affiliations.[6] Rekhi's remarks are neither sudden nor unexpected, but it is important to point out that though this latest group of South Asians does come from the middle to upper middle class populations at home, their jobs in the United States places them on the lower rungs of the middle class. That is to say, though this group is well-educated, their life-style choices of food and leisure come from popular culture, thus marking them as new cosmopolitans. In the last decade, immigration from India, to take the case of the largest emigrant nation in South Asia, has overwhelmingly been in the form of short-term technology workers coming to America on six-year H1-B visas. As their numbers grew, the self-definition by South Asian Americans became a natural outcome of a gradual perception of themselves as a distinct group of Asian Americans. At present Indian Americans comprise 16.4 percent of the Asian American population, and according to the 2000 Census data, are the third largest in the Asian American community behind the Chinese and Filipinos.[7]

On the face of it, the ubiquity of South Asian presence in the arts, in media, in business, in the slow leakage of popular cultural marks of *Indianness* co-exists with a public ignorance of its nature, scale and complexity of the lived cultures and traditions both in South Asia and in the United States. For example, *mehendi* or henna tattoos, *bindis* or red dots on the forehead, and/or jeweled nose rings have become incorporated into metropolitan, mainstream teen fashion, as have signature Indian rhythms in music videos (Jay-Z's "*Beware of the Boyz*" for example). Stuart Hall's assessment that "global mass culture is dominated by modern means of cultural production, dominated by the image which crosses and recrosses linguistic frontiers much more rapidly and more easily . . . is dominated by all the ways in which the visual and graphic arts have entered directly into the reconstitution of popular life, of entertainment and leisure. It is dominated by television and film, and by the image, imagery, and styles of mass advertising" (1997, p. 27) is true in this case.[8] Vijay Prashad's *The Karma of Brown Folk* looks at this problem from the angle of taming the exotic, collates, and analyzes the stereotypes, to posit ready-made niches for Indians in this country. South Asians have come to the United States through multiple routes, beginning with Sikh farmers in the West Coast (Leonard) to the bourgeois population that arrived in the 1970s via East Africa and Canada, and a large, professional population that came directly, post-1965, as doctors, engineers, and educators. The final wave came around the late 1980s onwards, as students, computer engineers,

and software specialists. Recognizing this uneven entry and migration pattern (geographic and economic) is crucial in avoiding an evolutionary (modernity based) model for the South Asian presence in the United States. The latest cosmopolitans build on the work of immigrants who arrived in the 1960s and 1970s, whose politics were those of unobtrusive, inoffensive, wealth accumulation. This is changing as the recent run by Bobby Jindal (R) for governor of Louisiana has showed. Jindal had to prove his "American" identity and downplay his ethnicity significantly over his political career to reach that position, as he had no natural "ethnic" constituency in Louisiana to support him. However, it is noteworthy that he positioned himself as mainstream, Christian, American, not as an Indian-American. In contrast, Swati Dandekar (D) was successfully elected to the Iowa State Assembly by claiming in her campaign that *America* is a land that assimilates its immigrants. Shahab Ahmad, a Bangladeshi American, elected to city council in Hamtramck in Michigan, is another such example who asserted the unlimited possibility of the American Dream during his campaign. It is important to recognize that this desire to participate in US public and social life as Americans is a new trend, which is almost contrary to the earlier stereotype of quiet, apolitical lives that many South Asians have led. Dandekar and Ahmad represent a new trend of involvement in American state and local level politics in their home states. They signify a two-way acceptance: not just of South Asians participating in American public life, but also an acceptance of South Asian Americans by the American electorate at large. The latest example of this growing trend of South Asians seeking public office is the case of Kamala Harris's victorious election (born of Indian and African American parents) in a nonpartisan bid to the post of Attorney General of San Francisco.

Which now begs the question—are there similarities between two historical periods of migration to the United States: the new flows of people from South Asia and early twentieth century working class European migrants? What seems anomalous in such a comparison is the uneven privilege that the former enjoy, which in turn is tied to their politics with regard to immigration, assimilation, wealth accumulation, and religio-cultural affiliations. There are clearly two distinct strands here. Many from this new cosmopolitan group are significantly short on progressive politics, even though a large percentage have been educated within traditionally liberal US universities and have had some form of postgraduate training. The effortless access to the PMC and its privilege of this population, combined with a carefully

constructed nostalgia for their cultures of origin has resulted in a predominantly conservative, right-wing, and unabashedly capitalist nexus. Although this segment of the South Asian population is out of touch with the progressive politics in their homelands and with other South Asians in the larger US political scene, it also seems to be out of step with the progressive politics of the other minoritized citizens in the United States. What most in this group fail to realize is that being conservative in their private sphere and apolitical/invisible in the public sphere, that is, failing to establish any real solidarity, also makes them powerless to effect changes in their own lives. This combination of US domestic policies (anti-Muslim, anti-South Asian sentiment in the tech industry, and anti-outsourcing hysteria in public culture) and their lack of collective politics and lobbying makes this group of privileged South Asians quite vulnerable during cyclical ravages of the US economy. In contrast, over the last couple of years, another face of a younger group of South Asian-Americans has emerged that is becoming socially responsible. This younger generation seems more politically motivated, and considers itself American first and South Asian second. One way in which this manifests itself is through participation in volunteerism and social justice efforts. An example is that of Anup Patel, a young South Asian-American, who, having won the Barry M. Goldwater scholarship in 2004,[9] donated part of his fund money and three months of his time volunteering to help HIV infected children of prostitutes in Mumbai. Such cases of volunteerism are not unique; in fact, they are becoming more and more common in second and third generation youth, who see themselves in step with *Americans* of their age, rather than as model minority subjects as their parents had done.[10]

One could suggest that, for the most part, South Asians in the United States occupy a space that is in between here and there, which is almost an extension of the home country, but also a source of accumulated wealth and privilege in the host nation. Such mediations between the host country and country of origin as well as the circulation within the South Asian diasporas of bodies, goods, information, cultural products, ideas, and capital, captures precisely the new paradigm of a South Asian cosmopolitanism. In seeking to explain such flows of people and ideologies and their restricted situatedness, Bauman's (2000) argument about revising the conception of space—both occupied and imagined—is worth reiterating. It is especially pertinent to the unceasing, rapid global reality of ebb and flows in the South Asian case, who have allied themselves with the exercise of various

kinds of technological capital/power to reflect these disembodied trajectories. But, while his use of "flow" suggests a horizontal movement, and implies that people move, work, and live on an equal plane, the reality, however, is that globalization is vertical and represents the power (of technology and capital) only of developed nations. Bauman's assessment of globalization works better at explaining this phenomenon in the global north better than it does in the whole world. Thus, "liquid" must be qualified and defined conditionally. A complementary reading of Appadurai's *Modernity at Large*, with its complex formula of "*scapes*" to describe the functioning of subjects in global culture, is useful in addressing this blind spot in Bauman's argument. Appadurai uses the term "uneven" to explain the operation of modernity outside the West. He suggests that we can no longer position the populations of the world on "center-periphery models (even those that might account for multiple peripheries) . . . [because] the complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture, and politics that we have only begun to theorize" (1996, pp. 32–3). It seems fitting then for Bauman's sweeping, "fluid" model of the world to be developmentally nuanced by deploying Appadurai's elaborate trope of "*scapes*" that stress disjuncture as the ground for inhabiting, producing in, and consuming global culture in the perpetual present of modernity.

Popular cultural elements, on the other hand, make some South Asian aspects into pleasantly ethnic and consumably *American* objects (incense, henna tattoos) and others into targets for racism (sometimes, interestingly, the same object functions in both registers). In such exchanges what are perceived as ethnic South Asian or mainstream American get conflated, and either used or abused in those precise "disjunctured" locations that Appadurai posits. Although some South Asians are caricatured as ethnic jokes (Apu in *The Simpsons* or the endless taxi driver jokes) in the media, mainstream South Asian American professionals bypass such stereotyping. Such contradictory exchanges between ethnic South Asian and mainstream Americans get conflated, and are either used or abused in those precise locations of "disjuncture." Interestingly, many South Asians use this break or gap between ethnicity and normative dominant culture to their advantage. The dot.com millionaires of Silicon Valley, who occupy both the "technoscape" and "financescape disjunctures," for example, insist upon their simultaneous South Asian and American identities because their ethnicity/citizenship divide grants them access to favorable spaces of mainstream American culture.

A different example is the bindi (dot) that some older Indian American women wear on their foreheads, which resulted in widespread racist attacks in New Jersey by a group called "dot busters" in the early 1990s. Similarly, the post 9/11 period hostility and open racism against Muslim women who wear their veil in public, or the Sikhs and Indians who have been mis-identified, presents a different kind of analytical problem[11]. These are "ideoscapes" in action, created by fear and xenophobia, which reveal the "disjunctures." Yet, Madonna's appearance with a signature Hindu caste symbol painted on her forehead[12] and a diamond nose ring in a late 1999 music video was largely favorable, and shows the stylized but "disjunctured" relationship between American and South Asian cultures mainly through the "ethnoscapes" and "mediascapes." Such complex actions and reactions in the contact zone known as public culture occur because the very phenomenon of globalization has made it possible for local, regional, and particular practices or habits to be selectively enacted on a world stage. In other words, the boundaries of nation-states are now becoming porous not only in terms of people moving in and out, but cultures, customs, and social practices are becoming migratory as well. And most importantly, such a new cosmopolitanism underlines the centrality and privileged positions of native citizens (white Americans) who can commodify and consume racial and ethnic symbols without paying the price for them.

Thomas McCarthy writes in "On Reconciling Cosmopolitanism: Unity and National Diversity":

> If nationalism has to be transformed to be compatible with liberal universalism, what of liberal universalism? What changes must it undergo to be compatible even with a transformed nationalism? . . . More specifically, if culturally diverse nations are the rule, then cultural pluralism has to be integral to national self-understanding. And, this suggests that ethnic nationalism will have to give way increasingly to civic nationalism. To be sure, the latter is more abstract form of integration, but allegiance to a national community was itself already more abstract than the local ties it transcended. And, as we saw, the nation, however powerful the "we" consciousness it generated, it is not a natural but a constructed object of group loyalty. There seems to be no reason in principle, then, why it cannot itself be transformed to be compatible with liberal cosmopolitanism. (pp. 180–81)

His observation is pertinent to the South Asians because they are constructed as a group despite their religious, national, class, and ideological differences,

while simultaneously insisting upon an undifferentiated *American* identity outside this nation space. How do we speak of the shifting nature of the various and varying spaces that South Asians occupy within national situations even as they collude with the forces of globalization? Although the older model of cosmopolitanism was grounded in a transnational, mostly urban, elite population of South Asians, the new cosmopolitanism defies such categorization. What McCarthy sees as the schism between an ethnic and a civic nationalism can be understood in terms of a new cosmopolitanism that partakes unevenly of locality and globality. After 9/11, "civic nationalism" has evolved into a rejection and suspicion of ethnic identities and voiced in the national popular as a set of strident binaries. The threat of arbitrary violence is everywhere invoked by the presence of South Asians, the once accepted model minorities. What are the analogies and anomalies of this kind of a new cosmopolitanism? In this context, the uneven nature of modernity can be seen at a glance in the intersections of cosmopolitan tastes and habits being manifested in the ordinary and everyday spaces of lived cultures. John Tomlinson captures this phenomenon as "experience[ing] the fine grain of locality rather than globality while maintaining cultural differences in the face of an eroding connectivity" (1999, p.7). Part of the untold story of South Asians in public culture is that it is a deeply divided population, split along cultural but more crucially, along lines of wealth, culture, and class. The dual nature of South Asian identity can be seen in the fact that while within mainstream US culture, they are constructed as a homogenous group despite their religious, national, class, and ideological differences, within this imposed group identity, the schisms are deep indeed.[13]

Culturally, the fusion of American and South Asian forms in the domestic and consumer spheres results in new cultural representations and/or productions, which use the gloss of wealth and technology but veer ideologically toward a revived traditionalism (and in many cases, result in a fundamentalism). The recent successful popular NRI Bollywood movies such as *Monsoon Wedding* and *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham (K3G)* makes clear on one level that localized forms of identity are inflected toward global marketplaces. *Monsoon Wedding* illustrates this split sensibility, both in its story about the celebration of an arranged marriage but one accomplished with the help of diasporic family members and global trade, and in the fact that Nair built on the film's success by heading a calculated marketing operation selling Indian chic in the United States (such as a line of home furnishings, saris, and glitzy jewelry).

Whether we look at the grand narratives of popular Bollywood movies, or the more hermetic space of a South Asian home interior and its attempt to be ethnic and sophisticated (modern or Western) it becomes clear that localized forms of identity gestures toward a global, or new cosmopolitan sensibility. This seems, in part at least, a response to the US market forces which have, through their many cultural and conspicuous consumption channels, tried to make South Asianness (similar to the Latin American case through food, music, and slang vocabulary) part of what is called an *American* way of life, giving valence to what Tomlinson calls the "homogenization thesis" (p. 6) of globalization.[14]

Known in anthropological circles as "embedding," this assessment matches the consumption patterns of South Asians, at least in the middle to upper class population in the United States and in their homelands, as being geared toward global markets, economically and culturally. The middle to lower middle class South Asians on the other hand, seem to be living lives quite similar to ones they would have led in their homelands. In other words, the lower and lower middle class South Asians carry on in the tradition of early Jewish immigrants, for example, by establishing spatial networks and communitarian ties along ethnic/diasporic lines. The construction of the upwardly mobile, worldly, South Asian identity falls apart in the concerns of working class South Asians (taxi drivers, storeowners, waiters, and small-scale entrepreneurs) who are less cosmopolitan largely because the barriers to assimilation are higher. And, it is crucial to note that their politics play out through stronger links to homeland cultures and within the United States through local labor politics. The manner in which South Asian taxi drivers in New York City became unionized in 1999 reveals the mentality of *American* workers from half a century ago. Interestingly, however, by occupying some of the same spaces as their upper class compatriots in this variegated *America* during religious celebrations in places of worship, or on college campuses during ethnicity week, or on the streets of major metropolises such as New York City during India Day parade, or even Gay Pride Parade, or in the most horrific example of women's abuse shelters, class distinctions get elided as their cosmopolitan cultural sensibilities or communitarian responsibilities come to the forefront. Consequently, although it could be argued, as Prashad does, that the South Asian population remains divided along class lines, one could now make a strong case for an emerging kind of new cosmopolitanism, wherein a regional and cultural identity comes to the fore.

Sadly, the tendency toward localism among South Asians can take ugly, ethnocentric forms as well. The schism between a cosmopolitan or civic and ethnic nationalism manifests itself most strongly around questions of culture and its transmission. In concerns that echo those around Jewish culture, South Asians have prioritized the value of their homeland cultures, though the nature, definition, and practice of those privileged sense of cultures is unclear even to them. For many, it means a classical culture: language, attire, dance, music etc. For others still, it can mean an emphasis on rituals around marriage, festivals, sacramental ties with extended families and other ceremonies. This links up, in ugly ways, to questions of gender, as workers in South Asian women's shelters will testify.[15] But overwhelmingly, it has come to be interpreted around the idea of religion and its preservation. The raising of funds for building mosques, temples, and *gurudwaras* is a focal point for South Asian communities.[16] And these spaces have evolved in the United States from being merely religious locations to becoming places for an entire community to gather and redefine itself *outside* of American workplaces and everyday society. What this means is that the idea of community is rapidly coming to mean a religious-ethnic (Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Tamil, Brahmin) identity rather than a national one (Indian, Pakistani, Nepali, etc.). Read in conjunction with the growth of religio-ethnic fundamentalisms in South Asia, especially in its exclusivist, state-sponsored, discriminatory form in India, and now increasingly in Pakistan, this means that the South Asian diaspora, with its wealth and influence, and its anxiety over maintaining cultural ties to the homeland, becomes a power broker for the most heinous of ethnocentrisms back home. Whether we look at the links between Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) sponsored "hindutva" summer camps in the United States and the VHP presence on university campuses here (see *Amerasia* pp. 101–5) or the fight for the secession of Kashmir being fought in mosques in the United Kingdom and in the United States (as mentioned above), the lines between nostalgia, cultural preservation, and political propaganda are very thin.[17]

A neologism like *technomics* might be coined to suggest the vast power and potential of virtual money and politics circulating within the South Asian diaspora. In our discussion so far, the tech industry has served as a heuristic for elaborating upon mass and popular cultural practices of South Asians within the United States primarily because its capital (economic and intellectual)

has motored the engine of globalization *and* this new cosmopolitanism. At a surface level, the powerful presence of South Asian techies is analogous to the dominance of Hispanics in the music and entertainment industry in the United States today. And, like the Hispanic example, the glare of new South Asian tech wealth and power has not fully overwhelmed or stopped other discourses and practices through which South Asian Americans make their presence felt. The example of Urvashi Vaid, Bhairavi Desai, and Biju Mathew's work with taxi drivers in their aggressive and successful negotiations with Rudy Giuliani in New York City is a case in point, as is the work of Chaumtoli Haq in the Asian Action Advocacy Collective. These brief examples point to one more instance where activism based upon shared origins become points for organizing for progressive ends and resisting the sub-contractual, sweatshop-like labor practices of many professions, including technology firms. Civic nationalism combined with a memory of origins becomes enacted through solidarity and region-based community building by/of South Asians within the national space of the United States and across class lines. Another example is the way in which disasters in South Asia, such as the Gujarat earthquake in 2001, can prompt the diffusely organized and class driven South Asians to use their wealth and resources to help. Temples, mosques, and shops thus became money collection sites for the earthquake relief, temporarily laying aside their sectarian or nationalist impulses.

## Scholarship on South Asians

Scholarship in the US academy on the South Asian experience in this country has reflected the tension of this uneven assimilation/identity. "Satyagraha in America: the Political Culture of South Asian Americans," a recent issue of *Amerasia*, captures some of these divergences and contradictions in relation to the question, "What do South Asian Americans want?" For example, one can see tensions around class, religion, and caste, even regionality played out in the spaces of temples, mosques, and Indian or Pakistani grocery stores, and in the misleadingly jejune remarks pitting second generation South Asian Americans against recent immigrants.

These questions and points of divergence are important because they reveal a gradual shift from an older form of cosmopolitanism that was based upon racial and essential categories (South Asians assimilated into US society

based upon class affiliations), to a new cosmopolitanism wherein South Asians of different classes and generations are manipulating and negotiating their identity within the dominant cultural matrix, sometimes accessing advantage from the Asian side of their hyphen and sometimes from the American side. That is to say, in the past for example, Indian or Pakistani Americans perceived and conducted themselves as different from not only Americans, but also from other Asian Americans. And, while this distinction is rooted in the immigration history of the peoples from the subcontinent just much as it in America's history of war in Asian nations (which resulted in refugee-based immigration policy and subsequent diversity in Asian American population), the other more powerful but subtle reason is that South Asians aligned themselves with postcolonial peoples in the general society and in the academy. The other major point of difference, as Susan Koshy has argued, is that early immigrants from India at the end of the nineteenth century identified with and counted as Caucasians in US census reports. It was only when these Indian families were racialized and denied citizenship, did *becoming Asian American* create a dilemma. And since this was an anomalous factoid in the post 1965 waves of immigration, most theorizing around citizenship, albeit a racialized citizenship, has not been a major focus in South Asian scholarship. An equally important factor was the socially constructed parameters of Asian American community, both in the general public and in the academia, which normativized such marginalizations in anthologies such as *Aiiieeee* (1991)or its sequel, the *Big Aiiieee* (Inada et al., 1993) that showcased Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino American writing, or in reverse, in *Contours of the Heart: South Asians Map North America* (Srikanth et al., 1996) or *A Part Yet Apart: South Asians in Asian America* (Maira et al., 1998), which, though they used the fresh nomenclature and category of South Asians, underscored differences from a larger Asian America. Yet, one can find a middle ground in this Asian American/South Asian chiasmus in the field of diaspora and cultural studies; for example, in *Orientations*: *Mapping Studies in the Asian Diaspora* (Chuh et al., 2001) and *Theorizing Diaspora* (Mannur et al., 2003). An excellent, innovative exception in bridging this divide is the anthology, *Charlie Chan is Dead* (Haggedorn et al., 1993) and its sequel, *Charlie Chan is: Dead II* (2004). Why is it necessary to invoke literary texts in this volume of new cosmopolitanism? Because, literature does the work of culture, and *new cosmopolitanism is an assertion of placement* that transcends older forms of privilege in our globlized milieu. That is to say, Asian American texts are

read as ethnography by the general public and by students with a preconceived grid of representative politics of race and assimilation traumas, which Elaine Kim argued recently: "binarizes literature and us" so that we can be "categorized and contained" in America (conference keynote lecture delivered at *Asians in America: At Home in the World,* 2004). But, there is more work to done, as many of the schisms still exist. So, when the US census predicts that the Asian Americans will soon be a big part of the non-white population, it makes one hopeful about a more inclusive category where South Asian presences will be a part of the fabric of America.

## Essays

The essays in this collection examine a wide-ranging set of subjects from the impact of different religious beliefs on the identities of new cosmopolitans, to the production, circulation, and consumption of material culture like art, literature/fiction, and film, to the *cosmopolitanization* of the newly fashioned, gendered body of South Asian women. In doing so, the essays engage with the actual and fantasized presence of South Asians in the United States by scrutinizing the significance of class, gender, generational, and political affiliations, and their attendant alliances and antagonisms. Since the subjects and issues tackled by the contributors are quite diverse, they are articulated in different disciplinary paradigms and vocabularies, and consequently, exhibit or evoke different sensibilities in the act of reading. Although at first glance, such differences could cause dissonances, at the theoretical level of exploring a "new" cosmopolitanism, these essays mirror the very lived realities of South Asian experiences. For example, in speaking of art and religion, Dehejia and Leonard, respectively find a descriptive, ethnographic mode suitable. In Dadi's analysis of Pakistani American politics of representation, a critical race theory approach works best. In our own essay on theorizing the global recognition accorded to South Asian authors, we find a cultural studies method tempered with a journalistic style appropriate. Desai, and Haslam and Iyer borrow heavily from their disciplinary lexicon of feminist film studies and psychoanalysis, respectively. To sum-up then, the essays are meant to function intersectionally and cross-disciplinarily in order to examine and define an emerging phenomenon that we call new cosmopolitanism, which reflects the in-betweenness of the identity, class, and citizenship nexus of contemporary South Asians within the United States.

Iftikhar Dadi's "The Pakistani Diaspora in North America" is one of the first sustained scholarly analyses to look historically at the Orientalized, immigrant communities of Pakistanis, and explore "slippery definitional quandaries of national/diaspora identities" through complex markers of race, class, gender, popular cultural affects, and the "rubrics of Islamic" practices. Writing in the horrific shadow of the events of September 11, he shows the collapsing of class to say that "even the most privileged elites have become objects of surveillance and suspicion, the subjectivity of the Pakistani American is being interpellated and reinscribed on a plane of contestation," revealing perhaps, a negative phase of new cosmopolitanism. Dadi addresses both the historical and contemporary roots of Pakistani-American identity, which creates a cross-genre dialogue between ethnographic and the historical-informative. He traces the multiple traumas of originary nation creation and consolidation being gradually replaced by a strong sense of belonging in the Pakistani-American population.

Karen Leonards' essay, "South Asian Religions in the US: New Contexts and Configurations" looks at the South Asian groups in the United States like Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, and Zoroastrian, who practiced in historical and traditional ways, and contrasts them with contemporary groups who have adapted to hybridized forms with local Americanized variations. Such a contrast, she accurately points coexists with a revivalist fervor that mirrors the religious fundamentalism, here in the United States, of their homeland cultures. Also addressing the concept of the "value of homeland religions" in South Asian communities, Leonard makes an insightful distinction between identarian politics of patriarchal and gender confluences in what Stuart Hall sees as diasproic practices, and what Pnina Werbner calls transnational, cultural variations, to suggest a new, "reconfigured community of believers."

Vidya Dehejia in "Identity and Visibility" provides a wide-angle lens view of the layered status and reception of South Asian art in US culture. She begins by setting the context for museum displays, explaining both the strategies used in exhibiting cultures and the power-play that museum organizers engage in, to suggest that what the public see is not "just art" but the careful showcasing and eliciting of aesthetic responses by "mediating between art and the visitor." Next, using three different exhibitions—"Devi The Great Goddess," "India Through the Lens," and the "Chola Bronzes"—curated by the Sackler Gallery (Asian unit of the Smithsonian complex) on the cusp

of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Dehejia explains how her Asian Americanness, that is, "the politics of my own identity as an insider-outsider, an individual with a hyphenated status, and a woman" coincided, among other concerns, with the planning and curating of the exhibitions. "Devi," in particular, as she explains, was executed as an interactive exhibition that while aestheticizing, made concrete numerous aspects of Hindu culture as the materiality of many South Asian homes in the United States. Dehejia (focus on materiality of art) like Leonard (focus upon religion), the editors (focus upon class), and Dadi (focus on Islam) notes that contemporary South Asians are at the crossroads of cultural practices enjoyed by people with different allegiances, and thus belong to what we see emerging as the new cosmopolitans.

Jigna Desai in "Bollywood Abroad" addresses the shift in cosmopolitan tastes from viewing a Satyajit Ray's work as art-house cinema, to the "showcasing of *Devdas* at the Cannes film festival and nomination of *Lagaan* for an Oscar award, to the opening of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Bombay Dreams* in London and New York, and the Golden Globe nominations for best comedy of Gurinder Chadha's *Bend it Like Beckham*." This, she suggests, indicates "expectations are high for the diasporic and crossover appeal of Bollywood and diasporic cinema and the attendant productions for a new cosmopolitanism." By blending together globalization, feminist, queer, and film studies discourses, Desai suggests that Bollywood audiences in the United States reveal a different kind of sensibility than diasproics of an earlier era did, who used these films to fulfill their longings for home. Nick Halsam and Dana Sahi Iyer in "The Psychological Cost of New Cosmopolitanisms" also focus on the transnational spaces inhabited by South Asians by bringing a scientific rigor to examine the particular ways in which race, class, and minoritization combine to create particular somatic disorders in second and third generation South Asian Americans. Their argument, enhanced by its co-authored status, presents a sociological and psychological perspective on a problem not traditionally associated with South Asians in the United States. Finally Sharma and Rajan in "Theorizing Recognition" address the more discursive space of literature written by writers both South Asian and hyphenated South Asians. Instead of examining the literature itself, they examine the broad appeal of such writing and how readership issues are intimately bound up with the political and ideological tendencies in much of this writing. Thus almost all the essays in this collection approach their subjects in transgressive ways,

in order to understand a phenomenon that cannot be contained within a single disciplinary boundary.

## Future of the Field

It is hard to ignore, at the risk of sounding banal, the extent to which the events of 9–11 in the United States have changed attitudes not only toward nation and immigration, but also toward the existence of immigrants and minorities already in the country. In scenes reminiscent of the McCarthy witch-hunts, Muslims and Arabs were scapegoated, assaulted, arrested, and harassed in the wake of that date. For the discussion of new cosmopolitanism and the field of diaspora studies as well, this has far-reaching effects, some impossible to even predict. One way in which identity has begun to be conceived of differently is in the new emphasis on religion. Not only is Islam or anything Islamic now marked with an exaggerated significance in popular and public culture, but the western world in general (and the United States in particular) has begun to be redefined with the term "Judeo-Christian" and seen as inimically hostile to the Eastern, Muslim world. In contrast, in academic and high culture circles, there has been a paradoxical and hyperbolic attention trained upon educating the nation about Islam, as evidenced in the recent NEH grants, the Ford and Fulbright awards, and national museum exhibitions. Hing, in *Making and Remaking Asian America*, argues that United States foreign and public policy have been consistently exclusionary in singling out Asian Americans, but that for the most part, Asian Americans themselves have not been very effective in combating such racisms. Within South Asians in the United States, this targeting of people based on their religion—Islam—has resulted in a shift away from national and racial identities to religious identifications and affiliations. In terms of citizenship and civic rights, the emphasis is on coercive citizenship and hyperpatriotic rhetoric, and increased surveillance, as in Donald Rumsfeld's aborted TIPS (Terrorism Information and Prevention System) program, which encouraged neighbors and postal workers to report "suspicious" people and activity.

South Asian and Middle Eastern groups rallied together in the aftermath of September 11 and in the build up to protesting the Iraq war, thus creating new transregional, political affiliations and revivifying civic nationalism. On the other hand, the climate of suspicion that has existed since then, in the

long run, will probably have the effect of speeding up assimilation, and an attempt to minimize differences from mainstream America, as far as that is possible for visible minorities like South Asians. It may seem strategic, not opportunistic to suggest that one of the future directions for South Asian peoples and South Asian scholars is to build alliances in broader communitarian terms with other Asian Americans, not just in this hour of crisis, but rather to move in step with the times. In an era of globalization, relations of power with "fluid" (Bauman) capital, and flows of people can articulate one's place in society. Networked relationality is the new direction for citizenship—both at local and global levels as opposed to an identity of politics, or racialized and essentialized representation. That is to say, new cosmopolitanism creates the room to move across race, religion, protonational, class lines, and beyond liberal multiculturalism's systemically heirachized chronometers of essentialized inclusion into community. An inkling that we are fast approaching this important threshold is seen in the concept of biraciality, and, interestingly, if one looks around on college campuses, this seems to be taken quite matter-of-factly by the South Asian youth population. The value and authority invested in the purity of origin by the first generation diasporic South Asians (who could also be categorized as traditional cosmopolitans) seems to be less pertinent now, and we have to thank (partially, at least) the 2000 US Census with its new category of biraciality for this felicitous beginning. It points to emergent ways in which the question of race in the United States is being rearticulated as a result of demographic trends, and cultural and social forces. A final thought of where our scholarship on new cosmopolitanism would lead can be seen in this phenomenon—where Asian Americans (together with many other Americans)—will have to move beyond traditional categories of belonging to make choices about cultural and civic affiliations.

## Conclusion

Pnina Werbner, in *Diaspora*, points out that our understanding of the term diaspora has changed greatly in the last two decades. She stresses the "social heterogeneity" of diasporas by which she means the "*dual* orientation of diaspora communities: on the one hand, to fight for citizenship and equal rights in the place of settlement, . . . on the other, to continue to foster transnational relations and to live with a sense of displacement and of loyalty to other places and groups beyond the place of settlement" (2000, p. 5). In addition,

Werbner adds, they are deeply implicated in the "nationalist projects of their homelands." What this means for Werbner and for our project, is that theoretical and academic work on diaspora and transnationalism has to account for "the constitutive relations among intellectual creativity, diasporic quotidian culture, subjective consciousness, and political action" (p. 6). It is this work that we hope our book will generate. In other words, although we have often used Indian Americans as examples to explore larger issues of globalization and a new cosmopolitanism within the United States, we hope the issues raised in the essays will cover more and more varied ground.

Some questions that invite discussion include: What are the modes of assimilation of South Asians from Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan into United States culture and society and within the matrix of Asian America? Is the Indian American example analogous or hyperbolic? Can the tech magic "leak" (Bauman) into other classes of immigrants and diasporic subjects and how might that be achieved across "disjunctrues" (Appadurai)? Is political activism of the younger generation of South Asians a factor that will suppress internal regional/national differences to move towards "cosmopolitics" (Cheah)? In terms of questions of culture, whose politics are invoked when South Asians merchandize nostalgia via museum exhibitions, calendar art, religious centers, or media and cinema (Bollywood and art films), or even with disposable calling cards? Do traditionally marginalized groups within the larger group model spawn a new minority (for example, South Asian queers in the film *Chutney Popcorn*)? In other words, how is queerness practiced/regulated within the South Asian community in the larger space of US society when viewed against the rising influence of internal religious fervor? How are culture-specific aspects of femininity and female sexuality deployed through arranged marriages and beauty pageants? We hope, in the end, to create a dialogic space where the South Asian question can be examined in all its nuanced complexity.

## Notes

1. Brenann carefully delineates the roles of academics and intellectuals in valorizing a certain kind of cosmopolitanism that is complicit in the exercise of power and empire. He distinguishes this from the ethical praxis of cosmopolitanism that is closer to the older definition of a (positive) internationalism.

2. In the Kantian sense ("Perpetual Peace" 1795) cosmopolitan law endows one with world citizenship, which suggests in a general sense what man (sic) deserves as a citizen of this earth. Such a proto-humanist understanding of human rights vis-à-vis cosmopolitanism and sovereign subjectivity is available in the eighteenth century to the educated few. In a Marxist sense, cosmopolitanism is the ideological reflection of capitalism and its byproducts like wealth and culture.

3. Bauman stresses that the "contemporary, global elite . . . [are] now traveling light, rather than holding tightly . . . [that] is the asset of power" (p. 13). This accurately describes the manner in which the Non Resident Indians (NRIs), for example, strong-armed the Indian government into opening domestic markets to US interests. Appadurai raises this concern in different words: "global capital in its contemporary form is characterized by strategies of predatory mobility (across both time and space) that have vastly compromised the capacity of actors in single locations even to understand, much less to anticipate or resist, these strategies . . . This sense of compromised sovereignty . . . is the subject of intense debate among political theorists and analysts" ("Grassroots" p. 16).

4. See a discussion of the Bhagat Singh Thind case by Koshy (1998) in *Diaspora* 7, 3: 286.

5. In framing the South Asian question within the United States, we need to take into account the serial and multi-directional arguments that have been made about globalization. In a general frame, presence as diasporic identity has been articulated through nationalism, transnationalism, and cosmopolitanism (beginning with Kant and moving to Benedict Anderson, and more recently in the debates of Bruce Robbins and Martha Nussbaum), through discussions of nationality and ethnicity as factors implicated in globalization (Anthony Giddens, John Tomlinson, Stuart Hall, Roland Robertson, Scott Lash, John Urry, and others), as flexible citizenship (Aihwa Ong), "cosmopolitics" (Robbins and Pheng Cheah), "global citizen" (Zygmunt Bauman, Arjun Appadurai, Barbara Adam), "glocalism" (Robertson), "sojourners" (Robin Cohen), "traveling identities" (James Clifford). Marshall McLuhan's phrase, "global village" has been recently invoked and merchandized by the United Nations in their 50th Anniversary Report as "Our Global Neighborhood."

6. See http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/may/10usspec.htm. On a historical note, US Jews from Germany and France in 1896 systematically objected to allowing Jewish immigrants from Russia and Eastern Europe along similar lines of logic as Rekhi and others do today. To understand the impetus of this self-policing, one needs to acknowledge that the sudden visibility connotes a "foreigner's" desire to be worthy of national attention and denotes the intense insecurity of the immigrant group as always/already other.

7.  The number of H1-B visas assigned to Indians jumped form 2,697 in 1990 to 55,049 in 2000. These figures show that despite the brutal consequences for workers, the program was overwhelmingly popular with Democrats and Republicans, who enjoy the tech industry's substantial campaign contributions. In October 2000, Congress passed an industry-backed bill to increase the number of H1-B visas granted each year. The Indian American community, partially because of its relative wealth and numbers, has taken a more assertive stance with regard to this development. The India Abroad Center for Political Action, a body invested in sharing and circulating information about issues affecting the Indian American community from a governmental perspective, has gone further. They argued that since there are 1,678,765 Indian American citizens in the United States now, roughly equivalent to the population of the State of Nebraska, one could envision having three members in Congress to represent the interests of this bloc. In other words, if *America* works on the originary assumption of immigration as the process of nation building, then the logic of citizenship, i.e., belonging and having political representation must make this polemic a *fait accompli*. Now, with the negative visibility accorded due to the outsourcing debate, and the publication of the Census figures, prominent South Asians like Kanwal Rekhi are becoming image conscious, and wondering what sorts of immigrants should be allowed in. This self-directed policing is a direct result of the so-called success of South Asians in the United States.

8.  Borrowing from Stuart Hall's comment made in a different context, we suggest that within public culture, "America" and "India" are pumped into the popular imagination and get manifested in the consumption patterns of both nations, eliding neatly the distinction between mass and public spaces.

9.  *India Abroad* January 9th, 2004, p. C5.

10.  Till recently, however, South Asians have had little impact on American public culture as the contact zone has been minimal and limited. Here, Cheah's and Robbins' attempt in *Cosmopolitics* to break the connection between cosmopolitanism from its historical meanings of "elitist," "individualist," "supranational," and instead redefine it as a "collective, engaged, and empowered form of worldliness" (1998, p. 5) is extremely useful. But in the South Asian case, "worldliness" is often colored by memories of a phantom national citizenship that shapes the politics of the nations of origin. This can be seen most clearly in the following examples where politics that play out around the issue of NRI (Non Resident Indians) remittances and capital, or the support for a homeland from Sri Lankan Tamils in Europe, the United States, and Canada. Similarly, the struggle for Khalistan as a separate state for Sikhs and the battle for an independent Kashmir are financed overwhelmingly from abroad. Also worth noting in this

context is the central role that this kind of remittance economy plays in Pakistan. The South Asian countries are not the only ones enmeshed in economic and political structures, both in the United States and in their homelands. On June 1, 2001, an editorial in *The New York Times* titled "Contributing to the Old Country" reported that Latin American immigrants (an abhorrent and incorrect term) now working in the United States are also engaged in building the economic bases of their respective nations through regular remittances. It stated, "in addition to individuals sending money to their families, Salvadorans and Mexicans are increasingly coming together in American cities to send back funds for public infrastructure works, usually through a hometown association. President Vicente Fox of Mexico has started some innovative matching programs for such funds, and the Inter-American Development Bank is looking to the same elsewhere in the region." It is important to note that immigrants sending money back to their families for personal/private use in the home country is not a new phenomenon. However, what is new is the way these funds now get absorbed by local and state governments to refuel national, public projects. The second important distinction is that the recent immigrants from South Asia belong to the upper, educated class—the wealthy dot.com millionaires—who are only now joined by the peoples of South and Central America, who have belonged largely to the labor class. The South Asians and the "Latin Americans" seem to be taking an alternative route to globalization, i.e., one that exceeds older, patronizing, and often harmful practices of the World Bank and World Trade Organizations. As we have stated in this essay and as The *NYT* points out, such pockets of wealth in immigrant communities, is bound to affect immigration patterns in the United States.

11. Appadurai writes, "*ideoscapes* are concatenations of images, but they are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counter ideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power or a piece of it. These *ideoscapes* are composed of elements of the Enlightenment worldview, which consists of a chain of ideas, terms, and images including *freedom, welfare, rights, sovereignty, representation*, and the master term *democracy*" (p. 36, original emphasis). In this case, the intense racism and weakened economic climate of the early 1990s nurtured a mood of immigrant bashing, which was propelled on a double axis. On the one hand, the general public, aided by the media, carefully amplified the meaning of *democracy* to signal a citizen's total right to any and all opportunities as some form of entitlement. In such articulations, the citizens were polarized against the immigrants, particularly against model minorities. On the other hand, the vocal anti-immigration sentiments of the state exaggerated its discourse of *rights, welfare, representation* etc. to systemically enforce the distinction between legitimate subject and illegitimate subject. Thus, dot busting, as the

practice was called in New Jersey, was neither really investigated nor punished by law enforcement officials.

12.  Madonna wore a *Vaishnava* mark—two white lines painted between and perpendicular to the eyebrows with a red line in between. Within Brahminical culture, this mark symbolizes the wearer's allegiance to Vishnu. While the youth audiences were more interested in the music, and were just mildly impressed by this Indianizing of Madonna's face, the Hare Krishna organization protested vehemently at having their signature symbol made sacrilegious. Madonna's appropriation of a religious symbol signified both mass cultures' fascination with markers of South Asianness, as well as the thin line of that appropriation with mockery and trivialization.

13.  The educational and economic background of South Asians in the United States makes this particular combination of local labor with global market almost inevitable. According to UNDP figures from 1998, the literacy rate for South Asia was almost 70 percent, with 78 percent of the population enrolled in primary schools. Within South Asia, the numbers vary widely with Sri Lanka way ahead of other countries with a literacy rate among 15–24-year olds of 96.50 percent and a primary enrollment of 99.9 percent. India and Pakistan rank next with literacy rates of 70.9 percent and 61.40 percent respectively. Bangladesh and Nepal follow last with 57.30 percent and 49.60 percent. In terms of tertiary education, figures show that Sri Lanka and India enroll about 29 percent and 25 percent of the population for higher education. Given the high number of students, H1-B visas and workers employed by multinationals in the United States and in India's tech capitals or call-center hubs like Bangalore and Hyderabad, this means that a significant portion of the educated class in South Asia contribute to the US economy. This may not be the case with the tech bust now, as these figures are a few years old. But, what these partial figures show (since they do not cover South Asia, but only India), is that a disproportionately large number of Indians living and working in the United States are concentrated in wealth-generating, technical fields. Suppose similar figures hold true, proportionately, for the rest of South Asia, what does this mean for the cultural flows, imaginative affiliations, and political sympathies of these highly skilled, somewhat anomalous population group? Does the slanted "brain drain" from South Asia have any long-term effects on South Asian or US society? Can we make any historical comparisons with the Jewish intellectuals who fled Europe to come to the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century, and have consequently generated immense wealth for this nation? Is it possible to think of the South Asian "professionals" similarly, i.e., not as classic immigrants but as sojourners or as embodiments of floating capital? The difference with Jewish intellectuals in the 1930s is of course one of sheer numbers, but also that in most

cases, South Asians are not fleeing horrendous religious or ethnic persecution.

14. Tomlinson continues, "It presents globalization as a synchronization to the demands of a standardized consumer culture, making everywhere seem more or less the same. So to assert cultural homogenization as a consequence of globalization is to move from connectivity through proximity to the supposition of global uniformity and ubiquity." (p.6). He points out that globalization is the growing, complex interconnections established by global modernity (a time-space relationship) that shows links between individual lifestyles and global consequences. These consequences can range from the mundane, localized life practices to the monumental—as in "cyber travel and the generation and exchange of capital from remote sectors."

15. See Margaret Abraham's, *Speaking the Unspeakable: Marital Violence Among South Asian Immigrants in the US.*

16. The recent census shows that many of the Muslims in the United States are from South Asia and they own the largest numbers of mosques in the country (as distinct from Nation of Islam mosques). Also see a recent report on the city of Fremont, CA, where a *gurudwara* built by the Sikh community has institutionalized a radical shift in the ethnic makeup of its population, much to the dismay of the older, white residents (*The New York Times*, "With an Asian Influx, a Suburb Finds Itself Transformed," May 26, 2001). Lastly, see Leonard, "State, Culture and Religion: Political Action and Representation among South Asians in North America", *Diaspora*, 9:1 (2000): pp. 21–38, for a discussion of communal agendas in organization and olitical lobbying.

17. A recent article by Ravindra K. Jain also addresses the rising problem of South Asians wielding fundamentalist religiocultural power in their homelands through the privilege that immense capital and distance that globalization has allowed them to access. Although he writes mainly of this problem created by South Asians in South Africa, the Caribbean, and Mauritius, he too touches upon the idea of a manufactured authenticity that South Asians claim by exaggerating their ethnicity through socioreligious rituals that we present in this essay. He writes, "the racially slanted class antagonisms within the immigrant South Asian communities themselves lend further edge to ethnic, subethnic, and class hostilities. The tendency in most social science writing about Indian diasporics has been to explain the rightist posture, *viz*, building of temples and mosques, financing visits from the homeland of religious personages, collecting funds for "hindutva" or "jamat-e-islam" or "khalsa" causes as manifestations of identarian and minority politics in plural societies. But the structural outcome of these cultural stereotypes and reactions is not at all so innocuous as surface reality may

suggest. The alignment between racist and class factors is cleverly disguised in terms of religion and culture. Here the official policies of multiculturalism in the host societies and the rightist policies go hand in hand. The ambivalence between, on the one hand, the purity and exclusivity of the Full Blooded Indians in South Africa and their counterparts in the Caribbean, North America, or Europe, and, on the other hand, the chauvinist appeal of "pure" Hinduism, Islam, or Sikhism in the homeland communities make an explosive mixture in the globalized world." For more see, "Culture and Class in Indian Diaspora: India vs. Bharat" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Commentary, April 28, 2001.

## References

Abraham, Margaret. 2000. *Speaking the Unspeakable: Marital Violence Among South Asian Immigrants in the US.* Newark: Rutgers University Press.

Amott, Matthaei. 1996. *Race, Gender, and Work: A Multi-Cultural Economic History of Women in the United States*. Boston: South End Press.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

— 2000. Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination. *Public Culture* 12, 1: 1–19.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2000. *Liquid Modernity* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Brennan, Timothy. 2001.Cosmo-Theory. *South Atlantic Quarterly* 100, 3: 659–91.

Castells, Manuel. 1996. *The Rise of the Network Society*. London: Basil Blackwell.

Cheah, Pheng and Bruce Robbins, eds., 1998. *Cosmopolitcs: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Ching, Leo. 2001. Globalizing the Regional: Mass Culture and Asianism in the Age of Late Capital. *Public Culture* 12, 1: 233–57

Chuh, Kandice and Karen Shimakawa, eds. 2001.*Orientations: Mapping Studies in the Asian Diaspora*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Cohen, Robin. 1997. *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Dasgupta, Sathi S. 1989. *On the Trail of an Uncertain Dream: Indian Immigrant Experience in America*. Delhi: AMS Press.

Haggedorn, Jessica 2004. ed. *Charlie Chan is Dead 2: At Home in the World.* NY: Penguin.

Hall, Stuart. 1997. The Local and the Global. In Anthony King, ed., *Culture, Globalization, and the World system.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Harvey, David. 2001. Cosmopolitanism and the Banality of Geographical Evils. *Public Culture* 12, 2: 529–64.

Helweg, Arthur et al. 1988. *An Immigrant Success Story: East Indians in America.* Philadephia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Hing, Bill Ong. 1993. *Making and Remaking Asian America Through Immigration Policy*, 1850–1999. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Inada, Chin L, et al. eds. 1991. *Aiieeeee: An Anthology of Asian American Writers.* Seattle: New American Library.

Inada, Chin L. et al. eds. 1991. *The Big Aiieeeee: An Anthology of Asian American Literature.* NY: Signet.

Koshy, Susan. 1998. Category Crisis: South Asian Americans and the Questions of Race and Ethnicity. *Diaspora* 7, 3: 285–320.

Leonard, Karen. 2000. State, Culture and Religion: Political Action and Representation Among South Asians in North America. *Diaspora* 9, 1: 21–38.

— 1992. *Making Ethnic Choices: California Punjabi Mexican Americans.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Lowe, Lisa, 1991. Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian American Differences. *Diaspora* 1, 1: 24–44.

Mannur, Anita and Jana Evans Brazeil, eds. 2003. *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader.* Malden MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Mathew, Biju and Vijay Prashad, eds.1999/2000. Satyagraha in America: The Political Culture of South Asians Americans. *Amerasia Journal* 25:3 special issue.

McCarthy, Thomas. 2001. On Reconciling Cosmopolitan Unity and National Diversity. *Public Culture* 11, 1: 175–208.

Ong, Aihwa 1999. *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Prashad, Vijay. 2000. *The Karma of Brown Folk.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Robertson, Roland. 1997. *Globalization: Social Theory and Social Culture.* London: Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Robbins, Bruce. 1999. *Feeling Global: Internationalism in Distress.* New York: New York University Press.

Rouse, Roger. 1995. Questions of Identity: Personhood and Collectivity in Transnational Migration to the United States. *Critique of Anthropology* 15, 4: 351–80.

— 1995. Thinking Through Transnationalsim: Notes on the Cultural Politics of Class Relations in the Contemporary United States. *Public Culture* 7, 2: 353–402.

— 1991. Mexican Migration and the Social Space of Postmodernism. *Diaspora* 1, 3: 8–23.

Rumbaut, Rubén G, and Alejandro Portes, eds. 2001. *Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Srikanth, Rajini and Sunaina Maira, eds. 1996. *Contours of the Heart: South Asians Map North America.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Srikanth, Rajini and L. D. Shankar, eds. 1998. *A Part, Yet Apart: South Asians in Asian America*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Tomlinson, John. 1999. *Globalization and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tölölyan, Khachig. 1996. Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment. *Diaspora* 5, 1: 3–36.

Werbner, Pnina. 2000. The Materiality of Diaspora—Between "Aesthetic" and "Real" Priorities. *Diaspora* 9, 1: 5–20.

*Note.* Amerasia 25, 3: 1999/2000 is also a valuable resource in which the organizational and political aspects of middle and working class South Asians are (rightly) highlighted as a counterpoint to the focus on the tech brigade.

# The Pakistani Diaspora in North America

IFTIKHAR DADI

## Introduction

Although the Pakistani-North American community is complex and multi-faceted, my concern in this essay is with emergent practices of the younger generations, both of migrants as well as of the second generation. As a cultural historian, my focus will be on questions of representation, especially the important issue of self-representation. In particular, I will explore how diasporic cultural expressivity can no longer be limited to the older paradigms of Urdu or English literature, fiction, and poetry. My contention is that textual practices—whether in Urdu or elite cosmopolitan writings in English[1]—although remaining of significance, are being "supplemented" by new expressive possibilities that are enacted at the popular level in various media, in activism, as well as in academia. However, for these emerging possibilities to develop more fully, much greater participation, patronage, and attendance by cultural workers, activists, and the community will be required. Scholarship and analysis of these movements—which is more or less absent—is likewise an imperative and immediate necessity. I will also briefly note salient issues that need to be accounted for, including the slippery definitional quandaries of national/diaspora identity; issues of race, class, and generational divides; the framing of Pakistani Americans under the rubric of Islam in North America; the role of popular culture in imagining identity; and developments after September 11. This essay is intended to provide a

broad (but by no means exhaustive) survey of new trends, in anticipation that it will prove useful for more focused studies to follow. Throughout, I will use the term "Pakistani Americans" to refer to the community in Canada as well.

## Existing Scholarship

The overall picture of both Pakistan and Pakistani Americans in academic scholarship, as well as in popular American media, continues to be deeply marked by Orientalist tropes and a narrowness of vision that privileges geopolitical strategy over and above social and cultural exploration. The academic view of Pakistan remains mostly limited to political analysis of the army and governmental institutions, ethnographies of the rural groups/urban poor, or at best, "high" literary culture. Especially in the United States, scholarship on Pakistan has obsessively focused on security and political analysis, much of it related to the alleged failure of democracy to take hold in Pakistan. Literary and cultural analyses have been largely devoted to the canon of Urdu[2] or writers in English, while sociological studies have principally viewed Pakistan through the lens of rural ethnography. Missing from academic scholarship, then, is the wider array of questions related to culture, media, urbanization, and civil society.[3] For example, so far I have been unable to find a single study of the social and cultural role of television in Pakistan. Assessments influenced by "cultural studies" or "public culture" approaches, which are of great relevance for the rapidly urbanizing and highly mediated public culture and its intersection with social and cultural issues, have not yet been undertaken.[4] This glaring deficiency unfortunately also characterizes studies of the Pakistani diaspora as well as Muslims in North America, which seldom move beyond reassertions of ethnographic notions regarding identity and accept ritual and institutionalized claims of religious avowals at face value.

Unfortunately, the US mass media's perception of Pakistan is even more circumscribed, to the narrowest of questions related to the immediate security concerns of the United States. Athough one can find no shortage of sensationalist reporting of "Islamic fundamentalism," the training of "terrorists" in Pakistani *madrasas* (traditional Islamic schools), alarming reports of nuclear proliferation, and so on, one is hard pressed to find any mention of social or cultural developments in Pakistan.[5] Nor can one find

much awareness of the complexity of Pakistani society in the shallow and one-sided literary and travel accounts by otherwise gifted writers, in the works of V. S. Naipaul,[6] and more recently, by the French philosopher Bernard Henri Lévy.[7] In turn, these popular media and academic views inform the opinions of North Americans in general, but also the self-perception of both the first and the second generation Pakistani Americans. The influence of dominant perceptions exerted upon the latter is in itself an important topic, which awaits detailed study.

Although there has been little work done on the Pakistani Americans, there is, however, a growing literature on Muslims in North America. As Muslims of South Asian origin—mostly from India and Pakistan—presently constitute a substantial percentage of Muslim immigrants in the United States and accounting for some 25 percent of all American Muslims,[8] this literature is also of great pertinence in any analysis of the Pakistani Americans. I will briefly explore the character of this scholarship and will suggest that although it provides an important interpretive framework by its focus on religious identity of South Asian and other Muslims, in turn it also elides other key questions—that are not reducible to a religious framework—which are simply not asked when Pakistanis are seamlessly viewed only as Muslims. However, it is also salient to interrogate just what being a "Pakistani" might suggest in the context of diaspora. As I will demonstrate, the referent of this label is far from simple, and needs to be unpacked.

## *Definitional Quandaries: Who is a Pakistani American?*

Even in the context of the virtualized identities of hyphenated diasporas, the appellation of "Pakistani American" is particularly slippery. To briefly rehearse the historical context, Pakistan was carved out of British India in 1947, comprising the geographically divided East and West Pakistan, with the territory of Kashmir in dispute with India. The partition of British India led to massive migrations and set the stage for a series of hostile encounters between Pakistan and India, which have continued until today, as violent exchanges in the form of war and clandestine operations, but also in terms of symbolic struggle. In 1971, after widespread civil unrest in East Pakistan, its brutal suppression by the (overwhelmingly West) Pakistani army, and the break out of war between India and Pakistan, East Pakistan broke away to form Bangladesh, leading to further transfer of populations between

the three countries. Therefore, in the last six decades, the question as to what a Pakistani might be has witnessed at least two large-scale shifts in meaning.

In addition, we must attend to the history of migrants from India during the colonial period, when indentured labor, traders, and elites settled in British colonial territories in Southeast Asia, East and South Africa, the Caribbean, and in Britain itself. The postindependence migrations, within the newly formed countries of South Asia, from South Asia to the United States and UK, and the large-scale migration of South Asians from East Africa to UK, and subsequently, to North America, further complicate this picture. How does one locate the nationality of a family from Gujarat, which had migrated to East or South Africa before 1947, and then moved to the United States in the 1980s, but whose extended relatives all relocated to Karachi after the Partition? Is this diasporic family to be automatically considered as Non Resident Indian (NRI) or as Pakistani American? And what about individuals who were born in Delhi, Bombay, or East Punjab, who migrated to Pakistan in 1947, but who left for the UK in the early 1960s, and eventually moved to North America? Then there is the case of the "Punjabi Americans," studied in detail by Karen Leonard, who were Sikh and Muslim, and who generally married Hispanic women, but were classified as "Hindu" during the early twentieth century. After 1947, however, their status as "Hindu" clearly became untenable. Of their descendants of Muslim origin, Leonard states: "There are the post-1947 Spanish Pakistanis, but they are an American invention, and relate uneasily to 'real' Pakistanis."[9] These examples unsettle the commonsense notions of what a Pakistani American might be, and force us toward developing a more nuanced understanding of the ambiguities and hesitancies subsumed under the "national."

Even in cases of migration out of South Asia after 1947, there remains considerable ambiguity regarding their status. What about Bengalis who lived in West Pakistan in the 1950s and 1960s, but moved to the United States before (or even after) 1971? Or the Bangladeshi labor that has come to Karachi in the 1980s and 1990s, seeking relatively better economic prospects, some of whom might have migrated to the United States? Or the generation of children who were brought up in the Persian Gulf countries since the 1970s, and who have settled in North America with their families? And with the emergence in Pakistan of the Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM) in the 1980s, the outlook of many *mujahir* (immigrants from India) was again powerfully articulated as

an imagined (pre-1947) wider South Asian Muslim identity. The origins and trajectories of these real or imagined journeys are neither simple, nor easily delineated within the framework of nationhood such as Pakistan, which had no "organic" demographic or cartographic existence prior to 1947.[10]

Over the last two decades, scholarship has addressed the distinctively imagined character of the general idea of "nation."[11] Pakistan offers an especially vivid example in this regard, and the Pakistani diaspora, by extension, also betrays more openly the constructed and contingent nature of the "national." This is especially evident when one undertakes a comparative analysis of the "national" in India and Pakistan. In both countries, the national question has developed in markedly different ways. As David Ludden has pointed out, the word "India" conflates the sense of India as a "civilizational entity" with the sense of India as a "nation-state."[12] This easy conflation has never been available in the appellation "Pakistan." To be a "Pakistani" is to evoke only the second of these identifications, that is, a political affiliation to the nation-state. This renders the idea of "Pakistaniness" as not so much "civilizational," but as "merely political," and is thus much less resonant as an identifying marker than that of "Indianness." *Indian and Pakistani nationalisms are not equivalent* and the Pakistani diaspora is also marked by this qualitative difference.

The question of nationalism and its relation to Muslim identity in modern South Asia is, however, historically complex, going at least as far back as the contentions of Syed Ahmad Khan after the Mutiny of 1857. This question became especially urgent by the 1920s, refracted by the Khilafat movement, the poet Muhammad Iqbal's reflections on the affiliations of Muslims in Indian nationalism, and the rise of the Muslim League under the leadership of Jinnah. The political partition of British India in 1947 was deeply entangled with the question of choosing clear sides in this highly ambivalent and contradictory social space. The persistence of chequered relations between India and Pakistan is thus symptomatic of the vexed issue of Muslim and Pakistani identity in modern South Asia.[13] Recent scholarship has reopened the question of the problematic intersection of nationalism and identity. Aamir Mufti, for example, has argued: "Muslim identity in colonial India exceeded the categories of minority experience within which Indian nationalism sought to contain it, an excess that had to be excised through Partition in order for 'Muslim' to become 'minority'."[14] Similarly, Vazira Zamindar has suggested, "border-making practices, part of an imbricated

Indo-Pak history, emerged largely to discipline Muslim political imaginaries into a two-state order, and in the process helped to secure critical relationships between nation, state, territory, and citizenship."[15] This overlapping and open-ended formation of modern South Asian Muslim identity informs the delineation of Pakistani identity and especially its venture into diaspora, and renders any simple ascription of national origin or identification as deeply problematic.[16] In the North American diaspora, the "excessive" relationship between national origin and Muslim identity again becomes an open-ended set of issues, which I view as a reopening toward a more difficult, yet potentially a more productive and enabling conceptual space.

What is then needed in the study of the Pakistani diaspora is a multiple focused view. A broad and partial ascription to South Asian Muslim culture—in which large numbers of South Asians, *whether or not they are Muslim,* participate to varying degrees—must be examined alongside cartographic limitations and minority claims, and the whole seen as an historically unfolding process marked by contingency and conflict. Moreover, the unfolding of future possibilities of diasporic practice is fully enmeshed in the full complexity of American society: this also demands a multiple view that can simultaneously focus on the specificities of the diaspora community as well as its participation in larger society. The Pakistani American diaspora identity may, therefore, be viewed as a ceaseless and restless movement in-and-out of the triangulated space demarcated by the tropes of "South Asia," "Islam," and the "West," understood in their entire baroque, overdetermined significations.

The larger rubric of "South Asians" or "South Asian Americans" is thus one useful perspective for locating the Pakistani Americans. But although the category of "South Asia" promises to be more sensitive to the separate articulations of nation-state and civilizational identities, the Indian diaspora, due to its centrality, size, and institutional establishment, also dominates representations of what constitutes the South Asian diaspora. A recent example is found in the excellent collection of essays in the volume, *At Home in Diaspora: South Asian Scholars and the West.* All the essays in this collection have been contributed by illustrious Indian academics of the humanities and social sciences, yet this congruence of India with South Asia goes unmarked, and thus reinforces its naturalization.[17] Due to the widespread predilection to equate South Asia with India and the South Asian diaspora with the NRIs, Pakistan marks *one* site of marginality within South Asianness. But Pakistan occupies an intermediate rung of marginality to be sure, as the

India-Pakistan question—almost always formulated in terms of locating the traumas of Partition—in turn overshadows considerations of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and Afghanistan. And unfortunately, even less has been written about migrants from these latter nations under the appellation of the South Asian diaspora. Thus the persistent lacunas and marginalities in the scholarship of South Asia migrate to the study of its diaspora as well, and demand alertness and attention from future studies of the South Asian diaspora, if these problems are to be acknowledged and addressed.

South Asia is further marked by other complex webs of affiliations—religious, sectarian, ethnic, caste, linguistic, and so on—that frequently exceed the national. Although not in any way minimizing the latter's significance, I would suggest that the lesson from the Muslim "margins" of South Asia suggests that in theorizing the diaspora, the "national" must not be fetishized as *the* singular or determining identification. But the absence of the "national" is also problematic in studies where Pakistani Americans are seamlessly merged into a singular religious identity, whereas in practice, their cultural, affective, and progressive-political projects share a great deal with the larger South Asian diaspora. Despite the persistence of habitually equating South Asian Americans with the NRIs, the appellation of South Asian Americans holds great promise for overcoming studies by strict national divisions. The term can enable thinking about South Asians of various national backgrounds in full and creative contact with each other, and with non-South Asian groups that are active in the North American landscape. But this cannot happen if the formulaic equations of Indian = Hindu = (mainstream) South Asian, contrasted with Pakistani = Muslim = (marginal) South Asian, continue to circulate in scholarship on the diaspora.

Out of consideration of the quandaries of identity during the post-September 11 period of intimidation and repression, in this essay, I have pursued a more modest agenda, by focusing on the issue of self-representation. I identify as Pakistani American only those individuals and groups that have themselves acknowledged a link with "Pakistan," understood as a conceptual construct as much as a real entity.

## Pakistani Americans as Muslim South Asians

Pakistani Americans are generally assimilated in the studies of Muslims in America,[18] or of South Asian American Muslims, but bringing the lens of religious affiliation to bear upon them leads to many methodological problems.

Here, an obvious fact needs to be emphasized: not all Pakistanis are Muslim. Christians, Hindus, Parsis, and other religious groups are, by definition, omitted when Pakistani Americans are equated exclusively as Muslims. And it must be reiterated that although South Asian Muslims form a significant percentage of American Muslims, African Americans, and Arabs are also numerically significant, have visible presence, and have very different migration histories to North America. Despite these important qualifications, this framing of Pakistani Americans under the larger category of Muslims, especially South Asian Muslims, may well be useful in overcoming some of the narrower ascriptions of nationality discussed earlier. Although Muslims of South Asia certainly share much in common, studies that focus on religious identity remain circumscribed, by emphasizing normative Muslim practices and affiliations with existing orthodox or sectarian identities—Sunni, Shia, Bohri, Ahmadi, Ismaili, and so on.[19] The reformulation and reimagination of religious identity in diaspora is undoubtedly a significant, perhaps even central locus of identity for many Muslims (and Hindus as well)—this is, in fact, almost a tautological claim. But an exclusive concern with religious identity overlooks aspects of ideas and practice that are indifferent, or irreducible, to the public and institutional assertion of religious identity.

Thus, while we have a number of studies of religious practices of Pakistani Muslims,[20] other affiliations that contribute toward the reinscription and contestation of social and cultural identities remain unstudied. How are hegemonic relations in Pakistan—which privilege *mujahir* and Punjabi ethnicities, Urdu and English language skills, class and professional determinants, and Sunni, especially Deobandi Islam—reproduced, amplified, or challenged in the North American diaspora? How does this primary reference to Muslim (or sectarian) orthopraxy displace work and leisure practices of the Pakistani Americans, which draw upon a complex web of national, South Asian, class, professional, religious, linguistic, ethnic, and Americanizing referents? How does involvement in cricket, or the creation, circulation, and consumption of *desi* food, fashion, music, and discussions about Kashmir, communalism in India, or political developments within Pakistan, all contribute toward a distinctive Pakistani American—both within and outside the context of a general South Asian—sensibility? These questions are difficult to consider if Pakistani Americans are thought of only as struggling to adhere to, or resist, being normatively Muslim.

To give a small but evident example, the reception of Pakistani Americans to Bollywood films, especially those that portray the stock and stereotyped figure of the Muslim, or of Kashmiri terrorism, or the construction of Indian masculinist nationalism by portrayal of war with Pakistan, has not been examined. And while there is a bibliography of gender issues and their relation to South Asian and/or to Muslim identities in North America,[21] the majority of this work is either based on participant-observation, or on personal testimony. The larger question as to how the texture of everyday life is imbricated in questions of identity, institutional patriarchy, race and class issues, globalization, economic inequality, and generally to the larger social and cultural contexts, still requires analysis and study.

## Class Divisions

Immigration from South Asia to the United States dramatically increased after 1965, and the 1960s also witnessed the beginning of large-scale Pakistani immigration to Canada. The earlier immigrants were middle and upper class professionals who were educationally well endowed. By the 1980s, however, a growing number of Pakistani immigrants from less privileged backgrounds were also making way to the United States. Although the former have found employment as physicians, engineers, and financial consultants, the latter are employed in lower paying industries, running small stores, or in the service sector, such as driving taxis in large cities. The gulf between these two groups remains extremely wide, and as many immigrants prefer to work in the "informal" sector until their immigration status is regularized, representations of their lives are scarce. Their "subaltern" invisibility frequently leads to idealist assertions regarding the status, privilege, and the social capital Pakistani Americans are said to generally enjoy, as part of the larger South Asian and Asian American "model minority" phenomenon.

Vivek Bald's video documentary, *Taxi-vala/Autobiography* (1994) provides an important (and rare) representation of the service workers, many of them Pakistani American.[22] At one poignant moment in the video, Bald addresses the question of the social location of class, by mapping it onto the seating protocols in a New York taxi. Bald wonders whether the passenger, seated in the rear (himself in this instance, but one can easily imagine a Pakistani American Wall Street analyst) could possibly overcome the social distance separating him from the driver. Extrapolating this, we would have to ask whether

the Pakistani American passenger and the Pakistani American driver—even if they shared a common past, (the degree of this sharing, which is itself debatable)—share anything of the present, or the future?[23]

The need to bring an understanding of race and class in the study of the South Asian Americans has been repeatedly emphasized by a number of observers, including Vijay Prashad, Bruce Lawrence, Ajantha Subramanian, and Kamala Viswewaran.[24] In theorizing the social space of the Pakistani American, I find Bourdieu's rereading of Marx useful:[25]

> The "real" class, if it has ever "really" existed, is nothing but the realized class, that is, the mobilized class, a result of the struggle of classifications, which is a properly symbolic (and political) struggle to impose a vision of the social world, or, better, a way to construct that world, in perception and in reality, and to construct classes in accordance with which this social world can be divided.

Clearly, the social location of a Pakistani American physician in Orange County cannot be equated with that of a restaurant worker in Chicago. Both need to be situated in the complex, overdetermined history of class, race, and ethnic divisions in the United States, as well as the needs of the globalized US economy to attract both skilled professionals *and* unskilled workers. As Bruce Lawrence has recently written on this topic in detail, I will not develop it further here. But the unfortunate truth of the matter is that class divisions have persisted and have even exacerbated by developments since September 11.

## *Culture, Religion, and Class*

As a goal of this essay is to provide a brief survey of the relationship between the triads of diaspora, South Asianness, and Islam, especially for the second generation, an aspect of this relationship that is repeatedly articulated is a perception of a tradeoff between "culture" and religion. In this view, there is an attempt to disengage the practice of Islam from South Asian "culture," as the latter is viewed as superfluous for future needs. For example, the filmmaker Zarqa Nawaz has stated:

> For Muslims who immigrate there's a fear that their children will lose their faith, . . . . But because my husband and I are second-generation raising third-generation, we've been through that and know it's not true. There's a danger of losing the language, because neither of us speaks our native

language. But that's not the priority. To have a rich spiritual life is far more important than being able to cook a good pot of curry. Given the way the political world is changing, Muslims are going to be viewed with a greater degree of suspicion. I want my kids to have the necessary social skills to handle that. I want them to have a good understanding of their faith, but to have their loyalty to Canada, where they belong.[26]

Naheed Hasnat, a second-generation Pakistani American, echoes Nawaz's observations, indeed, explicitly prioritizes "pure Islam" over both "South Asian cultural influences" and being "Pakistani," and affirms the primacy of her belonging to "Muslim Americans."[27] Hasnat's views are shared by a number of observers: the hope is that the second generation might well overcome the lingering "cultural" influences of South Asia that allegedly color the practices of the first generation, and in the process, form an American Muslim identity that overcomes the culturalist divisions within the American Muslim community. Thus some observers have contemplated the possibility of the emergence of a "utopian" Muslim community,[28] or according to author Asma Gull Hasan, of the blossoming of a "second Golden age of Islam,"[29] in North America.

The widespread perception, that large aspects of inherited South Asian "culture" are inessential, or an impediment to an Americanized, yet "pure" practice of Islam is a provocative suggestion, but one that needs to be problematized in at least three ways. The first issue is the elision between the practice of "pure" Islam, and the deeply consumerist US ideologies of individual freedom and self-realization. Accordingly, collective and communitarian aspects of Islamic belief and practice are profoundly but intangibly translated in conformity with contemporary American life. Although this may well be a necessary and perhaps even inevitable transformation for some, it does not come about without significant shifts in imagining Muslim community. The transformed community is now viewed as voluntarist and privatized, public representation now managed by the logic of neoliberal consumerist multiculturalism, and political participation becomes a matter of lobbying and interest groups. As Tariq Ramadan, in his study of the challenges facing Muslims in the West, has judiciously examined the premises of this transformation, I will not pursue it further here.[30] But class and race will continue to inflect the practice of Islam, and disadvantaged groups will not always heed calls by the elite for a privatized, normative Islam. As Moustafa Bayoumi has underlined, "Islam is no one thing. It is global, protean,

mobile, productive."[31] The itinerant but embodied potentialities of reimagining "Islam" will be deployed by groups that have borne the brunt of state repression in the wake of September 11, and whose plight has not been eased by the large Muslim organizations in the United States. The majority of the latter continue to pursue the agendas of elite immigrants in their call for tolerance and dialogue, but without a corresponding agenda for social justice—at both the national and the global levels, and both increasingly dominated by US neoliberalism.

The second difficulty is that the critique of a hidebound or deviant South Asian "culture" must be historicized, as this view has been decisively shaped by the rise of *salafi* and *wahhabi* practices among South Asian Muslim immigrants from the 1980s onward, influences that are particularly strong in immigrant professionals who came to North America after working in the Gulf countries. Here I must rephrase Bayoumi's statement—South Asian "culture" is no one thing, but highly complex and multifaceted. If it consists of dominant aspects that are coercive and hierarchical, it is also marked by a profound series of historical and cultural struggles that are dissenting and liberating. South Asian "culture" can and is being relearned, reterritorialized, and even betrayed to become meaningful in the diaspora, as the British Asian musicians have demonstrated,[32] and as I will show later in the case of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan.

Thirdly, class and racial privilege amongst the elite second generation, in relation to less advantaged groups in the United States, persists, and may even become amplified. As Bruce Lawrence has pointed out, the idea that various immigrant Muslim identities will find "convergence" into an American Muslim identity, ignores the shaping of the latter in the context of racial prejudice:

> Islam Americanized ignores not only the diversity that persists across generations in both the indigenous and the immigrant Muslim communities but also the major fault line that separates South Asian from African American cultural norms . . . . It underscores the persistence of cultural disparities, despite creedal and ritual sympathies, between indigenous African American and immigrant, largely South Asian, Muslim communities. The major impediment to collective solidarity among Muslims remains internalized racial prejudice . . . . Racialized class prejudice runs deep, even in the face of a universal religious ethos that eschews race as a marker of worth, even among American Muslims in the twenty-first century.[33]

Elite South Asian Muslims in North America have persistently failed to reexamine religious and cultural practices in relation to ideas of social justice, and this is likely to continue in the second generation, unless there is a rise of new consciousness regarding these issues, possibly ushered in by a dramatic sociopolitical transformation.

## Generational Divides

The first generation of professionals, who arrived around the time between 1965 and 1985 (before the full manifestation of contemporary globalization), came to North America at a time when the nation-state or religion was a primary referent in their self-identification. The immigrants arriving after around 1990, however, have included a significant number of working class, as well as those who are exploring the new means of communication and expressivity available with the Internet, and with the ease of mass air travel. Finally, there is the second generation with their own set of emergent interests and concerns. There are thus at least three broad generational groups, but it must be stressed that these are overlapping categories, which are also crosshatched by the divisions described earlier.

The immigrant generation has founded a number of organizations and platforms based upon national affiliations, for example, Pakistani American Business Executives Association (PABE), Association of Pakistani Physicians of North America (APPNA), Association of Pakistani Professionals (AOPP), Pakistan American Democratic Forum,[34] numerous community organizations,[35] as well as an online newspaper, *Pakistan Link*.[36] Immigrants have also played a prominent leadership role in many Muslim religious organizations,[37] including the national Muslim Students Association (MSA) and its numerous chapters on college campuses, and have assumed prominent roles in the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), whose annual convention attracts tens of thousands, a substantial number of whom are South Asian Americans. The Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) is dominated by immigrants from South Asia who are influenced by the writings and activities of Maudoodi and the Jamaat-i-Islami in Pakistan and India, a group involved in providing social services to the poor, yet one that also is ideologically conservative. The American Muslim Alliance (AMA), led by Dr. Agha Saeed, a Pakistani American academic, is an important body that actively works on political mobilization of Muslims in the United States.[38]

In theorizing the location of these groups in the North American political space, Bourdieu's articulation of "real" classes quoted earlier is helpful. First generation immigrant professionals have generally lacked an egalitarian social vision, which would account for their own complicity and location within the persistent history of race and class relations in the United States. The privileges enjoyed by South Asian and Muslim immigrant professionals must be seen against the broader social landscape in which the lower social position of African Americans, Native Americans, and working class immigrants forms the backdrop against which the enactment of the professional immigrants' drama of identity, belonging, and mobilization of special interest political groups takes place.[39] This phenomenon is so apparent that Yvonne Haddad, a seasoned, astute, and generally sympathetic observer of Muslim life in America has commented:

> Unlike the established patterns of earlier waves of immigrants to the United States such as Jews and Catholics, most recent South Asian Muslims have not had to climb up the ladder of economic mobility. Rather, they have been dropped into the middle and upper-middle classes through their professional achievement without their parents having to pay the price of toiling in the sweatshops of America. There has been very little effort on the part of Americans to integrate them socially, or on their own part to press for such integration. Nor do they appear to have the connections, the skills, or the will to do so.
>
> It is not surprising that many have opted to maintain their own distinctiveness, as assimilation would symbolize an abandonment of the faith as well as apparently slipping into the morass of what is perceived as a pornographic American culture that appears to have accepted a warped model of family values aimed at destroying the support system necessary for survival in an increasingly troubled environment. Caught on the horns of a dilemma, they find themselves approving of the family values advocated by the Christian right at the same time that they are well aware that it is these same groups that malign Islam.[40]

Haddad's suggestive observations are useful in accounting for the decision taken during the 2000 elections, by an umbrella group of Muslim organizations under Dr. Agha Saeed's leadership, to endorse the candidacy of George W. Bush, a decision that might well have won him a majority of immigrant American Muslim votes. In hindsight, with the Bush regimes' interventionist foreign policy replete with gross violations of international norms and human rights, the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, Iraq,

and Palestine, and the enactment of the Patriot Act as a draconian law used largely for the persecution of immigrant Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians, the decision to endorse Bush was perhaps unwise, to put it mildly.[41] Although many immigrant professionals felt that there were compelling reasons for this endorsement, and the drive itself was seen as a major success in terms of developing the very process of mobilizing Muslim votes, the lack of a socially progressive agenda in this decision—one that might have worked toward the formation of coalition of the diverse across the US social space, deeply fissured by the history of race and class divisions, for example—is only too apparent. This outlook of the immigrant South Asian Muslims has been formed by an amalgamation of the Aligarh version of modernist Islam, *salafi* and *wahhabi* influences from the Gulf, and the ideology of the Jamaat-i-Islami, all of which have historically lacked a meaningful social and democratic agenda.[42]

The contradiction between elite South Asian Muslim support of the neo-con right, even while being the object of the intrusive state surveillance, is even more transparently evident in the following report from the *New York Times*, February 17, 2004, which describes support for Bush's 2004 campaign by a prominent Pakistani American:

> Big donations have brought high-level access for Dr. Malik Hasan, a native of Pakistan and the former chief executive of Foundation Health Systems of Denver, one of the largest health maintenance organizations. In the past decade, Dr. Hasan has given several hundred thousand dollars to Mr. Bush and the Republican Party, including a $100,000 check to the Bush inaugural committee. This year, Dr. Hasan is a Pioneer [one who has raised at least $100,000]. In the past few months he has met personally with Mr. Bush, once at a White House dinner and again at a fund-raiser in Washington. He visited with Mr. Bush at the president's ranch, and Dr. Hasan's wife, Seeme, has been brought into high-level meetings on Arab-American concerns. The couple say they are still fans of Mr. Bush, even though, Mrs. Hasan said, their American-born son was recently surrounded by the police and detained at an airport for no apparent reason other than his ethnic background.

## Cultural and Political Activism

Immigrants, however, especially those who have arrived since 1985, are also involved in progressive activism. For many, the exemplary figure of Eqbal Ahmad (d. 1999) serves as a model of an activist public intellectual. A fellow

traveler with Edward Said and Noam Chomsky, Ahmad was an eloquent public speaker for many decades on decolonization and US foreign policy. As his collected writings are only now in the process of being published, one hopes they will serve as a resource for both immigrants and the second generation.[43] Other activists include Surina Khan, a writer and organizer who was formerly executive director of International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, and who has poignantly described her dilemma of balancing her lesbian identity with a Pakistani American affiliation.[44] Sehba Sarwar is the Co-Founder and Artistic Director of Voices Breaking Boundaries, a Houston-based institution that supports artistic projects related to activism.[45] And a number of prominent Pakistani artists have immigrated to the United States and Canada, and frequently exhibit their work in South Asian collectives,[46] which—whether they exist as real or online entities—are acquiring an increasing importance for new immigrants as well as the second generation. This reclamation of "South Asia" by Pakistani Americans is indeed a positive development. Some of the younger artists practicing in the United States are Ambreen Butt, Alia Hasan-Khan, and notably, Shahzia Sikander who has explored the quandaries of diasporic and hybrid identities in her work, and whose success in the United States has helped bring attention to the neo-Mughal miniature style of painting at the National College of Art in Lahore.[47] Of note is the launching of a new magazine, *Chowrangi*, published from New York, and discussing issues relevant to younger immigrants and the second generation.[48]

The Internet is clearly a significant new platform for "imagining community." An example of largely young immigrant activity on the web is the lively discussion forum, www.chowk.com, with daily articles and postings on politics and everyday life in Pakistan, India, and North America.[49] The US-based site, www.harappa.com, produced by Omar Khan, specializes in documenting images of preindependence South Asia and the culture of the Indus Valley. A growing number of bloggers, based in North America, the Arab Gulf, and Pakistan, offer frequent commentary on contemporary issues.[50] The Internet is of even greater significance in the making of an alternative Muslim public sphere and has contributed to new conceptions of religious affiliation, marking an important shift from modernist understandings of religious authority. As these developments have already been noted in a number of studies, I do not discuss them in detail here, but limit myself to pointing out a few interesting examples.[51] A group of web sites is organized under the

"Islamica" label, which center on diaspora South Asian Muslim concerns. These include a parodic news site, www.islamicanews.com, which lampoons Muslim life in the United States in a style reminiscent of *The Onion*, as well as an active discussion forum extensively patronized by South Asian Muslims. The "progressive" Muslim web site, www.muslimwakeup.com, posts opinions, both serious and playful, many by diaspora South Asian Muslims, on the need for a less conservative orientation of Muslim practice and politics in North America, and offers ongoing critiques of the stances assumed by mainstream US Muslim organizations. Unfortunately, much of this "progressive" critique remains rather idealist, as the socioeconomic and classed dimensions of diaspora life largely go unexamined.

The emergence of a growing number of academic scholars of Pakistani background in North America is also worthy of note. Scholars of diverse backgrounds, whether immigrants, second generation, or non-South Asian, such as Kamran Asdar Ali, Asma Barlas, Zahid Chaudhary, Faisal Devji, Munis D. Faruqui, David Gilmartin, William Glover, Shahla Haeri, Najeeb Jan, Fawzia Afzal-Khan, Naveeda Khan, Adeeb Khalid, Saba Mahmood, Farina Mir, Aminah Mohammad-Arif, Aamir Mufti, Adil Najam, Vali Nasr, Carla Petievich, Junaid Rana, Kishwar Rizvi, Shahnaz Rouse, Saadia Toor, Shawkat Toorawa, Muhammad Qasim Zaman, Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, and others, are bringing new critical insights to the fields of South Asian Studies, Islam, and the South Asian diaspora. Although not all of them work on issues directly related to Pakistan, one hopes that their work will also contribute toward the emergence of a critical mass of incisive and methodologically sophisticated scholarship on both Pakistan itself and its numerous diasporas.

The second generation can be generally characterized as still in the process of finding their voices, and in the next decade, for many, the question of identity will likely be formulated in more developed cultural and activist projects and institutional sites. Their concerns will not necessarily be preoccupied with the question of diaspora, at least in an overt fashion. A significant example of such an approach is the photography and writings of Fazal Sheikh, who was born in the United States, but whose father was born in East Africa, which he frequently visited while growing up in the United States. Over the last decade, Fazal Sheikh has produced a remarkable body of work documenting the status of refugees in Africa and Afghanistan.[52] Sensitive to the extremely one-sided character of photojournalistic representations of the

abject, Sheikh has woven the narratives of migrants with his own diasporic voice in many of his projects. By working on Africa and Afghanistan, Sheikh recreates new relationships with regions that figure as the "roots" of his own diaspora trajectory. And to mention a few other examples: Zarqa Nawaz is a Canadian filmmaker born in Britain of Pakistani parents,[53] who runs her own production company, FUNdamentalist films, and has made short comedy films, *BBQ Muslims* (1995) and *Death Threat* (1998), about stereotypes of Muslims in North America. Sharmeen Obaid, a documentary filmmaker has made a number of films exploring the effects of fundamentalism and terrorism in Pakistan.[54] The former model Lubna Khalid has founded Real Cosmetics, a company that specializes in makeup for women of color.[55] She is also an activist and has produced a documentary film, *Haters* (2002) on the subject of hate crimes and racial profiling.[56] Yasmeen Ghauri, a Canadian-born "supermodel," of Pakistani and German parentage, whose modeling career was mediated by a difficult relationship with her religiously observant father, and who has many fan web sites devoted to her,[57] provides yet another trajectory for the aspirations of many young women.[58]

   The writings of a number of second-generation authors have been published in various anthologies,[59] but as yet, no second-generation author has produced a major piece of writing that has achieved mainstream success. But other expressive activities are also being explored. The playwright Ibrahim Quraishi has recently collaborated with DJ Spooky on an experimental music based theater project *TransMetropolitan* at the Lincoln Center, which as stated by the latter, evokes a "different America: a place that we realize has always been hybrid, has always been mixed, and that, through music, has become a global reflection site of hope, change, and transformation."[60] The Washington-based theater group, Arth, whose members come from diverse second generation South Asian backgrounds, produces performances and short films about issues related to identity.[61] The "Islamic hip-hop" group, 786, is another example of younger first and emergent second-generation voices,[62] as is the Bay Area music and poetry collective, Calligraphy of Thought (COT), which has many Pakistani members, but also includes members of African American, Arab American, and Latino background, making it an interesting exemplar of the links emerging between young cultural activists of diverse ethnicities in Muslim North America.[63] Finally, *The Brown Book Project* (2000), published in the form of an illustrated photo-essay, has brought together the voices of second-generation Pakistani

Canadian and Lahori youth to discuss issues of activism and social con-
sciousness, and provides another paradigm for imagining new relationships
between Pakistan and its diaspora.[64] One hopes that such projects, which
are still in their infancy, will continue to mature over the next decade or so.
Patronage, institutional support, and availability of publishing and perfor-
mance venues, is essential in enabling these ventures to develop and flourish,
and this clearly needs more attention by community organizations, funding
bodies, journalists, and scholars.

The difficulty a cultural critic faces in writing about Pakistani Americans
is that although an emerging range of writers and artists are active on the
North American scene, so far, no novel, film, musical composition, or work
of visual art has achieved sufficient recognition so as to be widely known
and debated, not only among the diaspora community itself, but also in
the larger North American public sphere. One is thus unable to examine
a popular or a contested work that would yield insight into the dilemmas
of Pakistani American identity, culture, and politics. Moreover, this absence
is echoed in the social sciences—in comparison with detailed studies of
immigrants from India, for example—[65] where there are very few sociological
or anthropological studies that focus on Pakistani Americans,[66] certainly no
body of work comparable to that produced on Pakistani-Britons, which is
theoretically more sophisticated, and which also discusses the relationship
of diaspora groups to British society.[67]

The situation is thus quite unlike Britain—for which country good soci-
ological studies are available—and also where the novels of Salman Rushdie,
the textual and filmic works of Hanif Kureshi, the film *East is East*, do pro-
vide the critic with interpretive possibilities. Why are there no such artifacts
available in North America as yet? Pnina Werbner has suggested that the elite
hybrid cultural work by Rushdie, Kureshi and others, far from turning its
back on the larger Pakistani British community, in fact remains profoundly
engaged with the latter through a deliberate aesthetic strategy of shock and
scandal, in order to rebel against what the authors perceive as the hypocrisy
and stifling conservatism of the older generation. She notes, however, that
this work has had virtually no impact on the larger Pakistani community in
Britain, whose practices remain "insular," "conservative," and "dominated by
elders."[68] Perhaps the less alienated relationship between the elite Pakistani
American generations in North America, and the contrasting role of the
nation-state in the multicultural agenda in the United States, precludes the

receptivity to such rebellious works. Given that elite South Asians in North America are generally financially well off, skilled, and professionally well placed, the generational conflict is also characterized less by shock and mediated by access to privilege. On the other hand, the musical productions of British groups such as Fun-Da-Mental, which are not elite phenomena, but which strategically deploy the public image of South Asia and Islam toward aesthetic and political ends, does not quite conform to Werbner's argument above.[69] In the wake of September 11, activist cultural production may well follow the trajectory of a group like Fun-Da-Mental rather than a Salman Rushdie; such an instance has already been described by Junaid Rana in the wake of September 11.[70]

The economic, political, ideological, and cultural crises of Pakistan during the previous three decades has also meant that Pakistan has, so far, not produced a seductive culture-industry even remotely comparable with Bollywood, for example. But there have been less flamboyant developments. With the onset of television broadcasting in Pakistan, Pakistan Television (PTV) produced a steady stream of drama serials grappling with social tensions, many of which have been well regarded by critics. Over the years, Pakistani television has produced a number of programs that have inserted the diaspora in the Pakistani national imagination, starting with *Dubai Chalo* (1979), *Green Card*, *Mirza Ghalib in America*, and numerous other serials in which characters based in the diaspora made extended visits to Pakistan. But these plays are probably meaningful only for the first generation. A number of private channels have also started to broadcast a diverse array of programs, but again, the significance, if any, these serials may hold for the second generation is not yet clear.

Then there is the matter of high Urdu literary culture. Carla Petievich has pointed out that the second generation, lacking skilled training in Pakistani languages, naturally loses identification with its markers. In order for *mushairas*, (a gathering of poets) and *ghazal* (a love-lyric in Urdu of Persian Muslim origin) evenings, and fiction and poetry in Urdu to provide any motivation to the second generation, they will need to undergo extensive and ruptural translations. So far there is little evidence of such adaptation for the North America diaspora. However, as Pakistani music and television shows are increasingly available on the web, and with digital mixing and reproduction technologies for audio, video, and multimedia production rapidly becoming more widespread, one might well see new experimental

developments in the next few years, which would creatively reinterpret these forms.[71]

Another prospect is the full-scale commodification of South Asian heritage, a characteristic of postmodern and late capitalist cultures. The growth of pop music, music videos on Pakistani TV, and the emergence of popular bands like Junoon in Pakistan[72] (who tour North America extensively), provides possibilities for developing cultural affiliations between Pakistan and the second generation. Unquestionably, the most important case is that of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (d. 1997), whose remarkable career exemplifies one of the few instances of a significant insertion of a Pakistani cultural artifact in the circuit of globalized cultural commodification. Although the music of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and his prominence on the "world music" platform during the 1990s had provided a common affiliative marker for a diverse range of South Asians and Muslims, his translation of traditional *qawwali* (devotional Sufi music) into the framework of "world music" has also been highly contested. Understanding the trajectory of Nusrat's musical transformations, and analyzing the debate regarding its merits is important in gaining an insight as to just what is at stake, when "tradition" is commodified. The debate also underscores the need for a cosmopolitan global agent who can successfully translate cultural "heritage" for a wider audience, beyond the confines of the national and the diaspora community.

Nusrat's later work accomplished precisely that, but his work has proven to be controversial. On the one hand, Lahore-based filmmaker Farjad Nabi,[73] in his film *Nusrat has Left the Building . . . But When?* has suggested that the cost of commercialization has been deeply corrupting to the purity of the Sufi artistic evocation of the early Nusrat. The import of Nabi's film is usefully summarized in Nikhat Kazmi's review:

> Here, for the first time, we are able to view the deleterious effect of the market on a music maestro. None other than the iconic figure of Nusrat Fateh Ali who grew from a modest qawwal with a niche audience to a global phenomena in the world of music. For the average listener, Fateh Ali grew from glory to glory, but for the connoisseur, it was a tragic descent into kitsch.
>     This is the lament of filmmaker Farjad Nabi who confesses that the real aficionados stopped buying the singer's tapes when everybody else started. . . . the docudrama uses the music of the maestro as its only weapon of deconstruction. Moving from sublimity to the cacophony of fusion, the maestro's notes end up weaving a discordant symphony. One, where the

crescendo reaches a hysterical pitch of noises and noises and some more noises even as the camera grows dizzy trying to capture the streets of Lahore, the award ceremonies in Hollywood, the Sanyo video clips and the sundry televised music concerts which featured as overworked, hard-pressed commercial singer, rather than a musical genius. . . . the film remains an impressive dirge on pure art which metamorphoses into pop art, almost involuntarily.[74]

However, Rey Chow's discussion of postcolonial translation, developed in her discussion of the emergence of New Chinese Cinema and Walter Benjamin's ideas on translation, provide an important counterpoint to Nabi's critique of commodification. Chow repeatedly underscores the significance of "*the translation of ethnic cultures from their previous literary and philosophical bases into the forms of contemporary mass culture*," which she claims is "European colonialism's foremost legacy in the non-European world."[75] It is precisely the translation into the popular, the transparent, the literal, the superficial, and the accessible, which provides the very possibility for cultural transmission,[76] and hence, toward a renewed relationship with a weakened "heritage" that would otherwise irretrievably disappear. By walking through the image of Benjamin's arcade, understood by her as undertaking a journey of translation in the postcolonial context, Chow states:

What is forgotten, when critics think of translation only in terms of literary and philosophical texts, is that the arcade, especially in the work of Benjamin, is never simply a linguistic passageway; it is also a commercial passageway, a passageway with shop fronts for the display of merchandise. I would therefore emphasize this *mass culture aspect of the arcade* in order to show that the light and transparency allowed by "translation" is also the light and transparency of commodification. This is a profane, rather than pure and sacred, light, to which non-Western cultures are subjected if they want a place in the contemporary world. In "literal," "superficial" ways, this arcade is furnished with exhibits of modernity's "primitives" such as the women in contemporary Chinese film, who stand like mannequins in the passageways between cultures. The fabulous, brilliant forms of these primitives are what we must go through in order to arrive—not at the new destination of the truth of an "other" culture but at the weakened foundations of Western metaphysics as well as the disintegrated bases of Eastern traditions. In the display windows of the world market, such "primitives" are the toys, the fabricated play forms with which the less powerful (cultures) negotiate the

imposition of the agenda of the powerful. They are the "fables" that cast light on the "original" that is our world's violence, and they mark the passages that head not toward the "original" that is the West or the East but toward survival in the postcolonial world.[77]

Chow's compelling argument would alert us to the importance of otherwise seemingly superficial, primitivist, Orientalist, and "spiritual" adaptations of South Asian and Muslim culture, enacted in mass culture, and to its apparently simplistic referencing to "heritage." Chow certainly problematizes the existing literary and textual approaches in literary studies and art history that continue to be invested in historical canonizations. But a further challenge in evaluating diaspora culture is its complex negotiation between a commodified affirmation of identity, versus the need for a socially meaningful critique—one that is especially urgent after September 11—but which is not always easy to adjudicate. We need to recognize that an "affirmative critique," enabled by the translation of the cultural possibilities abundantly available in "South Asia," "Islam," as well as the "West," is also possible. Clearly, in evaluating the ongoing and emerging cultural work of the second generation, a critic will have to set aside the horizon of expectation of dominant first generation forms, in which culture appears in congealed and finished historical masterpieces, and attend to the contingent and the emergent, in which culture is as much an intervention in how the past is understood, as well as an uncharted journey into the future.

## The Aftermath of September 11

It is still too early to gauge the long-term impact of September 11 on all Pakistani Americans, but some preliminary remarks are in order. The class divide has generally widened, but as the case of Dr. Malik Hasan's son (described earlier) demonstrated, even class privilege now needs to negotiate racialization. Of course, the problems faced by many of the less privileged have, and likely will be, immeasurably more acute than those experienced by the elite. This has complicated the relationship of all Pakistanis in relation to the state machinery, whose surveillance and disciplinary actions have been seen by many immigrants as capricious, heavy handed, and vindictive toward Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians in general. Indeed, a recent survey has shown that in comparison with Arabs, a much greater percentage of Pakistanis have

suffered from bias and prejudice.[78] Moreover, a recent press report by CNN has stated that the US Customs officials are under instructions to "target" Pakistanis.[79] As the original reasons for going to war in Iraq lose credibility, and the global "war against terror" is faced with many setbacks overseas, many in the Pakistani community fear that continued domestic profiling will be utilized to reiterate terrorism as an imminent threat to the US public.

The requirement by the US Department of Homeland Security, which stipulated that every male Pakistani visa holder age 16 or older undergo "Special Registration" with the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in 2002 and 2003, has led to an exodus of tens of thousands of Pakistani immigrants from New York and other big cities, to Canada, or to Pakistan. Arrests, detentions, deportations, "disappearances," and voluntary departures have resulted in nothing less than devastation of the lives of many families and the Pakistani neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens.[80] As the overwhelming majority of these immigrants were law abiding and hard working, and as no immigrants to the United States and no Pakistanis were involved in the September 11 hijackings, one can only wonder as to the motivation and the heavy-handed execution of these directives by the US governmental agencies. But when viewed historically, the post-September 11 repression is the latest chapter in a long saga of subjugation of Native Americans, African Americans, Jews, Irish immigrants, Asian Americans, and women. What is perhaps distinctive about the latest phase is that the domestic national agenda is now inextricably enmeshed with interventionist US foreign policies in a much more intimate manner.

If there is a silver lining to be found among this profoundly disturbing scenario, it is in the collective work undertaken by Pakistani American, South Asian, and Muslim activist organizations to contest these alarming developments. Notable among them are the Blue Triangle Network, Alliance of South Asians Taking Action (ASATA),Islamic Council of North America (ICNA), and various other civil rights groups.[81] The events have impelled various immigrant Muslim organizations toward a far greater awareness of the need to establish coalitions with other civil rights groups and to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the American political process.[82] These issues are being highlighted by filmmakers, including Lubna Khalid's *Haters* (2002) mentioned earlier, Nicholas Rossier's *Brothers and Others* (2002), and in Jason DaSilva's film, *Lest We Forget* (2003), which looks

at contemporary racial profiling of Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians in the context of the Japanese American internment during the Second World War.[83] *Patriot Acts* (2004), directed by Sree Nallamothu, also scrutinizes the impact of Special Registration on Pakistani communities.[84] And Mira Nair's short film, included in the ensemble 11′9″01, poignantly recalls the double tragedy enacted upon the family and reputation of Salman Hamdani. A young Pakistani American medical student, Hamdani died while rescuing victims of the World Trade Center on September 11, but was instead suspected of being a terrorist by the police and other New Yorkers when his disappearance was noticed. And Junaid Rana has discussed how teenagers in Staten Island, have appropriated hip-hop to contest racism and anti-Muslim feelings.[85] The first issue of the new magazine, *Chowrangi*, also contains a number of essays addressing community responses to post-September 11 developments in New York City, and one hopes this coverage will continue in subsequent issues.

In general, one can discern a strengthening of both South Asian and Muslim identities, especially among the younger Pakistani Americans, due to the positive and proactive role played by respective organizations. But as I argued earlier, since the notion of Pakistaniness is not so much "civilizational" as that of citizenship in a nation-state, second generation affiliations are deeper with South Asia and/or Islam—but without necessarily having to be forced to choose between them, as if culture and religious identity were merely a simple zero-sum game. The second generation is thus increasingly laying claim to the manifold significations of being South Asian, Muslim, and American and Canadian simultaneously, despite the multiplicity of overlap and contestation between these identifications.

## Conclusion

For the Pakistani diaspora in North America, the post-September 11 scenario has already effected a much greater entwining of culture and politics, and its visibility, in ways that were unimaginable earlier. This development is still at a stage of infancy, and may be usefully compared with the longer experience of the Pakistani diaspora in Britain, especially by the impact of the "Rushdie affair" on Pakistani Muslims in UK, which occurred a decade prior to the crisis of September 11, when *The Satanic Verses* was first published. Although

that controversy brought to visibility a certain view of the British Muslim community as "backward" and nonliberal, its long-term effects helped propel diaspora issues into mainstream British political culture.[86] In a recent study of Pakistani immigrants in Manchester, Pnina Werbner has summarized the paradoxical consequences of the Rushdie Affair on the British public sphere:

> [T]he Rushdie affair might be said to have had some important positive effects as well. It liberated Pakistani settler-citizens from the self-imposed burden of being a silent, well-behaved minority, whatever the provocation, and opened up the realm of activist, anti-racist and emancipatory citizenship politics . . . . One might say that the shame of Islam generated by the Rushdie affair has been turned into a new strength, a new agenda for multiculturalism, for a fundamental revision of the national self-image of Britain as it moves to becoming a more self-consciously plural society. Muslims are both the victims and the torch-bearers of this movement.[87]

Perhaps the comparison between the British developments and the more recent American experience, of a traumatic and forced insertion of diaspora issues into the national public life, is untenable. But clearly, there is a significant transformation unfolding in the perception of Pakistani Americans, immigrant and second-generation American Muslims, and in their relationship to the US administration as well as with civil society. As even the most privileged elite have become objects of surveillance and suspicion, the subjectivity of the Pakistani American is being interpellated and reinscribed on a plane of contestation. This struggle will be increasingly located in the realm of culture, as pointed out earlier by Lisa Lowe in her influential study of Asian American cultural politics, *Immigrant Acts*. Lowe argues that the persistent racialization in the United States, over several decades, of the Asian American as the distrusted Oriental, has helped refashion the arena of *culture* as a site of struggle:

> Rather than attesting to the absorption of cultural difference into the universality of the national political sphere as the "model minority" stereotype would dictate, the Asian immigrant—at odds with the cultural, racial, and linguistic forms of the nation—emerges in a site that defers and displaces the temporality of assimilation. This distance from the national culture constitutes Asian American culture as an alternative formation that produces cultural expressions materially and aesthetically at odds with the

resolution of the citizen in the nation. Rather than expressing a "failed" integration of Asians into the American cultural sphere, this distance preserves Asian American culture as an alternative site where the palimpsest of lost memories is reinvented, histories are fractured and retraced, and the unlike varieties of silence emerge into articulacy.[88]

Following Lowe's observations one would thus not be surprised by the emergence in the next few years, of reterritorializations of Pakistani, South Asian and Muslim "heritages" into fresh articulations that consciously resist assimilation into the "melting pot" scenario, while becoming more visible and central to the North American imaginary. I have attempted to provide a brief survey of some of their promising developments in this essay. One would hope that these new cultural formulations will enunciate an influential and distinctive North American, South Asian, *and* Muslim expressivity. But more importantly, they will also simultaneously engage—in alliance with other groups—with the struggle for fully representative national citizenship at home, and for a more just and equitable global order, which the United States will likely continue to influentially shape for many years to come.

## Notes

1. For example, works by Bapsi Sidhwa, Zulfiqar Ghose, Tahira Naqvi, and Sorayya Khan.

2. As in *The Annual of Urdu Studies* (also available online at http://www.urdustudies.com/).

3. An exception is the study on urban women by Shahla Haeri, *No Shame for the Sun: Lives of Professional Pakistani Women.* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2002).

4. But see Kamran Asdar Ali, "Digest Culture: Reading Pakistani Domesticity" *SAGAR, South Asia Research Journal* 7, and also his article " 'Pulp fictions': Reading Pakistani Domesticity." 2004. *Social Text* 22(1).

5. Also see Pakistani American poet Mahwash Shoaib's critique of the Hollywood film *Vertical Limit* (2000), in its portrayal of Pakistanis. "The Heart of Whiteness: The Allure of Tourism in *Vertical Limit* and *The Beach." Bad Subjects*, Issue no. 54 (March 2001) http://eserver.org/bs/54/shoaib.html.

6.  V. S. Naipaul, *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey.* (New York: Knopf, 1981). There are numerous critiques of Naipaul's views of Pakistan and Islam, including those by Edward Said and William Dalrymple.

7.  Bernard Henri Lévy, *Who Killed Daniel Pearl?* (Melville House Publishing, 2003). For a measured critique, see William Dalrymple "Murder in Karachi." *New York Review of Books* 50, no.19 (December 4, 2003) http://www.nybooks.com/articles/16823.

8.  Karen Isaksen Leonard, *Muslims in the United States: The State of Research.* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003), p. 4.

9.  Karen Leonard, "California's Punjabi Pioneers: Remembering/Claiming Homelands," *Amerasia Journal* 28, no. 3 (2002), p.111. Also see her study, *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans.* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).

10.  Other scholars have also noted this. For example, in their introduction to the special issue on "Cosmopolitanism" of the journal *Public Culture* published in 2000, the editors Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, Carol A. Breckenridge, and Dipesh Chakrabarty state: "Pakistan, for instance, while definitely imagined from as early as the 1920s as a homeland for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent, had only the vaguest geographical referent for a long time in its career as a concept. Yet it was powerful in its capacity to address the experience of cultural and political displacement that colonialism had meant for many Muslims in South Asia." See their "Introduction" in *Public Culture* 12, no. 3 (Fall 2000), p.579. The question of precisely which segment of the South Asian Muslim (and Hindu, Sikh, Christian) population would be Pakistani was unclear, even in the immediate aftermath of the Partition.

11.  See Anthony D. Smith's review of Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson's formulations in "Invention and Imagination," *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism.* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998).

12.  David Ludden, "Introduction" in his edited collection, *Making India Hindu.* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996).

13.  See the works by S. M. Ikram, Aziz Ahmad, Francis Robinson, and Ayesha Jalal.

14.  Aamir Rashid Mufti, "Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and Dilemmas in Postcolonial Modernity," PhD dissertation, Columbia University, (1998). Abstract.

15.  Vazira Zamindar, "Divided Families and the Making of Nationhood in India and Pakistan, 1947–1965," Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, (2003). Abstract.

16. For a recent detailed discussion, see Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam Since 1850* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000).

17. Edited by Jackie Assayag and Véronique Bénéï (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

18. See the numerous works of Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Jane I. Smith, and Karen Isaksen Leonard. Also see essays in the collections: *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe*. Edited by Barbara Daly Metcalf. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); *Family and Gender Among American Muslims: Issues Facing Middle Eastern Immigrants and their Descendants*. Edited by Barbara C. Aswad and Barbara Bilgé (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996); Bruce B. Lawrence, *New Faiths, Old Fears: Muslims and other Asian Immigrants in American Religious Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Mohamed Nimer, *The North American Muslim Resource Guide: Muslim Community Life in the United States and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 2002); M. A. Muqtedar Khan, *American Muslims: Bridging Faith and Freedom* (Beltsville, Md.: Amana Publications, 2002); Asma Gull Hasan, *American Muslims: The New Generation* (New York: Continuum, 2000); *Muslim Families in North America*. Edited by Earle H. Waugh, Sharon McIrvin Abu-Laban, and Regula Burckhardt Qureshi. (Edmonton, Alta., Canada: University of Alberta Press, 1991); Aminah Mohammad-Arif, *Salaam America: South Asian Muslims in New York*. Translated by Sarah Patey (London: Anthem Press, 2002); Sheila Mcdonough, "The Muslims of Canada," *The South Asian Religious Diaspora in Britain, Canada, and the United States.* Edited by Harold Coward, John R. Hinnells, and Raymond Brady Williams. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000).

19. For example, see the studies on the Ahmadyyia in Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane Idleman Smith Haddad, *Mission to America: Five Islamic Sectarian Communities in North America* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993); Linda Walbridge and Fatimah Haneef, "Inter-Ethnic Relations within the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the United States," in *The Expanding Landscape: South Asians and the Diaspora.* Edited by Carla Petievich (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1999). On Ismailis, see Raymond Brady Williams, *Religions of Immigrants from India and Pakistan: New Threads in the American Tapestry* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988). On Shias, Bohras, and Ismailis see Mohammad-Arif, *Salaam America*, pp. 150–60.

20. See the essays by Regula Qureshi, Barbara Metcalf, and Susan Slymovics in Metcalf, *Making Muslim Space.*

21.  For example, see the essays by Lubna Chaudhry, Naheed Hasnat, Surina Khan, and Naheed Islam in *A Patchwork Shawl: Chronicles of South Asian Women in America*. Edited by Shamita Das Dasgupta (New Brunswick, N.J.; London: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Shahnaz Khan, *Muslim Women: Crafting a North American Identity* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000).

22.  Vivek Renjen Bald, *Taxi-vala/autobiography: a video.* Mistaken Identity production; produced, written, and edited by Vivek Bald; coproducer, Kym Ly Ragusa. (New York: V. Bald) 1994.

23.  For more on the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, see Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000) pp. 199–203.

24.  Also see the essays in SAMAR magazine http://www.samarmagazine.org.

25.  Pierre Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Space," *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Stanford 1998) p. 11.

26.  Greg Beatty, "My Big Fat Muslim Movie" *Prairie Dog Magazine*, March 10, 2003, http://www.alternet.org/story.html?StoryID=15348.

27.  Naheed Hasnat, "Being 'Amreekan': Fried Chicken Versus Chicken Tikka," in *A Patchwork Shawl*, pp. 38–9.

28.  Mohammad-Arif, *Salaam America,* p. 211.

29.  Asma Gull Hasan, *American Muslims,* p. 177.

30.  Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

31.  "Shadows and Light: Colonial Modernity and the *Grande Mosquée* of Paris," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 13, no. 2 (2000): p.288

32.  See Ted Swedenburg, "Transglobal Islamic Underground: Aki Nawaz, Natacha Atlas, Akhenaton" in *Unpacking Europe: Towards a Critical Reading.* Edited by Salah Hassan and Iftikhar Dadi (Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen: NAi Publishers, 2001). Also see Vivek Bald's film, *MUTINY: Asians Storm British Music* (2003), http://www.mutinysounds.com/film/summary/index.php.

33.  Lawrence, *New Faiths, Old Fears,* pp. 83–4.

34.  http://www.pabe.org/her; http://www.appna.org; http://aopp.org; http://www.padfonline.org.

35.  The PADF web site http://www.padfonline.org/ins-5.html reports on the founding of a new umbrella group, Pakistani American National Alliance (PANA) on January 2, 2003.

36.  http://www.pakistanlink.com.

37.  See Karen Leonard, "South Asian Leadership of American Muslims" in: *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens*. Edited by Yvonne Haddad (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

38. http://www.msa-natl.org; http://www.isna.net; http://www.icna.com; http://www.amaweb.org.

39. This has been discussed extensively by Vijay Prashad, *Karma;* Bruce Lawrence, *New Faiths;* and Ajantha Subramanian, "Indians in North Carolina: Race, Class, and Culture in the Making of Immigrant Identity," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 20, no.1–2, (2000) pp. 105–14.

40. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad "At Home in the *Hijra:* South Asian Muslims in the United States," *The South Asian Religious Diaspora in Britain, Canada, and the United States*, pp. 240–41, 253.

41. This report is still on the AMC web site at: http://www.amaweb.org/election2000/ampcc_endorses.htm. Dr Agha Saeed has also explained the history of mobilization efforts that lay behind this endorsement in his essay, "The American Muslim Paradox" in *Muslim Minorities in the West: Visible and Invisible*. Edited by Y. Haddad and Jane Smith. (Lanham, MD: Alta Mira Press, 2002). Also see the reassessment by M.A. Muqtedar Khan in his *American Muslims*, pp. 39–42.

42. For a discussion of the activities of ICNA in New York, see Mohammad-Arif, *Salaam America*. On the history of Aligarh, see David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978).

43. Edited by Margaret Cerullo, *Confronting Empire: The Collected Writings of Eqbal Ahmad*, (tentative title) compiled, edited, and introduced with Carollee Bengelsdorf and Yogesh Chandrani, (forthcoming, Columbia University Press, 2004) "a view of world politics from the global South covering the years 1948–1998." From Cerullo's web site, http://carbon.hampshire.edu/~nsfmexico/MargaretBio.htm. Also see Eqbal Ahmad, *Confronting Empire: Interviews With David Barsamian*. Forward by Edward W. Said. (Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2000); *Stories My Country Told Me*. (video recording): with Eqbal Ahmad. (Princeton, N.J.: Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 2000).

44. "Sexual Exiles" in *A Patchwork Shawl.*

45. Their web site is http://www.voicesbreakingboundaries.org.

46. The South Asian Women's Creative Collective (SAWCC) organizes events to support second generation women artists, www.sawcc.org. Artists residing in Canada, include Sylvat Aziz, Tazeen Qayyum, Asma Arshad Mahmood, and Samina Mansuri. For more information and resources, see the SAVAC (South Asian Visual Arts Collective) web site http://www.savac.net/. The Pakistani American curator Manhaz Fancy was involved in the running of an important art space in New York, the Indo-Center of Art and Culture, which has unfortunately recently shut down. Atteqa Ali, a young curator, has recently curated a series of exhibitions in New York featuring new art from Pakistan-based artists and diaspora artists.

47. On her work, see Faisal Devji's essay and interview by Homi Bhabha *in Shahzia Sikander* by Shahzia Sikander, Homi Bhabha, and Faisal Devji. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). The latter is also available in *Public Culture* 11, no.1 (1999): pp. 146–52.

48. The first issue was released in Fall 2004. For more information see http://www.chowrangi.org/.

49. Another organization, Human Development Foundation that promotes social work in Pakistan, runs the web site http://www.yespakistan.com, which also has an active discussion forum.

50. For example, see http://avari.blogs.com/weblog/; http://ko.offroadpakistan.com/pakblogs/.

51. Gary R. Bunt, *Virtually Islamic: Computer-mediated Communication and Cyber Islamic Environments* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000); Gary R. Bunt, *Islam in the Digital Age: E-jihad, Online Fatwas and Cyber Islamic Environments* (London: Pluto Press, 2003); *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*. Edited by Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

52. His work is available in print and also accessible online on an excellent web site www.fazal sheikh.org/. His interweaving of diaspora experience is most visible in the work in his book *The Victor Weeps: Afghanistan* (Scalo Verlag Ac, 1998). A recording of Eduardo Cadava's lecture, "Palm Reading: Fazal Sheikh's Handbook of Death" is available from The Slought Foundation in Philadelphia, http://slought.org/content/11138/.

53. Her web site is http://www.geocities.com/fundamentalistfilms.

54. http://www.sharmeenobaidfilms.com/. (Accessed on September 26, 2004).

55. http://www.realcosmetics.com.

56. Available at http://www.dvrepublic.com/microsite/bffdvlab.cfm.

57. For example, www.yasmeen-ghauri.com.

58. http://www.yasmeen-ghauri.com/talk/2003/Dec/23/#more.

59. Collections include *Bolo! Bolo!: A Collection of Writings by Second-generation South Asians Living in North America*. Edited by the Kitchen Table Collective (Mississauga, Ont.: South Asian Professionals Networking Association, 2000); *Living in America: Poetry and Fiction by South Asian American Writers*. Edited by Roshni Rustomji-Kerns; with an introduction by Rashmi Sharmi (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995); *Our Feet Walk the Sky: Women of the South Asian Diaspora*. Edited by Women of South Asian Descent Collective (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1993). Also see essays and reviews published in *The Toronto South Asian Review* (1982–93), renamed *The Toronto Review of Contemporary Writing Abroad* (1993 onwards). Solo works include Tahira Naqvi, *Dying in a Strange Country* (Toronto: TSAR,

2001); Sabrina Saleem, *ABCDs: American Born Confused Desis* (Karachi: Ferozsons, 1999).

60. http://www.intuitivemusic.com/content/view/587; http://www. asiansinmedia.org/news/article.php/music/495. (Accessed on September 26, 2004).

61. http://www.artharts.com.

62. http://www.786boyz.com/index.php.

63. http://www.muslimpoet.com/inresidence/calligraphyofthought/cothome page.htm.

64. http://homepage.mac.com/schauhan/brownbookflyer.html; http://www. brownbook.cjb.net/.

65. For example, see works by Keya Ganguly, Sunaina Maira, Padma Rangaswamy, S. Mitra Kalita, Sandhya Shukla, Madhulika S. Khandelwal, Amitava Kumar, Ajantha Subramanian, Vijay Prashad, Lavina Dhingra Shankar, and Rajini Srikanth.

66. The most comprehensive study on South Asian Muslims in North America is Mohammad-Arif's *Salaam America*. Also see the essays in *The Expanding Landscape*, edited by Carla Petievich. Also see the works of Karen Leonard. Iftikhar Haider Malik's study unfortunately lacks a sufficiently critical and interpretive framework, *Pakistanis in Michigan: A Study of Third Culture and Acculturation* (New York, NY: AMS Press, 1989).

67. On the British Pakistanis, see Jessica Jacobson, *Islam in Transition: Religion and Identity among British Pakistani Youth* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998); Pnina Werbner, *Imagined Diasporas among Manchester Muslims: The Public Performance of Pakistani Transnational Identity Politics* (Oxford [England]: James Currey; Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research Press, 2002); Muhammad Anwar, *Between Cultures: Continuity and Change in the Lives of Young Asians* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998); Ted Swedenburg, "Transglobal Islamic Underground" in *Unpacking Europe*.

68. Pnina Werbner, "Introduction: The Materiality of Diaspora—Between Aesthetic and 'Real' Politics" *Diaspora* 9, no. 1, (2000): pp.11–12.

69. On Fun-Da-Mental, see Swedenburg, "Transglobal Islamic Underground."

70. "Muslims Across the Brown Atlantic: The Position of Muslims in the UK and the US." This piece originally appeared in *Samar* 15 (Summer/Fall, 2002) http://www.samarmagazine.org/archive/article.php?id=110.

71. www.muziq.net; www.ptv.com.pk; www.pakistanvision.com.

72. Their web site is http://www.junoon.com/home2.htm.

73. http://matteela.com/.

74. Nikhat Kazmi, "The Noise behind Nusrat," *The Sunday Times of India*, February 15, 1998. Quoted from http://matteela.com/nusrat/nu-pg-reviews.html.

75. Rey Chow, *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 191. The italics are hers.

76. Chow, *Primitive Passions*, pp.199–200.

77. Chow, *Primitive Passions*, 201–2.

78. "Pakistanis feel most 9/11 bias, poll finds." *Detroit Free Press,* August 27, 2004, http://www.freep.com/news/metro/bias27e_20040827.htm (Accessed on September 26, 2004).

79. "U.S. Customs targeting Pakistanis" *CNN Online*, Wednesday, June 30, 2004, http://www.cnn.com/2004/US/06/29/customs.pakistanis/. (Accessed on September 26, 2004).

80. An extensive archive of articles on this subject is available on http://www.notinourname.net/detentions/.

81. http://www.bluetriangle.org/; http://www.asata.org/.

82. Compare the manifesto of AMT, an umbrella group of Muslim organizations apparently newly created for the 2004 elections with the endorsement of Bush in 2000, http://www.icna.com/.

83. http://www.lestweforgetmovie.com/.

84. http://www.thirstfilms.com/patriotacts.html. (Accessed on September 26, 2004).

85. Rana, "Muslims Across the Brown Atlantic."

86. For an important critique of the mainstream liberal position of the Rushdie Affair, see Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

87. Werbner, *Imagined Diasporas,* pp. 258, 259.

88. Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996).

# Identity and Visibility: Reflections on Museum Displays of South Asian Art

VIDYA DEHEJIA

One in every 480 adults in the United States is a museum volunteer, a remarkable fact that testifies to the role played in American culture by museums, which rank among the top three family vacation destinations. Statistics reveal as many as 2.3 million visits daily to some 16,000 museums that are devoted variously to explicating art, history, science, military and maritime issues, as also flora and fauna by way of zoos, aquariums, and botanical gardens (AAM 2003). Art museums constitute a more rarefied world, but even so, no less than 648 institutions fall into this category. While Asian art has been on display in major US museums for the better part of the twentieth century, the word "Asian" (as in census categories) has held the primary meaning of East Asian, in other words, Chinese and Japanese art (Korean art is less well represented). South Asia—today's standard term to describe the Indian subcontinent, and including the nation states of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sir Lanka, and Bhutan, with Tibet often being considered part of the South Asian rather than East Asian cultural continuum—is a relative newcomer to the museum scene. However, at the start of the twenty-first century, a dozen or more museums in major cities house significant collections of South Asian art, while increasing numbers of smaller institutions have also entered this underrepresented area.

The prime purpose of museums across the world is, obviously, the acquisition, conservation, and exhibition of the material cultures of people. South Asia's rich ancient remains—its stone sculptures and bronze images,

its miniature paintings and its decorative arts—have become much desired acquisitions. Museum professionals seek out choice objects, conduct research on their authenticity and legality, and provide displays that highlight the artistic and cultural heritage of the area. However, the ability of a museum to develop a representative collection, spanning some 2000 years of history and covering the subcontinent's geographical expanse, is clearly limited. The growing commodification of ancient art and its rapidly rising prices, the increasingly stringent rules of "provenance" following the signing of the UNESCO convention on antiquities, and the restricted budget of most museums implies that their South Asian collections will remain uneven and partial. With the exception of a few institutions that have achieved some degree of overall coverage, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, the general picture is one of scattered representation. Contemporary art, not surprisingly, has been a recent entrant onto the scene. It is only in the last fifteen years, since Sotheby's and Christie's commenced their regular auctions of contemporary South Asian art, that twentieth-century works have entered the precincts of museums. As yet, only one museum, the Peabody-Essex in Salem, Massachusetts, has a permanent gallery devoted to contemporary art, and that is entirely because a local American donor made a generous gift of a substantive part of his contemporary art collection.

Apart from museums, private individuals of wealth and taste in the United States have, throughout the twentieth century, collected the ancient art of South Asia. The early collectors were white Americans and included names such as Charles Lang Freer, Avery Brundage, J.D. Rockefeller, and Norton Simon, all of whom established museum collections in their names. Other major American collectors have variously pledged their objects to museums, sold them in auctions, or still hold them as private collections. In recent years, members of the South Asian diaspora have also entered the realm of collecting ancient art, but the diasporic presence is more strongly felt in the realm of contemporary South Asian art. In fact, an interesting buyer profile has emerged that makes itself strikingly evident both during auction previews and in the auction room itself. By and large, ancient art interests the white American collector, while Americans of South Asian origin crowd into the contemporary displays. In fact, it is largely due to the buying power of South Asians that contemporary art today has a high enough profile for a handful of New York galleries, mostly in South Asian hands, to specialize in the

contemporary. As a corollary, one might note that in the case of dealerships in ancient South Asian art, the balance tilts slightly in favor of white American ownership. Art collecting, clearly a mark of taste and cultivation that signals an upper class cosmopolitanism, goes hand in hand with education, urban life, class, and privilege.

It is useful to remind oneself that, with the exception of miniature paintings, most collections of Indian art, in museums or in private hands, consist of objects whose primary aim was not to arouse admiration of their aesthetic qualities, but rather to inspire devotion. Stone and terracotta sculptures had specific roles in completing the iconographic programs of temples; and bronze images fulfilled explicit ritual functions. While ancient visitors to temples and palaces admired the sculptors' creations, and ancient poets have left us verses testifying to such appreciation of fine workmanship, the category of "art," as such, is a recent invention. As Donald Preziosi somewhat sardonically puts it, the notion of art is "one of the most brilliant of European modernist inventions . . . which has for the past two centuries retroactively rewritten the history of the world" (Preziosi, 1995), whether Asian, Mediterranean, Medieval European, or Meso-American. Art, as a collectible, is a rarefied commodity, and not one for popular consumption. In South Asia, art was collected by the maharajas, and later by wealthy industrialist families like the Goenkas, Birlas, Sarabhais, Kanorias, and by the occasional discerning scholar-collector. Those of class and education among the new South Asian cosmopolitan diaspora, many of whom collect art, readily visit museums and attend exhibition openings; those of lesser privilege need to be coaxed into art museum visitation.

Museums in the United States place considerable weight on the institution's educational role and the need to communicate effectively with its audiences. In fact, every definition of a museum, whether from the American Association of Museums (AAM), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), or the federal government, includes the word "education." The need to be centrally concerned with communication and hence with reception seems self-evident. Yet, one might note that museums with Asian collections have largely ignored the diaspora, which could and should form a significant part of the museum's constituency. The reflections on educational and display strategies, museum priorities, and South Asian participation in museum activities that form the body of this essay, draw substantially upon my personal curatorial and museum management experience at the

Smithsonian Institution's Freer Gallery of Art and its Arthur M. Sackler gallery, which are viewed as jointly constituting the nation's national museum (the small caps are intentional as the name is not officially on the letterhead) of Asian art. A onetime insider's ability to explain the rationale for decisions may be of some interest since there are no standardized or even customary practices that museums follow, or are expected to follow, in their choice of themes for special exhibitions, the decision to highlight one cultural complex at the expense of another, the alternation of large and small exhibitions, display tactics, or outreach activities. Myriad contesting priorities, ranging from the financial to the aesthetic, compete for attention. For instance, museums will agree to showcase private collections of which they publish catalogues in the hope of securing those collections for their institution; instances include the Metropolitan Museum's *The Flame and the Lotus* (1985) and the Norton Simon Museum's *Painted Poems* (2003). One might note too that total control over the choice of subject matter is not always in the hands of individual museums since they do not routinely generate their own exhibitions of South Asian art. More often, they host an exhibition offered by an institution with an active curator, and the ultimate choice of an exhibition might well depend upon the availability of a particular show during a time slot that suits the museum. The size and scale of the show, whether generated inhouse or taken from traveling offerings, depends largely upon the museum's priorities and the funds that it is willing to make available for a show of South Asian art that is not generally expected to be a crowd-pleaser.

Today it is widely recognized by specialists that museums and their exhibitions do not constitute "a neutral and transparent sheltering space" (Duncan 1991); rather, museums are acknowledged to be instruments of power that make moral statements (Karp 1991). The act of choosing and displaying objects is a weighted decision, and there is awareness that museums and exhibitions are, or can be, culturally, ideologically, and politically freighted enterprises (Baxandall 1991, Duncan 1991, Lentz 1998). As Susan Vogel (1991) points out, the very banner hung in front of a museum communicates that institution's values to visitors even before they enter the building. It is difficult to argue with public perception of the relative values assigned to cultures when a museum banner for an Asian show is a quarter the size of an adjoining banner for a European art show. The gallery space given to a particular culture is often perceived by visitors, and indeed by museum staff, as highlighting

the importance of one cultural complex at the expense of another. Even having an established, well-regarded curator in a particular curatorial field is perceived as a museum's high regard for that field, and is usually viewed as being at the expense of some other area of expertise. Consequently, museums with limited displays of South Asian art might do well to point out to their critics that the blame lies with the vagaries of collecting history, and does not reflect the management's current value judgments.

A museum's displays from its permanent collections, as well as its special exhibitions, represent South Asian identity both directly through the images on display and indirectly through the many nuances and implications of the chosen objects. It is not the unknown, anonymous creator of the ancient art object who enunciates that identity, nor indeed does the exhibition's audience somehow perceive that identity. Rather, it is the exhibition makers, the curators, who have taken on this vastly important role (Karp 1991). The very first publication dedicated entirely to museum practices, Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine's 1991 *Exhibiting Cultures*, brought together papers from a 1988 international conference, and reflected the times when museum professionals in non-Western fields were largely white Americans. Today that scenario has begun to change, bringing with it different curatorial perspectives, guarded but generally responsive reactions from museum management, and wide-ranging feedback from differing categories of the public. Increasingly, it is women of South Asian origin who seem to be filling curatorial positions in museums with South Asian collections. While Svetlana Alpers found it troubling that objects of other cultures are made into something we can look at (1991), today those who make it into an object to be admired are often from the culture represented, as indeed are those who look at it. The curatorial voice is one that can, and does, wield immense power in its ability to control the manner of representing a community. It is not surprising that local communities of South Asians feel ignored, if not slighted, when not brought into the consultation process that accompanies an exhibition. When an art exhibition is largely a stylistic exercise and presents, for instance, a group of paintings by different contemporary artists, or from different ancient schools, the curatorial voice may be largely of stylistic ascription. But when an exhibition takes cultural interpretation as its mandate, as in the Philadelphia Museum of Art's "Manifestations of Shiva" (1981), the Los Angeles County Museum's "The Peaceful Liberators: Jain Art from India" (1995), or the Sackler's "Devi: The Great Goddess" (1999), the curatorial

voice, its inevitable cultural assumptions, and its role in constructing identity become paramount. In such cases, it would be wise for a museum to put the name of the curator upfront, rather than only in the catalogue, so as to assign responsibility for the construction of meaning within the exhibition. The exhibitions that will be the focus of my reflections in this essay are inevitably charged, to a lesser or greater degree, with the politics of my own identity as an inside-outsider, an individual of hyphenated status, and a woman.

As far as art museums are concerned, one may speak of two very different philosophies of display. One, the masterpiece approach, stresses the primacy of the object, with aesthetics as the ruling factor, and visual concerns of overriding importance. The second, the contextual approach, stresses the function of the object, and sociocultural concerns are of prime significance. Between them, the Freer and Sackler galleries exemplify both approaches. The Freer Gallery of Art (founded 1923) follows the principles of its founder, Charles Lang Freer, for whom artistic masterpieces stood in stately grandeur on pedestals and spoke a universal language of beauty in which context was largely irrelevant. A Buddha from the so-called golden age of India's Gupta period, a Chola dynasty bronze image of Shiva, a Pala period stele of Vishnu stand in exquisite isolation, and the primary message concerns beauty of line, form, and color. Rooms are painted in shades of restrained elegance, with discretely carpeted floors, and lighting that is appropriately subdued; viewers generally feel constrained to converse in lowered tones. The adjoining Arthur M. Sackler gallery (founded 1987), on the other hand, plays up the role of context whenever the opportunity presents itself; interpretation of the art is all-important, and meaningful communication and interaction with viewers is considered rewarding. Walls are frequently painted deep green or rich burgundy, lighting may be used to dramatic effect, and flowers, garlands, and silks may be used to recreate an appropriate setting for a specific work of art. Since the terms of Freer's gift decreed that his gallery would neither lend its objects nor borrow from outside collections, all major loan shows of South Asian art are presented in the Sackler Gallery with its possibilities, and pitfalls, of contextualization.

Over the years the Freer, and its much younger sister the Sackler, acquired a high reputation for exhibitions devoted to the sophisticated artistic traditions of China and Japan. Special exhibitions of South Asian art were few and far between and when they were mounted, they focused largely on the refined painted miniatures of the Mughals, which forms the wealth of the Freer

collection. This emphasis was partly due to the portable character of paper pages, which could be readily transported across continents, and partly due to the appeal of the Mughal style to Western taste into the 1970s and 80s. Painted pages, held together in manuscripts or albums, were created largely for the viewing pleasure of monarchs and aristocrats. Context was thus relatively simple even if artistic conventions, like the use of multiple perspective or the non-naturalistic color schemes, needed to be explained. Added to this was the fact that "traditional" museum audiences—Western viewers—found it easier to relate to the two-dimensional flat surfaces of a page of paper, as indeed of silk hanging scrolls or hand scrolls, since the recent Western artistic tradition has been largely dominated by two-dimensional painted canvases. Mughal paintings might hold great appeal for Western audiences, but it was a fair guess that the relevance of such material to the diasporic South Asian community would be limited.

Arriving at the museum in the 1990s, it seemed appropriate that I highlight the depth of the cultural tradition of South Asia, largely though not exclusively of India, through its rich repository of stone, bronze, and terracotta sculpture that, for centuries, was its dominant and highly visible form of artistic expression. The sensuous impact of three-dimensional figural sculpture from South Asia generally leaves Western audiences feeling uncomfortable. The abundance of flesh in a Rubens' canvas seems to be something audiences can take in their stride, but the three-dimensionality of Indian female figures that, apparently, appear to invade the viewers' space, is something that leaves many visitors ill at ease. While this discomfort is rarely expressed directly to museum authorities, any museum professional who walks through galleries to assess visitor reaction will hear such sentiments voiced. It seemed necessary, however, to handle that challenge as well as the accompanying complex issue of mediator between the art and the visitor. Since the permanent collection of the Freer and the Sackler galleries had limited sculptural material, it became clear that special exhibitions with international loans would need to be mounted.

Three very different types of visitors constitute the Freer and Sackler's audience, and their expectations had to be borne in mind in planning a long-term exhibition schedule, determining the character and content of exhibition catalogues, and deciding upon the appropriate "voice" for wall-text panels and labels. For connoisseurs and afficionados of South Asian art and culture—scholars at universities and museums, as well as collectors and

dealers—a special exhibition must present unknown or lesser-known objects and offer new insights. Exhibition catalogues containing new research and fresh perspectives were largely aimed at this audience, which included South Asians, as were the scholarly symposia that accompany major exhibitions. The second category of visitors comprised "nonspecialist" Americans, generally Caucasian, both adults and children, who would appreciate easy access to an "exotic" cultural complex. Audioguides, interactive videos, colorful brochures, children's programs, and activity-cum-reading areas largely cater to this group. Finally, there is the South Asian disaporic community, representing the new cosmopolitanism discussed by the editors, and including those of class, education, and wealth, as well as those of lesser privilege. By and large this community is familiar with the cultural milieu of the art objects displayed, but has rarely thought of its material culture in terms of aesthetic significance or a museum display. An exhibition must be relevant to all three types of audiences whose participation in one way or another is crucial to its success. And the extension of the exhibition through lectures, music and dance performances, films, and community participation, helps provide a fuller experience of the art on display, extending its scope and significance. Critics might question whether museums are moving out of the art business into the realm of popular culture. But this may be necessary with increasing awareness that a museum visit is a leisure-time activity that competes with a range of other such activities including movies, concerts, theater and indeed, open-air pursuits. For some museum visitors, the art, in and of itself, is a sufficient draw; others, especially the lesser-privileged members of the diaspora, may have to be coaxed into a museum through its public programs.

While marked by strong pride in their cultural heritage, the South Asian diaspora is by and large indifferent, even disinterested in museums, only slowly appreciating that museums serve as "valorizing agencies" (Lavine 1992). In addition to obvious commonalities like food, dress, and adornment, the shared experience of its members includes distant memories of colonial rule, familiarity with ancient myths and legends, temples and mosques, the all-important deliberate dislocation from a known environment, and subsequent relocation within a new value system. There is a shared nostalgia for 'back home,' but there is no intention to return. The term transnational is one that seems ideal to describe this diaspora; as Tololyan explains in his choice of the word to feature in the subtitle of his journal *Diaspora*, it "contains

the root term "nation," which was and remains indispensable to thinking about diasporas" (2002), and the South Asian diaspora in particular. While readily adopting American citizenship, the diasporic communities continue to have strong emotional and cultural ties to the home nation; their temple and mosque building activities are examples of this rootedness, of the need to assert and emphasize identity. It is clear that American citizenship and nationalism are not viewed as oppositional by individuals who are viewed as caught in the hyphenated betwixt and between. It is increasingly evident that members of the diaspora no longer see themselves in a noman's land; rather it is a specific if liminal space within which many are increasingly comfortable.

It is not useful to speak of the South Asian disapora as a monolithic entity in the context of museum visitation. The diasporic community is split between the upper class elite whose circle of friends would include Western museum goers, and those from a strata of society to whom a museum visit is an unfamiliar concept. "Art" has a marginal role in many lives unless it is in the form of "calendar art," which rarely forms part of an art museum collection, being considered more worthy of study in sociological, religious, or anthropological contexts. To view as "art" stone figures from temple walls, frequently of sacred import, requires new ways of thinking that are not part of immediate past experience. Such difficulties are faced not only by those from the less wealthy segments of the diaspora; those who have amassed wealth and status may also find themselves in the same conundrum; for many, a twenty-first century bronze of, say, god Krishna, is as good as the fourteenth century image that they have recently been persuaded into purchasing for their local museum.

Today, increasing numbers of successful contemporary artists are members of the South Asian diaspora. Their approach to the display of their works in specialized museums like the Smithsonian's Freer and Sackler galleries that display only Asian art varies immensely. Some are delighted and consider it an advantage to show their work in a South Asian context. Others would prefer to display in museums of contemporary art, construing a display in an Asian art museum as a marginalization of their relevance.

Two small-scale exhibitions which, independent of curatorial and management intention, seem to have functioned as sites of "retelling," and thus of community building (Berman 2001) were mounted at the Sackler Gallery in 1995 and 1996. "Puja: Aspects of Hindu Devotion," displayed objects of

cultural and ritual significance, both from the angle of the devotee and that of the art lover. The compact exhibition was tripartite and focused on the ritual worship of Shiva, Vishnu, and Devi. It presented a temple shrine to Shiva, a home shrine to Vishnu, and a wayside shrine to the goddess; each was shown first in a simulated sacred context that would be familiar to the South Asian devotee, and the three in situ displays were then juxtaposed with a standard museum-style presentation of similar objects as works of art. Thus, the temple-shrine section of the exhibit commenced with a Shiva linga, dressed and adorned, and placed within a simulated shrine with trays of devotional offerings of fruit, flowers, and coconuts. The adjoining room provided a total contrast by displaying lingas, and mukhalingas, as works of art, placing them within glass cases with spotlights. The exhibition, which won an award for the museum's education department, was proposed initially as a way to introduce a complex religion to the general public. In addition, it was a good instance of an exhibition that might face the criticism that museums turn cultural materials into works of art. It proposed that the objects in the exhibition possessed equal validity in two very different contexts. In their roles as objects of devotion, intended entirely for ritual worship and adoration, beauty was irrelevant; this is the normal approach to such objects by devotees. On the other hand, those same objects have today acquired a valid existence as works of art; as such they were presented in a strikingly lit museum display with an ambience very different from that of their ritual context. The exhibition was attended by substantial numbers of Washington area South Asian diaspora who had heard of the exhibit largely through their involvement with the Shiva-Vishnu temple in Lanham, Maryland, whose chief priest had ritually dressed the Shiva linga prior to the opening of the exhibition. Young teens of South Asian origin found themselves perplexed, even confounded, by viewing in a Smithsonian display, objects similar to those in their parents' homes where they were placed on kitchen or bedroom shelves, or in special puja rooms. For these teens feeling that ubiquitous, probably imagined, pressure to conform, it turned out to be a validation of cultural practices (of art too?), which they had hitherto faced with a degree of ambivalence if not actual discomfort. "Puja" resonated with the mix of classes that constitutes the new cosmopolitanism.

    Another such experience was provided by "Painted Prayers," an exhibition centering around a set of striking photographs of those ubiquitous threshold designs created by women in Indian homes, known variously as *kolam*,

*rangoli*, *alpana*, and the like. To emphasize the impermanent nature of these works of art and their constant renewal, as also to stress their continuing relevance in the cultural life of the community, both in India and overseas, women of the diasporic community were invited to create a different "painted prayer" each weekend. A specially constructed large wooden platform, a foot high, was placed in an open area at the entrance to the show, and the creativity displayed by the local South Asian women attracted a substantial viewership. This was an occasion tailor-made to stress Raymond William's dictum that "culture is ordinary," (1981) that Mughal miniature paintings, Vilayat Khan's ragas, and Satyajit Ray's films were no more "culture' than women's daily "art," bhangra rock, or a Bollywood musical. Yet, in highlighting the fact that the designs held symbolic meaning and were viewed as harbingers of the auspicious, the exhibition simultaneously emphasized the view of culture as "the order of life in which human beings construct meaning through practices of symbolic representation." (Tomlinson 1999). Both "Puja" and "Painted Prayers" were museum successes in being low-budget exhibitions that brought in large numbers of viewers.

It is a repeatedly emphasized fact that museum displays isolate and transfer objects from their original setting/s, and in doing so invest them with new meanings as works of art. Svetlana Alpers (1991) refers to "the museum effect" that turns cultural materials into works of art, and Vogel (1991) speaks of the resulting "drastic recontextualization." To my way of thinking, this is not a troubling phenomenon, even though most South Asian sculpture is sacred imagery that was created to be approached with devotion. Richard Davis (1997) actually argues that subsequent reinterpretations of India's art objects, particularly images of the gods, are as worthy of study as their original intent and context, while Philip Fisher (1996) comments on art objects surviving recontextualization "in the way that certain personalities survive and even thrive under the strain to personality that immigration imposes." Three very different exhibitions, curated at the Gallery between 1999 and 2002, will be used to illustrate some of these comments on museum practices and priorities. All three required extensive fund-raising to facilitate the national and international loans, and all three had cultural interpretation as part of their self-imposed mandate.

To feature the ubiquitous presence and importance of Devi in the artistic and cultural heritage of South Asia, a 1999 exhibition, "Devi: The Great Goddess," brought together a hundred and twenty objects from thirty-seven

different collections, public and private. It included works produced in the first century BCE as well as contemporary art; a fiberglass sculpture by the British diaspora artist Anish Kapoor enabled portraying the culture as a dynamic, living entity, rather than a static one of past glory. Although the exhibition focused on classical sculptures of high monetary value, place was given to tribal brasses from interior India, as also an inexpensive "calendar art" image. Possibilities of presentation included a chronological or art historical approach but these were abandoned as being neither challenging nor enlightening, nor indeed of interest except to a limited few. Instead, the exhibition proposed a new set of categories, organized on the basis of Devi's "function," which seemed intriguing and evocative, and would hopefully create a meaningful experience for visitors. This classification started with the most powerful, most expressive forms of the goddess, and moved toward gentler and less dominant categories. Commencing with Devi as Cosmic Force, the exhibition moved to her role as *Dayini* or Giver (of boons), her presence as Heroine and Beloved (Sita, Draupadi, Radha), her role as local protector (village and tribal deities), the category of Semi-Divine and Auspicious (*yakshis*, *naginis*), and concluded with deified Woman Saints. It was acknowledged that categories of this type overlap and intersect and that all boundaries are fluid; the inclusion of the final two categories in an exhibition titled "Devi" would undoubtedly be controversial and thought provoking.

A substantive volume on Devi, with catalogue entries preceded by a series of essays from scholars in a range of disciplines including religious studies, literature, anthropology, and art history, was intended for specialists, as too was a daylong symposium on aspects of Devi. An innovative audioguide was created largely with the uninitiated public in mind. While one segment, directed toward adults, allowed them, for instance, to explore a range of poems on the goddess, a second segment for families was narrated in the dynamic voice of Devi herself. Would South Asian families find this offensive? Judging from the comments in the visitor book, viewers found it stimulating and indeed more people listened to it than to the adult segment. The Sackler's inhouse children's program, ImaginAsia, was directed toward Devi for the duration of the show. Each session commenced with story telling, followed by a gallery visit during which the 6- to 10-year olds were asked to select an image of Devi (from a chosen few) on which they would like to write a story. Innovative responses, revealing the children's ability to get deeply involved in unfamiliar material, included several who chose to write about

Durga battling the buffalo-demon, but from the angle of the defeated animal. In order to further enrich the experience of the exhibition, and to put it into its wider context for all categories of audience, the Gallery provided an extensive series of public programs that included performances of dance, music, film, and sacred chants. These were well attended by the diaspora who were repeatedly exhorted, at these events, to visit the exhibition itself. While artists of international stature participated in the program, the diaspora of the greater Washington area was more closely involved in the performance aspects; it was they who provided the sacred chants, the story-telling sessions, and many of the music and dance performances, bringing family and friends with them. To reach audiences unable to visit the show in Washington DC, a rich web site was created, which included also a children's section and resources for teachers.

The ability of art objects, in appropriate museum settings, to arouse wonder is something that museologists capitalize on, frequently using theatrical tactics in presenting exhibitions. In their original context, most of the images in the Devi exhibition were neither intended to be portable objects, nor to be viewed as "art," but history has decreed that they take on a new persona in which they are highly valued objects of aesthetic significance. There are no curatorial apologies for using "boutique lighting" (Greenblatt 1991) to make the images of Devi glow and sparkle; it seems a wholly appropriate way to suggest to viewers that they might view the multiplicity of divine images as multiple sparkling facets of a single diamond, as many Hindus themselves do. Any exhibition creates a structured path, an imposed order, "a programmed narrative" (Duncan 1991). Images are juxtaposed in specific ways and often take on new meanings when viewed in relation to particular works. There is usually only one way to enter an exhibition and one way to leave, and specific meanings are constructed by placing images early or late in an exhibit, before this image or after this one, or standing in splendid isolation rather than forming part of a cluster. As Fisher (1996) so aptly phrased it, "The path, the wall with its juxtapositions, the room with its cluster, are all tiny narratives or histories, built into the architecture and into the experiential unit of the visit." In any exhibition, the material is filtered through the interests, and research experience of the curator and in the case of Devi, the experience was indeed structured by distinctive curatorial interests, sensibilities, and biases. A Devi exhibition by another curator would certainly have a different structure. That should not seem strange since something

very similar occurs when academics write a book. There is a first chapter and a last, and an idea is presented before this one or after that, and the various chapters, in place of rooms, build into the experience of the book. Two scholars writing about the same subject are likely to come up with two different books; the choice of material, the approach, the emphasis, whether in a book or in an exhibition, is all-important.

The complex nature of the subject of Devi, its numerous ramifications, its vast chronological span and geographical reach, indicated the necessity to guide the viewer through what was indeed "a cultural obstacle course" (Lentz 1998). Apart from impressing visitors with the sheer beauty of the objects on display and with the overwhelming significance of the goddess in the South Asian context, there were two main strands of thought to be conveyed to those willing to engage deeper. It is more or less a museum dictum that a successful exhibition is one that restricts itself to conveying two major avenues of thought; more than that cannot be absorbed in a single museum visit. The first was to suggest to viewers to come to terms with the paradoxical nature of the Goddess. She is Ma, mother, that most approachable of beings, gentle, nurturing, and concerned with her children's every need. At the same time she is Jaganmata, mother of the universe, an awesome being of great power, remote, fearsome, and difficult to approach. It was hoped that visitors would accept this paradox through viewing a range of beautiful images that expressed the one aspect or the other, and in some instance, combined both aspects in one image. This was a strand of thought that caused much confusion to the general nonspecialized audience, but caused little concern for either the scholar or viewers representing the new cosmopolitanism. The second thought to be imparted to the more serious visitor was posed in the form of a question. Is Devi One? Is she many? Is she One through, and in, the many? This question resonated throughout the exhibition, but no answer was proposed, as any answer, especially within the context of an exhibition experience, would indeed constitute an oversimplification. While neither scholars nor the general public wished to express themselves on this issue, it was one that was enthusiastically, even excitedly, debated by members of the diaspora. To them this was an issue of cultural, and hence, everyday discourse, and one which they wished to contest. It was a sobering curatorial reflection to recognize that the exhibition ultimately bore the awesome responsibility of being representative of an entire culture through its portrayal of one major facet of that culture.

An unexpected objection to "Devi" took the form of letters and e-mails that claimed that this exhibition promulgated a specific religious tradition, and accused the Smithsonian, a federal institution, of failing to recognize the separation of church and state. Each communication was answered individually, explaining that the Gallery was not highlighting the Hindu religion as such, but rather the art produced by the Hindu religious and cultural tradition. This exchange highlights an interesting conundrum since none, I am sure, would ever debate whether an exhibition of Giotto's painting, or a display of Byzantine art, represented art or the Christian religion. It is no doubt the level of unfamiliarity with Hindu art that provokes such reactions.

A very different type of exhibition, "India Through the Lens: Photography 1840–1911" was mounted at the Sackler Gallery in the year 2000. Its declared aim was to emphasize the aesthetic qualities of nineteenth century photographs as works of art, and disassociate them from their all-too-frequent status as documentary aids to a range of disciplines that include history, anthropology, and art history. At the same time, however, the images provided visitors with an insight into the complex relationship that existed between India and the British Raj, but without making this the central point of what was an art exhibition rather than a photo exhibit mounted in a history museum. Negotiating between these two disparate aims proved to be a tricky exercise. Scholars interested in the history of photography wondered why the exhibition dealt at all with issues pertaining to colonialism and the imperial presence, while those working in postcolonial or subaltern studies felt the exhibition had sidestepped important issues. A 2003 exhibition titled "Traces of India: Photography, Architecture, and the Politics of Representation, 1850–1900" presents the opposite end of this spectrum. Its aim was to bring fine photographs "into the context of larger debates about colonialism's cultural technologies and the production of national histories" (Pelizzari 2003). While immensely successful in its intention, and totally stimulating as a book, there was no way to avoid the visual disjunctures in the exhibition experience.

A third exhibition, which illustrated attempts at in-situ and contextual displays, issues of "voice," and the possibilities of outreach activities, focused on some of the most aesthetically satisfying imagery created anywhere in the world—bronze images of the Chola period (ninth to thirteenth centuries) from south India. As always, the challenge was to present material that makes a scholarly contribution to the field of South Asian art and culture, and is yet

what one might term "user-friendly." This 2002–2003 traveling exhibition was titled "The Sensuous and the Sacred: Chola Bronzes from South India," and it presented viewers with the paradox of the "sensuous-sacred image." It invited viewers to ponder the fact that, for both artist and devotee, beauty of external form went hand in hand with inner spiritual beauty. This concept was unsettling to all but the diaspora who took it in their stride, commented that sacred temple images were always beautiful, and wondered what all the fuss was about.

In the welcoming but artificial environment of a museum exhibition, sacred bronzes of the Chola period, each a unique piece emerging from a clay mold that must be broken to release the image, were presented as works of art. Visitors could study them up close and admire their sensuous form and swaying movement, their technical virtuosity and refined details. But it was necessary to emphasize that viewing them in their original temple context, covered with silks, jewelry of gold and precious stones, and fragrant flower garlands, would be an utterly different experience. Context was vital to demonstrate that for priests and devotees today, as much as in Chola times, the bronze had no existence as a work of art; it existed solely as an object of adoration. Thus, a large bronze of dancing Shiva was draped and adorned by the local temple priest, and placed in a simulated sacred context to alert viewers that the bronze images were sacred processional images carried through town and temple for the many ritual festivities of the south Indian religious and social milieu. Photomurals of adorned images in context, as well as actual jewelry of a type that would have adorned temple bronzes, encouraged viewers to envisage the bronzes in their ritual context. Carnatic music in the galleries alerted viewers to the fact that music is an integral part of the southern temple milieu. The exhibition emphasized the continuity, into the twenty-first century, of both the creation of bronze images and their ritual significance. The exhibition was one where South Asian diasporic communities, as part of the new cosmopolitanism, could feel their cultural practices and everyday life to be legitimized.

Since "voice" is such a crucial issue in museum presentations (Lavine 1991), the Chola exhibition attempted to present multiple voices—of the curator and the diaspora, of story-teller and ancient poet saints—in an attempt to provide a richer overall dimension. To supplement the curatorial voice and provide a different perspective on the bronzes, the Education department interviewed practicing Hindus from the greater Washington area and featured

their voices in a series of wall text-panels placed throughout the exhibition. Their interventions were varied; some provided personal and devotional approaches to individual bronzes, others expressed perplexity at seeing sacred images in a museum and questioned its appropriateness. Here, one might say, was an experiment in how "the *audience*, a passive entity, becomes the *community*, an active agent." (Karp 1992, italics in original). Separate "labels" telling the stories of the myths and legends surrounding the various deities were planned to supplement the ecstatic poetic verses composed by the saints between the sixth and ninth centuries. The exhibition title, the headings of each text-panel, as well as a verse by one of the saints, were provided in the Tamil script. In an attempt to draw in visitors from the diaspora who frequent the many Hindu temples in the greater Washington area but never visit the museum, the Education department came up with an extensive outreach program in which it identified a group of teens of South Asian background and trained them to be "exhibition guides." It was determined that those members of the diaspora who would not normally visit the museum and attend a standard docent-led tour of Chola bronzes would indeed come to one "advertised" in the temple and led by young people from their own community.

What then is the construction of South Asia produced through museum spaces? A reasonably accurate one, by and large, that attempts to represent the range of countries, and religions, that comprise South Asia, and covering a time span from the second millennium BCE (when possible) to the present. With India being the largest country in the region, collections naturally tend to highlight its sculptural wealth of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain imagery. However, both Pakistan and Bangladesh are featured, the one through the Indus civilization and its Gandharan Buddhist art, and the other through sculptures of the Pala-Sena monarchs of the ancient region of Bengal. Mughal miniatures, carpets, architectural units, and jeweled objects are featured without a country ascription since Mughal rule extended over more than one modern nation-state. Sri Lankan Buddhist images, and the Himalayan art of Nepal (and Tibet) are also significant players in South Asian collections. The stone and bronze sculptures, the miniature paintings and jewelry, speak of a world of shrines and palaces, a sophisticated world, the upper class of an ancient milieu. Contemporary South Asian art likewise speaks of an urban and urbane milieu. It is the wealthy social strata that sponsored the production of finely crafted images, and exquisitely painted miniatures, and which also

constitutes the purchasing audience for contemporary urban sculpture and painting. The vibrant works of everyday culture, created by tribal and village India, tend to be seen largely in Natural History museums, in displays of craft items like basketry, pottery, and often textiles. This division between art and natural history museums is beginning to blur, but by and large, as is evident in both Washington and New York, the division still holds. While we might indeed object to this fragmented view of South Asian culture, it is certainly a fact that all art museums represent an upper class milieu, a sophisticated world of which each culture, whether Greek, Roman, Chinese, Flemish, or Renaissance, was proud and which sponsored the creation of beautiful objects. More disturbing is the fact that several large museums, with major collections of art works from the Islamic world, have taken it upon themselves to carve up the world of South Asia. At the Metropolitan Museum of Art, anyone wishing to examine South Asian miniature paintings must walk to the far right of the museum to view Rajput paintings in the South Asia galleries, and to the far left to see Mughal paintings in the Islamic wing.

Today the United States seems to have set aside the ideal of assimilation in a melting pot in favor of not merely an acceptance, but an actual embrace of multiculturalism. And reacting to this unstated, though palpable atmosphere, a range of diverse communities are reasserting their differences, all the way down to the emphasis, clearly audible on National Public Radio, on the authentic pronunciation of often complex diasporic names. If Sampath and Rajnikant had arrived in the US in the last decade or two, it is unlikely there would have been a store named "Sam & Raj." The question one might appropriately raise in this context is whether the South Asian diaspora is comfortable about inhabiting the everyday space of American culture that includes art museum visitation. In India, museums were introduced by the British as part of their attempt to catalogue the monuments and archives of the subcontinent; Indian museums have since remained as mere repositories of objects, with little attempt to create displays that communicate with their audiences. As such, the idea of museum visitation as a popular leisure-time activity is new to most South Asian immigrants. Any attempt to assess South Asian museum visitation in the United States requires acknowledging the differences between first and second generation diaspora, between its more and less privileged sections, between women and men, and of course, the many possible combinations of the above. As with any other

diaspora, members of the first generation tend to have stronger ties with the homeland, while subsequent generations increasingly absorb American values through interaction with peers at school and college. The more privileged, even of the first generation, generally feel part of the fabric of this nation, comfortable in most social and cultural situations, with little need for separate spaces; participation in events at art museums is initiated by women, with men frequently, though not invariably, accompanying them. With the less privileged, it appears to be the second generation that moves toward the same comfort level, inhabiting the everyday American world of, say, sports and leisure-time activities that might include a visit to Cleveland's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. It appears that second and third generation diasporic communities have no need for separate spaces or discrete pleasures; the Metropolitan Museum of Art is already on their New York trip agenda. And this is just as well since museums, as "certifiers of taste and definers of culture" (Karp 1992), constitute a world in which the new cosmopolitanism clearly has a stake.

## References

AAM (2003): American Association of Museums web site.

Alpers, Svetlana. 1991. The Museum as a Way of Seeing. In Karp, Ivan and Lavine, Steven D., eds., *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, 25–32. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Baxandall, Michael. 1991. Exhibiting Intention: Some Preconditions of the Visual Display of Culturally Purposeful Objects. In Karp, Ivan and Lavine, Steven D., eds., *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, 33–41. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Berman, Jessica. 2001. *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Community*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Davis, Richard H. 1997. *Lives of Indian Images*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Duncan, Carol. 1991. Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship. In Karp, Ivan and Lavine, Steven D., eds., *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, 88–103. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Fisher, Philip. 1996. Local Meanings and Portable Objects: National Collections, Literatures, Music, and Architecture. In Wright, Gwendolyn, ed. *The Formation of National Collections of Art and Archaeology*, 15–27. Washington: National Gallery of Art.

Greenblatt, Stephen. 1991. Resonance and Wonder. In Karp, Ivan and Lavine, Steven D., eds., *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, 42–56. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Karp, Ivan. 1991. Culture and Representation. In Karp, Ivan and Lavine, Steven D., eds., *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, 11–24. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Karp, Ivan. 1992. Introduction: Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture. In Karp, Ivan and Lavine, Steven D, eds., *Museums and Communities. The Politics of Public Culture*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Karp, Ivan and Lavine, Steven D., eds. 1991. *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Karp, Ivan and Lavine, Steven D, eds. 1992. *Museums and Communities. The Politics of Public Culture*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Lavine, Steven D. 1991. Museum Practices. In Karp, Ivan and Lavine Steven D., (eds.,) *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, 151–58. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Lavine, Steven D. 1992. Audience, Ownership, and Authority: Designing Relations between Museums and Communities. In Karp, Ivan and Lavine, Steven D., eds., *Museums and Communities. The Politics of Public Culture*, 137–57. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Lentz, Thomas W. 1998. In Flux: Asian Art at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. In Lawton, Thomas and Lentz, Thomas W., eds., *Beyond the Legacy. Anniversary Acquisitions for the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery*, 81–115. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Pelizzari, Maria Antonella. 2003. From Stone to Paper: Photographs of Architecture and the Traces of History. In Pelizzari, Maria Antonella, ed. *Traces of India. Photography, Architecture, and the Politics of Representation, 1850–1900*. Quebec and New Haven: Canadian Centre for Architecture and Yale University Press.

Preziosi, Donald. 1995. Museology and Museography. *Art Bulletin* 77:1.

Tololyan, Khachig. 2002. From the Editor. *Diaspora* 11:1.

Tomlinson, John. 1999. *Globalization and Culture*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Vogel, Susan. 1991. Always True to the Object, In Our Fashion. In Karp, Ivan and Lavine Steven D. (eds,) *Exhibiting Cultures. The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, 191–204. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Williams Raymond. 1981. *Culture*. London: Fontana.

# South Asian Religions in the United States: New Contexts and Configurations

KAREN LEONARD

## *Religious Identities in the United States*

Scholarly discussion of South Asian Americans in the new world order seems to celebrate the "cosmopolitanism" of South Asians, pointing to the educated, worldly, and highly mobile nature of the population of recent South Asian immigrants to the United States (Rajan and Sharma). Often, too, such writers are really focusing on immigrants from India, and the new cosmopolitanism, is, they do recognize, closely tied to the privileged class status of those immigrants. When a class difference is taken into account, the assumption usually is (as discussed elsewhere below) that working and lower-middle class South Asian immigrants are living lives quite similar to the ones they would have led in their homelands, in other words, that they have become transnational but not cosmopolitan. Often, too, identities in the diaspora are said to be increasingly "religious-ethnic," particularly for the local/ethnic/noncosmopolitan sectors of the immigrant community, although scholarship on religious beliefs and practices among South Asian immigrants is not well developed.

However, the experience of the Punjabi Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu immigrants at the turn of the twentieth century and the contemporary experiences of those Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, and Zoroastrian South Asians who seek to practice their religions in the United States suggest somewhat different interpretations. One might, instead, suggest that it is the

many recent middle- and upper-class immigrants who use their resources to retain transnational "religious-ethnic" identities. In addition to class, demographic factors like the numbers, types, and origins of coreligionists play important roles in determining the religious identities of immigrants. Some of the new combinations in the United States produce opportunities to move across national origin and sectarian boundaries to build communities more cosmopolitan in their very constitution (although how these opportunities are used varies). Finally, the new national context, the changing American religious landscape, and the ways in which American legal authority can be utilized to challenge the transnational extension of religious authority from homelands must be considered. Before comparing and contrasting immigrant South Asian religious groups and their evolving identities, however, we must first review some theories about identity, citizenship, transnationalism, and cosmopolitanism and then review the changing religious scene in the late twentieth century United States.

Stuart Hall and Pnina Werbner theorize about identity, citizenship, transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. They write prolifically about immigrant identities, how immigrants are seen by others and how immigrants see themselves. Both make the important point that identities may start with the past, with the way people give an account of who they are, but that identities are just as importantly about where people are going.[1] This orientation to the future raises the issue of citizenship. Pnina Werbner argues:[2]

> [rather than being] an artificial construct of modernity, citizenship as a subjectivity is deeply dialogical, encapsulating specific, historically inflected, cultural and social assumptions about similarity and difference. The negotiation of these may generate at different times and places quite different sets of practices, institutional arrangements, modes of social interaction and future orientations. This is especially so because, unlike nationalism which grounds itself in a mythical past, citizenship raises its eyes towards the future . . . its politics are aspirational . . . discourses of citizenship constitute horizons of possibility . . . ."

In the formulations by Werbner and Hall, ideas about identity and citizenship interact with ideas about transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. In an ongoing debate about class and global subjectivity, distinctions are being drawn between cosmopolitan and transnational behaviors and attitudes. Drawing on definitions proposed by Ulf Hannerz and Jonathan Friedman, Werbner defines cosmopolitans as people who familiarize themselves with

other cultures and know how to move easily between cultures; she defines transnationals as people who, while moving, build encapsulated cultural worlds around themselves, most typically worlds circumscribed by religious or family ties.[3] Werbner also talks about conscious positively valued hybridity and dangerous or transgressive hybridity,[4] distinctions made by both US-based scholars and new immigrants, although not in precisely the same ways. Thus the practice in the United States, for example, of "love" rather than "arranged" marriages may be classified as either positively valued hybridity or dangerously transgressive hybridity, depending on the social location of the classifier. Such distinctions are highly relevant to identity politics, and particularly to religious politics, among South Asian American immigrants in the new world order.

Keeping these theories in mind, late twentieth century changes in America's religious landscape need to be delineated briefly.[5] Euro-American Protestantism, male-dominated, prevailed from the founding of the country. Recently, Catholics and Jews have become part of the mainstream religious culture, the national civil religion. Some have written about this in terms of race: how the Irish became white, how the Jews became white.[6] Others have written about it in terms of economic and social strategies, of ways of using opportunities. Catholic immigrants, they argue, built a separate subculture, which became strong enough to earn recognition and political power, while Jewish immigrants empowered themselves through mainstream educational institutions to achieve recognition and respect.[7]

Furthermore, the ideological and organizational nature of the American religious landscape has changed significantly. First, denominations, so important in the mainline Anglo-Saxon Protestant world, have become less significant as people become more highly educated, intermarry, and move to new neighborhoods with different local churches. Christians now change their denominational or church affiliations relatively easily. Second, despite male domination of religious structures and dialogues, it is argued that women in America constitute the majority of participants in Christian religious activities and institutions, and women have increasingly exercised moral authority in both religious and civic institutions. Third, even as denominations have declined, special purpose religious groups organized along conservative and liberal lines have developed, leading to the passionate mobilization of new coalitions on issues in the public arena like homosexuality and abortion. Fourth, and finally, the public dimensions of religious culture in America,

despite the separation of church and state, have grown in importance, as specialists in religious studies and American history testify. Religious beliefs and practices are clearly often central to immigrants' lives in the United States, confirming the failure of the secularization paradigm that informed recent decades of social science research and encouraged scholars of migration to overlook religion in their inquiries.[8]

## New Contexts and Configurations

Keeping these reviews of relevant theory and recent American religious history in mind, we can see that the characteristics of both the South Asian immigrants and of the receiving society differ greatly for the pre- and post-1965 immigrants. For both the early twentieth-century Punjabi immigrants and the recent post-1965 South Asian immigrants, US citizenship was a meaningful goal. However, the accessibility of citizenship and its mediation by projects of multiculturalism have differed strikingly over time. The pioneer immigrants had access to citizenship, then were denied it (the Thind 1923 Supreme Court decision), then were awarded it again (the Luce-Celler Act of 1946). The newer immigrants could apply for it upon arrival, but since some home governments (India, for example), prohibited dual citizenship, the move toward US citizenship was slow but has now become the majority trend among South Asian immigrants.

   Although citizenship proved important to both old and new South Asian immigrants, very different interpretations of the diasporic identities of the two waves of immigrants are being put forward. Some view the pioneer Punjabi farmers in America as a "Sikh" diaspora, a homogeneous and religious one (the Sikhs were the majority, about 85 percent). Similarly, some view the older migration of Indian workers to the West Indies as a culturally "continuous" diaspora of "exclusivism and purity," while the "new" Indian diasporas are viewed as "discontinuous" ones of "borders," of mixture and hybridity.[9] These analyses resonate at least partially with our editors' delineations of a middle- and upper-class cosmopolitan knowledge and mutating culture and a rather parochial and working-class transnationalism.

   In fact, the pioneer Punjabi farmers experienced considerable discontinuity and disruption in their lives, caused primarily by America's racist policies governing immigration, citizenship, and marriage. The predominantly working class communities the Punjabis built under very difficult conditions

were characterized by hybridity and mixture. Constrained by laws that denied them citizenship, prevented them from bringing wives or brides from India, and limited their marriage choices in the United States, the Punjabi men could not be transnational and became cosmopolitan. Unable to retain strong and continuous Indian religious or familial networks, they turned, overwhelmingly, to women of Mexican or Mexican-American background and built biethnic families. They remained themselves Sikh, Muslim, or Hindu, but most were not well schooled in their religions and there was no effort to retain connections with sources of religious authority in India. Since most of the wives were Catholic and they raised the children, the children also were mostly Catholic (although some claimed to be "Catholic and Muslim" or "Catholic and Sikh"). The post-1965 new immigrants from South Asia and confrontations with them spurred these men and their "Mexican Hindu" families to recognize their own hybridity and use it to claim a mainstream American identity.[10]

In contrast, the new South Asian immigrants to the United States have been very interested in maintaining exclusivism and purity, and they are far more able to do that than were members of the old diaspora. South Asians in the United States have a very high socioeconomic profile. Those born in India have the highest median household income, family income, and per capita income of any foreign-born group in the 1990 Census; immigrants born in India and Pakistan have high educational attainments and are well represented in managerial and professional fields. They are building many kinds of political and social organizations and conspicuously producing and reproducing cultural and religious activities.[11] But I expect that the hybridity of the old diaspora will overtake the attempts to retain exclusivism and purity.[12] Indicative of the coming transformations are the attempts to control the activities, most particularly the marriages, of the second generation; such attempts are featured in the many ethnic newspapers and journals put out by members of the first generation of newcomers.[13]

The challenges South Asian immigrants face as they build religious-ethnic identities in the United States involve issues of citizenship, identity, and hybridity. As Rajan and Sharma propose, many South Asian immigrants are emphasizing their religious identities in North America, efforts often central to the constitution of diasporic communities. But the diasporic religious communities are not entirely free to constitute themselves as they please. All groups save the Christians and Zoroastrians (Parsis) come into contact with

American-born converts to their religions (and certainly the South Asian Christians meet American coreligionists and the Indian Zoroastrians meet coreligionists from Iran). Such interactions only strengthen the assertion that part of the new cosmopolitanism of South Asians in the new world order involves the movement of Sikhism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Zoroastrianism abroad. Yet at the same time, as our editors and Werbner remind us, some of these immigrants may maintain transnational religious networks which can be viewed as, at best, local or ethnic, and, at worst, "ugly" or dangerously essentialist.[14]

These reconfigured "communities of believers" in the United States[15] represent challenges of varying degrees to South Asian immigrants. National origin, class, language, race and ethnicity vary within the religious communities. The demographic configurations are not only very different from those in the homeland contexts but are also strikingly different from each other. Beliefs and practices also vary within each religious community, and issues focused on boundary maintenance, the location of religious authority, gender, and relationship to the American civic religion are particularly challenging.

Let us look closely at the differences of national origin, class, language, and race or ethnicity within these US-based South Asian religious communities and try to suggest how the issues of boundary maintenance, sources of authority, gender, and relationship to American civic religion are being approached. Following descriptive overviews of each religious group, I will conclude by hypothesizing about the conditions that have led to the development of transnational or cosmopolitan emphases in the various South Asian religious groups now in the United States.

The Sikhs and the Hindus are primarily diasporic communities, rooted in India and sharing a British colonial past. North American converts form very small parts of these two communities in the United States: the "white" or "gora" Sikhs, the Ramakrishna Mission, the Transcendental Meditation movement, the Hare Krishnas.[16] Yet these US-born followers of Sikhism and Hinduism often differ strikingly from the new Indian immigrants, and, depending on the interpreter, their beliefs and practices can be considered dangerously hybrid or more "authentic (text-based)" than those of the immigrants.

For example, the American white Sikhs and the Indian Punjabi Sikhs have had problems relating to each other. The Sikh immigrant community

in the United States now sees itself as a diaspora community, and many of its members also recast the pioneer "Hindu" or Punjabi immigrants to North America as "the Sikh diaspora."[17] The Indian Sikhs have a public profile marked by sharp, public disagreements over their place in India and the nature and extent of Sikh religious authority. Sikh minority status everywhere (they constitute some 2 percent of India's population) and specific grievances based in Indian politics exploded in the 1986 demand for a Sikh homeland, or Khalistan, by Canadian and US Sikhs.[18] Militant takeovers of North American Sikh *gurdwaras (churches)*, associations, and media followed, but so did resistance by Sikh moderates. The centralizing institutions of Indian Sikh governance are trying to exercise supreme authority at home and abroad. Some Sikhs in the United States, however, have turned successfully to American courts, arguing that *gurdwara* congregations have always exercised local control.[19] Thus western legal systems are used to resist religious law being extended from India.[20]

The white Sikhs have a shorter, American history. They were recruited by Yogi Bhajan, an immigrant from India, who taught yoga to eager young, counter-culture Americans in the 1960s and 1970s. They are not only predominantly white in racial terms, they wear only white clothing, the women wear turbans just like the men, and they consider the practice of yoga and vegetarianism integral to the Sikh religion. These practices are not typical of contemporary Sikhism in India's Punjab, however, and post-1965 Punjabi-speaking Sikh immigrants to the United States consider yoga and vegetarianism to be essentially Hindu, not Sikh, practices. Furthermore, the white Sikhs know little of Punjabi language and culture, and they were notably hostile to the political movement for Khalistan that received so much support and funding from overseas Punjabi Sikhs. Yet the American converts must be accommodated and welcomed to establish Sikhism's claim to be a world religion, not just a regional one.[21]

The decline of the Khalistan movement has facilitated a closer integration of the small white Sikh group and the Punjabi immigrant Sikhs that, along with converging second-generation conceptions of Sikhism as a world religion,[22] has had impacts back in the Punjab. The white Sikhs have become active in India, setting up a school in Amritsar and sending their children to learn Punjabi culture. Meanwhile, pressure for the gender equity promised by Sikhism has increased, partly because of white Sikh expectations. White Sikh women recently won the right for all Sikh women

to perform certain previously male-only services in the Golden Temple in Amritsar.[23]

Hindus, least in number among the early Indian immigrants but probably the largest and most privileged of the new South Asian religious populations, constitute an overwhelmingly diasporic religious population in the United States. As in India, those who follow Hindu beliefs and practices are extremely diverse and authority is decentralized. Hindu immigrants tend to have strong and continuing allegiances to India, and some neo-Hindu or Hindutva groups are undeniably important with respect to politics in the homeland. There is little in the way of Hindu politics focused on goals in North America, however, and efforts to build a unified Hindu community in the United States appear insignificant. Associations along linguistic, regional, caste, occupational, and educational (school) lines flourish. Although many of these crosscut religious boundaries, others may reinforce sectarian or caste boundaries, regulating marriages and conduct in the diaspora as in the homeland.

Hinduism has not been promoted as a universal or world religion in the United States in the same ways that Sikhism or Islam have been promoted. This is perhaps because the diverse religious beliefs and practices designated as Hinduism have relied primarily on family- and caste-based rituals, and new temples in the United States have been financed, at least initially, by particular regional and sectarian groups. Yet Hinduism is undoubtedly flourishing in America,[24] and immigrant efforts dominate the scene. Many new congregations and temples are being established in urban centers, fueled by relative prosperity and the ease of securing the necessary physical and cultural materials (and artisans to put them together) in this era of global trade and travel. Even though Hindu groups are chiefly reproducing rather than reconfiguring congregations in the diaspora, this can be seen as a way of becoming American,[25] if not consciously hybrid, and in fact changes from homeland practices are occurring in Hindu homes and temples in the United States.[26] One could perhaps argue that bringing together Hindus from different Indian linguistic, caste, and sectarian backgrounds in American settings is analogous to bringing together Zoroastrians from India and Iran.

Hindu religious authority is decentralized in India and in the diaspora, and gender issues are equally diffuse and difficult to analyze. Some Hindu sectarian or caste groups in India extend authority over members overseas, and Hindu religious specialists are recruited from India to staff the new temples

in America. There are parallels to the Sikh court cases involving contested leadership of particular Hindu temples, but such cases are not part of a national or transnational pattern contesting the nature and extent of religious authority exercised from India. Changes in gendered practices are occurring among American Hindus. Some scholars find women's empowerment and greater gender equality in the new context, while others see Hindu families and communities instituting more inegalitarian and restrictive models of womanhood than in India.[27]

As with Sikhism, American converts to Hinduism often contrast conspicuously with the immigrants in styles of dress, home and temple decoration, music and dance, and degree of commitment to meditation, yoga, and vegetarianism.[28] Some groups of American-born Hindus (the Hare Krishnas are an example) actively orient themselves to India, seeking legitimation in teachers, texts, and traditions grounded there. In other cases, a longer history in the United States has led to largely white American communities whose connections to India have become somewhat attenuated (the Ramakrishna Mission, the Transcendental Meditation movement). In still other cases, a charismatic guru from India has built a transnational following that includes both Indian immigrants and other Americans (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Satya Sai Baba, and others).

Now we come to religious communities that cannot be considered diasporic. Buddhist and Muslim communities of believers in America are extremely diverse in terms of national origin, class, language, and race and ethnicity. In both cases, there are significant American-born components, and, also in both cases, South Asian immigrants have emerged as important participants and leaders of these large and evolving religious communities. In both cases, too, but particularly among the Muslims, there are efforts to unify believers across the many internal boundaries (major ones being those among African Americans, Arabs, and South Asians and between Sunnis and Shias). Such efforts must be viewed as cosmopolitan, and they immediately invoke competing sources of religious authority, in the homelands and in the United States.

The Buddhists in the United States do not share one colonial past but represent many histories; they do share American citizenship and a converging religious identity. Small groups of converts have long been recognized as authentic practitioners of Buddhism in America, but the immigrant Buddhists are the majority now and attempts at unification or coalition-building are

underway. Monks from Sri Lanka, probably because of their high English language educational attainments and the backing of well-off Sri Lankan immigrants, have been conspicuous in Buddhist institution-building and in interfaith efforts even beyond Buddhism. They may be a small minority in terms of population and persuasion,[29] but they have pioneered in devising new categories of monks to be trained and ordained in the United States.

The Sri Lankan Buddhists have also changed gendered practices in the diaspora, and they have pioneered here most notably by ordaining nuns (long extinct in Theravada Buddhism). This ordination of Buddhist nuns in Los Angeles has been controversial in Sri Lanka, as monks in both countries claim rights to religious authority and take opposing positions on this matter. Among East Asian and Southeast Asian immigrant Buddhists, too, gender issues are important.[30]

Like American Buddhists, American Muslims cannot be viewed as a diasporic community but as an American Muslim community in the making.[31] The earliest Muslims in the United States were African Americans,[32] struggling to define themselves as different from, and emphatically separate from, the dominant Anglo and Christian culture. They still constitute some 30 to 42 percent of the American Muslim population.[33] Interestingly, it was Ahmadiyya missionaries from British India who made major contributions to the African American Muslim movements. The Ahmadis brought an English translation of the Quran in 1920, published the first English language Muslim magazine in the United States, and told the African American groups about the five pillars of Islam and headed them toward mainstream Sunni teachings.[34] African American Muslims have returned the favor by forging legal victories which have broadened the rights of all Muslims in America.[35] Arab Muslims, along with more numerous Arab Christians, came to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and then, after the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act, new Muslim immigrants came from many more countries, including India and Pakistan.

Islam in the United States has been twice stamped with South Asian influence. After the Ahmadi missionaries in the 1920s came the post-1965 new immigrants of high educational and socioeconomic status, men who by the 1990s took national political leadership of American Muslims away from the earlier Arab Muslim immigrants.[36] And where is this leadership headed? As the world has changed with globalization, Muslim immigrants, like others, can better maintain links to their homelands, but American Muslim

organizations have chosen to de-emphasize the transnational networks and politics "back home" in order to build strong roots in the United States and participate in American society.[37] Yet some of the tensions within their coalitions come from an unwillingness to acknowledge fully the historical heritage presented by the African American Muslims and the Ahmadis; the latter are now often regarded as non-Muslims.[38] If American Muslims take a stand against the Ahmadis, however, it means erasing much of the early Muslim history in America, and a history that links immigrant and African American Muslims.

Importantly, many first-generation Pakistani and Indian Muslims work to expand the basic definition of America's civic religion, the Judeo-Christian tradition, to the Abrahamic (Judeo-Christian-Muslim) tradition. Thus the discourse of immigrant Muslim American leaders asserts that Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are monotheistic "religions of the book" with shared origins, prophets, and values. American Muslims also write about the compatibility between Islam and democracy and increasingly pay attention to the political sphere.[39] Historically closely related to western culture, Muslims are at the same time very critical of it; worse, they are at a power disadvantage and must hopefully seek "common ground."[40]

American Muslims wrestle with issues of religious authority and gender.[41] They may battle together against the stereotyping of Muslims as terrorists, but they acknowledge no single source of religious authority. American Muslims follow divergent beliefs and practices rooted in many countries (Lebanon, Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, etc.) and in many sectarian traditions (the dominant Sunnis, the various Shias, Ahmadis, Druze, and so on. ).[42] Sufis, who practice a mystical strand of Islam, also figure in efforts at community building, for charismatic Sufi leaders have been recruiting followers in America since 1910.[43] And of course the predominantly African American "new Muslims" and the immigrant "new Americans" do not always relate well to one another or even interact much in mosque, residential, or organizational settings.[44]

Muslim mobilization in the US involves the development of *fiqh,* or Islamic jurisprudence, in the new context rather than transnational applications of *fiqh* from various homelands. A National Fiqh Council established by the Islamic Society of North America "is overwhelmingly composed of naturalized Muslims," men who know little about US family law and inheritance rights, according to an African American Muslim scholar (and the

Council is not accepted as authoritative by all American Muslims).[45] Leading *fiqh* scholars do agree that the context should strongly shape decisions about Muslim practices in America.[46]

Gender issues loom large in American Muslim community discourses.[47] Many immigrant Muslims uphold patriarchy and gender complementarity (different male and female roles) in family and community, perceiving the dominant American values of gender equality and freedom of sexual expression as transgressive hybridity,[48] serious threats to a Muslim way of life and indeed to all ordered social life. Such gendered and generational tensions are shared to some extent by immigrant Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, and Zoroastrians as well, as they worry about emerging "problems" involving their children and families and whether these should be attributed to cultural and religious values brought from the homeland or to those of the host society.[49]

South Asian Christians in the United States are an understudied and internally diverse set of immigrants, some of them diasporic and some of them not. They represent communities ranging from Latin and Syrian Catholics to Jacobite, Mar Thomite, Nestorian, and many post-Reformation Protestant denominations. Most are from parts of South India, where Christians are more numerous in India (though only 2 to 3 percent of the total population), especially Kerala. Malayali-speaking Kerala Christian nurses came to the United States in large numbers in the 1970s, bringing husbands and eventually relatives along. So this religious group "immigrated on the shoulders of women," as Raymond Williams writes.[50] He also points out that, unlike other religions from South Asia that are led by lay people in the United States, many priests and pastors have come from India (and some of them were trained in the United States, in institutions already producing Christian religious leaders).[51]

South Asian Christians in the United States have sometimes joined mainstream American Christian congregations and sometimes retained their ethnic or national origin identities. The Methodists, Episcopalians, Nazarenes, Lutherans, and Pentecostals tend to join existing American congregations. The numerous Christians from Kerala are most active in establishing churches and new denominations in the United States, although at first their leaders in India discouraged them from doing so. Telugu- and Tamil-speaking Christians tend to form regional or linguistic congregations, and Gujarati and Hindi-speakers are doing so as well.[52] Like Muslims from India,

Christians from India and Pakistan have asked for help not only from core-ligionists, but also from other immigrants from their homelands as anti-Christian attitudes and actions in India and Pakistan have threatened their ancestral communities.

Our final example of South Asian religious/ethnic identity reconfigura-tion in the United States finds the Parsis from India confronting Zoroastrians from Iran. The Parsis are providing trained priests to American congrega-tions even where they are outnumbered by Iranians (in Los Angeles, for example), because the religion has been weakened in Iran. Both populations are doing extremely well economically, and the Indian English-speaking Parsi immigrants are working hard with Persian-speaking Iranian immigrants to build an integrated North American community of Zarthustis, the name upon which they have agreed. Together, they are building organizations, producing scholarly journals, and publishing impressively comprehensive membership lists.

The Zarthustis, too, debate issues of religious authority and gender, and in a religion where conversion has not traditionally been possible. The priests in Bombay are pitted against some priests in the United States over changes in funeral, marriage, and baptism rituals in the diaspora. In Bombay, Parsi priests insist on the traditional disposal of bodies in "towers of silence" where vultures devour them, and they prohibit cremation. The priests in India also refuse to marry Parsi women to non-Parsi grooms, and they refuse to baptize the children of mixed marriages. But in North America, such practices are be-coming accepted as concern grows about the declining numbers in the com-munity. The new Zarthustrian religious centers in the United States are also cultural centers, intended to strengthen second-generation attendance and encourage marriages among the young people. Through intermarriages and *navjyots* (confirmations) of "mixed" children, the possibility of conversion emerges, and if this were to be accepted back in India, the reversal of the Parsi population decline there might even be possible.

Just as the political interplay of issues of citizenship, transnationalism, cosmopolitanism, and religious-ethnic identities could lead to a reversal of India's Parsi population decline, the same factors could lead to the rein-vigoration of Buddhism in its original homeland, India. A very large-scale conversion of Dalits or Untouchables from Hinduism to Buddhism was an-nounced by a Dalit leader in the fall of 2001, and this may be occurring.[53] This option, tried half a century ago under the leadership of Ambedkar,

derives new legitimacy from the Tibetan Buddhist refugee population settled in India and especially from the great respect internationally accorded to the Dalai Lama, developments I would term cosmopolitan, and ones that allow another final twist, a comparison of the evolving identities of American Black Muslims and Indian Dalit Buddhists. In both these instances, an imported or reimported religion promises a reconfiguration of oppressive beliefs and practices rooted in the original home context. Also in both instances, we see the creative interplay of citizenship, class, religious-ethnic hybrid identities, and global subjectivities.

## The Contexts and Configurations Encouraging Transnationalism or Cosmopolitanism

In all the cases above, we saw that religion was a major force shaping and changing constructions of religious identity among South Asian immigrants. The brief histories above of South Asian immigrants, by religion, highlighted the ways in which they, too, reflect the changing American religious landscape. Even the diasporic, strongly transnational religions have experienced problems with boundary definition and maintenance, with sources of authority and gender issues,[54] and with the nation's expanding but increasingly politicized civic religion. We also saw transnational religious networks and important interactions between immigrant and homeland beliefs and practices. The most diasporic immigrant populations, the Sikhs and Hindus, both have developed political manifestations of religious identity strongly linked to homeland politics.[55] Finally, we saw, in some cases more than others, how religious beliefs and practices could relate immigrants to the state and American civic life, bringing to the fore not religious-ethnic identities but religious-political ones.

Despite the strong effect of the new context upon all the South Asian religions, the new configurations are quite significant when seeking to distinguish between transnational and cosmopolitan immigrant religious communities, between transnationals building encapsulated cultural worlds and cosmopolitans moving between and interweaving worlds. The following generalizations seem supportable. Where immigrant numbers are small and/or indigenous convert communities are large, communities of cobelievers have been most pressured to develop cosmopolitan rather than transnational religious communities. Where the possible sources of authority are many, in

terms of national or sectarian traditions, and where traditions of gender relations are being challenged, again cosmopolitan rather than transnational communities are being constructed.

I would argue, also, that the effect of these and other immigrant religions in the United States pushes the national religious landscape as a whole further toward cosmopolitanism. Certainly religious diversity is being recognized as never before and it is becoming part of the multicultural agenda at all levels of public life.[56] In a sense, this is a blurring of religion into culture, a fitting of religions into multicultural boxes. Whether or not this is desirable, and just how it is happening or should be happening, is debatable.[57]

Leaders of many South Asian religions have argued for the inclusion of their religions in the American mainstream religious scene. In the case of Islam, while the early African American Muslim movements were separatist ones, in tension with religions well-anchored in America, immigrant Muslims are now positioning Islam as the third of the Abrahamic religions and an integral part of the American religious landscape. What this argument means for the many other religions in America now, the Buddhists (arguably as numerous as Muslims and growing equally fast), Hindus, and smaller groups deserves further thought.

Finally, turning to contemporary constructions of religion and the American nation, the events of September 11, 2001, have clearly sharpened and hastened the trend to special purpose (conservative and liberal) religious coalitions across denominational lines.[58] The nature of the national civic religion and its politicization are issues of far greater significance than before the terrorist attacks. Previously, religious and political coalitions involving immigrant religious groups were more conspicuous on the conservative end of the political spectrum as Muslim and other groups at both local and national levels talked about family values, American immorality, and issues like homosexuality, marriage, and divorce. But now the liberal end of the political spectrum is being embraced as American Muslims, along with Sikhs, Hindus, and other South Asians, emphasize civil rights, justice, and the freedom of speech and assembly. Making common cause against discrimination on the basis of religion, national origin, and ethnicity or race, many South Asian Americans have downplayed critiques of American foreign policy and orientations to nations of origin to emphasize their rights and obligations as American citizens. An insistence on the civil rights and freedoms possible in the United States is now a matter of urgency, a matter at the top of the

agenda for many in this country, including and perhaps even especially for South Asians of all religious backgrounds.

The boundaries of nation-states are, perhaps, becoming porous, but each national context remains distinctive. National immigration and citizenship policies and national demographic profiles with respect to race, class, national origin, language, religion, and ethnicity significantly shape religious beliefs and practices for South Asian immigrants to the United States. These include Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, and Zoroastrian or Parsi immigrants, and their religious interactions in the United States can significantly shape beliefs and practices back home, too.

However, I think that the contemporary experiences[59] of South Asian immigrants who seek to practice their religions in the United States suggest, instead, that it is the middle and upper class immigrants who use their resources to maintain transnational religious-ethnic identities, and, also, that demographic factors like the numbers and types of coreligionists play major roles in determining their religious identities. These immigrants are not entirely free to constitute religious communities as they please. All groups save the Zoroastrians come into contact with American-born converts to their religions, and even the Indian Zoroastrians, or Parsis, meet coreligionists from Iran. The ensuing interactions do strengthen the impression of cosmopolitanism as Sikhism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Zoroastrianism move abroad, yet immigrants often retain transnational religious networks which can be viewed as, at best, local or ethnic, and, at worst, dangerously essentialist.[60]

These reconfigured "communities of believers" in the United States present interesting challenges. National origin, class, language, race and ethnicity vary within them, and the demographic configurations are not only very different from those in the homeland contexts, but are also strikingly different from each other. Questions arise about what is religion and what is culture, and about hybridity and mixture, in the new context. New immigrants and others make distinctions between conscious positively valued hybridity and dangerous or transgressive hybridity, although not in the same ways. Thus a particular practice (arranged marriage, wearing a *hijab* or headscarf, wearing a turban) may be seen either as religion or culture, as positively valued hybridity or dangerously transgressive hybridity, depending on the social location of the viewer.[61] Problems involving gender and the location of religious authority are particularly challenging to people both inside and

outside these newly configured US-based religious communities, as this quick survey of them should make clear.


## Notes

1. Stuart Hall, "Politics of Identity," in eds., Terence Ranger,Yunus Samad, and Ossie Stuart, *Culture, Identity, Politics: Ethnic Minorities in Britain* (Brookfield, Vt: Avebury, 1996), pp. 131–32; Pnina Werbner, "Exoticising Citizenship: Anthropology and the New Citizenship Debate," *Canberra Anthropology* 21, p. 2 (1998).

2. Werbner, "Exoticising Citizenship," p. 5.

3. Pnina Werbner, "Global Pathways, Working class Cosmopolitans and the Creation of Transnational Ethnic Worlds," *Social Anthropology* 7, 1 (1999), pp. 19–20. Hannerz defines cosmopolitans as "willing to engage with the Other" and transnationals as frequent travelers who carry with them meanings embedded in social networks: Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Social Organisation of Meaning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992): p. 252. Friedman shows the encapsulation of cosmopolitans as well: Jonathan Friedman, "Global Crises, the Struggle for Cultural Identity and Intellectual Porkbarrelling: Cosmopolitans versus Locals, Ethnics and Nationals in an Era of De-hegemonisation," in eds., Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood, *Debating Cultural Hydrity: Multicultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism* (London: Zed Books, 1997), pp. 84–5.

4. Pnina Werbner,"Introduction," 12, in eds., Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood, *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism* (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997).

5. For a fuller discussion of these changes, see ed., Thomas A. Tweed, *Retelling U.S. Religious History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), especially Ann Braude's article, "Women's History is American Religious History," and Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since World War II* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

6. Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Karen Brodkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What that Says About Race in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

7. Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

8. See, especially, Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, *Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations* (Walnut Creek, Ca.: AltaMira, 2000); R. Stephen Warner and Judith G. Wittner,

eds., *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration.* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1998); Karen Isaksen Leonard, Alex Stepick, Manuel Vasquez, and Jennifer Holdaway, coeditors, *Immigrant Faiths: Transforming Religious Life in America.* Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2005).

    9.  Vijay Mishra, "The Diasporic Imaginary: Theorising the Indian Diaspora," *Textual Practice* 10,3 (1996), pp. 421–47, focusing on the West Indies and relying on Naipaul. See also his "(B)ordering Naipaul: Indenture History and Diasporic Poetics," *Diaspora* 5, p. 2. (1996). Mishra's theory, built as it is upon literary works, is a "diasporic imaginary," and he calls it this himself.

    10.  Karen Isaksen Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992). "Hindu" in the early twentieth century designated people from Hindustan, or India (in Australia and New Zealand as well as the US).

    11.  Karen Isaksen Leonard, *The South Asian Americans* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997), pp. 77–81, 88–96, 131–43.

    12.  Mishra proposes the opposite, that, over time, "the first diaspora of exclusivism will in time collapse into that of the border:" Mishra, "(B)ordering Naipaul," p. 190. I do see a class difference here, as those without resources or legal status are led to make occupational, residential, and marital choices in the directions of hybridity and mixture, and one might point to the different patterns of lower and upper class Bangladeshis, in particular, to illustrate this: in downtown Los Angeles, young men who are members of the city Bangladeshi association are marrying Korean and Salvadoran women, while the doctors, engineers, and computer professionals in Orange County have established their own, separate, dues-paying association.

    13.  The socialization of young people in the new context means hybridity and mixture, and many books and articles show the vigorous movement of younger South Asian Americans into mainstream American culture, e.g.,: Sangeeta Gupta, *Emerging Voices: South Asian American Women Redefine Self, Family and Community* (New Delhi: Sage, 1999); Shamita Das Dasgupta, *A Patchwork Shawl: Chronicles of South Asian Women in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, 1998); the issue of *Amerasia Journal* edited by Vijay Prashad (25, 3, 1999); and Sunaina Maira, *Desis in the House: Indian American Youth Culture in New York City* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

    14.  Rajan and Sharma, this volume; Werbner, "Introduction," where the transnational but not cosmopolitan movements are in danger of slipping into antihybrid or essentializing discourses, or some combination of these.

    15.  A 2001 study by the Graduate Center of the City University of New York found that 52 percent of American adults identified themselves as Protestant

Christians, 25 percent as Catholic Christians, 1.3 percent as religious Jews, 0.5 percent as Muslims, 0.5 percent as Buddhists, and 0.4 percent as Hindus: *India-West*, November 2, 2001, p.B22. This is controversial—for example, some Muslims have claimed at least six million followers in the US, not the 1.8 million estimated here. The study does show that the number of Muslims has doubled and the number of Hindus has tripled (to 766,000) from a similar survey in 1990.

16. Most of the work on Hinduism in the US ignores the non-Indian Hindus, a situation reflected in two bibliographies: John Y. Fenton, South Asian Religions in the Americas: *An Annotated Bibligraphy of Immigrant Religious Traditions* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995); Stewart J. Lawrence, *Religion and Immigration in the Contemporary United States: A Bibliographic Review Essay* (mss, 1998). Raymond Brady Williams and Verne A. Dusenbery are exceptions. Williams, *Religions of Immigrants from India and Pakistan* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1988), covers the International Society of Krishna Consciousness (Hare Krishnas), the American Muslim Mission (W.D. Mohamed's branch of the Nation of Islam, now renamed the American Muslim Society), and the Sikh Dharma Brotherhood (white Sikhs). Williams also discusses "American cousins" briefly in "Asian Indian and Pakistani Religions in the United States,"*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* p. 558 (July, 1998). He includes Jains and Indian Christians in the survey, one of the few scholars to publish on them, and see his *Christian Pluralism in the United States: The Indian Immigrant Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Best on the white Sikhs is Verne A. Dusenbery, e.g., "Punjabi Sikhs and Gora Sikhs: Conflicting Assertions of Sikh Identity in North America," in eds., Joseph T. O'Connell, Milton Israel, and Willard G. Oxtoby, with W.H. McLeod and J.S. Grewal, *Sikh History and Religion in the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Toronto, 1988), pp. 334–55. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami's death on November 12, 2001, draws attention to this omission—born Robert Hansen in Oakland, California, he founded the international periodical *Hinduism Today* and the first Hindu temple in the US (1957).

17. Verne A. Dusenbery, "A Sikh Diaspora? Contested Identities and Constructed Realities," in ed., Peter van der Veer, *Nation and Migration* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), pp. 17–42.

18. The violence of 1984 was the spark: Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi sent the Indian Army on Operation Blue Star, an assault on militants in the Amritsar Golden Temple, and she was subsequently assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards. The Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada formed, with US Sikhs, the World Sikh Organization at a New York International Convention in 1984; the WSO, with a new International Sikh Organization, demanded Khalistan in 1986.

19. In fact, many *gurdwaras* in the US and elsewhere have some sort of caste basis, and there is an untouchable Sikh *gurdwara* in New York city, despite the abolition of caste in Sikhism.

20. N. Gerald Barrier, "Controversy among Sikhs in North America: the Implications of Conflicting Views of Tradition and Power for Scholarly Discourse," mss, 1999. The centralizing Sikh institutions in the Punjab are those constituted under colonialism in the early twentieth century, the Akal Takht (head council) and a *jathedar* (custodian or high priest).

21. Verne A. Dusenbery, "'Nation' or 'World Religion'? Master Narratives of Sikh Identity,"pp. 127–44, and Karen Leonard, "Second Generation Sikhs in America," pp. 275–97, both in eds., Pashaura Singh and N. Gerald Barrier, *Sikh Identity: Continuity and Change* (New Delhi; Manohar, 1999).

22. Dusenbery, "Nation"; Leonard, "Second Generation Sikhs." Political goals remain elusive: while some first-generation Sikh immigrants want to create a new homeland by a territorial division within India, some in the second generation want to recreate a Punjab for Punjabi-speakers from both India and Pakistan, using language and not religion as their rationale

23. Interview, Guru Ram Das Gurdwara, Los Angeles, 1998, Karen Leonard.

24. Hinduism has had a major impact on popular culture in the US through numerous yoga and "new age" meditation movements, ones often so hybrid that they are no longer recognizably religious in nature.

25. Prema Kurien, "Becoming American by Becoming Hindu: Indian Americans Take Their Place at the Multicultural Table," in eds., Stephen Warner and Judith Wittmer, *Gatherings in Diaspora: Religious Communities and the New Immigration* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), pp. 37–70, exemplifies this argument, advanced chiefly by sociologists.

26. Shampa Mazumdar, "Sacred Spaces: Socio-Spatial Adaptations of Hindu Migrants." Ph.D. dissertation, Boston: Northeastern University, 1995.

27. Prema Kurien discusses this contradiction in the literature on immigrants and provides further references: "Gendered Ethnicity: Creating a Hindu Indian Identity in the United States," in *American Behavioral Scientist* 42, 4 (January 1999), 648–70.

28. Studies tend to be on a case-by-case basis rather than comparative; I found no accounts of significant interactions between Indian- and American-born members of a Hindu congregation.

29. Buddhists from Sri Lanka are a double minority. First, they follow the Theravada (or Hinayana, Lesser Vehicle) tradition, the earlier form of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Burma. The more elaborate Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) tradition, now the majority one, developed in China, Korea, Vietnam,

Japan, and elsewhere. Second, in terms of numbers, the Sri Lankans are swamped by the Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, and perhaps even Tibetan, Buddhist immigrants. Even the well-established American converts to Japanese Zen Buddhism from the 1960s and more recent American converts to Tibetan Tantric Buddhism are part of the Mahayana tradition and probably outnumber the Theravada Sri Lankans.

30. Leonard, *South Asian Americans*, pp. 125–26; Paul David Numrich, "Theravada Buddhism in America: Prospects for the Sangha," in Charles S. Prebish and Kenneth K. Tanaka, *The Faces of Buddhism in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 148–61; Penny Van Esterik, *Taking Refuge: Lao Buddhists in North America* (Toronto: York Lanes Press, 1992).

31. One might argue that the shared focus on Mecca as a sacred center, along with a shared historical core of teachings, moralities, and myths, constitute a diasporic orientation, but I would relate these factors to the constitution of the *ummah*, to some kind of citizenship in a universal Islamic community, not to the reconstitution of a diasporic community in any one nation.

32. The very earliest, slaves from Africa, did not leave descendants who knew Islam, so it had to be rediscovered or reinvented: Allan D. Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Sulayman Nyang, "Islam in America: a Historical Perspective," *American Muslim Quarterly* 2, 1 (1998), pp. 10–11.

33. One estimate puts African Americans at 42 percent, South Asians at 24.4 percent, and Arabs at 12.4 percent (with smaller groups of Africans at 6.2 percent, Iranians at 3.6 percent, Southeast Asians at 2 percent, European Americans at 1.6 percent , and "other" at 5.4 percent): Fareed H. Nu'man, *The Muslim Population in the United States* (Washington D.C.: American Muslim Council, 1992), p. 16. Another puts "Americans" at 30 percent, Arabs at 33 percent, and South Asians at 29 percent: Ilyas Ba-Yunus and M. Moin Siddiqui, *A Report on the Muslim Population in the United States* (New York: CAMRI, 1999).

34. For these hybrid movements, see Ernest Allen, Jr., "Identity and Destiny: The Formative Views of the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam," eds., Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito, *Muslims on the Americanization Path*? (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1998), pp. 201–66.

35. Kathleen M. Moore, *Al-Mughtaribun: American Law and the Transformation of Muslim Life in the United States* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

36. Karen Leonard, "South Asian Leadership of American Muslims," in ed., Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, *Sojourners to Citizens: Muslims in Western Diasporas* (New York: Oxford, 2002), pp. 233–249.

37. This decision, already taken, was strengthened by the events of September 11, 2001.

38. The Ahmadis were regarded as Muslims in the US by both African American and immigrant Muslims well into the 1960s, when C. Eric Lincoln found that "the Ahmadiyah were generally accepted as a legitimate sect of Islam": *The Black Muslims in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), p. 221. Whether the Ahmadis consider their founder a Prophet is contested, and there are differences among Ahmadis too. But they were only outlawed in Pakistan after the third of three court cases, and the two earlier decisions, based on the same body of textual material as the third, did not find them unorthodox. The third decision was reached only under extreme political pressure: Tayyab Mahmud, "Freedom of Religion and Religious Minorities in Pakistan: a Study of Judicial Practice, *Fordham International Law Journal* 19, 1 (October 1995), 40–100.

39. American Jews are a constant reference group, seen as monolithic and both envied and feared by American Muslim leaders. Political activists striving to bring American Muslims into public life achieved conspicuous successes under the Clinton administration and have continued to do so.

40. R. Radhakrishnan, "Culture as Common Ground: Ethnicity and Beyond," *Melus* 14, 2 (Summer 1987), pp. 5–19.

41. See my "American Muslim Politics: Discourses and Practices," *Ethnicities*, 3, 2 (June 2003), pp. 147–81 and *Muslims in the United States: the State of Research* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003) for much more on these issues.

42. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane Idleman Smith, *Mission to America: Five Islamic Sectarian Communities in North America* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993).

43. Marcia K. Hermansen, "In the Garden of American Sufi Movements: Hybrids and Perennials," Peter B. Clarke, ed., *New Trends and Developments in the World of Islam* (London: Luzac Oriental Press, 1997); Larry Poston, *Islamic Da'wah in the West: Muslim Missionary Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

44. Aminah Beverly McCloud, *African American Islam* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Linda S. Walbridge and Fatimah Haneef, "Inter-Ethnic Relations within the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the United States, in ed., Carla Petievich, *Expanding Landscapes: South Asians in Diaspora* (Delhi: Manohar, 1999), pp. 123–40. For "new Muslims" and "new Americans," see Robert Dannin, "Understanding the Multi-ethnic Dilemma of African-American Muslims," eds., Mehdi Bozorgmehr and Alison Feldman, *Middle Eastern Diaspora Communities in America* (New York: Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies at New York University, 1996), p. 163.

45. McCloud, *African American Islam*, pp. 126–27.

46. These include Khaled Abou el Fadl, Professor of Islamic Law at UCLA, and Taha Alalwani, President of the (ISNA) Fiqh Council of North America and head of the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences in Leesburg, Virginia. See Khaled Abou El Fadl's insightful book, *The Authoritative and Authoritarian in Islamic Discourses: a Contemporary Case Study* (lst and 2nd editions, by MVI, 1996, and Dar Taiba, 1997), now in a 3rd edition entitled *And God Knows the Soldiers* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2001).

47. For an overview, Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2001).

48. The vigorous defense of gender complementarity is also found among some African American Muslims, and Christian fundamentalists. For African American Muslims, McCloud, *African American Islam*, p. 55 *et passim*. For US Christian fundamentalism, see Manuel Castells, on a "crisis of patriarchalism" brought on by the women's movement, the gay and lesbian movement, and the rising incidences of divorce, separation, family violence, children born out of wedlock, and a general rejection of patriarchal authority: *The Power of Identity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 25–7. See also Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), on Jewish, Christian, and Muslim fundamentalisms.

49. There is a fear of "American individualism," which is interpreted not as a moral ideal, but as egoism, an amoral phenomenon, and a sign of family and societal breakdown. Charles Taylor, "Two Theories of Modernity," *Public Culture* 11, 1 (1999) makes this important point in note 3, p. 159. Margaret Abraham, *Speaking the Unspeakable: Marital Violence Among South Asian Immigrants in the United States* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000), exemplifies a tendency to blame both sending and receiving societies.

50. Raymond Williams, "Asian Indian and Pakistani Religions in the United States," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, p. 558 (July 1998).

51. Raymond Williams, *Religions of Immigrants from India and Pakistan: New Threads in the American Tapestry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 119–20.

52. Williams, *Religions of Immigrants*, pp. 103–4, 109–10. For more details, see Raymond Brady Williams, *Christian Pluralism in the United States: The Indian Immigrant Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

53. Kay Benedict, "Revolt with Record Conversion," *The Telegraph*, April 9, 2001; Sugita Katyal, "Hindu Outcasts Embrace Buddhism," *India Journal*, November 9, 2001, p. A38 (reporting that "thousands" of India's 160 million Dalits,

led by Ram Raj of the All India Confederation of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe Organizations, converted to Buddhism).

54. I link these because women present an emerging challenge to traditional male sources of authority in many cases above as in the traditionally mainstream religions in America. The feminists writing about Islamic law and jurisprudence include indigenous and immigrant Muslim women; the so-called "gender jihad" is one of the most exciting developments in American Islam.

55. Hindu fundamentalist efforts are not only furthered, but also resisted in the diaspora, e.g., by the *Newsletter@stopfundinghate.org* that highlights Hindutva efforts in the US and their links to India.

56. As I was writing this, a member of the UCI police department called me. The department had received a booklet from a police force in Australia, summarizing the basic beliefs and practices of several religions that might be useful to policemen in the course of their duties, and he asked me to review it for use in California.

57. See David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

58. See Richard Cimino, "No God in Common: American, Evangelical Discourse On Islam After 9/11," forthcoming, on conservative Christian attacks on Islam and Muslims.

59. The working-class Punjabi Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu immigrants of the early twentieth century experienced hybrid family religious lives: Karen Isaksen Leonard, *Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).

60. Gita Rajan and Shailja Sharma, this volume; Werbner, "Introduction," pp. 1–5, in eds., Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood, *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism* (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997), where the transnational, but not cosmopolitan, movements are in danger of slipping into antihybrid or essentializing discourses, or some combination of these.

61. Werbner, "Introduction," p. 12.

# Bollywood Abroad: South Asian Diasporic Cosmopolitanism and Indian Cinema

Jigna Desai

In studying South Asian American cosmopolitanism, attention must be paid to the production, consumption, and impact of the influential cultural medium of film.[1] Cinema, particularly Indian and diasporic films, is central to thinking through pleasure and power and how they impinge on the cosmopolitan constructions of South Asian American subjectivity. Within Indian cinema, Bollywood, Bombay's Hindi language cinema, is not only nationally popular, but is also one of the most important cinemas in the world. It is a global cinema that consciously positions itself against the hegemony of Hollywood. It has been and continues to be an international cinema familiar to viewers from the Middle East to Russia and parts of Africa. More recently, with the transnational migration of South Asians in globalization, Bollywood too, has been reterritorialized with an increasing presence in North America and Europe. As such, many hopes have been pinned on the success of Bollywood as a global cinema for transnational, cosmopolitan, and diasporic viewers. From the showcasing of the film *Devdas* at the Cannes festival and the nomination of the film *Lagaan* for an Oscar award to the opening of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical *Bombay Dreams* in London and New York, and the Golden Globe nomination for best comedy film of Gurinder Chadha's *Bend it Like Beckham*, expectations are high for the diasporic and crossover appeal of Bollywood and diasporic cinema, and attendant productions for cosmopolitan and Western audiences.[2]

This essay examines South Asian American cosmopolitanism through surveying the ways in which cinema functions to produce and articulate transnational cosmopolitan subjects. It first introduces the central features of Bollywood cinema abroad attending to the location, distribution, and reception of films. It then considers the impact of Bollywood films on diasporic and dominant cultural production. Finally, the essay concludes by focusing on the particular pattern of diasporic consumption of Bollywood films and its relationship to the production of cosmopolitanism within South Asian America. Throughout the essay, I argue that Indian and diasporic cinema contribute in complex ways to South Asian cosmopolitanism. Cinema addresses issues of national belonging and citizenship and correlates media technologies with sexual, class, and community politics. Employing a transnational feminist and queer critique,[3] this essay considers how South Asian American cosmopolitanism negotiates a complex and ambivalent location in nation-state and global processes that is due to contradictory relations between capital and racial formations.

Most commercial Indian films are often characterized as unappealing to Eurocentric Western viewers (even to those art house audiences interested in foreign films) because of their content and aesthetic forms that derive from diverse Indian sources including Parsi theater and Hindu performances. These three-hour films often feature a multigenre form that includes elements of comedy, (melo)drama, action, romance, and music that do not fit Western aesthetic expectations; in particular, the melodrama and the elaborate and often extradiegetic (outside of the film's diegesis) song and dance numbers, usually 6–8 per film, often pose difficulties for Western viewers. Other Indian films, such as the work of Satyajit Ray, have been visible in the West through the category of art cinema in the United States, but popular Indian cinema has been seen until recently, for the most part, as kitschy and unrefined. One other factor hampering the crossover success of films is the disdain that many American and Western viewers have for subtitled films. Hybrid and diaspora films in English pose less difficulty to viewers who are unaccustomed and unwilling to read subtitles. Hence, films by diasporic directors such as Gurinder Chadha and Mira Nair with their crossover cosmopolitanism appeal more to Western audiences.

The recent emergence of Bollywood cinema in dominant Western cultures has been made partly possible due to the exposure engendered by the centrality of Indian cinemas to South Asian diasporas. This success hinges

on luring not only first generation South Asian migrants into theaters, but also second and third generation South Asians and non-South Asians[4] as well. Hence, Bollywood films have sought to appeal to multiple generations through the production of narratives and images that often reflect a diasporic cosmopolitanism. Currently, the largest markets for films outside of South Asia are in the United Kingdom, the Middle East, the United States, Australia, and Canada, all locations with large diasporic populations. The overall popularity of the films has been fostered generally by South Asian diasporic audiences viewing films at home and in theaters. Films, televised serials, and music, in many languages including Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil, and Telegu, have generally not had great access to mainstream networks and have increasingly circulated in diasporas through formal and informal networks. Additionally, diasporic filmmakers have also employed these same networks of distribution. *American Desi¸* for example, has had little access to mainstream theaters and has instead played at venues in major metropolitan locations with South Asian communities that regularly feature Bollywood films. On video, *American Desi* was primarily rented and sold (both legal and pirated versions) through the many South Asian video stores distributed throughout the United States and Canada. Cultural products, especially diasporic and Bollywood films, and also videos and DVDs, satellite television, and live performances, greatly contribute to the production of transnational ties as well as ethnic, gender, and class identities.[5]

The multiple effects of Bollywood on South Asian diasporic filmmaking attests to the centrality of Bollywood itself to those in diaspora. One primary example is the frequency with which Bollywood is referred to thematically within diasporic films themselves. I discuss just a few examples of the many films that feature Bollywood elements in their plots, narratives, and aesthetics here. Topically, many diasporic cosmopolitan texts make reference to Indian cinema. *Bollywood Calling* by Nagesh Kukunoor, for example, is a dark and comic take on the Indian film industry. Told from the perspective of a white American actor financially forced to participate in the Indian film industry, it lampoons Bollywood cinema's production process, content, and aesthetics. Displaying neither a Western nor Bollywood cosmopolitanism, the film had difficulty finding an audience to appreciate its parody of the Indian film industry. The hugely popular *Bombay Dreams* (the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical) similarly centers on the Bollywood film industry, but also focuses on the myriad of fantasies it produces in the lives of the rich and

the poor. This extravaganza, in contrast, has proven successful in London's West End and has been released on Broadway as well. The diasporic film *American Desi*, though not focused specifically on the Indian film industry, posits that a familiarity and appreciation of Bollywood is essential to a nonassimilated South Asian American ethnic identity. Within the film's logic, the whitewashed protagonist leaves his courtship of his South Asian American girlfriend in shambles when he demonstrates no familiarity with Bollywood-style romance and a disdain for the narrative and aesthetics of such films. His reconciliation with her hinges on his learning to dance to Bollywood and other Indian music at the college South Asian American college fete. These last two productions attest to the ways in which these texts suggest that Bollywood plays a feature role in not only constructing South Asian and diasporic identities, but also significantly participates in structuring the pleasures and desires of these subjects as well. Additionally, the impact of Bollywood extends beyond the content of films, appearing often in the filmic conventions that are reflected in the aesthetic forms and narrative structures in a variety of films. *Masala* and *Bhaji on the Beach* employ musical sequences, while *Mississippi Masala* and *Fire* feature Bollywood music both as background music as well as part of the narrative structure. *Bollywood/Hollywood* literally and figuratively merges the two cinemas with its psychosocial dialogue accompanying romantic comedy, family drama, and musical numbers.[6]

These hopes of crossover and diasporic appeal result partially from the increasing commercial success of Indian films recently in Britain and North America. A significant minority presence in England, British Asians have propelled Bollywood films into dominant public culture and multiplexes in complicated ways, thus luring not only multiple generations of British Asians, but also white British to the theaters. Films like *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*, *Hum Aapke Hai Koun*, *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge, Devdas*, and *Taal* have consistently appeared in the annual list of top twenty most popular foreign-language films in Britain for the last decade. For example, *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* was the top grossing foreign language film in 1998, earning almost 1.5 million pounds (Dyja 1999). In 2002, the British Film Institute launched its focus program on South Asian and diasporic films entitled *ImagineAsia* (British Film Institute 2002). This program was designed to boost the visibility and presence of non-Hollywood films in Britain, as well as recognize the significance of South Asian cinemas. Also in 2002, Gurinder Chadha's

film *Bend it Like Beckham* surpassed all expectations at the box office, becoming one of the top grossing British films of the year domestically and internationally (British Film Institute 2004). More recently, Chadha completed her Bollywood-Hollywood film *Bride and Prejudice* that remakes Jane Austen's novel with a hybrid Bollywood musical format.

Quite differently, in the United States, because of the dissimilar migration patterns of South Asians to North America, the visibility of South Asians and popularity of Indian cinema is more muted, but nonetheless present.[7] The mainstream fascination for Asian films includes an interest, in part, in the aesthetics, forms, and narratives provided by other Asian cinemas (for example, Hong Kong and Taiwanese) that are seen to revitalize Hollywood. In particular, the commercial and critical success of Ang Lee's hybrid *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* has prompted an increasing awareness and interest in alternatives to nonrealist form and content associated with certain Asian cinemas. Similarly, the recent popularity of *Chicago* as well as *Moulin Rouge* suggests that American audiences are receptive to musicals, a key aspect of many Bollywood films. Hence, the popularity of Chadha's films as well as Mira Nair's hybrid *Monsoon Wedding* increased the visibility of South Asians in the American popular imaginary. Additionally, references to Bollywood in films such as *Moulin Rouge*, *The Guru*, and *Ghost World* as well as sampled in music videos by singers such as Missy Elliott, have made Bollywood cinema and music familiar exotica to audiences in North America. But these brief references are a far cry from a public acceptance, appreciation, and hunger for Bollywood films, South Asian American cultures, or South Asians themselves; a quick flash in the pan reference hardly suggests that mainstream Western viewers will readily pick up an Indian film at their nearest blockbuster video store or pay at their local multiplex. However, an increasing audience appears willing to attend art house theaters for these films.

The disjuncture between American Orientalist conceptions of South Asia, especially since 9/11, and the complex realities of South Asian lives is one that is not easily bridged through the appealing idea of the crossover film. Ironically, and perhaps tellingly, the interest in and consumption of specifically *Indian* and South Asian diasporic cinema by American viewers comes most crucially during a resurgence of and proliferation in xenophobia and racism against South Asian, Arab, and Muslim Americans, a time when it seems necessary to distinguish between "good" (model minority) and "bad" (monstrous terrorist) South Asians. This correspondence, I believe, is no

coincidence but a manifestation of the complex racial formation, cultural and state citizenship, and class location of South Asian Americans who are necessary to the transnational economy of the United States, but also simultaneously always rendered expendable or dangerous within dominant national culture. It is this binary that engenders the tensions that undergird South Asian cosmopolitanism. Distinguishing between those "good" and "bad" South Asians relies on ambivalently including and incorporating those docile citizens who can be constructed as model minorities, while rejecting racialized others as terrorist monsters.[8] This dichotomization occurs partly in relation to differentiating national origins and cultures. The American fascination with South Asianness is a fascination with Indianness specifically, and in particular, with an exotic Hindu middle class Indianness. In contrast, other South Asians, for example, Sikhs, Muslims, Pakistanis, or Sri Lankans, are demonized or made invisible.

In turn, South Asian cosmopolitanism reflects a negotiation with these racial formations, employing differences such as class, religion, generation, and nationality also to distinguish between docile and monstrous citizen-subjects. Most recent diasporic films further a certain form of cosmopolitanism that does not challenge the formation of South Asians as terrorist Others, but forwards a docile and nonthreatening bourgeois subject who complies with a multicultural nationalism and global capitalism, one that is modeled on the good Indian Hindu immigrant subject that can be a citizen-self, rather than Other, of both the West and India. These films provide a purported glimpse of the lives of these intimate strangers that does not dismantle immediately the ease with which a benevolent curiosity about good Indians is coupled with an association of Muslims and others with racial terror.

It is not clear, however, that Eurocentric viewers know quite what to expect from these passing allusions to Bollywood in dominant media; armed with their long-standing Orientalism and their contemporary benevolent compassion, many may be quite surprised by their experiences at the theaters. With many Indian films thematically battling over the binary of tradition and modernity, few Western viewers will be able to reconcile the MTV-inspired choreography, mini-skirted and designer-clad characters, and palatial homes with their colonial and Orientalist images of dust and poverty or chaos and terror.[9] Expecting images of Indiana Jones, the British Raj, or the Kama Sutra, these viewers may not welcome more recent films such as the

four-hour nationalist *LoC* (*Line of Control*) that focuses on the Indian-Pakistan war over Kashmir, or the romantic comedy set in New York *Kal Ho Naa Ho*, with homophobic comic relief. Those that do may still see them as novelties, culturally different amusements rendered up for their benevolent Eurocentrism. What may appeal and has appealed to audiences has been the historical epic such as *Lagaan* that depicts the battle against colonialism that allows all to cheer for thrashing the British without any sense of immediacy, guilt, or contemporaneity—in other words, a safe critique of colonialism that does not question current imperialism, global capital, or racial formations. Similarly, films that emphasize contemporary ethnic cultural practices as traditional, that is, as signs of quaint cultural differences, have been popular. For example, like *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* delivers an ethnic family and festivities for consumption. Beside historical epics, the crossover success of films like *Monsoon Wedding* and *Bend it Like Beckham* suggest that Western viewers may well be interested in films that confirm their own nostalgia for close-knit and extended families and that support an anthropological gaze of cultural "traditions" linked to their own ideas of cosmopolitanism. Here, cultural differences are offered up within a Eurocentric framework that does not dismantle the ways in which imperialism, global capitalism, and Eurocentrism operate.

In this regard, diasporic films are more likely to be appealing to crossover audiences than Bollywood films. Because South Asian diasporic filmmaking often employs the aesthetics, form, and sensibilities of Indian and Western cinemas, they may be better positioned than Indian filmmakers to create hybrid films for consumption. For example, Mira Nair and Deepa Mehta, whose films are constructed simultaneously for multiple audiences, pursue the possibility of maximum exposure within India for their films, attempting to simultaneously locate them within North American national cinemas as well as in relation Indian cinemas. Nair, for example, forwarded *Monsoon Wedding* as India's nominee for Best Foreign Film for the US Academy Awards; the film, however, lost the nomination to *Lagaan*. Like *Fire*, *Monsoon Wedding*'s self-identified bid as an Indian film suggests the possibilities of films with complex locations in transnational public spheres and specifically in the formation of new cosmopolitan cinemas. In the examples above, at times, Bollywood and Indian cinemas can be seen as providing an oppositional aesthetic to that of Hollywood to diasporic filmmakers; consequently, aesthetic strategies as well as production modes are frequently

employed in order to render the complex historical and social conditions that produce migratory cultures. Therefore, references to Bollywood and Indian cinematic forms and aesthetics signify not only alternatives to dominant Western cinematic practices, but also a self-reflective claim to the cinematic apparatus itself in the name of the non-Western. However, this is not to suggest that diasporic films are embraced and easily folded into Indian cinemas and national public cultures; diasporic films may share a contested relationship with Bollywood as well as with Hollywood, as is the case with *Fire*.

The most recent attempts at this crossover are the films of Gurinder Chadha. *Bend it Like Beckham* has done well in Britain *and* the United States. More recently, her *Bride and Prejudice* produces its own understanding of cosmopolitanism as hybridity by purporting to marry Hollywood and Bollywood, claiming Jane Austen as a "Punjabi girl in a previous life" (Bushby 2003). In the selection of *Pride and Prejudice* as its subject, Chadha simultaneously reifies the notion of British national cinema as tied to British literature (frequently to canonical figures such as Shakespeare and Austen) and rewrites the British canon via Bollywood. In doing so, she is able to rely on residual and emergent notions of a national British cinema (Austen and Bollywood) within a British context, as well as market this hybridity for a South Asian cosmopolitanism within the American context. The film's preview emphasizes that the shooting of the film occurred on three continents and brings together various casts in its use of Bollywood stars such as Aishwarya Rai and Anupam Kher, diasporic actors such as Naveen Andrews, and Hollywood actors such as Martin Henderson to reflect a "global point of view." Though British films, Chadha's two latest films savvily include the United States in ways that offer US audiences a point of identification with the films: *Bend it Like Beckham* ends with the realization of the young women's dreams to play soccer in America, and in *Bride and Prejudice* Darcy becomes a wealthy American. Articulating more clearly that it is the visibility of South Asian cosmopolitanism in America that matters, Chadha states, "My intention with this film is to introduce Bollywood cinema with a British twist to all the towns and cities and the heart of people across America" ("Bride and Prejudice" 2003). It is this kind of prudence and calculation that has encouraged Miramax Films to prepurchase the North American and Latin American distribution rights to the film and to release it as a major, rather than as an art house, film.

However, while Chadha is well poised to make a popular and cosmopolitan Bollywood film, it is not clear that it will be perceived as such to all audiences or will be without contestation. During the recent shooting of the film in Amritsar, two Hindu nationalist groups, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal, deemed the film offensive and vulgar, calling for the ceasing of the shoot and the ban of the film by the censor board (Lalwani 2004). This scenario is a familiar and repeated one in which diasporic cosmopolitan filmmakers like Chadha, Nair, and Mehta have been accused by Hindu nationalists of violating the standards and values of "Indian" culture. Interestingly, Chadha's response to such charges is her claim that she wishes to bring Bollywood and its stars (including Aishwarya Rai) to mainstream audiences; here, this must be read as Western audiences. It seems that diasporic films like *Fire* and *Bride and Prejudice* rely on particular notions of South Asian cosmopolitanism that align themselves with a Western cosmopolitan consumption and sensibility and conflicts with dominant South Asian nationalisms. As I argue elsewhere, diasporic cosmopolitan cultural formations and identifications are often contested and challenged by those South Asians who have their own investments in claims to the nation, modernity, and representing cultural difference.[10] Hence, diasporic and Bollywood films compete to forward South Asian cosmopolitanisms, characterized by their representations of cultural difference that do not dismantle Eurocentrism, to Western audiences.

The Indian film industry produces a variety of films appealing to multiple and different audiences. Frequently, different films are popular within India with different audiences, and often, different films are popular in India than in the diasporas. For example, *Gadar,* an anti-Pakistani and anti-Muslim film, was immensely popular in India breaking many box-office records, while its patriotic narrative seemed of less interest to many diasporic and cosmopolitan viewers (not necessarily because they are not anti-Muslim). This lack of popularity may be in part due to the significance of generation to the diasporic consumption of Bollywood films as many second generation viewers found its historical theme of Partition not only divisive in terms of imagining South Asian *American* communities, but also of little interest in their cosmopolitan understandings of Indian culture and values that are presented most often in the genre of romance and family films and less relevant to their contemporary understandings of terrorism and Muslims.

In order to accommodate regional and geographic differences, the Hindi film industry distributes films based on a territory model that divides India into six major territories with the overseas market (primarily the United States and the United Kingdom) counting as a seventh territory. Generally, by an advantageous currency rate more than by number of viewers, the significance of this seventh territory fluctuates with certain types of films (that is, romances and family dramas) doing well abroad. Hence, the Indian film industry within global capitalism and the neoliberal nation-state is characterized by flexibility in its ability to target different viewers and audiences by making and circulating a wide range of films. However, this is not to suggest that region, location, or territory are the only significant factors in explaining differentiated consumption and reception—gender, class, and religion, for example, are also salient. As I argue below, class and cosmopolitanism appreciably influence film production and reception as well.

By the mid 1990s, the Indian film industry was beginning to seriously attend to the presence of diasporas not only in the accounting ledgers, but also in the reformulated national imaginary. Until then, Bollywood films frequently employed the West (for example, Switzerland) as beautiful and exotic foreign backdrops documenting and displaying the production costs of the films as well as promoting a reverse exotic tourism of the metropolises; but seldom were the films concerned with the subjectivities, experiences, or oppressions of those who lived elsewhere. Occasionally, South Asians abroad were depicted as sophisticated and cosmopolitan modern citizens of the world—ones who could appreciatively and comfortably travel through Europe and America, but return safely home to live as modern globalized Indian citizens. At other times, when diasporic characters appeared, it was often as foils to the "heroic" non-Westernized protagonists. They often represented the dangers of Westernization that occur through migration from the homeland. These earlier films featured characters who lost their connections to India, "traditions," and family simply by their presence in the decadent West. Thus, South Asians in diaspora were often depicted as immoral, corrupted, and unchaste, that is as Westernized in films such as *Purab aur Paschim*.

In the last decade, the Indian nation-state has changed its economic protectionist policies in response to globalization processes, leading to increased privatization and the presence of multinational corporations. During the 1990s, acting in the interests of global capital and the restructuring

of the neoliberal nation-state, the Indian state furthered deregulation and privatization policies. With increasing national debt, India has increasingly turned to its diasporas as reterritorialized national "citizens" (its Non Resident Indians or NRIs) with capital to send remittances and investments. These capital-carrying Non-Resident Indians, usually located in Europe, North America, and Australia, are courted members of the diaspora, unlike those other transnational past or present migrants (for example Middle Eastern guest workers or Caribbean ancestors of indentured servants), who carry little economic or political clout. Further policies encouraging foreign investment through incentive programs, many of which were targeted to NRIs, also emerged. NRIs, thus, were increasingly positioned as significant to the geopolitical and economic stability of India and were wooed to invest in the private and public sphere. In exchange, new categories of citizenship and affiliation were proposed only for those deemed desirable reterritorialized Indian migrants (those with capital) to mark the national belonging represented by NRI participation in the political and economic realms.[11]

Cultural narratives and identities attesting to such connections were fostered by state policies and popular discourses including those present in Bollywood cinema.[12] In its recent discourses about dual citizenship, the state imagines and constructs diasporas, constituting India as the spiritual home for the fragmented and reterritorialized splinter of the desired imagined nation living abroad. These discourses portray the nation-state as able to negotiate these distant but powerful transnational and cosmopolitan communities located primarily in the West by attempting to (re)incorporate them into the fold of its cultural imaginary, often employing the trope of the global family in its discourses. Thus diasporas are constituted by the nation, not so much as outsiders to Indian culture, but inversely, as insiders removed and reterritorialized as NRIs. NRIs appear here central to the construction of national identity due to the import of transnational economic and cultural capital in favor of the state. Moreover, this potential capital investment engenders popular discourses that herald the NRI often through the conception, production, and distribution of Indian films.

Although cosmopolitanism may imply a lack of national affiliation, within Bollywood cinema, frequently the reterritorialized national subject is sutured to the homeland nation-state through the gendered and sexualized cultural logics of cosmopolitan transnationality mobilized in the trope of the family. Specifically, national desires become eroticized and framed within the

heteronormative romance that must conform to the needs of the family. Subhash Ghai and Aditya Chopra, in particular, have been influential in producing films that reflect these kinds of narratives. Ghai's diasporic "trilogy" *Pardes, Taal*, and *Yaadein* as well as Chopra's *Mohabbetein, Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge,* and *Mujhse Dosti Karoge* have focused on cosmopolitan Indians abroad. Ghai's proclamation that his trilogy was made for Indians abroad did not ensure its popularity as films such as *Taal* did well, while *Yaadein* (*Cherished Memories)* failed to spark much interest after its opening week. Thematically and ideologically, the films are similar in their evocation of remaining Indian while abroad. As I mentioned earlier, certain actors, genres, narratives, and aesthetics are more popular in the overseas market. In particular, in suggesting that the trope of marriage and family is central to diasporic and national identities, I am consequently forwarding that the genre of the romantic musical is also, therefore, the most popular and influential.[13] As I discuss below, both romance and family are significant to configurations of cosmopolitanism and "Indianness."[14]

   *Pardes* illustrates the proper suture of homeland and cosmopolitan migrant through its dichotomous depiction of the good NRI versus bad NRI hero. The rich American playboy Rajiv is undeservedly betrothed to Ganga (named after the Hindu sacred river Ganges in India) the sweet innocent homeland heroine who sings "I Love My India" upon arrival to the United States to convert him from his corrupt ways. His drinking and carousing prove him unworthy of the homeland heroine who is saved from his clutches by his poorer, but non-Westernized, fatherless musician friend Arjun (played by Bollywood megastar Shahrukh Khan). The film suggests in quite clear terms that it is possible to remain Indian in America by maintaining Indian values in the face of Westernization (that is, drinking alcohol, not respecting family and marriage, and being sexually active). It is Arjun's cosmopolitanism (not via political patriotism, but rather cultural nationalism) as opposed to Rajiv's wealthy Westernization that is forwarded by the film. Interestingly, in Ghai's trilogy, it is the super-wealthy NRIs, rather than the modest middle class that most often lose their path in maintaining their "Indianness," as here Westernization is equated with a selfish capitalism, one that seemingly rejects emotional and financial investment in the homeland. For example in *Pardes*, the contrast between Rajiv and Arjun is emphasized through the corruption of wealthy Rajiv by the consumption of alcohol, gambling, and womanizing, all of which accompany a disregard for Ganga and India. In both *Yaadein* and

*Taal*, this theme of elite versus bourgeois cosmopolitanism is repeated as the elite place the consolidation of capital and bloodlines ahead of the bourgeois values of the individual, family, and community. *Taal*, in fact, demonstrates that the wholesome Indian woman of modest means can become wealthy, cosmopolitan, and well traveled while still remaining Indian; while, the proper male NRI may prove himself by being well versed in Sanskrit and his appreciation of rural Indian beauties. Moreover, as I discuss later, in all of these films, the declaration and performance of "Indianness" does not correspond to the older first generation in the films; most frequently, it is the heroes and heroines themselves as young migrants that espouse and are associated with "Indianness." These films suggest that a further examination of the complex nexus of generation, gender, class, and migration within South Asian cosmopolitanism is required.

Like Ghai's trilogy, other recent films such as *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge, Kal Ho Naa Ho*, and *Khabi Khushi Khabie Gham* all predominantly feature NRI characters that remain "Indian at heart" and often Western in wealth to render their precarious locations in relation to the nation-state and global capitalism. However, in contrast to Ghai's films, several of these films specifically highlight the Western designer clothing, palatial dwellings, and expensive sports cars of the cosmopolitan characters and their high consumerism. Thus, some suggest that it is possible to be in the West, be wealthy, and be Indian—a narrative that clearly complicates the previously described narratives about class and cosmopolitanism; cultural difference is nonthreatening and benign; moreover, it does not dismantle or disrupt Eurocentric, imperialist, and capitalist processes. In these films, Indianness is now determined less by geopolitical location *or* wealth than by the performance ("maintenance") of religio-cultural and "traditional Indian values" that encapsulate the "real India." It is no surprise that these films have proven more popular than those that implicate wealth as already corrupt and Western.

In contrast to Ghai's trilogy, one of the most popular Bollywood films of the nineties, *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* (*The Lover Takes a Bride*), opens with Indian and diasporic cinema actor Amrish Puri feeding pigeons in London, gazing into the distance, nostalgic for the mustard fields and untainted culture of Punjab. Focused on the lives of NRIs, the film was significant in its depiction of the shifting relationship between the diaspora and the homeland in the light of globalization processes including the political and economic neo-liberalization in India. Constructing the ideal NRI

subjects *DDLJ* counterposes the diasporic heroine (Simran played by popular superstar actress Kajol) and the cosmopolitan hero (Raj played by Shahrukh Khan) with the reterritorialized national subject of the pained patriarch who reminisces simultaneously about the fertile land and maidens of home. The film opens with Baldev comparing the search for sustenance by the homeless pigeons with his own experiences of migration; his monologue articulates his alienation in and from a land to which he is chained for his daily bread. Here "home" is produced not only as a territory, community, nation-state, and place (rural and pastoral Punjab as metonym of India), but also as a structure of feeling associated with a particular time for the older noncosmopolitan generation. Meanwhile, the balm for this suffering is the desire and dream to return to India, especially his Punjabi village. The contrast between London and the Punjabi village visually encapsulates an entire host of implicit comparisons within the film for this noncosmopolitan male character. More importantly, while the visual images foreground the object of nostalgia, Punjab, the film's dialogue prioritizes the subject of nostalgia— Baldev, who experiences nostalgia as a response to displacement and disenfranchisement.

In *DDLJ*, it is the noncosmopolitan sojourning patriarch who longs for the homeland and finds the West threatening in terms of contamination and corruption; in contrast, for most of the other characters, diaspora is home. Simran, as well as her sister and mother, dance happily to the radio until the father arrives home; similarly, Raj, the son of a wealthy father, appears quite comfortable in Britain, playing rugby, bowling, and riding his motorcycle. Hence, the film configures the displaced patriarch as emasculated and disempowered by race and class in the postcolonial metropolis. His loss of home is a consequence not only of displacement, but also of the resultant destabilization of the patriarchal and heteronormative formulation of family. In particular the daughters, symbolic of tradition within the national imaginary, become the objects of heteropatriarchal surveillance and law manifested in the institution of marriage and conducted as an exchange with homeland patriarchy. Not surprisingly, Simran and her sister do not express or experience this kind of nostalgia. Nevertheless, it is Baldev's desire that Simran marry his friend's son Kuljeet in India. Kuljeet, the willing groom turns out to be scheming and opportunistic, with a passion that is stronger for settling abroad than it is for Simran.

The true modern Indian proves to be the cosmopolitan and wealthy British Asian Raj, who is both honorable and loyal. Raj is shown to be more than

capable of maintaining his "Indian values and culture," although wealthy and residing abroad; and, he refuses to elope with Simran, demanding instead that they stay and win the approval and blessings of the father. In contrast to both Kuljeet and Baldev, it is Raj (and his father) who demonstrates South Asian cosmopolitanism as being compatible with Indian cultural nationalism. Their extreme wealth, which previously might have signaled Westernization and corruption, here is shown to be compatible with hybrid diasporic Indianness; in fact, his modern wealthy NRI status is what defines him as the perfect Indian—the NRI that is desired by the neoliberal and deterritorialized nation-state. In the end, Baldev reluctantly acquiesces to the union and consequently remains in Punjab with his wife and younger daughter, having returned to the desired homeland, while Simran, Raj, and his father head "home" to England. Although aggressively equating Indianness with the support and replication of patriarchy, the film simultaneously decouples this Indianness from the specific territory of the Indian nation-state and from its previous association with only the middle class; the wealthy but Indian-identified Raj is the new king of the Indian nation-state wrestling with global capitalism and migration. The popularity of this film in particular can be at least in part contributed to its willingness to combine these two factors in producing a cosmopolitanism that nevertheless mitigates transnationality through gender and generation.

Like *DDLJ*, films by Karan Johar—*Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, Kal Ho Naa Ho*, and *Kabhi Kushi Kabhie Gham* (*K3G*)—are also seen to be made primarily with the overseas market in mind, producing narratives on cosmopolitanism focused on issues of family, marriage, and cultural values. For example in *K3G*, like *Mohabbetein*, Amitabh Bachchan (the most popular Indian performer ever) as the wealthy father is shown to be "traditional," demonstrating elitist noncosmopolitan values: he disapproves of his son's selection of a fiancée as she is not of the elite class. The son, played by Shahrukh Khan, rights wrongs and voices the modern cosmopolitan challenge to these anachronistic notions of tradition, but not before being forced to leave his familial home for England. Similarly, in Nikhil Advani's *Kal Ho Naa Ho*, it is the younger generation, played again by Shahrukh Khan, who preaches and teaches the older generation, as well as the young lovers, how to be happy and harmonious. Additionally, here too, affluence is acceptable and necessary —the younger actor Saif Ali Khan plays a prosperous cosmopolitan Gujurati, Rohit, from a somewhat provincial family—the desired modern NRI man within the nation-state's imaginary. In both of these films,

generation correlates strongly with concepts of modernity, cosmopolitanism, and Indian culture, ensuring their popularity with second generation viewers and ensuring a vision of South Asian Americans as model minority citizens, ones who embrace American empire and capital along with residency, but nevertheless hold some affiliation with the homeland nation-state.

However, in the latter film, one can also read against the grain and see the ways in which material wealth accumulated through insertion into global capitalism and imperialist racialization processes also produces anxiety, displacement, and unhappiness. In the film, the heroine Naina (played by Preity Zinta) and her family suffer economically upon the death of her father; it is only with the help of Aman (Shahrukh Khan) that the family's failing diner is ethnicized, indigenized, and converted to a successful hip Indian restaurant. However, the film can be seen to do more than just celebrate wealth—it seems to indicate the ambivalent position of South Asian Americans within racist economic structures of transnational capital. Although the now-Indian restaurant indicates the possibility of remaining Indian and being profitable, it also attenuates that success, in this case, is based on the ambivalent manufacturing and commodification of ethnic cultural difference in the guise of cosmopolitanism, one in which Indianness may be about performativity and ambivalent relations to capital and nation-states. Furthermore, the film toys with the anxiety associated with the failure of the bourgeois family by employing the "misrecognition" of the relationship between Rohit and Aman as homosexual as a form of comic relief. Here the anxiety is that heteronormativity itself is threatened and displaced. *Kal Ho Naa Ho*, like, the other films, strives to soothe this alienation and dis-Orientation through narratives of heteronormative romance and family. The film, set in a nonthreatening post 9/11 New York, evokes the event and its consequences only by its setting with no reference to it in the narrative or images. But, this Bollywood film with its Muslim actors cannot go as far to engage with broader issues of US foreign policy, imperialism, racial formations, and terrorizing of Muslims, instead, the specter of this challenge to benevolent cultural difference remains invisible and unspoken in the film. The film soothes these larger anxieties by sublimating them onto the family. It should, therefore, be of no surprise that the comforting *Kal Ho Naa Ho* has achieved strong economic and popular success in both the United States and the United Kingdom, collecting nearly $5million dollars through box office receipts and video/DVD sales (Nag 2004).

To Indian viewers, Bollywood films are presumed to provide comfort or familiarity as emblems of national homeland culture to homogenous NRI audiences. These films are seen to emphasize an idealized India, and in particular an idealized "traditional" Indian family and culture, but again one that can be reterritorialized. As one critical reviewer writes:

> In *K 3 G* India doesn't exist. What exists is a strange mutant, a beautiful, savagely dumb, ritual-driven wasteland where rich people sing adrenaline-thumping bhajans and, in times of stress, the national anthem. It is also a chilling film. Chilling because here is India, Hinduism, Jana Gana Mana made into glossy laughable commodities to be purchased for a high price. The film is designed to make NRIs thankful that the Old Country is as beautiful, as backward and as resoundingly traditional as he wants it to be . . . . In the NRI cultural imagination, India must remain a vast stretch of villages, fakirs, sadhus and cool spirituality. The recognizably modern, the sensible, the commonsensical or indeed the ordinary business of life merits no attention because such features are simply not what the NRI would like to remember . . . . At the risk of sounding sensationalist, Indian culture itself stands in danger of being colonized by NRIs, precisely because of their power and success . . . . The NRI doesn't vote in India, he [sic] doesn't pay taxes in India, he will never do military service here, yet he wants to create a nostalgic dream world through sponsorship of a certain kind of culture. When you don't actually live in the country to which you profess to belong, then you naturally begin to create an imagined homeland which is designed only to suit your own needs rather than be true to the country which you left behind. (Ghose 2001)[15]

In her critique of the film, Ghose raises questions about the material impact of overseas consumption of Indian films. She lambasts, in particular, the nostalgia that she identifies as the underpinning mechanism of NRI media consumption and the lack of political consequences and material responsibilities of the *male* NRIs. This nostalgia, she argues, has led diasporic viewers to hijack Bollywood from its rightful place as a national cinema. Additionally, Ghose suggests that not only does the NRI imagine India, but that the masculine gendered NRI with cultural and economic capital who does so produces material repercussions that are also damaging to the *actual* citizens of the nation-state. Ghose's critique implies that NRIs have sequestered the film industry from its properly national moorings in service of its own fantasies. These fantasies consist of Hindu-normative paeans to the family as

nation and are rampant in many films, not just *K3G*. Moreover, these imaginings, suggests Ghose, are removed from any material, political, or ethical responsibility. The NRI viewer here watches Bollywood films in order to produce an idealized India that does not satisfy the needs of the country "left behind" as is appropriate to a national cinema.

There does seem to be an increasing consideration of the seventh territory of the Indian film industry—the overseas market in the United Kingdom and the United States. However, not all the narratives forward paeans to Orientalist fantasies as Ghose suggests. Ghose attributes all of the agency and power within these dynamic processes to diasporic subjects. One may contest this construction in many ways, including with consideration that the nation-state itself may be seen to be involved in interpellating diasporic subjects as NRIs. In fact, one may see the films as forwarding the notion of India as home as a form of cultural capital in which diasporic affiliation is strengthened in relation to economic, political, and cultural interests of the homeland nation-state by seeking increased transnational activities in processes such as remittance, investment, outsourcing, support of Hindutva, and marriage arrangements.

Although suggesting that Hindi films are seen as providing narratives of desire and fantasy, Ghose also implies that they are satisfying narratives of a homogenous group of NRIs, not a diverse range of cosmopolitan diasporic viewers. These viewers, however, are assumed to be passive and nostalgic consumers of Bollywood cinema and televised serials who homogeneously desire one vision of India, one that is Orientalist, anachronistic, and fossilized. Most viewers are seen to consume the films as prefabricated transnational commodities providing comforting and familiar emblems of normative social values neatly wrapped in packages of glossy celluloid. The film is designed to make NRIs tearful, but it is also designed to encourage the consumption and conflation of family and capitalism in India for the cosmopolitan bourgeoisie. What needs to be registered here is that the diaspora and the India are both heterogeneous so that a film is made as much an audience specified by generation, religion, and class as by geographic location. Furthermore, it is significant to note that nostalgia and consumption are not the sole property of diasporic viewers. The popularity of films like *Hum Aapke Hain Koun* (HAHK) attests to the power of nostalgia and desire of viewers within India as well.[16] The film manufactures nostalgia for the joint and extended family for Indian and diasporic viewers alike. In other words,

it is not only for the United States and the diasporas that nostalgic Hindu families are constructed on the screen in order to negotiate tradition and modernity within the national imaginary. The popularity of this film (one of the all-time top grossing box office hits in India) attests to the nostalgia that underlies many of these films that are not purportedly targeted particularly to diasporic audiences. Furthermore, it seems that the cosmopolitanism of many of these films appeals to both Indian and diasporic viewers in complex ways.

Finally, we may want to read the films in ways that suggest that heterosexual narrative closure regarding romance and family is always inadequate; additionally we may need to consider that it is anxiety and ambivalence that draws viewers to the films. *Kal Ho Naa Ho* provides one indication that South Asian/American cosmopolitanism is deeply rooted in ambivalence, an ambivalence that reflects an imbricated and unsatisfying relation to imperialism, modernity, globalization, racialization, citizenship, and migration. Although South Asians in South Asia and abroad are located differently, they both employ certain notions of cosmopolitanism to ease their uneasy locations within contemporary geopolitics. Those who have migrated to the economic North have contradictory and negotiated relations with the nation-state, capitalism, and imperialism that appear to be soothed with narratives of cultural difference couched in terms of gender, sexuality, and family. South Asians find themselves in an embattled position in which postcolonial migration and residence in the United States after 9/11 creates contradictory and complex positions in these shifting relations of power, but neither are simple narratives of belonging to the homeland sufficient to negate or neutralize these anxieties and displacements. If this is the case, we may want to pay closer attention to the contradictions that appear in cinematic narratives and representations of affect, to ascertain more fully how cosmopolitanism is employed to imagine and negotiate this difficult position in terms of global capitalism, as well as competing and estranging nationalisms, in the heart of the beast.

## Notes

essay. I dedicate this essay to my sister Seema Desai and my son, Rohan Desai-Hunt. May you both transform the present with a vision of a different future.

1. In relation to film, research by Marie Gillespie (1995) and more recently by Rajinder Dudrah (2003) examines the consumption and viewing practices of British South Asians. Similarly, scholarship by Purnima Mankekar (1999) has probed the general viewing practices of Indian audiences of Indian television serials. Mankekar's scholarship, like that of research on Indian cinemas, focuses on the function of media in a national context, seeking to understand the links between nationalism, cultural reception, and subjectivity. This type of analysis has barely begun to be considered in the case of South Asian Americans and their consumption of Indian cinemas.

2. Many discussions of "audience" are problematic as they rely on assumptions of clear boundaries and shared viewing experience based on essentialist notions of subjects as viewers. Here, my discussion of audience allows for viewers with different pleasures, interests, and interpretations in its definition.

3. I elaborate the specificities of a transnational feminist and queer critique in *Beyond Bollywood: The Cultural Politics of South Asian Diasporic Film* (Desai 2004). To briefly summarize, a transnational feminist and queer critique integrates a critique of globalization (global capitalism and empire), nationalisms, and the various normativities (including heteropatriarchy and Hindu-normativity) that support and further them.

4. Even during the early years of Indian independence that saw the formation of Indian cinema as primarily a national cinema, Indian cinema was a popular non-Western cinema and circulated to places such as Russia, China, and East Africa. With the exception of Satyajit Ray's work, Indian's popular cinema has remained invisible to Western eyes. The last two to three decades have witnessed an increased global consumption of Indian films in and out of the diaspora. Popular films, exchanged as part of world communications, foster economic, cultural, and social ties between the Indian homeland and its diasporas.

5. See Rajinder Dudrah's essay "Zee TV—Europe and the Construction of a Pan-European South Asian Identity" (2002) for a similar argument.

6. Also, there is crossover in terms of performers: Shashi Kapoor, Zohra Seghal, Om Puri, and Shabana Azmi are all actors who have appeared in Indian and diasporic productions.

7. South Asian migration and settlement patterns to Britain differ greatly from the American due to the specific shared history of colonialism. South Asians of many different classes, religions, and nationalities, not only from the Indian

subcontinent, but also from Africa and the Caribbean, as members of the Commonwealth, have migrated to and greatly impacted the metropolises. While South Asians were present in the United States throughout the twentieth century, if not earlier, it is the migration after 1965 that has slowly made South Asians visible in dominant national cultures. Smaller in number than their British counterparts, South Asian Americans remain on the margin of the national imaginary. The first wave of South Asian migration after 1965 to the US also consisted of many professional and middle class immigrants. Hence, South Asian Americans have high median incomes compared to their British counterparts.

8. See Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai's (2002) "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots" for an elaboration of the conflation of monster and terrorist.

9. One would expect that anti-Pakistani and anti-Muslim Indian films such as *Gadar* would actually resonate with American audiences, but this has not yet proved to be the case, partly, one can speculate, due to the provincial unfamiliarity of most Americans with the historical and political tensions between India and Pakistan.

10. See *Beyond Bollywood* (2004) for further discussion of these tensions and relations of power.

11. More recently, India has been careful to suggest that it is interested in making accessible citizenship for all those who would be interested in and eligible for dual citizenship based on the policies of the host countries.

12. This project began as a counterpoint to my previous work in which I analyze constructions of diaspora and homeland in South Asian diasporic cinema. I became interested in the increasing popularity and impact of Indian cinemas on diasporic communities and identities. Moreover, during this time, I began to note a shift so that the Indian diaspora was also being represented in Indian cinema and became interested in the construction of diaspora by the homeland.

13. One significant aspect of the films is their production and reformulation of religious practices and identities. It is important to note that for many viewers, the films function pedagogically in establishing, often, hegemonic interpretations of South Asian religions. That South Asian American cosmopolitanism does not promote itself as secular is remarkable in, and of itself. An understanding of the ways in which these films participate in forwarding religion as part of this cosmopolitanism is salient and requires further elaboration elsewhere.

14. While I do not specifically discuss the importance of music to this genre in this essay, I argue that a study of the consumption of Indian cinema cannot be decoupled from the consumption of music. My own research with second

generation South Asian American youth suggests that music and dance play salient roles in the formation of South Asian American social identities and communities.

15. "E-mail Nationalism: Does India exist only in the emigre's imagination?" (Ghose 2001)

16. See Patricial Uberoi's (2001) study of *HAHK*.

## References

Bride and Prejudice. 2003. http://www.thezreview.co.uk/comingsoon/b/brideand prejudice.htm. Accessed April 6, 2004.

British Film Institute. 2002. Imagineasia. http://imagineasia.bfi.org.uk. Accessed March 5, 2003.

British Film Institute. 2004 http://www.bfi.org.uk/facts/stats/2002/uk20_ukboxoffice.html. Accessed September 29, 2004.

Bushby, Helen. 2003. Bollywood Austen Film Goes Global. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/3057959.stm. July 11, 2003. Accessed January 3, 2004.

Desai, Jigna. 2004. *Beyond Bollywood: The Cultural Politics of South Asian Diasporic Film*. New York: Routledge.

Dudrah, Rajinder. 2002. Zee TV-Europe and the Construction of a Pan-European South Asian Identity. *Contemporary South Asia* 11, 2: 163–81.

Dudrah, Rajinder. 2003. Queer as Desis: Secret Pleasures of Gender and Sexuality in Bollywood Films in Diasporic Urban Ethnoscapes. *Journal of South Asian Popular Culture*: US Launch Conference, August 22–3, 2003, Fairfield University, CT.

Dyja, Eddie, ed. 1999. *BFI Film and Television Handbook*. London: British Film Institute.

Ghose, Sagarika. 2001. E-mail Nationalism. *Indian Express*. December 28, 2001. http://www.indianexpress.com/ie20011228/ed4.html. Accessed November 12, 2002.

Gillespie, Marie. 1995. Sacred Serials, Devotional Viewing, and Domestic Worship: A Case-Study in the Interpretation of Two TV Versions of the *Mahabharata* in a Hindu Family in West London. In Robert C. Allen, ed.,*To Be Continued . . . Soap Operas Around the World*, 354–80. New York: Routledge.

Lalwani, Vickey. 2004. *Bride and Prejudice* Creates Buzz. *Bollyvista* http://www.bollyvista.com/article/a/32/1906. Accessed April 6, 2004.

Mankekar, Purnima. 1999. *Screening Culture, Viewing Politics: An Ethnography of Television,Womanhood, and Nation in Postcolonial India*. Durham: Duke UP.

Nag, Ashoke. 2004. NRIs Simply Love *Kal Ho Naa Ho*. *Times of India* March 10, 2004. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/549914.cms. Accessed March 15, 2004.

Puar, Jasbir and Amit Rai. 2002. Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots. *Social Text* 20, 3 (Fall): 117–48.

Uberoi, Patricia. 2001. Imagining the Family: An Ethnography of Viewing *Hum Aapke Hain Koun*. In Rachel Dwyer and Christopher Pinney, eds., *Pleasure and Nation: The History, Politics, and Consumption of Popular Culture in India*, 309–29. New York: Oxford University Press.

# The Psychological Cost of New Cosmopolitanism: Eating Disorders in the Context of Globalization

DANA S. IYER AND NICK HASLAM

In this essay we explore the influence of the globalization of the thin body ideal in the development of body image dissatisfaction, and eating disorders in South Asian American women. We consider representations of South Asians in the American and Indian media, and experiences of racial teasing that heighten awareness of ethnic features. We assert that the internalization of media images in the United States and in South Asia, coupled with the painful self-awareness about one's physical differences from the beauty ideal, may give rise to the desire to achieve the perfect body sought through excessive dieting and compulsive exercising. We conclude by arguing that the global acceptance of the thin ideal by South Asians in their countries of origin and elsewhere is likely to give rise to a new kind of cosmopolitanism, one that looks at people as objects of desire, irrespective of race.

> Even when I was really young, like six . . . kids used to call me names . . . and harass me in the playground because I was different, because I had brown skin. . . . It was easier for me to . . . put those people into . . . a separate category . . . [like] they're just mean . . . not the norm. . . . But when I got to be a teenager, that's when [I] started realizing everybody's dating, but who do you want to date? The people who look like the girl in the Ivory Snow commercial or the Noxzema commercials, which is not like us. . . . Then you see where your position is . . .
>
> *The interviewer asks:* "Did you want to be white then?"

*The participant responds:* Oh yeah, everyday . . . my friends use to tell me . . . we don't consider you Indian . . . [but then] they'd . . . make a slur at somebody else who was Indian but then they'd turn to me and say, you're not Indian . . . . When I was in high school . . . I was anorexic . . . and bulimic. [I would have done] anything to be accepted by them. [But] to be . . . accepted by them . . . I always thought I had to be that much better than white girls. That much skinnier. That much prettier. That much smarter . . . . (Tee 1997, p. 146)

Ten thousand miles from Bollywood, bouts of uproarious laughter are punctuated with pregnant sighs of envy from young women as Aishwarya Rai, with bare midriff and swaggering slender hips, beams into television sets across America. Although readily consumed as commonplace today, in the 1970s, when many South Asians began their diaspora to the United States, a different and more traditional type of beauty was adored, one with fuller hips and dimpled thighs. The slimmed down actresses of today highlight the startling discrepancy in beauty norms between the South Asia of times past and today, in their slenderized and Westernized forms.

Not surprisingly, the emaciated and starved bodies readily available in American film and print media have been implicated accusingly in America's cultural obsession with thinness, and in the steep rise of body image dissatisfaction and eating disorders in Caucasian women. Sociocultural accounts of eating disorders assert that media representations of the thin ideal lead many young white women and girls to valorize shape and weight to a pathological and sometimes deadly degree (Garner, Vitousek, and Pike, 1997; Lask 2000).

Curiously missing in such accounts is the recognition that the pervasive cultural influences of body image dissatisfaction and eating disorders on Caucasian women might also bear on ethnic minority women in America and overseas. Ethnic minority women, such as those of the South Asian American community, have been thought to be protected from the development of eating disorders due to the allegedly diminished emphasis on thinness in their cultures, in which heavier women are supposedly perceived as being more beautiful and of high financial standing (Nasser 1988; Thompson 1994). Ironically, despite the worldwide distribution of Western images of glamorous and emaciated women and their acceptance in non-Western societies, many researchers continue to cling to the anachronistic belief that eating disorders only afflict Caucasian women in Westernized countries. In this chapter, we

lay out some evidence that challenges this belief, review some of our own and others' psychological research on the sources of eating and body image disturbance in the South Asian diaspora, and speculate on the implications of these embodied cultural dynamics.

## Cultural Influences on Disturbances of Eating and Body Image

The causal role that disseminated Western media images play in the globalization of eating and body image disturbance has become increasingly clear in recent times. For example, in a longitudinal study conducted in Fiji, where large body shapes were traditionally accepted for women and men, Anne Becker, an anthropologist at Harvard Medical School, found striking consequences coinciding with the introduction of television (Becker et al. 2002). In 1998, 38 months after this introduction—which included Western programming such as *Melrose Place*, *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Seinfeld,* and *Xena: Warrior Princess*—a dramatic increase occurred in disturbed eating behavior. Fifteen percent of teenage girls reported they had vomited to control their weight, in contrast to only 3 percent in 1995, immediately following the introduction of television. Further, in 1998, 29 percent scored high on a test indicative of risk for disordered eating in comparison to 13 percent in 1995. Interestingly, after the introduction of television, 74 percent of girls reported feeling "too big or fat" at least sometimes. Those who watched television for at least three nights per week were 50 percent more likely than those who did not to perceive themselves as too fat and 30 percent more likely to diet to lose weight, reflective of a bodily discontent similar to that reported in Western countries.

India, a country that has traditionally celebrated women of different shapes and sizes, has refused to be left behind in this revolution. Increased television programming from the West has also been paralleled by a rise in the number of web sites and magazine articles in India addressing and educating patrons about eating disorders and their adverse effects. In a featured story in the *Tribune*, Aradhika Skehon (2000) asserts that Indian women are unconditionally accepting the Western body ideal, with young women adopting stick figure role models like Calista Flockhart "who emphasize weight and shape without a thought for what is healthy, feminine, and desirable." Skehon adds that eating disorders hardly known in the subcontinent a decade ago are becoming "household worries." The unfettered export of the

thin body ideal is producing an internationally normative bodily discontent, as found in the United States, where a moderate level of body dissatisfaction is accepted as being normal among women (Rodin, Silberstein, and Striegel-Moore 1984).

However, not all of this discontent can be attributed directly to the Western media. Women who watch Bollywood movies are exposed to beauty norms that now mirror the West's obsession with thinness. As in Hollywood, Bollywood has witnessed a considerable slimming down since the 1950s and 1960s, when beauty was based more on facial features than body size. For example, the talented and beloved actresses Meena Kumari, Nargis, and Aruna Irani, were well endowed. But, more recently, "lollipop" leading ladies such as Aishwarya Rai or Karisma—whose heads are the most curvaceous parts of their stick-like figures—have come to dominate this multibillion dollar industry, representing beauty ideals unattainable for most South Asian women.

Ironically, the increasing adoption of the thinness ideal in South Asia has not been driven by men, but by women and for women. "By and large," Sekhon asserts, South Asian "men like voluptuous women . . . and to be attractive to the opposite sex, it isn't necessary to look starved." Curiously, South Asian women have lifted themselves from the burden of looking a particular way for men and enslaved themselves in the prison of achieving the "perfect" or stick-figure, thin body. These women appear to have diverged from what is considered traditionally beautiful (that is a well-proportioned figure) and strangely enough are likely to become the driving force behind a normative shift in the value placed on thinness amongst men and their matchmaking elders.

Beauty ideals that are influential in South Asia have also become a point of reference for the South Asian diasporic community, eager not only to admire Bollywood fashions, but also to don the glamorous and skimpy outfits worn by their favorite lollipop ladies. A feat often requiring a considerable contortion for normal human sized bodies! Thus, it is not simply viewing thin actresses and desiring to be beautiful like them that is damaging to self-image, but attempting to dress like them that makes eating disorders a nightmare reality for young women.

This reality can be observed in South Asian communities within the United States. The ironic documentary *Miss India Georgia* follows four South Asian-American contestants as they prepare for the Miss India Georgia beauty

pageant, a pageant alleged to be a conduit for imparting Indian culture to the Americanizing South Asian youth. Far from being agents for cultural continuity and pride, beauty pageants for some women underscore the inadequacy of their appearance in contrast to Caucasian women. "I've always wanted to be in a beauty pageant," confesses one contestant but "I've been afraid to compete against white girls." Another admits that being Indian "had to do with my not feeling pretty," an assessment that implies majority standards of beauty against which she feels she falls well short. Thus, pageants may serve to highlight "racial" difference, and bring into sharp relief the ambiguous racial position of South Asians in a region of the United States that is highly polarized along Black-White lines. Where does a "brown" South Asian American woman fit in this dualistic universe (Twine 1997)?

Such beauty pageants, which adapt with minimal alteration the Southern United States' tradition of debutante balls and coming out parties, are curious channels for South Asian cultural transmission, enabling some South Asian women, uncertain of their attractiveness in a Caucasian culture, to chase Barbie beauty dreams, while reinforcing their inferiority to White women. These pageants or "fashion shows" have invaded college campuses as well, where South Asia clubs across the country applaud and celebrate local beauties, romanticizing the importance of appearance and body size Bollywood style. This disturbing acceptance of Western beauty pageants into the South Asian culture promises the exploitation of young women, indicative of a larger and growing trend in personifying femininity through sexualizing young bodies and parading them on the catwalk.

The tradition and practice of arranged marriages amongst South Asians also serves to sharpen body shape norms, thereby emphasizing physical attributes such as light skin, long thick hair, and a well-proportioned figure as being essential in fetching a highly coveted groom. Matrimonial advertisements, prominent staples of newspapers abroad (for example *India Abroad*) and in South Asian countries, continue to resuscitate the tradition of arranged marriages, as well as egregiously reinforce this normative, gendered, aesthetic identity. In fact, these newspapers also circulate in temples and mosques, bestowing on gaunt body shapes a stamp of religious authority. For these reasons, identification with South Asian cultural traditions is unlikely to bring invulnerability to disorders grounded in body image.

We have discussed several cultural sources of disturbed body image among South Asian women, in South Asia and in the diaspora, and these influences

would be expected to contribute to eating problems and disorders. Western researchers have largely ignored the vulnerability of South Asian American women to eating disorders, as evidenced by the paucity of relevant research, but it appears to be a severe and overlooked problem. The few studies conducted in England have found that eating disorders are at least as, or more, prevalent in South Asian than in Caucasian girls (Bryant-Waugh and Lask 1991; Furnham and Husain 1999; Mumford, Whitehouse, and Platts 1991). An American study investigating experiences contributing to body image dissatisfaction and eating disorders in women of South Asian descent, found that 11 percent of a sample of South Asian American undergraduate women endorsed eating problems of clinical severity, a rate comparable to Caucasian samples and considerably greater than the national population prevalence (Iyer 2001).

In view of this underinvestigated problem, there is a pressing need to understand the distinctive dynamics at work in eating disturbance among young South Asian American women. Although sociocultural accounts of eating disorders have rightfully directed their attention toward the increasing acceptance of the thin ideal, our cultural obsession with achieving such a body type cannot alone explain why only some women develop eating disorders. Although discontent with one's body appears to be increasingly commonplace, the development of an eating disorder continues to be a less frequent occurrence. New accounts are needed to make sense of the particularity of this case.

## Motivations for Adopting the Ideal of Thinness

It is clear that the thinness ideal has globalized with the dissemination of Western images of beauty, often refracted through local media and cultural practices. However, we must also ask what dynamics drive its adoption by women from non-Western cultural backgrounds. Most psychological researchers who have sought to answer this question in the American context have implicated the cultural variables of acculturation and ethnic identification. First, they have hypothesized that as ethnic minorities acculturate (or assimilate) into the dominant Western culture, which equates thinness with beauty, success and desirability, they will come to strive for thinness and consequently experience rising levels of eating problems (Ball and Kenardy 2002; Chamorro and Flores-Ortiz 2000). Second, they have hypothesized

that ethnic minority women who are identified with their culture of origin are protected from developing eating disorders because of the decreased emphasis on slenderness in these cultures (Abrams, Allen, and Gray 1993; Pumariega et al. 1994).

Although acculturation and ethnic identification would appear to offer promising accounts of susceptibility and resistance to the Western thinness ideal among ethnic minority women, they provide little service in understanding eating disorders in South Asian American women. For a start, evidence that they mediate body image disturbance and eating disorders has largely been confined to research on African American, Latino American, and to a lesser extent East Asian American women. Moreover, recent work conducted with South Asian Americans (Iyer 2001; Lawrence 1998) has found that women born or raised in the West do not have greater susceptibility to eating and body image disturbance than those born or raised in South Asia, despite being more acculturated to the United States, and less ethnically identified as South Asians. Not surprisingly, perhaps, given the recent acceptance of the Western silhouette in Bollywood, identifying with South Asian cultures offers little protection against body image dissatisfaction and eating disorders.

If acculturation and ethic identity do not account for eating disturbance among South Asian American women as they do, at least in part, among other American minority groups, a new account is required. One place where such a new account might begin is in the public reception and media representation of South Asian Americans' visible difference. Rather than focus on the relation of South Asian American women to the dominant culture (acculturation) or to their culture of origin (ethnic identity), that is, we propose a new focus on the dominant culture's response to them. We argue that some of the distinctive roots of eating disorder among South Asian American women can be located in exclusionary and racialized responses of other Americans toward them, and to the sense of not belonging that these responses engender.

South Asians have collectively attempted to acquire a model minority status within the United States, and this status has moved beyond intellectual and career goals into areas of beauty. However, as the editors of this volume have pointed out, media representations of South Asian individuals have often depicted them as inept and risible. The 1980s T.V. show *Head of the Class* portrayed its Indian character as intelligent, but socially awkward

and gauche. *The Late Night Show* presents two Bangladeshi store clerks who amuse fans with their cacophonous accent and backwardness. *Seinfeld* gave audiences "Babu," whose gullibility and odd gestures mark him as preposterous. Caricatures such as these emphasize the visible difference of South Asians, and help to make appearance and demeanor primary foci of shame and embarrassment. In this context, the difference between idealized images of cool, emaciated beauty in the American media targeting young women juxtaposed with images of South Asian awkwardness and comicality become stark. For many young South Asian American women it likely drives a desperate attention to visual self-presentation and an internalization of Caucasian beauty norms.

This sense of visible difference may be exacerbated within diasporic communities by negative interpersonal experiences with majority group members, particularly teasing about South Asian "racial" characteristics. Racial teasing may include name-calling or racial slurs such as "dot head," "Gandhi," or "Punjab," and mimicking or otherwise ridiculing the behaviors and cultural practices of South Asians, such as accent or food habits. For many South Asian adolescents, the experience of being racially teased exacerbates a nascent sense of inadequacy and not belonging. It also helps to direct their responses toward altering their appearance, the salient basis of their denigration, creating a fertile ground for the development of body image dissatisfaction and eating disorders. A quote from an unpublished dissertation by Tee (1997), on experiences of South Asian women in Canada, poignantly illustrates some of these themes of visible difference, racial teasing, and feeling excluded.

> Until I was about 16 . . . I blamed my parents for everything and would look at my family like . . . everyone else was normal and my family was deviant and that had a lot to do with the color of their skin. That we were deviant because we were Indian . . . that I wouldn't be called a Paki obviously if I was born in a white family . . . I remember calling another South Asian boy a Punjab, and he looked at me and then he said, well who the fuck do you think you are? And it really stopped me in my tracks . . . . It was when, to the point when I had internalized so much [racism] that I was angry at anyone that was South Asian for being visible, which made me visible. That was the natural outcome of it was to call someone that, that you yourself were being hurt by . . . the only way to get out of it was to continue to deny any of your Indian heritage. To not wear Indian clothes. To not go to temples or gurdwaras. To not have

other South Asian friends. To be as non-South Asian as you could.
(pp. 148–9)

## Body Image and Eating Disturbance Among South Asian
American Women: A Psychological Study

In a recent quantitative study (Iyer and Haslam 2003), we examined this
new account of the psychological dynamics of body image and eating dis-
turbances among South Asian American college women, focusing especially
on the role that racial teasing plays in these phenomena. One hundred
and twenty-two undergraduates born in South Asian (Bangladesh, India,
Pakistan, Sri Lanka) or with at least one parent from these countries, were
recruited from colleges in five US states. All participants were administered
a series of psychological instruments assessing depression, body image dis-
satisfaction, eating disturbance, self-esteem, strength of South Asian ethnic
identity, American acculturation, and experiences of racial teasing, and they
also supplied their body mass.

Consistent with our expectations and with earlier studies, levels of accul-
turation and ethnic identification were not associated with either body im-
age or eating disturbance in our sample. South Asian American women who
showed the greatest dissatisfaction with their bodies and the most disturbed
eating behavior were not those who were most assimilated or least identi-
fied with their cultures of origin. In contrast, but consistent with our new
account of the underpinnings of eating problems in these women, levels of
body image dissatisfaction and of disordered eating were strongly associated
with a reported history of racial teasing. These strong associations held even
when our participants' levels of self-esteem and depression and their actual
body weight were statistically controlled. In short, women who experienced
body image and eating disturbance were not simply those who were over-
weight, depressed, or suffering from low self-esteem, but also those whose
embodied "racial" distinctiveness had been made most negatively salient to
them over the course of their development.

Although preliminary, our study provides the first published psychologi-
cal evidence supporting a sense of visual difference as a contributor to eating
problems among South Asian women, and points to one plausible psycho-
logical pathway by which media representations of unattainable body ideals
might serve to globalize these problems. For some young women and girls in

the South Asian diaspora, racialized differences from the Caucasian majority, made hurtfully salient by stereotypical media representations and teasing and thereby engendering a sense of exclusion, may motivate the internalization of a Western beauty ideal of thinness that has pathological consequences.

## *The New Cosmopolitanism: The Emergence of a Universal Beauty?*

The sweeping acceptance of the thin, fleshless body ideal both in South Asia and in the West, appears to have penetrated the psyche of women worldwide. This changing body type, reflecting Western beauty norms and disseminated by Western as well as South Asian media, has given rise to a new kind of cosmopolitanism, one that perceives people as objects of desire, irrespective of race or color. As a result, the belief that South Asians in their countries of origin and in the United States are protected from internalizing the pervasive images of emaciated beauty and from developing eating disorders, is deeply questionable. Not surprisingly, South Asian women, irrespective of their degree of assimilation to American culture or identification with their own, demonstrate an equal propensity toward body image dissatisfaction and eating disorders, reflecting the far-reaching impact of the thin ideal of beauty. The acceptance of this thin ideal creates fertile ground for eating disorders to take root. However, despite the global prominence of this ideal, eating disorders may be less likely to develop when racial teasing, negative media representations of South Asians, and other exclusionary practices are not experienced. As the world increasingly pays homage to this new ideal, it is likely to usher in an era of a universal beauty, one that like the new cosmopolitanisms themselves, defies national boundaries, giving rise to an increasingly global form of misery.

## *References*

Abrams, Kay, La Rue Allen, and James Gray. 1993. Disordered Eating Attitudes and Behaviors, Psychological Adjustment, and Ethnic Identity: A Comparison Of Black and White Female College Students. *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 14: 49–57.

Ball, Kylie, and Justin Kenardy. 2002. Body weight, Body Image, and Eating Behaviours: Relationships With Ethnicity and Acculturation in a Community Sample of Young Australian Women. *Eating Behaviors* 3: 205–16.

Becker, Anne E., Rebecca A. Burwell, David B. Herzog, Paul Hamburg, and Stephen E. Gilman. 2002. Eating Behaviours and Attitudes Following Prolonged Exposure to Television Among Ethnic Fijian Adolescent Girls. *British Journal of Psychiatry* 180: 509–14.

Bryant-Waugh, Rachel, and Bryan Lask. 1991. Anorexia Nervosa in a Group of Asian Children Living in Britain. *British Journal of Psychiatry* 158: 229–33.

Chamorro, Rebeca, and Yvette Flores-Ortiz. 2000. Acculturation and Disordered Eating Patterns Among Mexican American Women. *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 28: 125–29.

Friedman, Daniel, and Sharon Grimberg. 1998. *Miss India Georgia.* VHS. Portland, OR: Urban Life Productions.

Furnham, Adrian, and K. Husain. 1991. The Role of Conflict with Parents in Disordered Eating Among British Asian Females. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 34: 498–505.

Garner, David M., Kelly M. Vitousek, and Kathleen M. Pike. 1997. Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy For Anorexia Nervosa. In David M. Garner and Paul E. Garfinkel eds., *Handbook of Treatment For Eating Disorders,* 2nd ed. New York: The Guilford Press.

Iyer, D. S. 2001. The Contribution of Racial Teasing and Cultural Identification in the Development of Eating Pathology in South Asian Women. Ph.D. dissertation, New School for Social Research, New York City, U.S.A..

Iyer, Dana S., and Nick Haslam. 2003. Body Image and Eating Disturbance Among South Asian-American Women: The Role of Racial Teasing. *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 34: 142–47.

Lask, Bryan. 2000. Aetiology. In Bryan Lask and Bryant-Waugh eds., *Anorexia Nervosa and Related Eating Disorders in Childhood and Adolescence,* 2nd ed. East Sussex, UK: Psychology Press.

Lawrence, S. A. 1998. The Relationship Between Eating-Related Problems and Acculturation in Women of East Indian Descent. Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana: Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Mumford, David B., Andrew M. Whitehouse, and Maria Platts. 1991. Sociocultural Correlates of Eating Disorders Among Asian Schoolgirls in Bradford. *British Journal of Psychiatry* 158: 222–28.

Nasser, Mervat. 1988. Eating Disorders: The Cultural Dimension. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 23: 184–87.

Pumariega, Andreas J., Carl R. Gustavson, Joan C. Gustavson, Patricia S. Motes, and Susan Ayers. 1994. Eating Attitudes in African-American Women: The Essence Eating Disorders Survey. *Eating Disorders: The Journal of Treatment & Prevention* 2: 5–16.

Rodin, Judith, Lisa Silberstein, and Ruth Striegel-Moore. 1984. Women and Weight: A Normative Discontent. *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation* 32: 267–307.

Skehon, Aradhika. 2000. Looking Good is Not Looking Thin. *The Tribune*, November 18. Available from World Wide Web: (http://www.tribuneindia.com/2000/20001118/ windows/main2.htm).

Tee, Karen Ai-Lynn. 1997. Between Two Cultures: Exploring The Voices of First and Second Generation South Asian Women. Ph.D. dissertation, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., Canada.

Thompson, Becky W. 1994. *A Hunger So Wide and So Deep: American Women Speak Out on Eating Problems*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Twine, France Winddance. 1997. Brown-skinned White girls: Class, Culture, and the Construction of White Identity in Suburban Communities. In Ruth Frankenburg ed., *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*.  Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

# Theorizing Recognition: South Asian Authors in a Global Milieu

GITA RAJAN AND SHAILJA SHARMA

> *"Globalization lies at the heart of modern culture; cultural practices lie at the heart of globalization."*
>
> John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture.*[1]

## Introduction

Since the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1980), South Asian authors have gained a great deal of global recognition, and one could argue that the themes evoked in this book ushered in a whole field called postcolonialism. However, it is equally accurate to say that for over a century now, tales from the Indian subcontinent, in their exotic and adventural sense, have always formed a subgenre that has been popular with readers. Salman Rushdie or Ruth Prawer Jhabhwala tapped into that strong readership base and successfully shifted the terrain of narrativity from a colonial landscape (which included India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) to a partitioned and then a postcolonial one (mostly India). The reason to invoke Rushdie and Jhabhvala (though very different writers) as quick examples is to signal our interest in the subject of recognition of Indo-Anglian writing in English, which bypasses the issue of those written in vernacular languages, and helps to launch the discussion in the direction of a global readership that includes, but is not limited to, the subcontinent.

One of the focal points of this essay is to understand the contemporary popularity and/or recognition of South Asian authors, by which we mean authors located in South Asia and in the global north, but who write *about* the spaces in and between South Asia and abroad. Although the shift from coloniality to postcoloniality, both in fiction and in analytical texts, is grounded upon the flawed but persistent logic of a Eurocentric modernity, authors like Rushdie have made the questioning and critiquing of the historical basis of this modernity a central part of their fiction. In this they continue, in fictional terms, what Dipesh Chakrabarty has called the project of "provincializing Europe."[2] Despite such questioning, such texts were located in a formal, European understanding of cosmopolitanism, and its readership has traditionally been a largely urban, upper class population. More recently, a cadre of new writers has emerged, who have addressed a different kind of audience with a new cosmopolitan, global sensibility.

Over the last few years, in India (and elsewhere in the subcontinent, though the term "Indo-Anglian" is often used as a shorthand for a larger group of writers from South Asia) and in the United States, writers and critics have engaged in a public debate about how South Asian writing in English should be defined. Publications as diverse as *The Hindu, The Times Literary Supplement*, and *The New York Review of Books* have all been the forums for such debates. The second part of this essay moves from elucidating the reasons for such globalized recognition to an analysis of the strategies that these authors use, which will allow us to argue that the success of South Asian writing in English has been its curious intermingling of difference and familiarity, strangeness, and in Bhabha's terms, the *heimlich/unheimliche* comforts that it offers.

## New Cosmopolitan Writing

Recent fiction by South Asians presents a different form of writing that borrows from local and global themes and vocabularies, appeals to a diverse reading public, and one moreover, which has become familiar with an ethnic undertow in place of a racial or exotic aesthetic. The writers that we discuss in this essay leave an imprint on the global map of fiction that in a sense become documentaries of affect; they explore contemporary realities of shifting national boundaries, multiple locations of home, multiracial and multicultural identities by deftly yoking together the local with the global. In

the United States at least, authors like Chitra Divakaruni, Mohsin Hamid, or Kiran Desai seem closer to Monique Truong and Karen Yamashita—Asian American writers—who tackle everyday realities of cooking, eating, living, and loving to carve out a plot, for example, rather than large-scale theatricalized histories, as Forster or Rushdie had done. These newer narratives, because of their veneer of ordinariness (not to be confused with realism in the novels of R.K. Narayan, for example, who grounded his texts upon the colonial/postcolonial divide), appeal to the masses in a way that older models of fiction (considered literature) did not. Further, aided by major publishing houses and promoted by mega book stores, these new authors have achieved a level of visibility that was not usually available to the writers of the older milieu. These newer authors routinely do public readings in local shops owned by big chains, autograph copies of their novels, and consequently, they begin to function like celebrities. By becoming more approachable, newer authors breach class, race, and gender lines to situate themselves inside a fluid space we call new cosmopolitanism. This new cosmopolitanism is enmeshed in global capitalism through routes taken in the publishing processes and subsequent, sophisticated forms of packaged communications. Very often, these authors allay audiences' ethno-global anxieties by situating their writerly presence between these very audiences and the subject of their novels, allowing an authorial identity to emerge that weaves in, out of, and in-between popular and academic cultures. In order to better understand the playing out of the phenomenon of a new cosmopolitanism, it will be useful to trace different levels of meaning of the word "recognition," and touch upon the significance of the phrase "South Asian" as it is coupled with the effects of globalization.

To begin with, recognition is a form of acceptance that South Asian writers gain in popular culture, which indicates the reading public's openness in encountering racial and ethnic differences, albeit from a distance of a textualized world. Recognition here means a familiarity with the author's name as gleaned from media sources or academic venues, and a willingness to engage with the author's world. An elliptical factor that enhances such recognition is the current trend of a personality cult, which coincidentally makes these writers into celebrities. So the identity quotient (constructed between the writer and the reader) is predicated upon a give and take relationship; there is an initial desire to read the works of such authors, which soon leads to a desire to see and hear them as well. Arundhati Roy and her Booker Prize work, *The God of Small Things* (1997) is an interesting launching point. In

their initial reviews, critics emphasized the Booker Prize, praised the work for its subtle narrative design, its magic realism, and its sense of ironic, poetic justice, but readers were not persuaded, because they complained of having to stumble over difficult Indian words, which distracted them from getting the meaning. In other words, even when readers understood that it would be a racial/ethnic encounter, they wanted the text to be transparent, and were unprepared to work through the rough terrain of a cultural translation. However, quite a few librarians from major metropolises noted in passing that in the books-on-tape format, which was read in a well-modulated but slightly accented voice, many such nodes of cultural differences were delicately mediated. This, in turn, allowed readers to gloss over this problem, because they got hypnotized by the authentic sounding narrated/speaking voice.[3] In the United States, both factors, that is, a faddish longing to consume a globally famous work like *The God of Small Things* and the facile/mobile accessibility feature soon made the book popular with the masses. Roy's popularity initially was also compounded by the fact that she was profiled in *People* magazine as one of the 50 most beautiful people in the world in 1999. She became a familiar name and face in the western media, and consequently, was able to cash-in and find a platform for her later, didactic prose essays on topics ranging from environmental disasters in India to the war in Iraq and global terrorism. Meanwhile, her recognition was problematized in India, where the presses, while highlighting the Booker, also focused upon negative publicity generated by the reaction of one reader who had filed a suit in the state of Kerala, where the novel is set. Although we understand that audiences for *The God of Small Things* reacted very differently in Europe, the United States, and in South Asia, and general responses even varied between this novel and her prose works, recognition, triggered by the Booker, made Roy a familiar name on audiences' lips on a global level.

Jhumpa Lahiri is another example, whose meteoric rise to popularity coincided with her Pulitzer Prize for *The Interpreter of Maladies* (1999). Again, book stores in major metropolises actively promoted the collection of short stories with glossy displays during the Christmas season of 2001, which were stripped bare with almost Dionysian abandon by customers. Lahiri's popularity amongst the masses, it seems, was also enhanced by the fact that she was declared one of the "women we love" by *Esquire* magazine in 2001. It is interesting now to watch Lahiri's publishers carefully manipulate her recent work, *The Namesake* (2004) by emphasizing the Pulitzer and underscoring

the recognition aspect with a stylish, ethnic profile. Another work in the glare of public recognition is Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*, which was championed by Oprah Winfrey on her show in 2001, and was rumored to have been on best-seller lists on two continents. Incidentally, Mistry's *Family Matters* (2003), a near Booker miss, remains unknown to the general public. It was not chic charm that worked for Mistry as a writer it appears, but a stamp of approval of the literariness of his work that Winfrey endorsed. So, in a sense, she was the celebrity who worked the magic for him, and situated him on the recognition continuum. Michael Ondaatje, too, got tremendous recognition and a Booker Prize for *The English Patient* (1996), and his visibility was enhanced to mammoth proportions by the popularity of the film version. However, this is a difficult example to use because his South Asian identity (that of a Sri Lankan Canadian) remained occluded in the shadow of an eerie tale, set in Italy, of the shattered lives of four soldiers at the end of WWII. In contrast, his more recent work *Anil's Ghost* (2000), which though constructed with tremendous complexity, failed to impress audiences, because the civil war in Sri Lanka was too remote. This tale of genocide, in a part of the world not yet spotlit by the western media, had no reference points for the general public, which in turn made recognition (as is accessible in a new cosmopolitan arena) impossible. Interestingly, neither the book nor its author was hyped-up by the publishing houses, and *Anil's Ghost* slipped from hard cover to paperbound very quickly. Ondaatje's fall from grace was accelerated further when *Anil's Ghost* received poor reviews from critics and politically correct academics (some academics claimed he had marginalized the always already silenced minority populations). These brief anecdotes show that recognition for many South Asian authors under discussion rests upon reception, that is, the taste for ethnic and/or racialized narratives that can be circulated with ease by the writer in the public sphere and consumed with a minimum of difficulty by the reader. Perhaps, the shift in attitude has occurred in the reading public, which demands a sense of satisfaction in achieving a measure of closure when engaging with complicated problems, almost akin to the sense of completion when working on an intriguing puzzle. Such a combination of writerly production and readerly consumption is also facilitated by a familiarity or recognition (as in recognizing difference) that is fostered by contemporary popular cultural elements like films, music, and food, and most recently, by the visual magic of Mira Nair's "*Monsoon Wedding*," Gurinder Chaddha's "*Bend it Like Beckham*," and

Lloyd Webber and Rahman's theatrical debut, "*Bombay Dreams*." Granted, each visual text had very different audiences and achieved varying levels of success, each nonetheless marks one more instance of introducing and familiarizing audiences all over the world with aspects of South Asian lived cultural experiences.

In academic circles, recognition has had another kind of resonance. There is the case of Amitav Ghosh, who refused to accept the 2001 Commonwealth Prize for fiction for *The Glass Palace: A Novel* (2000). His controversial act— of refusing the award for its colonial impulse—was based upon an ethics of resistance, because he felt the Prize came with the monumental weight of imperial arrogance. Citing the limitations of the English language as the allowed mode of fiction writing, and the continued violence of using a term like "the Commonwealth Prize" as his reasons, Ghosh walked away, and was hailed by many in both the global north and the south as a valiant figure. However, while Ghosh's gesture garnered him a place in the limelight (and huge book-sales), this story was mostly circulated in places of high culture, for example in newspapers like *The Guardian* and in academic circles. Similarly, it was mostly academics who avidly read and discussed V.S. Naipual's iconic, and slightly ironic but self-congratulatory acceptance speech of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2001. Invoking V. S. Naipaul signals our intention to bring to mind the fact that, in spite of the global moment in time when the honor and the recognition of the Nobel Prize was conferred upon him, his fiction remains firmly rooted in a postcolonial space, which attracts a different kind of readership, and does not have that new texture of global South Asian writing. Interestingly, it also shows the difference between a new kind of cosmopolitan audiences who remained removed from many of these issues, while people largely from the older cosmopolitan milieu were actively engaged in all these debates.

Although the examples of Ghosh and Naipaul circumscribe the dissimilar affects of recognition in a global arena, the significant component seems to be the appeal to a wider audience base, which suggests that the contemporary popularity of some South Asian authors is more complicated than the ability to produce good novels and/or be recognized by authoritative institutions. In other words, while all the authors mentioned thus far inhabit the same time-space continuum, which also coincides with what we loosely see as the trajectory of globalization, there is a marked difference. For one, writers such as Roy and Lahiri are actors on the public culture stage, and

their appeal lies in combining a new kind of narrative texture with a mass appeal factor. Their stories of migration, of identities in flux, subjects facing crisis situations and trauma, represent a contemporary phase in globalization. Their fictional worlds are shot through with moments and incidents that are made recognizable because of the ways in which mass media provides easy access to different and diverse cultures as consumable and discardable, and as transitory experiences of readers' desires that can move beyond ethnic, class, and gender differences. One does not need a specific knowledge of history, or geography, or civilizations to understand Lahiri's narrative world in "A Temporary Matter" from *Interpreter of Maladies*, for example. In fact, one need not even be cognizant of theoretical terminology such as center and periphery to make meaning of the works of many contemporary South Asians, because the phenomenon of migration, of travel, of disenfranchised lives, for example, are the routine subjects of media news stories. In contrast, Ghosh and Naipaul's narrative worlds do require some sense of history, particularly the coupled history of empire and colony and the subsequent emergence of a postcolonial reality in fiction. Naipaul's fiction in particular remains grounded upon the old kind of cosmopolitan readership base that was firmed up by Rushdie, for example. Herein lies the important distinction between an old kind of cosmopolitanism that rests upon privileges of education, class, and a transcontinental urban readership that is inculcated upon an acquired understanding of the other depicted by a Ghosh or a Rushdie, and a newer kind of cosmopolitanism that is infused with a familiarity of the other conjured-up by the media, and is seen in the fictions of Lahiri or Divakaruni, for example.

This may be the place to further demarcate the older kind of cosmopolitanism by probelmatizing the meaning of recognition through the figure of Salman Rushdie. In retrospect, his *Midnight's Children* accomplished two distinct feats. In embodying Saleem as simultaneously allegorical and ironic, Rushdie radicalized the fissure between India and Pakistan, Muslim and Hindu, and colonial and postcolonial conditions. This deeply politicized texture of fiction created an appetite for readers to engage with/in postcolonial literatures, and, it aestheticized that historical shift from empire to decolonization. That is to say, what was the Indian subcontinent for E. M. Forster's fiction entered a new phase most recently called Indo-Anglian fiction (explained below). Because of contemporary movements of globalization, and even though the region is loosely bound together under the term

South Asian and its diaspora, the *political timbre* of authors such as Rushdie is negotiated by a new cadre of writers *spacialized ethnic differences*, instead of the reproachful voice of the ex-colony. This shift enables the creation of a new cosmopolitanism, while revealing the tracings left by the old cosmopolitans. Rushdie, for all his newly created avatars in the popular media, is part of the old cosmopolitan tradition. His acerbic *New York Times* editorials or piquant pieces in *The New Yorker* are credible and his readership base remains stable because he does not switch roles. That is to say, he maintains his cantankerous genius identity in fiction and prose alike, wherein his urbane reference points charm the members of the old cosmopolitan group. Recognition in this frame, we realize has rules of etiquette that authors must follow, and comes with an appropriate price tag, and Rushdie is a case in point. Thus, writers like Rushdie and Naipaul (and to a lesser degree Ghosh) fall into a category of old cosmopolitanism whose fictions have a wider, urbane sweep, unlike the authors who take advantage of the moment engendered by globalization, which allows them to tackle the here and now and the familiar, and initiate a new kind of cosmopolitan readership.

The third stress upon the word recognition is based upon readerly responses. It is without a doubt, a form of academic acceptance, and comes because globalization has made it possible to have scholarly and pedagogical debates about South Asian authors and their works as they are read and taught. Such pedagogic attention is endorsed by the need to include multicultural or non-canonical literatures in university courses, and is elliptically validated when scholarly venues and public culture sites such as the *New York Review of Books*, for example, express a graceful interest in these authors. Let us briefly look at the list of works from South Asia that have made the rounds recently, both in major media and in major book stores: Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*; Lahiri's *The Namesake*; Vikram Seth's *An Equal Music*; Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land*; Manil Suri's *Death of Vishnu*; Anita Rao Badami's *A Hero's Walk*; Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*, not to be confused with Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters*; Meena Alexander's *Illiterate Heart*; Kiran Desai's *Hallaballoo in the Guava Orchard*; Divakaruni's *Sister of my Heart* and its tedious sequel, *Vine of Desire*; Kamila Shamsi's *Kartography*; Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke*; Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India,* which got a face-lift with Mehta's film "Earth"; Romesh Gunesekara's *Monksfish Moon*; Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy*; Mistry's *Family Matters*; and even Michael Ondaatje's not so well received *Anil's Ghost*. This is not even a complete list,

but a "flippant gesture" (Ondaatje's phrase from *Anil's Ghost*) to South Asians in the global limelight, who are featured in numerous college syllabi. And, those of us teaching such literatures can frame these works in neat pedagogical columns of gender, nation, memory, counter canonocity, ethnicity, or migrancy, hybridity and metropolis culture, or countless other themes—a reminder again, that they are all recognizably South Asian. Recognition, one could argue, premised on the conditions of a globalized literary production, gives rise to a new cosmopolitan outlook with different theoretical frameworks, which predispose them to other kinds of analytical paradigms. This recent literary production has a different nuance and timbre from say, the panegyric postcoloniality of a Rushdie (and a whole family of postcolonial authors who came to be called Midnight's grandchildren) or a pseudo-diasporic and/or multicultural rendition of a Bharati Mukherjee (thankfully, with not many inheritors). In contrast, the South Asian authors who are producing a new kind of cosmopolitan writing inhabit the globe with an easy, mobile sensibility, clearly moving beyond oppositional, emancipatory, or center-periphery narrative threads—instead, they have multiple peripheries, as is the custom in globalization.

Although it may seem contradictory to invoke both globalization and South Asia in the same breath, that is, transcend particularities while invoking regional specificity, it is possible to speak of them together through the notion of recognition. The former refers to a fluidity of ideas, capital, people, and borders, and the latter is region and culture specific. Yet, it is the migrations of peoples and ideas—both actual and virtual made possible through media and technology—from the specific to the global that makes recognition possible and permits us to coin a phrase such as new cosmopolitanism for the inventive and original kind of writing/literature that has emerged. South Asian, both a problematic and useful category, folds in a whole region but also encompasses its global diaspora. It is the literature of this all-encompassing but fluidly constructed space that major publishing houses have been highlighting for more than a decade now. Perhaps, another reason for such recognition is what Noy Thrupkaew notes, "It [South Asian writing] became a juggernaut among ethnic trends, shaking the book world from top to bottom with the potent combination of crossover appeal and literary acclaim." She goes on to add that what was once a "male biased world with Rushdie and Seth as the recognizable names, became enlarged in this other publishing trend called women of color" (*Bitch Magazine*, 2002).[4]

Still another angle to theorize recognition when looking at the phenomenon of South Asian writers in the limelight is to deploy Aijaz Ahmad's notion of what constitutes a theory. He says, "facts require explanations, and all explanations, even bad ones, presume a configuration of concepts, which we provisionally call 'theory.' In other words, theory is not simply a desirable but is a necessary relation between facts and their explanations" (p. 34).[5] The "facts" in our argument concern the powerful presence of South Asian authors in a globalized milieu. The parsing of the word recognition creates a rationale for theorizing the point that "South Asian" authors with their long and impressive list of books, have not only arrived in the major global metropolises, but they are also being acknowledged and rewarded by the arbiters of taste, are being read avidly by an engaged public, and are being taught with enthusiasm in the academy. In a different context, Arjun Appadurai speaks of the "optics of globalization" that helps define "*who* we see in this particular framing of citizens and *who* is allowed to be seen, especially by groups who empower models of regionality in global studies."[6] South Asian may be the new nomenclature we use when we take into account the serial and multi-directional arguments that have been made about globalization, but, we are still speaking about authors whose origins lie in a real or imagined India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, or Sri Lanka, for example. These two factors, catering to a first-world sensibility and the ability to speak in the language of the first world, has proven to be lucrative and generative for global publishing. In foregrounding the nature of global publishing trends (an issue we take up later) we do not at all wish to minimize the significance of literary production of this category of South Asian authors. That is to say, the contemporary modality of globalization creates spaces for South Asian authors to articulate their imaginations in ways that are both specific enough to be regionally ethnic, and general enough to appeal to a global uniformity. Yet, it is not simply practiced and polished craft—there is an innate elegance and powerful aesthetic symmetry in the work of many South Asian authors, as is evidenced in the global recognition that they have garnered.

## "Ignore the Commissars"! : Ethnicity and Cosmopolitanism

In this section, we set the terms of debate of how we assess the arguments made about South Asian writing from another angle. In an essay for *The*

*Hindu*, Vikram Chandra makes an argument for "Indo-Anglian" novelists to write in an English of their own choosing, their own "patois." Responding to a charge that these authors exoticize their writing in order to appeal to a "Western" audience, Chandra accuses these critics, "the Lefties" as he calls them, of waging an impure war in the name of purity. He says, "Ignore the commissars . . . . Walk confidently in all the world, because it all belongs to you. Be ruthlessly practical . . . . Do whatever it takes to get the job done. Use whatever you need. And do not worry about tradition. Whatever you do felicitously will be Indian."[7] In this long essay, Chandra signals that a preoccupation with classifications is ultimately a derivative discourse, best left to academic critics, or, the commissars. The job of a writer, an "artist" is quite simply, to write. But is that true? Do contemporary "Indo-Anglian" writers or writers anywhere write without an eye to the three p's: publishing, politics, and positioning? And what influences their aesthetic decisions about the settings and the descriptions of their novels, the languages their characters speak, and the titles? If we are to believe Chandra, artists must let contemporary reality determine for them the shape of their writing. And yet the question remains—is language transparent? Is writing only about reality and aesthetics, not representation? And aren't critics and writers locked in an embrace so tight that none can separate them?

The myth of complete artistic autonomy is just that. As an example of the artificiality of the creative and non-creative divide, we might look at two recent novels written by editors/agents of Indo-Anglian novels. Pankaj Mishra's *The Romantics* recently appeared in the wake of his "discovery" of Arundhati Roy, and alongside a career in social journalism. The latter provided the material for an earlier book of travel writing, *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana*, in which Mishra surveys the creeping reactionary brand of globalism in small town northern India. The other example is that of David Davidar, who has been the head of Penguin, India, for many years, and has recently published his own novel, *The House of Blue Mangoes*. Although this is neither surprising nor new, these critics/agents/publishers/writers make a mockery of Chandra's claim that writers occupy a purely creative place, quite apart from critical and strategic preoccupations. As already suggested, it is no secret that publishing conglomerates like Penguin, Random House, and Knopf in South Asia, as elsewhere, both create markets and fill them. There are some questions that we need to ask in our attempt to understand the vested interests of the debaters. For example, what characterizes Indo-Anglian

novels and unites them? What is their function within reading markets? And the inquiry subtending all of this is—what are the ways in which a constructed *safe* ethnicity plays into the popularity of this literature? In this regard the debate over ethnicity and the publishing market is very similar to ones in the United States about minoritization and its role as a marketable commodity.

The problematic term, "Indo-Anglian", which is used by Chandra, Mishra, and others, designates writers, often South Asian, who write in English, or, as Tim Brennan terms them, cosmopolitans. They have occupied an enviable niche in the publishing world since 1982. As mentioned above, the list is long; some of these writers live in India, others inhabit diasporic sites such as the United Kingdom and the United States. Like their locations, their subjects and writing styles are equally diverse. Yet, their publishers hone in on the fact that they carry a stamp of ethnicity/authenticity based upon some pre-arranged understanding of South Asianness without which they cannot be slotted, branded, read, and written about. This brand of ethnicity/authenticity allows them to spin narratives of the preferred world order, the world view we would collectively like to gaze on. It is a world of emigration, immigration, travel, multiple authenticities, of diaspora and its attendants, a kind of self-conscious hybridity, of language that stretches the borders of nations, communities, and ironically, ideas of purity. The postmodern world, in short, is their provenance. In that context, Chandra's exhortation is apt. It is properly cautious of grand theories, of reductive nationalist parameters and their agendas of division. Nothing unites them except that they are kind of, sort of, broadly speaking, roughly South Asian or of South Asian descent, even while there are glaring paradoxes of ethnic categories. Although contemporary writers are not the *only* Indo-Anglian writers (Attia Hosein, Manto, Mulk Raj Anand), they form its canon, and more often than not, write about subjects beyond South Asia.

The two sets of debates that have brought these contradictions in labeling and sorting practices, as Chandra perceives them, are relatively recent. The first debate surrounds Rushdie's remarks in his preface to an anthology of Indian writing in English, *Mirrorworks*, which he co-edited with Elizabeth West. In it, he claimed, "'Indo-Anglian' literature represents perhaps the most valuable contribution India has yet made to the world of books" (p. viii). The vituperation and self-righteous scorn that poured down on him took up the task of pressing the superior claims of India's "regional" writers, by

which it was meant those who wrote in all languages other than English. An academic who pressed this point in the Indian press, Meenakshi Mukherjee, at a later point questioned Vikram Chandra's use of overt Sanskritized titles for his short stories in *Love and Longing in Bombay*.[8] This in turn led to a long two-part essay Chandra wrote for *The Hindu,* titled "Indo-Anglian Writers: Nowhere and Everywhere" and "Indo-Anglican Writers: Where the Mind is Without Fear," in which he dismissed any attempts to straitjacket writing into nationalist and oppositional camps.[9] Both Rushdie and Chandra point out that English is not only *not* inimical to nation-love, but it is also a fact of being a middle class, urban Indian and does not get practiced at the cost of other languages. Both also point out that academics who accuse them of elitism (the horrible Lefties who worship Mao according to Chandra; Rushdie is more restrained as befits his gravitas) are themselves English-speaking/writing/reading, so their indignation is hypocritical at best.

But Rushdie is not entirely wrong in claiming that Indo-Anglian writing in English has indeed been the most well known, not in terms of the number of readers, perhaps, but certainly in terms of popular visibility at home and abroad. (A cursory look at the natal comparisons it generated convinces us that the success of Indo-Anglian writing since Rushdie is unprecedented. *Midnight's Children* gave "birth" to new Indian writing in English, just as it has passed the generational torch to "Midnight's Grandchildren," as *The New York Times* termed the new Indo-Anglian writers like Lahiri).[10] But the more problematic question that Rushdie and Chandra's essays raise is their use of the concept of *authenticity*. Meenakshi Mukherjee accuses them of squandering it or never having it at all, while Chandra makes an obscure argument about his gangster contacts to prove he does have it. Rushdie takes a more sophisticated approach (being Rushdie) and questions the static definition of Gandhian reality by claiming, "many of the writers gathered here [in *Mirrorworks*] have profound knowledge of the 'soul of India'" (p. xiii). In the end, he refuses to engage in a debate about Westernization and deracination, noting, "we drink from the same well. India, that horn of plenty, nourishes us all" (p. xiv).

Another voice in this debate has been that of Pankaj Mishra. In an essay for the *New York Review of Books* in May, 1999, he takes issue with Rushdie's assertion that "Literature has little or nothing to do with a writer's home address" and attacks this "cosmopolitan" writing at the level of form. Charging that

the reason most writers post-Rushdie have written "magic realism" instead of "psychological realism", he says "Magic realism's vocabulary of exotica and stylized literary devices has been a special boon to young writers whose initial success in the West has partly depended on assuming the voice of a well-known older author. Consider the titles of three novels recently published by expatriate Indian writers in America: *The Snake Charmer, Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, and *The Mistress of Spices*. The intrinsic strangeness of India provides easy fodder for colorful tall tales, and these novels, along with much other writing in English, abound in freaks and freakish incidents. They play up the most exotic imaginings of India in the West, and they work, for their predominantly Western readership, at a simple level of escapist fantasy" (p. 9).[11] Surprisingly, Mishra refuses any discussion of Arundhati Roy, whose magic realist *God of Small Things* he sold for a remarkable sum in 1994, just as he omits speaking of Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh, and Bapsi Sidhwa. Ironically, Rushdie does include these authors in his anthology, and discusses their work at some length in light of the necessity and authenticity of these different forms of writing as part of Indo-Anglian fiction.

Charges in this debate keep being traded between and amongst various constituencies, such as writers against critics and especially academics, Gandhians versus Nehruvians, regionalists versus cosmopolitan hybrids, and the stakes are the right to define what constitutes Indo-Anglian literature, surely a formidable task at any time. This is especially so at a time when the legitimacy of the nation-state all over the Indian subcontinent is being challenged, a point made in his essay by Vikram Chandra. However, it is also not enough to say as he does that we must just "ignore the commissars," for commissars are not just the straw men of an outmoded leftism, they are also trained readers and the interlocutors for a wider audience, which takes its cure from them. Writers depend upon them, for they are, in terms of education, class, and access to readership, just like them. So in shutting out any discussion or criticism of broad trends in Indo-Anglian writing, writers like Chandra also reject a larger relevant critique of their work.

## Indo-Anglian Writing and the Search for Authenticity

Indo-Anglian authors are not just popular; they are seen as high literary writers, and one could argue, as a group, they are one of the most complex and varied group of writers to appear in the last two decades. Toward the

end of the twentieth century they entered into substantive debates about definitions of religion, democracy, free speech, migration, revisionist history, and even globalization, as it impacted their own Indo-Anglian approaches, and even their lives. To accuse them of deracination and inauthenticity is slightly "parochial" as Rushdie claims, but it also touches on the resentments that their cosmopolitan status gives them, which is of being global or above national identity, at a time when nationalism is being hijacked by highly parochial forces in almost all countries of the subcontinent. With the increased size and visibility of the Indian diaspora in Europe and the United States, writers like Rushdie, Mistry, and Lahiri also act as representatives of and interlocutors for the diaspora. So the question of their audience and origin, their language and form, is also a question about globalization and its links to ethnic and national identity. It is not unfair to say that their cosmopolitanism is often read as signifying certain desirable aspects of hybridity and difference, but in a safe, apolitical way, and that contributes, much as Chandra would want to ignore the fact, to their popularity.

The charge of parochial, that is, the supposedly apolitical politics of postcolonial postmodernity, and the assiduous cultivation of reading tastes that favor cosmopolitan ethnic writers, draws in the question of global audiences. These writers are celebrated not only because they are new and interesting (questionable categories by themselves), but also because, as explained above, their writing ultimately comforts and absolves the global reader in its careful blend of exoticism and the familiar. It often draws on aspects of travel writing and East-meets-West romanticism that is exciting, progressive, and palliative. For example, Pankaj Mishra's *The Romantics* is a narrative about Samar, a young Indian from Allahabad and his complicated relationship with Catherine, a worldlier French woman who is already in another relationship. A subplot charts the evolution of his political consciousness, the nexus of unemployment, corruption, and violence in India. Samar's emotional maturity is catalyzed by his encounter with Catherine, who represents his encounter with a world outside the limits of his middle class upbringing. But his political maturity and his understanding of India are prompted by his encounters with Rajesh, a "hired gun" who once harbored dreams of becoming an intellectual like Samar. It is arguable that it is the latter, along with Samar's autodidactic encounter with the nineteenth century *bildungsroman* (Stendhal) that proves to be of lasting value as Samar develops into a writer. But the reviews of the novel in the *New York Times* and the *TLS* concentrated on the

romantic international relationship rather than seeing it as one element of a complex *bildungsroman*, because it is the cross-cultural encounter which will ultimately sell the book, especially in the West. The developmental trope at the heart of the novel—that of a caste-bound young Hindu living in Banaras (the latter a synecdoche for Hinduism in general) and his erotic infatuation with high nineteenth century European culture—can be read in two ways. One, most obviously, that it repeats an enlightenment trope found at its worst in the rhetoric of a "civilizing mission" of colonialism. But more interestingly in terms of readership, the focus on the heterosexual romantic relationship over any other in the novel proves the enduring popularity of that very trope as a metaphor of the bi-ethnic encounter. Amit Chaudhuri is right when he says that the postcolonial novel "becomes a trope for an ideal hybridity by which the west celebrates not so much Indianness, whatever that infinitely complex thing is, but its own historical quest, its reinterpretation of itself."[12] Thus Chaudhuri shifts the burden of the explanation onto an examination of audience and markets in place of the literature itself, unlike Rushdie and Chandra above. That there is an absence of any discussion on readership in their work brings up interesting questions of ethnicity and authenticity in reading that we wish to engage with.

Two approaches suggest themselves in a discussion of the ethnic charge of Indian cosmopolitan writers. One is a discussion of method and language, and the other that of audiences and markets. Instead of treating them separately, it may be useful to see them as *related*, not in a simple cause and effect relationship, but in an apparently contradictory way. That is, the Indo-Anglian text arouses expectation and gratification of working through difference, but assuages anxiety by providing an unexpected familiarity through language (and characters), and themes, which defuse that difficulty. This double action of difference and familiarity gives this genre a higher "literary" value than say, an American or English *bildungsroman* or family saga. Even as these novels are easily classified as cosmopolitan, their precise ethno-national aura makes them marketable. In Chaudhuri's terms, "although the emphasis on the plural and the multivocal . . . is postmodern, the interpretive aesthetic is surprisingly old-fashioned and mimetic"(p. 5).

Other critics have spoken of the similar lure of the category of "world music" or "art films," catch-all market-created terms designed to appeal to the discerning consumer.[13] The Indo-Anglian novel, with its promise of hybrid, internationalist philosophy and linguistic familiarity is similarly

positioned, even as it is possible to argue that such a broad categorization papers over many cracks. The corpus (a loose term) hardly exhibits a uniform genre, and definitely not a uniform style. But what makes it identifiable and thus a perfect product for a globalized world is the way in which a certain interplay of the exotic and the familiar takes place in its most successful examples. Although it is true, as Rushdie says, that the novels reflect the reality of middle-class life in India (or by extension, of South Asians anywhere) with its postmodern-traditional dichotomies and paradoxes, it is also true that it is precisely this interplay which makes the literature of this class so accessible yet different, amusing, mildly shocking, yet harmlessly hybrid.

These requirements for a *certain kind* of Indo-Anglian novel are reinforced by the fact that now, twenty years after the publication of *Midnight's Children*, there exist two parallel lists of Indo-Anglian novels. One list that gets launched simultaneously in India and either London or New York, sometimes only in the West, and then awarded, honored, and reviewed, it makes its way eastwards. The B-list, on the other hand, is launched in Delhi, often by branches of the same international publishers but never makes its way West. Authors such as Githa Hariharan, Manju Kapur, Manjula Padmanabhan, Anjana Appachana, and good writers all, choose a more localized canvas for their books, and are not marketable in the same way as other glamorized cosmopolitan writers. Even a writer such as Rohinton Mistry, despite his delicate prose and scathing political critique, is in a sense, too local to maneuver that cross-over to be located on that sensational international continuum.

The double play of familiarity and difference in the more successful Indo-Anglian novels is most visible in the areas of ethnicity and language (and characters). Ethnicity is configured in the Indo-Anglian novel, as alluded to earlier, so that it is both different (exotic) and familiar. The familiarity can draw upon identifiable traces of colonial habits, clothes, emphasis on familiar literary references that suggest shared cultural provenance, and discourse that may be academic or intellectual and thus suggest a shared international perspective. The exotic may be added through "realist" detail such as descriptions of food, safe markers of exoticization such as the *bindi*, or particular grammar in the speech of some peripheral characters. A character like Zeenie Vakil in Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, is a *bindi* and sari-wearing intellectual who can easily swear and say "fuck" and is libidinously rebellious; or Begum

Samroo in *Red Earth and Pouring Rain*, who is the wife of a Rajput chief but in her thinking is completely "emancipated" and recognizable. Or in *Midnight's Children*, Aziz's cosmopolitan sophistication frames the traditional women characters in his life, his mother and his wife, and makes their strangeness comic and acceptable while their disapproval of him legitimizes him in our eyes. The new cosmopolitan twist is presented by Lahiri, for example, in *The Interpreter of Maladies*, where the exoticism of the South Asian American is normalized by the artless intervention of Euro-American characters, or identifiable locations like Boston, or the familiar ambiance of New England college towns. Herein lies the swerve of a new cosmopolitanism, where mass audiences enter the fictional world that is made recognizable both through the eyes of one like them, and through the merchandizing of the other by global media and technology.

The language in the Indo-Anglian novel is both familiar (English) and alien as Indian inflections and speech patterns go hand in hand with immense sophistication and word play. Rushdie, as in other ways, was a pioneer in this aspect as *Midnight's Children's* single-most accomplishment is its ability to render the patterns of idiomatic Hindustani in English. Most characters,[14] including Saleem Sinai, use the sentence structures and colloquial idioms that are literally translated into English. It would not be hyperbolic to call the result a new language that combines a world language (English) with the language of Britain's largest former colony to appeal to a global audience as something new, but seen through the mirror of what is deeply familiar. Divakaruni's *Mistress of Spices* provides a new cosmopolitan corollary to the above example. Even as Divakaruni crafts her world of magic spices with wondrous curative powers, the tale is fully translatable because of the mass audiences' familiarity with such exotica through popular, new age culture.[15]

## Conclusion

These narrative strategies and publishing industry details are central to attracting a global, cross-cultural readership, more so than the explanation of a universal artistic genius or a belief in uniform middle-class experiences all over the world. At a time in Europe and the United States when tolerance and multiculturalism coexist paradoxically with racism and marginalization, and at a time when publishing empires look for a common denominator,

which will allow a book to be translated (in both senses) and read across cultural quiddities, it is not possible to ignore or refute the fact that the success of the Indo-Anglian novel has a lot to do with the ideological climate that structures their readership. The ideology is structured by the belief that in a unipolar world, toleration and respect for diversity are important, while inequality and untranslatability are irritants inasmuch they do not render the world perfectly lucid. The effort to render comprehensible and transparent while maintaining the texture of difference is central to positioning South Asian works within a global market. Alistair Niven, head of the literature department of the British Council said in 1999, "[The success of Arundhati Roy] has encouraged a huge number of Indian writers to submit their work to British agents and publishers . . . I do not know where it will break. The new writing will come from some other place or publishers will probably suddenly find extraordinary interest in Eastern Europe or Australia or somewhere and India will recede but I don't believe that talent will be any different. It is just that the public focus will shift."[16] Ian Jack, editor of *Granta* said something similar, again taking *The God of Small Things* as his starting point, "The marketing of books had become a big thing. Books had to be properly marketed. She had an agent, David Godwin, who understood that very well . . . . So people did see a lot of new and attractive writing coming out of India which would work in America and this country [UK . . . These were] good conditions in which to publish Indian writing in English, now how much of it is good or bad, who knows? I think the bigger question is how much of it will work commercially." Jack highlights the scale and extent to which marketing and positioning fashions literary style and subject matter and the establishment of a literature as much as theories of straightforward representation. Interestingly, Noy Thrupkaew made the same point earlier, while adding the gender component of the "women of color" potential that publishers exploit in the global marketplace. As we have been arguing all along, the truly marvelous thing about South Asian works (or Indo-Anglian literature) is that it has succeeded in positioning itself as both high "literary" culture as well as a marketable commodity by being positioned upon the double-edged sword of recognition. To shy away from this fact in order to persuade us that praise for artistic autonomy, not criticism, is the correct response to this phenomenon is to really do it a disservice. Instead of demonizing the commissars, perhaps we should actually be talking with them.

## Notes

1. John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (1999), p. 1.

2. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Thought*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

3. Informal phone survey conducted by Rajan in the winter of 2001–02.

4. Quoted in *http://Salon.com* December, 2002.

5. See Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Class, Nation, Literature*. London: Verso, 1994.

6. Appadurai, "Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination" in *Public Culture*, 12, 1: pp. 1–19.

7. Vikram Chandra, "Indo-Anglican Writers: Where the Mind is Without Fear," *The Hindu*, December 19, 1999.

8. Quoted by Vikram Chandra in his essay "The Cult of Authenticity," *Boston Review*, February–March, 2000.

9. Vikram Chandra, "Indo-Anglian Writers: Nowhere and Everywhere," *The Hindu*, December 5, 1999.

10. Mervyn Rothstein, "India's Post-Rushdie Generation; Young Writers Leave Magic Realism and Look at Reality," *The New York Times*, July 3, 2000.

11. Pankaj Mishra, "A Spirit of Their Own," *The New York Review of Books,* 46 no. 9, May 20, 1999.

12. Amit Chaudhuri, "Lure of the Hybrid: What the Post-Colonial Indian Novel Means to the West," *TLS*, September 3, 1999, pp. 5–6.

13. See John Hutnyk's work in this regard.

14. Characters are always drawn along a spectrum of familiarity, sometimes by making them well-traveled sophisticated types, at others by using well-known character types even when the characters themselves are comically strange. Again Naseem Aziz in *Midnight's Children* (the strict mother with a bruised heart) or Padma, the working- class woman with a heart as large as her fleshly self, are good examples of this strategy. Consequently, what the reader in the West may lose through linguistic quirkiness or its renditions, they reclaim through an appeal to the universality of the characters' motivations. Lahiri in "Hell-Heaven" negotiates this technique to make the work fit the contours of the new cosmopolitan category. For her full story, see *The New Yorker*, May 24 (2004): pp. 73–81.

15. For a detailed analysis, see Rajan's "Chitra Divakaruni's *Mistress of Spices*: Deploying Mystical Realism," in *Meridian*, vol. 2, 2: pp. 215–36.

16. Suresh Kohli, "Riding High," *The Hindu* December 5, 1999.

# Index

ASIAN AMERICA

*Before Internment: Essays in Pre-War Japanese American History*

YUJI ICHIOKA, EDITED BY GORDON CHANG AND EIICHIRO AZUMA, FORTHCOMING.

*The Global Silicon Valley Home: Lives and Landscapes within Taiwanese American Trans-Pacific Culture*

SHENGLIN CHANG, 2006.

*Writing Manhood in Black and Yellow: Ralph Ellison, Frank Chin, and the Literary Politics of Identity*

DANIEL Y. KIM, 2005.

*Consuming Citizenship: Children of Asian Immigrant Entrepreneurs*

ISA SUN-HEE PARK, 2005.

*Double Agency: Acts of Impersonation in Asian America Literature*

TINA CHEN, 2005.

*Five Faces of Exile: The Nation and Filipino Intellectuals*

AUGUSTO FAUNI ESPIRITU, 2005.

*Sexual Naturalization: Asian Americans and Miscegenation*

SUSAN KOSHY, 2004.

Dhan Gopal Mukerji, *Caste and Outcast*

EDITED AND PRESENTED BY GORDON H. CHANG, PURNIMA MANKEKAR, AND AKHIL GUPTA, 2002.

*New Worlds, New Lives: Globalization and People of Japanese Descent in the Americas and from Latin America in Japan*

EDITED BY LANE RYO HIRABAYASHI, AKEMI KIKUMURA-YANO, AND JAMES A. HIRABAYASHI, 2002.

*Japanese Pride, American Prejudice: Modifying the Exclusion Clause of the 1924 Immigration Act*

IZUMI HIROBE, 2001.

*Chinese San Francisco, 1850–1943: A Trans-Pacific Community*

YONG CHEN, 2000.

*Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration Between the United States and South China, 1882–1943*

MADELINE Y. HSU, 2000.

*Imagining the Nation: Asian American Literature and Cultural Consent*

DAVID LEIWEI LI, 1998.

*Morning Glory, Evening Shadow: Yamato Ichihashi and His Internment Writings, 1942–1945*

EDITED, ANNOTATED, AND WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY BY GORDON H. CHANG, 1997.

Mary Kimoto Tomita, *Dear Miye: Letters Home from Japan, 1939–1946*

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES, BY ROBERT G. LEE, 1995.

*Beyond the Killing Fields: Voices of Nine Cambodian Survivors in America*

USHA WELARATNA, 1993.

*Making and Remaking Asian America*

BILL ONG HING, 1993.

*Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and the Passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988*

ESLIE T. HATAMIYA, 1993.