Representation of Identity as Cultural Citizenship Practice: Positioning Deepa Mehta, Mira Nair, and Gurinder Chadha in the Context of Postcolonial Theory

Arti Modgill

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

NOVEMBER 2015

Abstract

Recent research on cultural citizenship focuses on issues of identity and belonging in multicultural societies and examines the political, economic, and cultural aspects of community membership in local, national, and transnational groups. Postcolonial research into colonial and neocolonial representations of individual and national cultural identities offers a means of interrogating hegemonic discursive practices of Orientalism, neocolonialism and globalization as they relate to the representation of cultural citizenship.

This dissertation positions the representation of Indian cultural identities in the films of Deepa Mehta, Mira Nair, and Gurinder Chadha as practices of cultural citizenship that attempt to reposition the Indian as a local identity in three Western multicultural societies: Canada, the US and the UK. It draws on postcolonial, gender, and literary theory to textually analyze the discourses underlying the filmic representations of marginalized identities by incorporating the theories of Said, Spivak, Mohanty, and Bhabha into a socio-cultural analysis of Indian identity construction.

The study utilizes the Lacanian theory of the mirror stage within the canonical writings of postcolonial theorists like hooks, Said, Fanon, and Bhabha, all of whom use Lacan's work to describe the splitting of the subject from the Other in order to illustrate the production of the derogatory figure of the Indian as inscribed in Orientalist, and Western/ Eurocentric

discourses. This figure is precisely that produced in and consumed through Bollywood films. Chapter one offers an analysis of the Lacanian subject formation as a moment in which the spectator of these films views the cinematic representation of the *imago* of Indian cultural identity—which in these films can be read as sociocultural constructions of local non-alien figures with community memberships in the adopted homelands—as practices of cultural citizenship acquisition affecting both the alienation of the characters and the spectators.

My second chapter, by revising the feminist perspectives of Spivak and Mohanty, strategically locates the subject position of these diasporic filmmakers as intellectuals to relate the representation of Indian cultural identity as a cultural practice within the praxis of Western film. In doing so, it aims to unearth the Indian woman in the West as the cousin of the subaltern woman, positioning her vis-à-vis a Western and local identity within a multicultural society. In my exploration of the filmmakers' practices of cultural citizenship I relate their community membership to the concept of Dharma as a culturally grounded feminist and postcolonial writing back to the subordinate representation of female Indians in their multiple locations.

In the third chapter I offer that cultural citizenship as a practice of representation of visible minorities constructed by these filmmakers offers a necessary splintering of the dominant national identities of their multicultural societies that illuminates the hybridity of cultural identities and the plurality of national identities. The filmmakers achieve this

revision by positioning the Indian as local of, rather than Other to, multicultural society. The discussion of Canadian multiculturalism in this chapter illustrates that these filmmakers' representations of plurality in their construction of national identities, splinters the representation of white monocultural national identities prevalent in Western multicultural nations.

My thesis contributes to the fields of postcolonial, literary, and cultural theory in the following ways: a) I add to the discussion of Lacan's subject formation, and the mirroring of the Other and the alienation of the immigrant, by examining the *imago* as a reflection of identity which can offer spectators a moment of belonging within an adopted homeland as a cultural citizenship practice; b) I add to the debate on cultural citizenship by relating the historic concept of Dharma to my discussion of the intellectual production of female identities and explicate how its counter-narrative challenges to the gender roles of Indian men and women. Ultimately I conclude that the representation of Indian cultural identity by these filmmakers and the representation of the *imago* as external spectral image of the Indian, immigrant, or visible Other, discloses a discursive strategy of social cohesion in its challenging representation of plural national identities which are local, multiracial, and multicultural.

Acknowledgments

I began this PhD rather naively, and with the determination and belief that great effort is matched by great achievement. However, losing my mother to cancer during this process left me very unsure as to whether desire and effort alone always lead to success. Fortunately, along the way, I was supported by people that buoyed me to finish this PhD, and it is my great pleasure to offer them thanks herein.

I would like to thank my mother, Pratibha, to whom I dedicate this thesis. Mummy, you are the reason I tried to climb higher in life. Your continual efforts to improve all aspects of your own life – along with your love, nurturing, and laughter – will always inspire me to keep moving forward. Om Shanti, Mummy, and thank you, Baba.

My sister, Geeta – we experienced something that we both imagined would be impossible: we kept walking forward. We did so with broken spirits at first, but always hand-in-hand, and it was with your support and encouragement that I was able to complete this thesis. Thank you for believing in me and for you incredible help in realising my dream of completing this work (as well as for all of the fun, long days in the library with me). Million-Zillion.

My husband, Joel – thank you for your support and understanding during the arduous process of completing my thesis. You have always reminded me that to achieve something grand, you must choose to take one step forward every day, and you were totally right. Now it's in writing.

I would also like to generously thank my supervisory team, Bernard McGuirk and Colin Wright, for their support. Bernard, thank you for beginning this journey with me, and for all of the support you offered in the

UK to house me, to find work spaces for me, and to make me feel included at Nottingham. I thoroughly enjoyed discussing new ideas with you and the opportunity to work together. Thank you, Colin, for helping me to navigate the administrative processes as well as for your support and input in completing my thesis.

I would also like to thank my family – Indu Sharma, Satya, Priya, and Dharam Bhardwaj – for their love and support. I want to give a special thanks to my mentor, the late Dr. Victor Ramraj; I hope that you knew how much your support and our meetings contributed to my belief in myself. I miss your friendship. Dr. Clara Joseph, thank you for your generosity and your encouragement to stay the course these past few years, especially in that crucial final hour. Thank you also to Shaobo Xie, Sandra Dewar and Merle Dalip, as well as the students, faculty, and staff of the University of Calgary, who were so supportive in supplying interesting conversations, seminars, and peer-support. Thank you to the inspiration for this work, the wonderful Deepa Mehta; it was a pleasure to discuss this project with you and a highlight to attend the premiere of *Midnight's Children* in Calgary as your guest.

To all of my loved ones and mentors – this success is also yours, thank you, thank you. To my little one, Arya, you are the miracle and oxymoron – brightest soul and grandest little one – who I have the pleasure of being with every day. Now I move forward for me and for you.

Table of Contents

Abstract ii

Acknowledgements v

Table of Contents vii

List of Images ix

INTRODUCTION – THE REPRESENTATION OF IDENTITY AS CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP PRACTICE 1

Methodology 5

The Filmmakers 12

Overview of Chapters 24

CHAPTER ONE – CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP AND CULTURAL IDENTITY ON FILM 27

Cultural Citizenship, Multiculturalism, and Identity 27

Orientalist Representations of Indians 36

Transnational Representations of Indians 42

The Representation of the Indian Diaspora in Bollywood Cinema. 44

The Indian Diaspora 46

"Diaspora" as a Marker of Cultural Citizenship 50

The Commodification of "Indianness" through the Consumption of Bollywood 54

Lacan's Mirroring: The Alienation of the Immigrant and the Need for Cinematic *Imagos* of the Diaspora 58

Recoding Signs: Alienation and Translation 75

CHAPTER TWO – THE ARTIST AS INTELLECTUAL: GENDER AND SUBJECTIVITY 86

Section I 88

The Representation of Women in Bollywood 88

Indian Women in Hollywood 97

The Namesake: New *Imagos* of Second-Generation Men and Women 102
Canadian Cultural Citizenship and the Diasporic Indian Female *Imago*: Deepa Mehta's Sue in *Bollywood/Hollywood*.................... 116
Dharma and Community Membership.. 119
Dharma and Gender.. 122
Section II 127
The Position of the Intellectual According To Gayatri Spivak...... 127
Spivak's Subaltern and her Marginalized Western Cousin 132
Spivak's Discreditable Native Informant....................................... 139
Reproducing Spivak's Strategic Essentialism................................ 142
Western Feminist Approaches to the Postcolonial and Diasporic Subject: The Application of Chandra Mohanty's Feminism to the Study of Film 153
CHAPTER THREE – HYBRIDITY AND NATIONAL IDENTITIES: A PLURAL CONCEPT 179
A Critique of Bhabha's Hybridity and Mimicry 181
Deepa Mehta's *Bollywood/Hollywood* and Homi Bhabha's Theory of Identity 191
Globalization and "Glocalization".. 204
A Critique of Bidirectionality: The Case for the Local 207
Whitewashed Histories: From Multiculturalism to Monoculturalism 214
CONCLUSION.. 225
Applying *Imago* as a Strategy in the Project of Social Cohesion .. 229
WORKS CITED 237

List of Images

Figure 1. Movie Posters for *Fire* (1996), *Earth* (1998), *Water* (2005). Dir. Deepa Mehta. Hamilton Mehta Productions. Web. 27 August 2012. 14

Figure 2. *The Namesake*. Movie Poster. Dir. Mira Nair, 2006. Fox Searchlight Pictures. IMDb. Web. 27 August 2012 20

Figure 3. *Bend it Like Beckham*. Movie Poster. Dir. Gurinder Chadha, 2002. 20 Century Fox. IMDb. C. Parry. Web. 27 August 2012. ... 23

Figure 4. *Lagaan: Once Upon a Time In India*. Movie Poster. Dir. Ashutosh Gowariker, 2001. Aamir Khan Productions. IMDb. HS.Sachdev. IMDb. Web. 27 August 2012 90

Figure 5. *The Namesake*. Ashoke (Irrfan Khan), Ashima (Tabu), scene still. Dir. Mira Nair, 2006. Fox Searchlight Pictures. IMDb. A. Genser. Web. 27 August 2012 108

Figure 6. *Bollywood/Hollywood*. Sue (Sunita) Singh (Lisa Ray). scene still. Dir. Deepa Mehta, 2002. All Movie Photo. K. Woroner. Web. 27 August 2012 118

Figure 7. *Bend it Like Beckham*. Jess (Parminder Nagra), scene still. Dir. Gurinder Chadha, 2002. 20 Century Fox.. IMDb. C.Parry. EW.com. Web. 27 August 2012 134

Figure 8. *Bend it Like Beckham*. Jess (Parminder Nagra), Joe (Jonathan Rhys Meyers), scene still. Dir. Gurinder Chadha, 2002. 20 Century Fox.. IMDb. C.Parry. EW.com. Web. 27 August 2012 136

Figure 9. Movie Poster for *Heaven on Earth*. Hamilton-Mehta Productions, 2008. Mongrel Media. Web. 27 August 2012 156

Figure 10. *Water*. Kalyani (Lisa Ray), Chuyia (Sarala Kariyawasam), scene still. Dir. Deepa Mehta, 2005. Hamilton Mehta Productions. D. Saltzman. Web. 27 August 2012 166

Figure 11. *Bollywood/Hollywood*. Grandma ji (Dina Pathak), scene still. Dir. Deepa Mehta, 2002. All Movie Photo. K. Woroner. Web. 27 August 2012 192

Figure 12. *Bollywood/Hollywood*. Rahul Seth (Rahul Khanna), Kimberly (Jessica Paré), Grandma ji (Dina Pathak), Dir. Deepa Mehta, 2008. Hamilton Mehta Productions K. Woroner. Web. 27 August 2012. 200

Figure 13. *The Namesake*. Gogol (Kal Penn), Ashima (Tabu), Sonia (Sahira Nair), scene still. Dir. Mira Nair, 2006. Fox Searchlight Pictures. About.com. Web. A. Genser. 27 August 2012. 220

INTRODUCTION

THE REPRESENTATION OF IDENTITY AS CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP PRACTICE

> The absence of a robust tradition of political theory on culture and citizenship is problematic, because cultural citizenship is undoubtedly one of the key components of the politics of identity and globalisation…The question and the possibility of cultural citizenship have become major issues of contemporary society as a consequence of globalization, decolonization and multiculturalism. Globalization raises new questions about individual identity and therefore brings into prominence questions of multicultural membership and cultural empowerment through the possession of citizenship status.
>
> (Turner 216)

This dissertation examines representations of Indian cultural identity as cultural citizenship practice by textually analyzing film though an application of postcolonial and feminist theories. I am concerned with the role of film in shaping particular understandings of the self and Other to evoke notions of belonging in multicultural societies, and the role of the film industry, texts, and viewing practices in structuring everyday political and cultural subjectivities. I situate my dissertation within socio-cultural discussions of cultural citizenship and within postcolonial criticism of the representation of identity, which examines the cultural politics of representing Indian diasporas in relation to citizens of multicultural societies with the goal of social cohesion. I align my research with Chen and

Churchill's textual analysis of films which focuses on the "contextual social and historical field to the broader socio-political and economic structures in which film is produced, circulated, and viewed, the aesthetic conditions and conventions, as well as the epistemological structures" and the tradition of Canadian and US scholarship of film which "has focused on the context and discourse of film as a site of the production of archival knowledge" (Chen and Churchill 3).

Specifically I consider the role of postcolonial film as an apparatus of cultural citizenship in multicultural societies in its representation of the localized diversity of cultural identities, while I examine films from three female directors of East Indian background who work in Canada, the UK and the US respectively: *Bollywood/Hollywood* and *Heaven on Earth* (Deepa Mehta), *Bend it Like Beckham* (Gurinder Chadha), and *The Namesake* (Mira Nair). Writing of the significance of Indian and diasporic film, Jigna Desai notes that it is "central to thinking through pleasure and power and how they impinge on the cosmopolitan constructions of South Asian American subjectivity" and "address […] issues of national belonging and citizenship and correlates media technologies with sexual, class, and community politics" ("Bollywood Abroad" 115,116). These films challenge the proliferous derogatory representations of Indian cultural identities in the West originating in the Orientalist texts of colonialism and disseminated through Bollywood cinema which is complicit in

homogenizing and exoticizing projects through the production of a sexist patriarchal rhetoric.

The question of how cultural texts influence citizenship to lead diasporic or migrant populations towards or away from community membership and integration in their adopted homelands is increasingly debated by scholars interested in postcoloniality, multiculturalism, and the politics of transnationalism and globalization.[1] My addition to this discussion and to the fields of postcolonial, literary, and cultural studies consists of the following:

1) Inspired by the Lacanian process of identification, I demonstrate how filmic representations of cultural identity are an exemplary locus of cultural citizenship practices, suggesting that the production of *imagos* or external spectral images can mirror the immigrant's move past alienation to being a "national" of her new homeland as she espouses her cultural citizenship by normalizing her inscription in Western cultures.

2) I discuss the community membership of the filmmakers and connect their practices to the concept of Dharma as it relates to cultural citizenship and a postcolonial writing back to the subordinate representation of Indian women. I draw on the feminist perspectives of

---

[1] See Rajan and Sharma's introduction to *New Cosmopolitanisms: South Asians in the United States at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century* for an enriched discussion of the scholarly fields examining South Asian Diasporas.

Gayatri Spivak and Chandra Mohanty to inform my study, which strategically locates their subject positions as filmmakers and postcolonial intellectuals who produce counter-narratives to patriarchal structures within Indian cultures. I explore this representation of Indian cultural and gender identity as a citizenship practice within the praxis of Western film to unearth the Indian woman in the West as the cousin of the subaltern woman. In doing so, I use Spivak's theory as a method of interrogating Gurinder Chadha's negotiation of gender disparities within the Indian diaspora, and I apply Mohanty's paradigm of feminist postcolonial scholarship to demonstrate Mehta's counter-narratives to both Western and Eastern patriarchal discourses of Indian women. My use of the Eastern concept of Dharma responds to Chatterji's challenge to study texts representing Indian women within an "Indian cultural, mythological and social foundation" (11) [2] and also to criticism of the use of women in Western feminism as a universal category of subjectivity which is examined through a Eurocentric and Western lens as illustrated in my employment of Spivak and Mohanty's theories in chapter two.[3]

3) Using sociological research into multiculturalism in Canada, I theorise that the representation of Indian cultural identities as local nationals responds to the gap between multicultural social policy and the

---

[2] Kevel Kumar supports the critique of Indian films within Eastern theoretical structures.

[3] See Butler, especially chapter one, for an insightful analysis of Western feminism's problematic and Eurocentric universalism of women.

practices of cultural citizenship. Applying Homi Bhabha's theories of identity construction to Mehta's *Bollywood/Hollywood* reveals the existence of plural national identities, which offer a challenge to multicultural, national, and transnational discourses of a homogenous Indian cultural identity. The film's illustration of plural national/cultural identities responds to the shortcoming of multiculturalism to practically promote social cohesion and belonging, a key consideration of cultural citizenship. Moreover, my research demonstrates the need for examinations of the creative potential of popular cultural artefacts to aid the project of social cohesion, and their potential to provide a more effective model of producing plural national cultures than the current, at times inert, multiculturalism policies, which struggle, especially in the setting of Canada, to generate a robust cultural citizenship which challenges the monoculturalism of a white national identity.

Methodology

In her examination of Indian women in film, Shoma Chatterji differentiates between the approaches of British and American feminist scholars: "The American school of thought primarily engaged in what is called the sociological approach, a subjective feminist analysis of films, distanced from the British school of feminist film criticism, rooted and derived from structuralism, psychoanalysis and semiotics which is objective and methodological" (9). I locate my analysis in the middle ground of

Chatterji's delineation of feminist approaches to film analysis, drawing on the discursive approach of postcolonial theory and criticism, which is also congruent with Chandra Mohanty's call for culturally located feminist analysis as distinct from a Eurocentric feminist perspective. I am using a mixed model here, drawing on postcolonial theory and criticism for its focused analysis of the sociocultural subjectivities of marginalized populations within multicultural societies, the self-reflexive strategies of postcolonial feminist scholarship for interrogating the discursive practices of the filmmakers (Spivak, Mohanty, hooks), and the Lacanian psychoanalysis to discuss the identification practices that take place in spectatorship (hooks, Hall, Bhabha). I note here that postcolonial criticism has relied on a self-reflexive analysis of the rules and procedures of its own production of discourse, genealogy, and practices.[4] This is especially true of feminist writing in this field (Spivak, Mohanty, Bulbeck, Belleau, Moraga, hooks). I situate my analysis within this tradition to develop this theorizing project. I also align my perspective with postcolonial feminist scholars to include the interrogation of my personal subjectivity as I locate myself as an Indian, Canadian, female academic, for my social and cultural location

[4] Keenaghan enumerates the need for questioning the subjectivity of the critic and writer along with the empirical analysis of the text as "imperative for maintaining ethical relationships not only to the literary texts we study but also to the socio-political world in which we study them" (189). His reasoning for including self-reflexivity alongside discursive analysis is eloquently mirrored in Sorenson's first chapter on the melancholic aspects of postcolonial criticism's move from radicalism to institutionalization, and also in Bahri's critique of the politics of postcolonial readings in *Native Intelligence: Aesthetics, Politics, and Postcolonial Literature.*

affects my examination of the filmmakers' work in relation to feminist postcolonial theories. I have chosen to return to two key texts of Spivak and Mohanty to analyze the discursive process through which the filmmakers position themselves as intellectuals—an analysis performed in conjunction with a necessarily self-reflexive exploration of my own reading as well as an attention to the historical context of their work.[5]

Chen and Churchill have emphasised that the texts of "film and history produce each other in historically specific and contingent contexts as narrative texts" (3).[6] Their examination of the "ways in which films engage with historical moments in their narrative and visual texts within and against the available imaginaries of their moments of production and circulation" (Chen and Churchill 3) aligns with my own method of textual and discursive analysis, which questions aspects of genre and audience, history and institutionalization, socio-cultural context, and narratives and representation. Boyle and Brayton build on Tasker's perception of film as cultural artefact (see Tasker 2012) and use a textual analysis of film which stems from "a discursive approach that focuses not on deciphering the meanings of a text as if they were embedded in it and awaiting discovery,

---

[5] See also Moodley's analysis of Nair and Mehta's constructions of Indian women using Spivak and Mohanty's strategies of postcolonial feminism.

[6] See also White and also Koshar's two texts examining the historiographical effects of film as sites of the representation of cultural citizenship and the production of historical knowledge.

but rather on how meaning is produced *through* the relationship between readers and texts in specific historical and cultural configurations" (Boyle and Brayton 470).[7] While I do not claim that my analysis of film and filmmakers provides insights into all fields of meaning, I contend that it offers important reflections on contemporary discourses of cultural citizenship practices, specifically regarding the construction of Indian cultural identities as hybrid Western identities within multicultural societies.[8]

[7] Reading film as texts is an approach taken by several scholars. See McKee for a detailed explanation of the techniques of textual analysis, and Dossoumon and Abboushi for an examination of cultural studies of media. Dossoumon discusses textual analysis as a methodological approach to media texts, in particular Hollywood films. Boyle and Brayton also refer the textual analyses of Dyer and Jeffords for examples of Hollywood film as sites of ideology, discourse, and representation.

[8] I have attempted to be consistent in my use of postcolonial feminist strategies and textual readings of these films. I discuss the identification to these films as the audience's negotiated reading of the films as texts and cultural artefacts. Rather than appropriating strategies of reception described by Iser and Livingstone (see two texts from Iser and additional Livingstone text), I approach reception in the sense of Hall's "encoding and decoding" process during the audience's potential identification with characters and narrators, as it is filtered through their particular historiographies. This approach views the films as cultural media texts that are experienced and used by audiences to inform their cultural citizenship; however, this takes place simultaneous to my tracing of the cultural influences of the filmmakers' subjectivities on their texts.

Benwell applies a sociological approach of ethnomethodology to a discursive analysis of diasporic fiction reception to circumvent what he sees as potential weaknesses of traditional reception theory which is somewhat analogous to the methodological approach I utilize in examining my texts. His criticism of reception theory mirrors my own reasons for choosing postcolonial feminist theory over the approaches of reception/reader-response, film criticism, and other psychosocial-focused approaches: "Firstly, the text itself is now neglected at the expense of an explication of reception contexts, with little attempt to draw explicit and systematic connections between content and reception, or to engage with issues of textual interpretation…Secondly, the work carried out within audience studies tends to be reluctant to engage in any kind of rigorous or systematic way with language, despite expressing a commitment to theories of the discursive formation of subjectivities. Finally, and perhaps more crucially, the ethnographic data gathered by these studies tends to be treated as transparent and unproblematic: as a 'report' of reality rather than an account" (304).

Film theory, and in particular psychoanalytic film theory, speculates on the experience of spectatorship using Lacan's psychoanalysis. Christian Metz uses Lacan's theory to point to the moment of identification for spectators of film; rather than such identification occurring in relation to the characters or the narrative, it takes place primarily through the film apparatus of the camera (Metz 49). In "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" Laura Mulvey builds on Metz's analysis by contributing a feminist perspective that interprets the camera's gaze as eliciting a male perspective. Unlike Metz, she places importance on the male gaze (specifically the gaze of the male characters) vis-à-vis the female characters, focusing heavily on scopophilia in which women are in a passive role on screen and the object of spectatorship in relation to the male characters and the audience. Female characters are fetishized in order to overcome the anxiety of castration they generate though the fetishizing male gaze that Mulvey attributes to both male and female spectators in her text "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' Inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun* (1946)." Psychoanalytic film theory identifies the gaze of camera as imparting pleasure or displeasure in the spectator (see Metz, Mulvey in *Visual and Other Pleasures*) Baudry and Williams place limits on the analysis of both the spectators' subjectivity and their personal sociocultural and historical and gendered perspective with which they negotiate the film's narrative and characterization. A review of Metz's and Mulvey's psychoanalytic film theory offers an entry point for identifying the

limits of film criticism in relation to postcolonial cinema: namely, an inattention to inappropriate and derogatory discourses entrenched in representations of cultural identities and also the neglect of audience subjectivity and historical, social, and cultural locations (see Gabbard 11). Prince verifies in his critique of psychoanalytic film theory that "A wide range of evidence indicates that film spectatorship builds on correspondences between *selected features* of the cinematic display and a viewer's real-world visual and social experience" (emphasis added, 80) and in contrast to discursive approaches to film like postcolonial readings of visual media and film. This aspect of contested negotiation is central to the deconstruction of the discourses embedded in film as a cultural product of a certain sociocultural and historical moment in which it was produced. Moreover my particular focus on film as a potent discursive strategy and as cultural citizenship practice takes into account the author or filmmaker and his or her role in the construction of discourse and knowledge of Indian cultural identities.

I examine the process of identification through a sociocultural engagement that suggests that Lacan's process of ego and subject formation can be configured to analyze the conditions of cultural exclusion and citizenship. Informed by Bhabha's theories of mimicry and hybridity, I discuss the power of cinematic representation to provide a metonymic rendering of the immigrant or diasporic subject of a multicultural society as

a practice of cultural citizenship leading to the inclusion of and a feeling of belonging for the spectator. In the same way that psychoanalytic theories consider subjectivity to emerge "as a result of socialization, so psychoanalytic approaches to film can theorise film as a cultural form that induces identificatory effects" (Wright, E-mail). Bhabha's strategy to "talk about hybridity through a psychoanalytic analogy" (Johnston and Richardson 122) reflects my use of Lacan as a method of interrogating the representation of the Othering multicultural societies.

I extract from Lacanian thought without reworking the psychosocial sexual conditioning of spectators—as Metz (1982), Mulvey (2009), and Žižek (2001) have done—as part of an intentional commitment to the strategy of post-structuralist feminists such as Butler[9] and Spivak, who promote the use of feminist theory "without presuming the materiality of the body and its attendant emplaced social identities" (Jaikumar 209). In this case an effective postcolonial feminist analysis of discursive practice goes beyond the boundaries of psychoanalytic film theory. I agree with those critics who view Lacanian analysis as "too top-heavy with abstract theoretical formulations and too focused on the process through which film generates meaning rather than the specific content of a given film" (Gabbard 10) and

[9] For a detailed explanation of the problematic reliance of using women's sexed bodies as the starting point for feminist criticism see Butler's third chapter "Subversive Bodily Acts"

therefore prefer to make use of his frame of identification and subject formation without centering my dissertation from that perspective. Arif Dirlik's work corroborates the idea that the examination of my films as cultural discourses and productions and personal experiential response of the potential of spectator identification with the text reflects a shift in postcolonial criticism (Dirlik 431).

The Filmmakers

The three directors/producers whose works are included in my study are the Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta, the British filmmaker Gurinder Chadha, and the American filmmaker Mira Nair. All three women have produced postcolonial films[10] whose narratives center on Indian cultural identities within Western locations and cultures. Narratives particular to the geographic locations and cultural spaces of the filmmakers result in local representations of Indian men and women within Western countries—a recent phenomenon in popular cultural film production. Hamid Naficy has written extensively on diasporic, postcolonial, and transnational filmmaking. He terms these films "accented cinema," analyzing the potential for these films to challenge Western, Eurocentric and dominant discourses of Other

[10] Sarah Ilott has labeled movies like these "postcolonial films" in "terms of the migrant communities, residual colonial inequalities and counter-hegemonic politics that the films represent," evoking Bhabha's call to uncover the inner workings of stereotypes to strip them of their power arguing that films like *Bend it Like Beckham* gently undermine prevalent "stereotypes, social satires and portrayals of multicultural utopias" (Ilott 1, 3).

cultures, and cultural identities: "The variations among the films are driven by many factors, while their similarities stem principally from what the filmmakers have in common: liminal subjectivity and interstitial location in society and the film industry" (Naficy 10). However, Will Higbee and Song Hwee Lim have written that to "locate diasporic/transnational filmmaking only in the interstitial and marginal spaces of national cinemas" should be rethought as "diasporic cinema, while transgressing and transcending national boundaries, also has the potential of occupying or influencing the mainstream in national and transnational cinema spaces" (Higbee and Lim 10). Indeed, Naficy has theorized that accented filmmakers have the potential to challenge constructions of national cultural identity, which is the case with Mehta, Nair and Chadha's films.

In the case of Mehta, these narratives include stories about people in India, which constitutes a reversal of "writing back" by bringing the perspective of the diaspora to the so-called original homeland.[11] Mehta was born in India and immigrated to Canada in 1973 while in her twenties. Mehta received a degree in philosophy from the University of Delhi and began her career in film by making short documentaries before moving to

[11] In relation to Ilott's emphasis on the postcolonial imperatives of the filmmakers, Punathambekar notes that "'diaspora' and diasporic media production have been privileged sites for understanding the shifting, often disjunctive, relations between cultural production, geography, and identity" ("We are the Martyrs" 68). While both labels "diasporic" and "postcolonial" fit the filmmakers' subjectivities, the impetus of postcolonial media production to provide counter-hegemonic discourses at the local, global and transnational sites of identity politics seems more evident in the label.

Canada where she began working as a screenwriter. Her films include *Sam and Me* (1991), *Camilla* (1994), *Fire* (1996), *Earth* (1998), *Bollywood/Hollywood* (2002), *The Republic of Love* (2003), *Water* (2005), *Heaven on Earth* (2008), *Cooking with Stella* (2008) (co-director), and *Midnight's Children* (2012) based on Salman Rushdie's novel.

Figure 1. Movie Posters for *Fire* (1996), *Earth* (1998), *Water* (2005). Dir. Deepa Mehta. Hamilton Mehta Productions. Web. 27 August 2012.

The 1996 film *Fire* was the first in the three-part trilogy of *Fire*, *Earth*, and *Water*, and it provided such a challenge to the construction of the female identities of Indian women, particularly in its depiction of a lesbian relationship within the confines of a traditional Indian family, that it was met with an outcry from orthodox Hindu groups inside India against the "corrupted portrayal" of Indian women. Mehta chose to represent the women as part of traditional society and constituted their difference within a "normal" Indian family, carefully avoiding casting them as Other, or as members of a counter-culture to what would be considered normative

Indian society. Although the lesbian relationship is shown as a marginalized sexuality in the setting of the family and local community, it is still not constructed as abnormal within the culture.[12]

The release of the third film in the trilogy *Water* led to tremendous resistance and criticism among some sectors of Indian society and simultaneously garnered media support for her work in the West. According to Mehta, the opposition to her films in the trilogy was centered on their narrative interrogation of "the interpretations that current Hindu leaders were giving to the Sacred Texts and in particular as they related to the treatment of women" (*Fire Press Kit* 2). Despite the initial negative reception to *Fire* in India and the death threats against Mehta and actresses Shabana Azmi and Nandita Das, the film "became the highest-selling pirated DVD in India" (*Fire Press Kit* 2).

Mehta again faced opposition to her work during the production of *Water*. Hindu fundamentalists in India led a riot and a mob of 2000 people "attacked and burned the sets of the production of *Water*," again issuing death threats against the director and actresses (Official press kit of *Water* 5). These events eventually forced the production to move outside of India

---

[12]For a detailed analysis of the controversy surrounding the film and an examination of its resistance to heterosexism and Hindu practices in India that oppress and marginalize women, see Shohini Ghosh.

to Sri Lanka. Once again Mehta received support from the West, with Hollywood filmmakers like George Lucas in *Variety* (cited in Yuen-Carrucan) encouraging Mehta to continue her struggle. Mehta's deviation from Indian film traditions to critique the patriarchal structures of Indian culture led to her being temporarily cast out of India.

Although the release of *Fire* was met with challenges issued at the local religious level and the broader political level, Mehta continued to work on provocative films which openly criticize the position of women in Indian society. As a director she has a well-defined agenda, which is to create films that are aesthetically stunning and intellectually challenging. Mehta's construction of Indian cultural identity on film is filtered through a rigorous attention to the metanarratives of tradition and history through which they represent both individual identity and agency (Mehta, *Fire Press Kit* 2). Although Mehta has thought of her own work in terms of its universal appeal, she demonstrates a commitment to locating her narratives within specific cultural and social contexts rather than within the vacuum of universalism: "*Fire* deals with this specifically in the context of Indian society. What appealed to me was that the story had a resonance that transcended geographic and cultural boundaries" (*Fire Press Kit* 2). Mehta's film *Bollywood/Hollywood*, which I examine in chapter three, was shot during the production delay of *Water*. The film, which challenges the gender stereotypes of Indian womanhood, is especially pertinent to my research in

that it represents Indian cultural identity in the Canadian context. In his critique of Mehta's films, Melynk writes that:

> Desai argues that Mehta, as a transnational filmmaker, is always working in a Westernized cultural mode, whether in her Indian trilogy or her Indo-Canadian films. In both cases, there is a 'contested field of the nation'... Yet there is little contestation between the Indo-Canadian community and the rest of Canada in this particular film. The national identity question and the negative consequences for women who are oppressed by traditional beliefs and roles is played out more fully in the Indian trilogy, where Mehta's feminist critique is more evident. (164)

Bollywood/Hollywood is indicative of my argument regarding the relevance of the *imago* or image of Indo-Canadian men and women for representing the cultural plurality of Canadian society and the hybridity of diasporic identities. To reiterate, Mehta's concern with producing this *imago* is born out of her own location as an Indian woman living in Canada.[13]

Like Mehta, Mira Nair was born in India and has dual cultural membership in India and the West. Nair was educated in film studies at Delhi University where she also specialized in sociology before moving to

---

[13] Melnyk supports my assessment of Mehta's films *Bollywood/Hollywood* and *Heaven on Earth* as evident of her cultural hybridity, and emblematic of her own "transnational filmmaking identity" (139).

the United States to continue her studies at Harvard University. Also like Mehta, Nair began her career in documentary filmmaking. She has directed numerous films including *Jama Street Masjid Journal* (1979), *So Far From India* (1982), *India Cabaret* (1985), *Children of a Desired Sex* (1987), *Salaam Bombay!* (1988), *Mississippi Masala* (1991), *The Day the Mercedes Became a Hat* (1993), *The Perez Family* (1995), *Kama Sutra: A Tale of Love* (1996), *Monsoon Wedding* (2001), *Hysterical Blindness* (2002), *Still, The Children are Here* (2003), *Vanity Fair* (2004), *The Namesake* (2006), *Amelia* (2009), and the 2012 film *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. In several of her films, Nair creates narratives of Indians which trace their identity struggles on both internal and external levels. Her film *Monsoon Wedding*, which also became well known for its soundtrack, was one of the first films depicting Indian cultural identities in an English language film that gained public recognition in North America. The film centers on a family's preparations for an Indian wedding and the social and cultural issues—ranging from incest to female resistance of patriarchy—that arise as the preparations take place. In exploring such issues, the film challenges the culturally entrenched Bollywood portrayal of Indian women and culture through an uncomfortable representation of gender problems in Indian society. Like Mehta, Nair constructed a film that "writes back" to the motherland and home culture from a critical perspective, by depicting the characters in terms of their everyday lives rather than as exotic Others. Unlike Bollywood films, which refuse to depict the abuse of women and children—instead

implying that abusive behaviors and practices are unusual and outside of the realm of "normal" behavior in the context of the "good" Indian society—Nair's film portrays abuse within a middle-class Indian family, showing how Indian culture exacerbates the problem as a result of its patriarchal model of family and community. Nair's challenging narratives of Indian cultures and her position as an Indian American woman has led to South Asian critics considering "Nair a type of native informant, offering Western audiences exoticised or abject images of the Third World in the West" (see section on Spivak's native informant in chapter two) and claiming that "her films have come under fire for promoting a type of apolitical and romanticised multiculturalism" (Brennan 303-4).

Like Deepa Mehta's *Bollywood/Hollywood*, Nair's film *The Namesake*, which I discuss in chapters one and two, also represents Indians within Western culture. The film, which was based on the novel of the same name by Jhumpa Lahiri, begins its narrative in India with the introduction of the protagonist's parents, whom it follows through their life as newcomers to the United States, including their experiences as new parents.

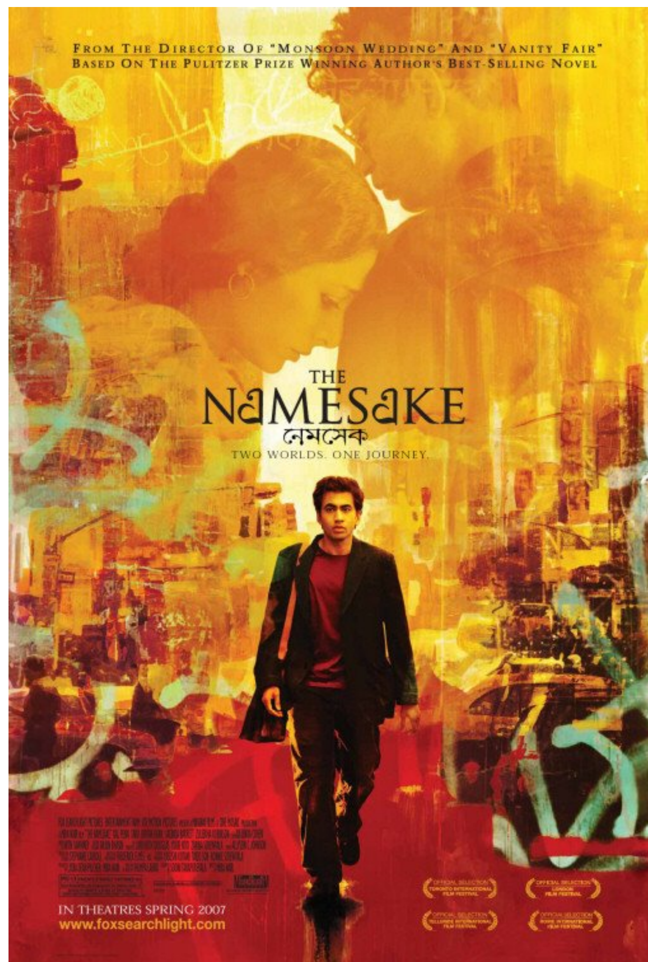

Figure 2. *The Namesake*. Movie Poster. Dir. Mira Nair, 2006.
Fox Searchlight Pictures. IMDb. Web. 27 August 2012.

As it also follows the lives of their children, second-generation immigrants, as they move in and out of the subcultures that inform their identities as Americans and as Indians it brings out the novel's transnational theme in which Lahiri's central characters "lack the luxury of completely possessing and belonging to the place where they live" (Leyda quoted in Abboushi 172). The film deconstructs the stereotypes of Indian cultural identity through its depiction of the changing experiences and desires of the characters.

As I pointed out in my introduction to Mehta and Nair, both women share dual community membership—citizenship in Indian and Western cultures—in common.[14] However, British director Gurinder Chadha differs from both Mehta and Nair as a second-generation British Asian woman rather than emigrant of India. Chadha was born in Nairobi, Kenya, and was part of the Indian diaspora in East Africa. In 1963, at the age of two she moved with her parents to the United Kingdom and like many Indians leaving Africa moved to Southall in West London. She earned her degree at the University of East Anglia before attending the London College of Printing in 1984 to study radio journalism. Chadha then worked as a BBC Radio reporter before moving into work in television and then film. Chadha's films include *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993), *Bend It Like Beckham* (2002), *Bride and Prejudice* (2004), *The Mistress of Spices* (2005), *Paris, je t'aime* (2006), *Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging* (2008), and *It's a Wonderful Afterlife* (2010). Chadha's first feature film, *Bhaji on the Beach*, won a BAFTA Nomination for "Best British Film of 1994" and the Evening Standard British Film Award for "Best Newcomer to British Cinema." Chadha's film *Bride and Prejudice* (2004), a retelling of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, also included Bollywood actress Aishwarya Rai in her second crossover film with Chadha. However, the film has been described as "high

[14] Successful postcolonial filmmakers like Nair are often recalled within the borders of India by critics like Harish Trivedi as "anglophone diasporic Indians" producing off shore Indian Cinema (207). However, as was the case with Mehta, the cultural citizenship of diasporic directors can be revoked when they challenge Indian cultural norms.

concept and rife with cliché as anything ever churned out by Hollywood, but with worse production values and a load of sanctimonious political correctness…and delivered with much finger-wagging about cultural tolerance" by critics such as Manohla Dargis of *The New York Times* (2005).

Unlike Mehta and Nair, Chadha was born a member of the Indian diaspora—a difference which seems to influence her discourse around British Asian culture and cultural identities and her focus on "similarities, rather than differences, between British and Indian culture" (Heinen 65). In her narratives of interracial and intercultural relationships, Chadha favors cultural integration in several of her films, including *Bend it Like Beckham*, which is the focus of my analysis of filmic representations of Indian cultural identity in chapter two.

Like Nair's *Namesake*, Chadha's main character in *Bend it Like Beckham* challenges her parents' traditional Indian attitudes while questioning the culturally acceptable roles for Indian women. However, Chadha's Jess ultimately blends her identity more easily into the Western ideological framework which is inseparable from the film. This appears to indicate a more seamless hybridity for Chadha herself in the construction of an East/West cultural identity. Viewers of diasporic films like Mehta's *Bollywood/Hollywood* and Chadha's *Bend it Like Beckham* have pointed to these types of light-hearted films as "sharing some of the basic problems of

Bollywood, namely embedded assumptions, simplistic solutions, and some stereotyping" (Hirji 184); however, this analysis highlights the films' potentials as cultural citizenship practices.

Figure 3. *Bend it Like Beckham*. Movie Poster. Dir. Gurinder Chadha, 2002.
20 Century Fox. IMDb. C. Parry. Web. 27 August 2012.

Yet all three film directors began their film careers in the West, and have worked their way toward depicting both dominant and marginalized cultural identities on film. While they approach their crafts differently via cinematography, theme, and genre, similarities can be gleaned from the challenges all three pose to traditional gender roles and stereotypical scripts.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter one establishes the relationship of the concept of cultural citizenship to that of multiculturalism, specifically within a Canadian context. It then situates the representation of Indians in the West within the historical narratives of Orientalism as well as within transnational narratives of Bollywood cinema—both of which are sites of limited and deeply problematic representations of the Indian diaspora. Finally, the chapter relates the subjective process of identity formation to potential cultural citizenship practices of social cohesion through a reframing of the Lacanian mirror phase into a moment in which the spectator of these films views the filmic external image of the Indian as an *imago* which is a local non-alien figure with community membership in the adopted homeland. Based on my analysis of the identification of the migrant Indian subject, I further employ Lacan to recode the use of Bengali in Nair's *Namesake* as a retreat from the alienating space of Otherness in multicultural societies.

The second chapter is divided into two parts and begins with an analysis of the representation of Indian women in Bollywood and Hollywood through a comparative examination of the films *Lagaan* (India) and *Mistress of Spices* (US). In doing so, it establishes the predominance of Eastern and Western constructions of Indian women within certain patriarchal discourses in film. The analysis in this chapter utilizes the feminist perspectives of Spivak and Mohanty to strategically align the

subject position of filmmaker as intellectual with the directors' artistic representations of Indian cultural identity. The chapter proposes to unearth the Indian woman in the West as the cousin of the subaltern woman in India while simultaneously situating her vis-à-vis her diasporic identity within a multicultural society. I bring together Spivak's work on scholarly positionality, Nair's film *The Namesake*, Chadha's film *Bend it Like Beckham*, and Mohanty's critique of Western feminist scholarship to ultimately develop my feminist methodology through an explication of Mehta's films *Water* and *Heaven on Earth*. In my look at the cultural citizenship practice of the filmmakers I pay attention to their community memberships and relate their cultural practices to the concept of Dharma, as a culturally grounded feminist and postcolonial "writing back" to the problematic representation of female Indians in the East/West sites of their locations.

In the third chapter I propose that the filmmakers' practices of representing visible minorities enact a necessary splintering of the dominant national identities of the multicultural societies in which they are situated and an illumination of the hybridity of cultural identities and the plurality of national identities. This is done by placing the Indian in the position of a local of, rather than Other to, the multicultural society. I introduce and explicate Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity and focus on a textual analysis of the cinematic representation of Sue in Mehta's

Bollywood/Hollywood. I trace the construction of Sue's cultural identity through the lens of Bhabha's theory to demonstrate Mehta's attention to the slippage of identity and cultural citizenship. In doing so, I carve out another representation of Indian cultural identity within the plurality of potential identities as a move towards rethinking the priorities of multicultural societies aspiring to integrate Others into their national cultures. The discussion of Canadian multiculturalism in this chapter illustrates that these filmmakers' representations of plurality in their construction of national identities, splinters the representation of white monocultural national identities prevalent in Western multicultural nations, as a practice of cultural citizenship which promotes social cohesion.

CHAPTER ONE

CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP AND CULTURAL IDENTITY ON FILM

Cultural Citizenship, Multiculturalism, and Identity

Firstly I would like to define my use of the term "cultural citizenship," so that I can begin to shape and outline the tensions that exist in my application of this idea to the films. In *Culture and Citizenship*, Bryan Turner writes that the term citizenship:

> may be conceptualized as a bundle of rights and responsibilities that formally define the legal status of a person within a state. This formal status is important because it is from this legal basis that individual citizens claim entitlements to national resources through such institutional arrangements as retirement, unemployment provisions, social security and welfare. There is an important reciprocal relationship between the possession of citizenship status and community membership. Yet citizenship on a cultural level goes far beyond the legal limitations of citizenship. (11)

The term "citizenship" traditionally denotes a legal status, and this formal status provides entry onto the playing field where community membership—citizenship on a cultural level—can be sought, negotiated, and/or lost. The legal status is universally understood and defended as important and necessary for people in all societies and within all countries;

however, I will demonstrate that addressing the confusion regarding the necessary negotiation of its cultural dimensions is how modern societies will survive and thrive as they are increasingly globalized. The importance of community membership goes beyond the experience of individuals to encompass neighborhoods, cultural groups, religions, organizations, and so forth, and is directly tied to national cultures through the formation of national cultural identities.

However, the liberal philosophy around the modern concept of citizenship mistakenly thought that the "integration of migrants would follow from the acquisition of citizenship and a non-discriminatory, culture-blind application of the law, once successive generations mastered the dominant language and entered the labor market as equals with the majority" (Miller 61). Cultural citizenship in its conception as a legal status falls short of effective integration of migrants by the assumption that it also leads to belonging without recognizing the cultural differences or practices of cultural discrimination. This problem and the lack of integration of migrants led governments to rethink ideas of citizenship and extend it beyond the legal realm to include cultural citizenship (Kymlicka 725).

Canada's official policies of multiculturalism were first introduced over 40 years ago in 1971 by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Trudeau himself straddled the French-English cultural divide, and he and

his government recognized that the Canadian population was becoming increasingly diversified by an increase in immigrants who would become visible minorities in Canada (Reitz 5). The country, which was already dealing with linguistic cultural divides especially in the East, could potentially face even greater problems with the increase of ethnically diverse people coming to Canada and the resulting cultural conflicts. So Trudeau and his government announced the policy of multiculturalism in an attempt to head off impending problems with cultural citizenship in the country.

In *Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion: Potentials and Challenges of Diversity*, Jeffrey G. Reitz explains that "Multiculturalism as a social philosophy and as a policy suggests that, in an attempt to shape a cohesive society from diverse ethnic and cultural groups, it is better to recognize and value that diversity, and not seek to downplay diversity, or to cast all groups within one single cultural mould" (1). It is important to point out that multiculturalism in Canada was meant to be a policy which would help with the project of shaping the Canadian nation's diverse population into a socially cohesive society, an aim which has largely been ignored or forgotten in recent years. However, critics of multiculturalism, have pointed out its opposite effects in the area of social cohesion even though as a social philosophy it offers the promise of diversity and social harmony.

In Canada the official multiculturalism policy has adopted the rhetoric of celebrating Canada as a "cultural mosaic," which is frequently juxtaposed to what is known as the American "melting pot." Multiculturalism was meant to support the idea that Canadians of all ethnicities can simultaneously live as equals within Canadian borders, and within their own cultural traditions. While the policy was meant to lead people down the path of social and cultural harmony, it seems, in some aspects, to have stalled the process. Reitz writes that,

> Multiculturalism has been advocated by political philosophers on moral grounds. They argue that individuals have the right to maintain their cultural communities, and they argue that governments have a moral obligation to avoid or offset cultural biases inherent in state institutions. But these advocates also put forward sociological or psychological arguments, suggesting that recognition of diversity helps create positive self-esteem and greater social unity. (2)

He then asks, "Does support for ethnic diversity bolster individual well-being and inter-ethnic cohesion as its advocates espoused, or does if foster tension and discord, as its critics contend?" (7) His question is really about whether supporting equal membership in one marginalized cultural community has actually interfered in the ability of some people to gain

membership in national Canadian culture, as it is defined and represented by the country's cultural center.

The question is complex, and critics of Canadian multiculturalism, such as Himani Bannerji and Smaro Kamboureli[15] have pointed out multiculturalism's marginalizing capacity that makes "Other" any represented person or cultural group that falls under the banner of multiculturalism, which is the category the dominant, normative cultural center of Canadian society uses to define itself against:

> Some also argue that multiculturalism is divisive because it perpetuates marginality and inequality. This point was raised in Canada very early by the sociologist John Porter (1965, 1979), and more recently also in a book by the novelist Neil Bissoondath (1994) which created a media stir because Bissoondath is himself a member of a visible minority group. Many today point to evidence of the marginality of minorities, and mounting evidence of inequality and poverty. (Reitz 8)

On the surface multiculturalism displays notions of acceptance, and thus belonging, as well as instantaneous community membership and cultural citizenship. However, as Bannerji, Kamboureli and Dionne Brand have

[15] See Bannerji's influential text *The Dark Side of the Nation* and Kamboureli's text *Scandalous Bodies.*

recognized, it maintains the power imbalance of the center over the margins, the racial binary of white and non-white, and discourse of us and them. For Kamboureli, multiculturalism is partly a containment strategy of the Other and it is a practice of "sedative politics" (82). Similarly, Bannerji points out that "multiculturalism may be seen less as a gift of the state of 'Canada' to the 'others' of this society, than as a central pillar in its own ideological state apparatus" (96).

Yet, even with its challenges, multiculturalism in Canada seems to have greater support and success than in other countries like Australia and the Netherlands, which have adopted multiculturalist policies after the Canadian example, but have recently rejected multiculturalism in favor of finding more active integrationist methods to deal with their diverse populations.

At the 2007 International Conference on Diversity in Organizations, Communities and Nations held in Amsterdam, the keynote speaker, Joris Rijbroek, presented ongoing cultural and media projects in Amsterdam as the city's way of dealing with the increasing problem of cultural clashes and violence. Rijbroek explained that the shocking 2004 murder of Theo Van Gogh, an artist, who had released a short film critical of violence against women in some Islamic societies and was killed by Mohammed Bouyeri, a 26-year-old Dutch-Moroccan citizen, was a watershed moment for Dutch

society and raised calls to government to make changes to the cultural policy of tolerance. The murder of Van Gogh increased the popularity of right-wing xenophobic groups in the Netherlands, a trend seen in other European countries at the time. The move towards extremist nationalist politics in other European nations has "raised questions about these national 'approaches' to diversity, such as various symbolic and legal forms of inclusion or exclusion, citizenship, 'multiculturalism,' or 'assimilationism'" (Reitz 18). The Dutch move towards assimilation, and away from multiculturalism, has not happened in Canada, but state-led ideas supporting cultural homogenization have a way of spreading when conflicts emerge, and Canada is as vulnerable as other nations in this regard.

Thea Dukes and Sako Musterd published a paper in May 2012 entitled "Towards Social Cohesion: Bridging National Integration Rhetoric and Local Practice: The Case of the Netherlands," which reviews the case of Dutch cultural citizenship and social cohesion and the local approaches of the cities of Rotterdam and Amsterdam in building practices of cultural integration. They explain that the Dutch move towards integration over tolerance mirrored changes in social and cultural policies in other European nations toward supporting monoculturalism:

> In many EU member-states, they [multiculturalist models of integration] have been pushed aside to make way for monoculturalist

> models of assimilations…According to Vermeulen (2008), the visions underlying the two types of model result in very different understandings of diversity: an integration model that is based on multicultural vision has an eye for the positive aspects of diversity and pays attention to the structural inequality between groups….In a monocultural integration model, on the other hand, the "own" culture and the national identity are the prevailing standard. Migrant groups and diversity are primarily constructed in terms of problems. (1990)

While Canada still holds onto the first model of multiculturalism which promotes diversity, a landmark study, the Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS), which was conducted by Statistics Canada and the Department of Canadian Heritage in 2003 (no similar survey has been conducted in Canada since 2003), points out several issues in visible minorities' relationship to the assumption of Canadian cultural identity. Visible minorities' problematic assumption of Canadian cultural citizenship is in part due to the responses of survey participants who responded that they have experienced discrimination and societal inequality on the basis of their ethnicity (Reitz and Banerjee 134-145). According to the survey results, inequality and racially-based discrimination affects people's ability to attach to a Canadian identity. The problem is one of belonging and its apparent lack. About the city of Toronto, Canadian writer and critic Dionne Brand writes: "In a place

such as this so full of immigrants, everyone is deeply interested in belonging" (*A Map to the Door of No Return* 71). Canada is not unique in its problem of cultural citizenship and belonging; other multicultural countries like the UK, in which a third of minority citizens "do not think of themselves as British" (Seaford 107), are experiencing similar problems affecting cultural integration and social cohesion.

The debates on governmental policies of citizenship and the cultural attempt to address the problem of integration in scholarly research in the area has extended through the fields of social sciences and law to philosophy and the humanities as we reconceptualize the models of citizenship to address conflicts within multicultural societies. Miller has identified three zones of citizenship investigation as "the political (the right to reside and vote), the economic (the right to work and prosper), and the cultural (the right to know and speak)" (35). My current dissertation probes the influence of the representation of cultural identity on cultural citizenship in the texts and discourses of filmmakers who straddle the East/West divide within their multicultural societies, analyzing the aspect of cultural citizenship that focuses on the discursive "right to know and speak."

The analysis in this project considers Tina Chen and David Churchill's question of "what if we were to think more carefully about the social and political operation of film in this case and the place of film as a

site of production of history and cultural citizenship?" (2). Textual analysis of film and study of its representation of the cultural identity of minorities in the West aligns with concerns around "the participation of film and filmmakers in articulating and challenging projects of modernity" (Chen and Churchill 2) by contesting misrepresentations of Indian cultural identity and gender. This project addresses "the role of film in shaping particular understandings of self and other to evolve collective notions of belonging" by linking the representation of Indians with their identification with images in film that offer alternative plural national identities; it also demonstrates "the combination of the film industry, texts, and viewing practices in structuring modes of everyday political life and subjectivities" (Chen and Churchill 2) by examining the subject positions of the filmmakers and the role of Dharma as an antecedent of cultural citizenship practices.

Orientalist Representations of Indians

In order to understand the project of representing Indian cultural identity and its effect on cultural citizenship, I turn first to Edward Said's theory of *Orientalism* to discuss the historical discourses and representations of cultural identity. Here I look at the postcolonial Indian and the problematic relationship of the Indian diaspora to the resident Indian as it relates to the question of self-definition; utilizing V.S. Naipaul's non-fictional writing as an example, I probe the interference of history and

transnationality in the representation of Indians within Western multicultural societies.

To begin outlining the image of the Indian in Western cultures—in particular, the Indo-Canadian,[16] the British Asian,[17] and the American Desi[18]—the process of Orientalism must be acknowledged. Later as I discuss the need for localizing the cultural identities of people previously named as diasporic, I recognize that the local terminology of "Indo-Canadian" and "British Asian" are effective descriptors and important for combating essentializing stereotypes and recognizing the importance of localizing individuals within the specific social and cultural locations that inform their identities. However, for now it is my strategy to employ "Indian diaspora" to describe people of Indian descent who live and have citizenship in Western nations,[19] a label which I will discuss shortly. In order to look at

---

[16] The term Indo-Canadian is used extensively to refer to Canadians of Indian origin and in the names of many Indo-Canadian community associations, women's groups, clubs, and more recently commercial businesses.

[17] The UK seems to have adopted the least amount of labels for Indians, commonly called British Asians or simply Asians however, as is the case in Canada and the US, people from surrounding countries such as Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are also problematically lumped into the category.

[18] In the US, the labels East Indian, South Asian, American Desi, and Indo-American are used somewhat interchangeably. US census however, uses a broader category of Asian American. The plethora of labels is reminiscent of Naipaul's description of the problematic labeling of Indians in Caribbean.

[19] I note here that the use of Indian diaspora to refer to people in Western nations omits people normally included in the label such as Indian Fijians, Indo-Caribbeans, and Indians in South East Asian countries such as Singapore and Malaysia. This omission is not intended as a rejection of Indians residing outside North America or Europe; it is out of necessity and the lack of an existing label to discuss Indians living in Western/Northern countries. I recognized the exclusion here in my use of the term.

the current production of Indian cultural identities, an understanding of the historical figure of the Indian in the Western imagination is necessary as it has heavily influenced, and continues to influence, the current Western characterization of the Indian diaspora.

The historical figure of the Indian was produced in Western discourse and cultural consciousness beginning with British colonialism and its literature, which filtered into European culture to form part of what Edward Said brilliantly describes as the project of Orientalism in his groundbreaking 1979 book. As I move forward to examine the chosen films and their directors, I will employ Said's work for two purposes: firstly, to understand the influence of history on the current representation of Indian cultural identity in order to demonstrate its effect on achieving cultural citizenship for the Indian diaspora in Canada, Britain, and the United States; and secondly, to examine the role of the directors as intellectuals in the production of their films.

Said's concept of Orientalism relies loosely on Saussure's arrangement of language signs to produce meaning, and emphatically on Foucault's post-structuralist concept of "discourse" and Gramsci's notion of "hegemony." The idea that language systems and their "signs" are produced through the assignment of arbitrary symbols and words to concepts, and that the speaking subject's role and social context must be considered

because language and its meaning is unfixed and constructed rather than inherent, together with Gramsci's and Foucault's work to uncover the relationship of power to knowledge in discourse and the hegemonic tendency of such discourse to reproduce certain power structures in societies, corroborates Said's notion of the West's discursive control over the East (*Orientalism* 94). As "narrative can never escape the discursive level," "all instances of language[s] have to be considered in a social context," as the text is "potentially the site of a struggle" (Selden, Widdowson, and Brooker 146-7).

Said explains that Europe was dependent on the Orient to help define itself and that it used the contrast that it drew between the two to determine its own characteristics. In other words, Europe used the Orient to define what it was (not) via its relation to the Other (*Orientalism* 3). In his introduction to *Orientalism*, Said writes that "Orientalism expresses and represents [Europe] culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, images, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles" (1). Said explains that the Orient, which includes India, South Asia, South East Asia, and the countries that now comprise the Middle East, "is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other" (1). Orientalism allowed European and more recently

American cultures to become the naturalized center of the civil world by rendering them normal and neutral. The so-called Orient, the imaginary site of Eastern non-white cultures, was rendered Other, ethnic, and exotic by comparison. Moreover, this relationship also juxtaposed European cultural superiority to Eastern backwardness, putting the Occident in a more powerful position than the Orient. Said's ideas also stipulate that history, namely the history of Orientalism, continues to significantly impact Western, and even occasionally Eastern, representations of the Orient and the Occident. This history has become so ingrained in the global consciousness that the Orient also helps to uphold European cultural superiority to such an extent that modern Bollywood films, mainly from the 1990s onwards, often idealize Western culture as progressive and more advanced, to the extent that they sometimes show characters on holiday in scenes of undisclosed European locations to evoke the atmosphere of pleasure or privilege in the storyline. Characters recently fallen in love will suddenly, and inexplicably, frolic in summer Swiss meadows or skip through Italian piazzas during song and dance sequences, and the Indian audiences understand that the European backdrop stands in for the ideal place—that is, Europe.

Building on Michel Foucault's assertion that institutions in power have the ability to take a hold of the discourse on a subject to produce knowledge about it (see Foucault, *Power,* 2000), Said writes that

Orientalism is a result of the systematic maintenance of a hegemonic relationship between the West and its Others:

> Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hay has called the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying "us" Europeans as against all "those" non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity is a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness, usually overriding the possibility that a more independent, or more sceptical, thinker might have had different views on the matter. (*Orientalism* 7)

As Said points out, Orientalism, and its process of supplying discourse to support European colonial domination over the Orient, was so pervasive that it was extremely difficult for anyone to take an outside opinion on the "fact" of European superiority. The idea of European superiority and the projection of European fantasies of the Other was so successful that its remnants continue to be seen in modern culture—through globalization and the continued cultural hegemony of the West over the East; in the cultural citizenship of people of Eastern origin in Western nations; in the representation of Indian cultural identity on a global scale; and at home in

multiculturalism projects in countries like Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

Transnational Representations of Indians

As British imperialism was the site of much Orientalist transmission the Indian became one of the key examples of the Oriental figure. The representation of colonial Indians and their cultural subjugation has to some extent survived the colonial period to affect contemporary Indian cultural identity. It survives both on a global scale, in the form of a homogenous Indian cultural identity that is globally accepted and interferes with local representations of Indian diasporic subjects living outside of India. The global figure at times even forecloses on the possibility of a local figure.

The representation of Indian cultural identity in what can be called the global arena can be traced in part to Orientalism and its accompanying literature, the representation of Indian cultural identity within India in the form of Bollywood cinema, and the misappropriation of Indian culture in the West through the commodification of aspects of Indian culture such as food, music, and spiritual traditions. The resulting imagined Indian figure that is seen in the West is reflected as a homogenous culturally backward Other that is too exotic to be local and that is forever tied to the Oriental figure—as such, this figure is too culturally, and I would add, racially

inferior (see Shome 107-128) to be considered part of dominant Western culture.

Western popular culture also circulates (mis)representations of Indian cultural identity. While the culturally familiar figures of this identity have some stereotypically desirable qualities—think here of the scholarly, successful doctors on television shows like *ER*, *House*, and *Heroes*—they are still often relegated to the margins of what is considered culturally desirable, normal, and mainstream; in short, they remain exotic. In the preface to her text *Virtual Orientalism: Asian Religions and American Popular Culture*, Jane Iwamura examines the Western visualization of the figure of the Oriental monk, pointing out that the neo-Orientalist practices of American popular culture shape discourses in "photography, film, television, and other electronic media," giving rise to "products that are ready for immediate consumption" and reinforcing "Orientalism's hold on the Western imagination by limiting alternative possibilities" (5). She reiterates Said's belief that representations of so-called Orientals in popular culture entrench them in a "popular imagination that looks to the magazine page and to the big and small screens" for its understanding of cultural identities. As Said points out, "One aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed. Television, the films, and all the media's resources have forced information into more and more standardized

molds" (Said, *Orientalism* 26). Therefore the production of counter-narratives of Indian cultural identity must contend with not only the historical figure of the Oriental, but also with the neo-Oriental figure in contemporary popular culture.

The Representation of the Indian Diaspora in Bollywood Cinema

There are two figures of Bollywood cinema that affect the representation of Indians in the West: the resident Indian and the diasporic subject. In chapter two I discuss the representation of Indians as it correlates to the filmmakers' counter-narratives, while here I focus on the representation of the diaspora in Bollywood cinema and the contrast between the two, which results in a recasting of the colonial Manichean allegory, defined as an axis of "diverse yet interchangeable oppositions between white and black, good and evil, superiority and inferiority, civilization and savagery, intelligence and emotion, rationality and sensuality, self and Other, subject and object" (JanMohammed 63), this time with the non-resident Indian cast in the position of the Occident.

The diasporic subject is often depicted in Bollywood cinema as a deviant cousin that is too Western and not Indian enough to be considered

Indian (Kaur 206). Hirji states that critics like Dwyer and Desai[20] have pointed out a recent shift in the way the diaspora is being presented in Bollywood however, the changes have not coincided with a decentring of Indian family values (109) as the measure of acceptability of the diaspora, which points to their cultural citizenship and likely hybrid of Eastern/Western family values as a continual marker of their inferiority in Bollywood. While being Western in dress and certain behaviour has become popular in some post-1980 films, with the decentralization of Indian media and entertainment and the simultaneous influx of foreign media, being Western, or for that matter colonial, with complete cultural citizenship in another place outside of India, is habitually represented as a pejorative status within Indian popular culture and particularly within Bollywood film. Regarding the latter:

> The audience is given to conclude that in the West everything is evaluated in terms of monetary benefits, and that people are as cold as their icy climate. The Indian Diaspora is also evaluated according to the extent of its interaction with the local society. The less 'polluted' it is with Western influences, the more Indian they are in their values. (Kaur 206-7)

---

[20] See Dwyer "Bollywood's India" for insightful analysis of Bollywood, and for Desai's additional focus on Indian Diasporic films, see *Beyond Bollywood*, "Bollywood Abroad," and "The Scale of Diasporic Cinema."

In Bollywood films, the cultural citizenship Indians have in Western society directly conflicts with their cultural citizenship in India. Ultimately the diasporic Indian is deemed problematic within Western cultures and within the borders of India.

The Indian Diaspora

Prior to the study of film representations of the diaspora, postcolonial writers such as V.S. Naipaul described the suspicion of postcolonial Indians in the West by resident Indians and the problematic regard for them as performing rather than being Indian. In his 1965 essay titled "East Indian," Naipaul demonstrates the divide between Indians from India and those who are a part of the Indian diaspora, and illustrates the problematic attempt to trace the Indian back to a particular place, time, or origin. What he demonstrates is that there is a heterogeneous Indian rather than the homogenous figure that is often represented in Western media, and that the label "Indian" is at best problematically assigned outside of India's borders.

In "East Indian," Naipaul relates an encounter between himself, a person of Indian heritage from Trinidad, and an Indian from India, thereby tracing the linguistic and cultural implications of being a "colonial" in the eyes of others:

> There was another Indian in the lounge. He was about fifty and very small, neat with homburg and gold-rimmed spectacles, and looking

> packaged in a three-piece suit. He was pure buttoned-up joy: he too was an Epicurean traveller.
>
> "You are coming from—?"
>
> I had met enough Indians from India to know that this was less a serious inquiry than a greeting, in a distant land, from one Indian to another.
>
> "Trinidad," I said. "In the West Indies. And you?"
>
> He ignored my question, "But you look Indian."
>
> "I am."
>
> "Red Indian?" He suppressed a nervous little giggle.
>
> "East Indian. From the West Indies."
>
> He looked offended and wandered off to the bookstall. From the distance he eyed me assessingly. (35)

Even for the Indian from India, the diasporic or postcolonial Indian is an oddity not easily definable as an Indian or as a person from a place other than India. In Naipaul's essay, the diasporic Indian posits an uneasy subject for the Indian man. The diasporic Indian mimics an Indian in appearance but without full cultural citizenship, as he lacks community membership in India, and thus is not of the country, and is therefore performing an incomplete or false representation of what or who is truly an Indian. The man from India assumes his Indianness so thoroughly and without effort that he, rather than his new diasporic traveling companion, abandons the conventions and restraints of his culture and religion by drinking alcohol and eating meat while onboard the flight they share, without any question

of his own Indianness or cultural citizenship. And what is more, he takes it upon himself to congratulate the diasporic Indian for his performance of Indianness by saying:

> My dear sir, I am a journalist and I have travelled. I hope you will permit me to say how much I appreciate it that although separated by many generations and many thousands of miles of sea and oceans from the Motherland, you still keep up the customs and traditions of our religion. I do appreciate it. Allow me to congratulate you. (37-38)

In this encounter, the man from India indicates not only the idea that the diasporic Indian is doing something akin to "keeping up appearances"—so well in fact that he deserves applause for his efforts—but also that those appearances are a performance rather than an expression of his Indian identity. Hence, the diasporic Indian is no longer Indian; he is appropriating Indianness not only in customs and religion, but also in appearance and race. The resident Indian sees himself as representing Indian culture by simply being from India. However, in this encounter a gap becomes apparent in which the diasporic Indian (re)presents Indian culture from a distant place.

Naipaul also explains the complexity of defining a diasporic Indian within his or her adopted place. And, although his essay was written in 1965, it describes the difficulty of labeling, representing, and constructing

the Indian cultural identities of Indians living outside of India, a problem that is still applicable to the modern Indian diaspora. As Naipaul carefully unravels the attempts to label people of Indian origin in the Caribbean, he reveals that the Indian is a figure who seems to have always had problematic cultural citizenship in the colonial world (39-41).

"Indian," like "diaspora," is a label that is riddled with problems of definition, particularly as it pertains to community membership. It seems that the Indian outside of India needs a new label, indeed a new cultural identity, which is separate from that identity that has been prescribed, however (in)accurately, to people on the Indian subcontinent. Both from the perspective of the Indian from India, as demonstrated in Naipaul's essay, and from the perspective of those living in multicultural postcolonial countries in the West, where the Indian diaspora has extended itself, the label of "Indian" has been problematic, and a frustratingly incomplete description of community membership. Still, there must be some way of distinguishing subcultural groups in a multicultural nation when examining or describing them as a cohort. However, as Naipaul states, those expatriates from India are no longer of Asia and a new differentiation is necessary, and it must be localized in order to locate those Indians as cultural citizens of the places they live.

The convention of labelling identities in Canada and other

multicultural nations involves the use of a hyphenated name such as Indo-Canadian, and I too use this distinction alongside American Desi and British Asian, among others, when speaking of people often grouped together as members of the "Indian diaspora." I perform this labelling to denote a subcultural group, as a study cohort, as I would do to discuss Generation Xers as a group—not to attempt to group them as an intrinsic collective of homogenised people. While the need to respect cultural difference is imperative, so too is the need to gain full cultural citizenship into multicultural societies, and I localize them as "British Asians," for example, with the hope that those subcategories do not bar people from being integrated into their adopted land by representing them as Other to the local or national culture. That is why I prefer to include the country, or culture, of diasporic residence in my labelling process, rather than always using the homogenizing term "Indian diaspora." In fact, for many diasporic peoples the existence of a motherland is a mythical rather than tangible place of origin or return (Safran 91), as their cultural citizenship is tied to the reality of their citizenship—as second-, third-, and fourth-generation diaporic Indians in the West—in the countries in which they live.

"Diaspora" as a Marker of Cultural Citizenship

The term "diaspora" has been increasingly employed in cultural studies to refer to ethnic, religious, and cultural groups that are living outside of their countries of historical origin. But the concept has changed

from its original usage, and it is now used to refer to a variety of people who share one common ancestry and live outside of their so-called homelands. As such, "Indian diaspora" is an increasingly common term used to refer to people of Indian origin living outside of India (Jayaram xv). It is thought to have been originally used to speak of the Jewish diaspora—of a people who, prior to the creation of Israel, lacked a historic homeland (Safran 83-84). Cristina Demaria delineates the origin of "diaspora," explaining that it "deriv[es] from the Greek *speiro* ('to sow', 'to scatter'), [and] refers to a people dispersed by whatever cause to one or more foreign destinations, who may never be fully assimilated in their host countries and may harbor thoughts of return" (Demaria 448). This definition, while it may have been relevant to the Jewish diaspora, whose people were not fully integrated into European societies when the label was first applied, has had to be theoretically reworked in postcolonial and cultural studies in a way that "the refashioning of the idea of Diaspora provided conceptual means to understand revived forms of transnational movements and global migration, of emerging identities and oscillating patterns of settlement and integration" (Demaria 450). Indians have made homes for themselves all over the globe, some arriving as indentured laborers, some as highly trained white-collar professionals, and some as naturalized citizens of countries that parents and grandparents chose long before they existed. Thus, the term is a difficult concept to demarcate as it is perhaps experiencing a "dilution of meaning" as it seems to apply to any people who share a

connection to a lost homeland no matter what history they have as immigrants and regardless of their daily lives as cultural citizens of different nations (Demaria 450). The relationship that "diaspora" maintains with a place of origin is one of its most problematic conceptual issues. If we follow the current postcolonial frame of identity as unfixed, always in process and with changing referents, the concept of diaspora collides directly with the idea of identity being based on fixed origins. As Homi Bhabha explains in "The Other Question":

> An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness. Fixity, as the sign of cultural/historical/racial differences in the discourse of colonialism, is a paradoxical mode of representation; it connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition. Likewise the stereotype, which is its major discursive strategy, is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated. (37)

To locate someone as part of a diaspora is always, whether intentionally or not, to propose a fixity of cultural identity and assume that the identity and its signifiers, in the form of accompanying stereotypes, are known. Thus, while the categorization of diasporic groups is an attempt to recognize

difference, it can be a homogenizing gesture. Stuart Hall explains that his concept of identity as always in motion:

> thus invites a move away from the imperializing notion of diasporic people as scattered communities whose identity, defined by essence, purity and authenticity, can only be measured in relation to some sacred homeland, in order to look at their experience as based on heterogeneity and diversity. (qtd. in Demaria 450)

The essentialist tendency inherent in the concept of diaspora is also often ignored in its contemporary usage.

Another conceptual flaw in the definition of diaspora is its inability to distinguish generational and cultural differences within diasporic groups. As I discuss, the aim of attaining community membership in an adopted homeland, of gaining full cultural citizenship, may be confused when the label of diaspora is continually assigned to a group. There is, as Demaria explains, historically the idea that the diasporic group, in never being "fully assimilated into [its] host countries," and those under the banner of diaspora are expected to potentially "harbor thoughts of return" (447). But for those second, third, and fourth generations, the idea that diasporic groups are intrinsically tied to an original homeland, which they are supposed to feel enough kinship with that they have thoughts of returning there, rather than wanting to live in their birth and thus

naturalized homelands, is a depressed outlook which may lead away from social cohesion by denying members of such groups cultural citizenship simply by keeping them under the banner of diaspora. The problem with the label of diaspora meaning anything other than local, and originally hailing from elsewhere, is not as benign as it seems. Rather, like the rhetoric of governmental projects of multiculturalism, which claim to be aiming for the acknowledgement and normalization of cultural difference, the homogeneous categorization of "diaspora" can further alienate people assigned to it.

The Commodification of "Indianness" through the Consumption of Bollywood

In addition to Orientalism, the Bollywood archetype of Indian cultural identity, which has recently made it into the global marketplace, interferes with localized representations of Indian cultural identities in Canada, the United States, and the UK. These films have large film audiences among the Indian diaspora and, albeit to a much lesser degree, non-Indian audiences; however, the profiles of culture and cultural identities in Bollywood films are often recognized in Western cultures as metonymic presences standing in for Indian culture, and for the Indian living next door.

The Indian film industry, which includes mainstream Bollywood films, a small minority of films made by smaller art-house production companies, and non-Hindi films, produces around 1000 films each year. India exports many of those films to Indians in countries in the Middle East, Europe, North America, and other nations with Indian migrant populations (Pillania 1). What is shown in films provides audiences in India with an entertaining fantasy and escape from everyday life, but could not be farther from the reality of how most people in India live. Rachel Dwyer writes of Bollywood cinema:

> It is concerned with entertainment, presented with an excess of emotion and spectacle, whose high points are numerous song and dance numbers. Bollywood – which can be labelled eclectic and hybrid – is happy to mix elements of realism with fantasy (often in the same frame or sequence), anything in fact that will allow it to entertain. ("Bollywood's India" 383)

While Bollywood is understood to be a fantastical escape into an idealized world by audiences in India, for audiences of Indians and non-Indians in the West, the films are sometimes the only tangible link to culture in India. While Indian popular culture, in the form of Bollywood, also stands in for Indian culture for diasporic audiences, for non-Western audiences who are viewing the increasing trickle of Bollywood crossover films, they are a commodity which can lead to false expectations of cultural competencies

and a false understanding of what is Indian. For both Indians outside of India, and especially for non-Indian audiences, Bollywood films and the cultural products inspired by them are consumed in the West and can stand in for Indian culture acting "as a unique repository of India's public imaginings, shaped by fantasy, nostalgia and desire, and it is one of the most productive arenas for us to discern clearer patterns of India's social imaginaries, so we can learn how India sees itself today" (Dwyer 384), which also interferes with the representation of Indian cultural identity in its localized site.

The commodification, and thus misappropriation, of Indian cultural artefacts and cultural identities, once a result of colonial Orientalism, is now experiencing a regrowth and as neo-Orientalism, as Bollywood films provide a metonymic representation of who and what is Indian, as the films and their by-products of music, food, and fashion enter the arena of Western popular culture. The consumption of exotic Bollywood, and the (mis)appropriation of "Indianness," maintains the status of Indian cultural identity as exotic and Other. Globalization, and the addition of Bollywood to global culture—which is at times indistinguishable from American popular culture—adds a new set of tensions by providing another homogenous representation of the Indian that resides in the subconscious as a transnational global Indian archetype.

The commodification and misappropriation of Indian culture and identity also happens in Western popular culture. The resulting misrepresentation of the Indian in Western popular film and television can be seen in television series like *The Simpsons*, and in films like *The Guru* and *Mistress of Spices*, which I discuss in chapter two in terms of the exoticization of the female lead and the failure to translate the references of Indian culture and Hindu mythology for Western audiences, rendering the image of the Indian even foreign, mysterious, and inaccessible. This misrepresentation of the Indian in Western films actually propels the exclusion of the Indian within Western culture, resulting in a corresponding representation of Indians as a homogenous group, and as "immigrants" and "foreigners" (e.g. "Others") in films like *Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle* (US). In short, the misappropriation of Indian culture and cultural identity in the West incites neo-Orientalism, which in turn interferes with the diaspora's entry into cultural centers in localized representations.

Lacan's Mirroring: The Alienation of the Immigrant and the Need for Cinematic *Imagos* of the Diaspora

> Dominant Western conceptions of identity are inextricably bound up with the modern privileging of sight as the primary locus of experience and knowledge, and thus rely heavily on the metaphoric language of vision and visuality. Identity is understood primarily as an image we create so as to assume unique subject positions in social time and space. Our sense of identity brings into view that which sets us apart from one another, the difference between self and other. (Koepnick 41)

The origins of this dissertation lie in response to the question of why audiences take pleasure in watching films with whose characters or narratives they identify and what role race and culture play in that attachment. This question led to an examination of discourses of identification in relation to marginalized identities on screen, which was inspired by Jacques Lacan's theory of identity and subject formation and the work of bell hooks, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Stuart Hall. Lacan's mirror stage informs a discursive analysis of the film representations of the sociocultural alienation of the immigrant in the contexts of postcolonial and global diaspora. The discourse around alienation of immigrant and second generations in these films can be read as problematic cultural citizenship maturation.

In contrast to the unnegotiated process of identification presented in much psychoanalysis of film, this use of Lacan to promote the cultural citizenship of certain spectators occurs concurrently to recognition of spectator subjectivity. Here I turn to bell hooks' concept of "oppositional gaze." hooks states that it was the oppositional gaze that mobilized the construction of images and representation of black people by black people to challenge the "system of knowledge and power reproducing and maintaining white supremacy" in the US (117). In her analysis of the representation of blacks and gender in American film, hooks writes: "Black views of mainstream cinema and television could chart the progress of political movements for racial equality via the construction of images, and did so" (117). In contrast to film theorists' immediate identification with the filmic gaze, hooks identifies the possible site of rupture in spectatorship when the viewer could take "visual pleasure in a context where looking was also about contestation and confrontation" (117). The pleasure in the contestation is a recognition of the agency of spectators to reject negative discourses about themselves, and results in the demand to change the derogatory representations of cultural identity. hooks's theories develop Hall's work on identity representation and visual media and the agency of the spectator to rupture from the identification with the representation.[21]

[21] Hall builds on discursive theory to describe the agency of the spectator and all readers of identity representation. See Stuart Hall, "Encoding, Decoding", and "Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation." See also Manthia Diawara's supporting discussion of race, subjectivity and the agency of the spectator in *Black American Cinema*.

This distinction between psychoanalytic and postcolonial analysis of film is significant as a marker of post-structuralist discursive negotiations and explains the incentive of the filmmakers' production of counter-narratives to the culturally and sexually subordinate representations as I will discuss in chapter two.

To return to Lacan, he elaborated the idea that during an infant's development in the mirror stage, external spectral images or *imagos* are what she unconsciously connects with; that which is seen in the mirror is part of the process of self-recognition, and it is an essential process in the life of the subject and in the formation of the ego. Lacan's theory of the structure of subject formation has been integrated into a postcolonial lens to examine the immigrant or diasporic figure. In *New Postcolonial British Genres: Shifting the Boundaries*, Sarah Ilott explains writes,

> Iterations of the mirror stage function to illustrate the effects of alienation when characters from ethnic minorities are made to experience themselves as Other, which is clearly a result of the binarising effects of an imperial logic….Such a representation of the knowability of the unknowable and binary structures based on the assumed superiority of the western Self is probably best articulated in Edward Said's influential work Orientalism. (69)

Ilott's work points to a relationship between Lacan's mirror phase and a character's process of experiencing themselves as Other and the resulting alienation. Robin Visser also discusses how the migrant's identity as foreigner is reminiscent of the mirror stage in his analysis of immigrant identity in the novel *Breathing*. Visser connects the migrant's difficult negotiation of self-identification and connection to problems with cultural citizenship, and nation to Lacan's child's mirror stage in his book *Cities Surround the Countryside: Urban Aesthetics In Postsocialist China*:

> That these immigrants fail to find a sense of identity has a national as well as personal dimension. In a global era, in which demographic shifts include not only mobility form the countryside to the city, but exit from the nation-state altogether, one's identity becomes radically redefined. The foreigner becomes a mirror for self-identification, reminiscent of the alienated recognition the infant makes in Lacan's mirror stage. (Visser 246)

In both Ilott and Visser's texts there is a sense that cultural identity and community membership of characters is tied together and the tension of cultural citizenship is exposed in the representation of *imago* for migrants. The external image of the self in society and its representation in texts, becomes is critical in the search for full citizenship in that society for the character or immigrant to avoid alienation.

When connected to film directors as producers of representations of cultural identity or *imagos*,[22] and to the audience seeing these images, we see that the production of these filmic images can counter, distort, challenge, or subvert dominant Western cultural identities—which are most often understood to be "white", "Anglo" in the case of Canada, and "Christian"—by helping the Other out of permanent subservience to the cultural centers in so-called multicultural societies.[23] While the narrative of European origins is recalled for Canadian cultural identity and sits in the centre of the dominant culture and dominant cultural identity, we can infer that the margins of Canadian culture, and as such the images of the Other that occupies those margins, are used to define the dominant national

---

[22] Patrick Hogan uses the term *imago* to discuss the representation of African women in his book *Colonialism and Cultural Identity: Crises of Tradition in the Anglophone Literatures of India, Africa, and the Caribbean*: "indigenous women were 'hyper-feminized,' which in this care means assimilated as a group to prostitutes, or rather to a fantasy of the prostitute, an imago of an insatiable, scheming, threatening temptress" (19). In the same sense as Hogan discusses the representation of identity in colonial discourses, a filmic representation of a woman is also an *imago*, which can trap a character's identity in discourses and stereotypes of a subject, whether temporarily or permanently.

I also use of the term *imago* in the same sense Jörg Schweinitz has in his discussion of the representation of actors' off-screen personas and the "stereotypization" of film characters: "As a product of the popular media, the imago is schematically simplified in its complexity and designed to conform to the fantasies, desires, and predispositions of the audience. This imago has emerged from the stores of cultural experience as a stable template of expectation. The imago is a notion that, once established and maintained by the cult of the star, even configures an actor's off-screen image—including the publically communicated representation of and actor's 'real' personality….in regard to the imago of Marilyn Monroe, for example—remains a possible way of appropriating stereotypes" (52).

My use of *imago* also corresponds to Sarah Arnold's application of the term in *Maternal Horror Film: Melodrama and Motherhood*: "the films, I suggest, collapse any distinction between the biological state of pregnancy and the psychical imago of motherhood. The pregnant woman is represented in terms of motherhood, in terms pregnancy is presented in terms of horror and the abject" (154). The representations of cultural identity in these films operate as psychical *imagos* of the Indian diaspora and can be read in terms of immigrant alienation and issues with the attainment of cultural citizenship.

[23] Several scholars have traced the problematic depictions of non-whites in film: See Dyer and Tasker.

cultural identity. Ahmed Elbeshlawy explains in his discussion of a sociocultural construction of American nationhood: “Imagos of America refer to both idealized/deformed imagos of America constructed by the perceivers of America and to the imagos of the perceivers themselves constituted by their very act of reading America” (9). Unlike the relationship between the discourse of Occident and the Orient in which the binary opposition seems to have stayed intact, discourses around nationhood in these films seem to demonstrate that in countries like Canada and the United States, the discourses around identity are moving beyond that paradigm. I would add that—unlike Canada and the United States, whose national cultures represent an immigrant population of European descent rather than indigenous cultures—in those multicultural Western countries, like the UK and France, in which so-called “original” cultures dominate the national identity, the frenetic pace of globalization and immigration means increasing problems of cultural citizenship.

Before exploring the subject of the film representations’ importance for the Indian diasporic figure, some further explanation of Lacan’s psychoanalysis and his concept of the *imago* is necessary. In his seminal paper on subject formation, Lacan outlines his psychoanalytic theory: at six months, he claims, infants enter something he calls the mirror stage. They begin to see that there is a correlation between themselves and an image of

their own body reflected back at them in a mirror. Lacan explains the following:

> The mirror stage in this context *as an identification*, in the full sense analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes [*assume*] an image—an image that is seemingly predestined to have an effect at this phase, as witnessed by the use in analytic theory of antiquity's term, "imago." (95)

Previously the infant had no sense of self, and was pre-ego, seeing no distinction between itself and its mother. Now as the infant sees this external spectral image of the self, which Lacan refers to as the *imago*, it undergoes the formation of the ego and becomes a subject.

In *Subjectivity and Otherness: A Philosophical Reading of Lacan*, Lorenzo Chiesa reads Lacan's theorization of the moment of ego and subject formation as a result of his alienating identification with a series of external images, for "the ego is an other, since the *imago* (de)formation of power absorbs and captures the subject" (15). Thus, in Lacan's theory the ego is formed as a result of the subject's identification with an external image, and cannot exist prior to this moment of identification. Chiesa goes on to explain:

> Lacan reworks this Freudian theme and attributes a 'morphogenetic' function to images—that is to say, he believes that certain images are also to exercise a (de)formative power over the subject's psyche; given their importance, he also deems these images—or, more correctly, *imagos*—to be the precise object of psychoanalytic theory. (15)

According to Lacan, "imaginary identification occurs in the subject through the unconscious assumption of an external image (initially to the subject's own body as reflected in a mirror) in which he recognizes himself" (Chiesa, 15). This notion, that an external image can have a (de)formative effect in the individual's psyche, is an important idea which can be related to my discursive analysis of the cinematic representation of the immigrant and second generation diasporic figure in a multicultural society. Ilott explains that "the detrimental psychological effects on ethnic minority characters who experience themselves as Other as expressed through mirror stages that represent a persistent state of misrecognition and alienation" (*New Postcolonial British Genres* 66). Lacan's unconscious deformative effect can also be extended to the spectator or reader, linking the derogatory representation of cultural identities to Said's concept of Orientalist discourse and the feeling of alienation for the view of reader of the text. As hooks describes in her analysis of black identity representation on film, the spectatorship, or reading of the texts, becomes a potential site of contestation and confrontation because the discourse of cultural citizenship

can be charted in the socio-cultural construction of the cultural identity on screen (see also Visser 246, and Elbeshlawy 9).

As Ilott and Visser have also suggested, much like the infant in the mirror stage, the image of the immigrant can trap the subject also allows her to create a self-identity as a cultural native of her adopted homeland, naturalizing its existence for herself and for others or lead her to a feeling of alienation and reflection of cultural citizenship of immigrants for audiences.

I wish to explain that I use the term “immigrant” as a jarring and simplified way of referring to people, whether first or fourth generation, who find themselves continually in the margins of societies in which they have not moved beyond the alien status of foreigner. Used in this way, the term immigrant serves the dual purpose of mocking the idea of lawful citizenship without cultural citizenship, since the separation makes it impossible for the foreigner to be a full citizen of their adopted homeland. Indeed (re)birth into the alien or foreign culture is what the immigrant subject experiences as she is faced with new systems of signs, with a new discourse which she has not naturalized as has the cultural native. This formative phase in the immigrant’s development is where a new ego becomes trapped by the allegorical *imago* presented in popular culture. The phase in which the subject grows from immigrant to citizen is dependent on her inclusion in

the culture and on the identification that happens with the *imago* of a corresponding cultural identity now present in that culture. As was the case with colonial discourses, if the representation of the subject's immigrant or diasporic identity is negative, then that will affect the subconscious and the message of being substandard in the dominant culture will be imprinted on the ego while the immigrant is relegated to the margins. If the image is absent from discourse of national identity, then the subject will not be able to attain cultural citizenship and will feel an incomplete sense of belonging living in the new country.

Lacan also claims a problematic formation of an ego split in the *subject* that gives rise to alienation:

> However, the relationship between the subject and the external perfection of the specular image will always presuppose an irreducible dialectical tension…[O]n the one hand, the mirror stage allows the subject to individuate himself as ego, on the other, the emergence of the ego constitutes the primary source of the subject's alienated status, since it is based on an alienation in the other, that is to say, a structural disjunction between the ego and the subject. The image that institutes the subject as an ego is the same image that separates the subject from himself. (Chiesa 19)

Lacan's supposition that the *imago* is also responsible for separating the subject from himself does not contradict the discursive analysis of immigrant alienation on film, since popular culture is known to project stereotypical conceptions of cultural identity, or offer, in a better scenario, one story of an individual with which the audience relates. This question of the subject seeing and identifying with the *imago* could be more broadly supported by the audience's need to "relate" to characters to enjoy a film. In "relating" to the characters, the audience has a moment of "*ideal* imaginary unity," which Lacan's child *rejoices* in, and the audience thus *enjoys*, and *rejoices* in, watching the film.

Lacan writes: "The anxiety provoked by the experience of his real fragmentation accelerates the subject's alienating identification with the mirror stage" (18). This alienation or splitting of the subject and specular self, or image, is the identification process the subject has with the *imago*. However, in the case of the immigrant, the establishment of the *imago* on the level of the individual subject has already taken place in childhood; yet the cultural establishment of an immigrant's immature state in the new culture begins the splitting of the subject again but without an appropriate image for the subject to establish an ego of citizenship. The diasporic individual can also have this anxiety of incomplete citizenship because she cannot see herself in the national culture. The production of the Indian, read in terms of Lacan's subjectivity, can be called an *imago* in popular culture,

without which the subject is continually relegated to the margins of the dominant culture, and the subject's ego, from being captured in the external *imago*, is alien in the Western country and made Other to the dominant culture and its citizens.

If the "mirror stage establishes a structural psychic dialectic between the subject and the other that serves as a model for the entirety of the subject's many chronologically successive imaginary identifications" (Chiesa 16), then an immigrant without the *imago* of the Indian, Chinese, Arab, or Kenyan in popular culture will experience further alienation from the dominant culture by not having any *imago* to fulfill the necessities of the establishment of ego (see Elbeshlawy 9, and Visser 246). Without an appropriate *imago*, the ego will always be incomplete and aporetic as the immigrant attempts to join society as a fully developed subject. If we think of the immigrant as having an immature position in the new culture, then we can extend Lacan's mirror stage in which the child has the primordial experience—which, as Chiesa explains, is "the primal basis upon which the ego will later emerge" (16)—to the subjective experience of the immigrant.

Thus *imagos,* those external spectral images that are needed for people to experience cultural belonging, have done well to reflect the dominant classes back to themselves, legitimizing them as full citizens

against the backdrops of their countries.[24] Until recently, these external *imagos* in the canon of visual media did little to include images of marginalized groups, and thus little to include them in the dominant culture and in the national cultural identity. As a result "the very indeterminacy and apparent lack of locatedness of contemporary diasporas can be a s/pace for writing/visualising themselves into being" (Khorana 462). However, as I have explained, without these images, the Indian in the West is always read as alien and unable to see herself in the culture in which she lives and unable to bring her subjectivity fully into being and normalize her presence for herself in her culture of lawful citizenship. If the image is always negative, derogative, or anti-feminist, then that *imago* enters the unconscious to produce a negative self-representation of the immigrant or the "Oriental" that will always assume second-class status to the Western Occidental figure still in a holding pattern of normative discourse and permanent citizenship. Without the specular image, the *imago*, the Indian does not experience unity with the adopted nation or dominant culture and has an incomplete cultural citizenship.

As I have discussed in relation to the recent work of others, Lacan's "looking glass phase" can be adapted to the process of achieving cultural

---

[24] In *Black Skin, White Masks* Franz Fanon describes this practice of mirroring in colonial discourse: "Once we have understood the process described by Lacan, there is no longer any doubt that the true 'Other' for the white man is and remains the black man, and vice versa" (139).

citizenship for the immigrant or diasporic individual, who without full cultural citizenship is always alien. In *Psychoanalysis*, Colin Wright establishes that "Lacan stresses the role of the image in establishing an apparent unity of the self," as "the human infant can become a coherent *I* only by seeing itself in the mirror" (Wright 82, 83). To extend this idea to the hyphenated, marginalized cultural immigrant is not to say derogatorily that she lacks the maturity to move beyond Lacan's mirror stage (as obviously she has already completed childhood). Rather, Lacan's theory can be used to describe the immigrant's ego split as the problem of an experience of incomplete social and cultural selfhood and unrealized community membership, *as* a Canadian, British or American person—without the need to modify the immigrant's existence with the hyphen and without rendering her always alien, always an immigrant, always performing a mimicry.

As Wright explains, the recognition of the *imago* is, for Lacan, "the moment that makes *complete* unity and *complete* identity simultaneously impossible!" (83). This idea, if we believe Hall and other postcolonial theorists, means that the fixity of the subject's identity is never possible and identity is always in process; thus a "complete identity" is always out of reach: "According to Lacan, the subject only emerges in and through the double-bind of the mirror stage, which demands an identification with something resolutely separate from the self, a mere image or *imago*" (Wright 84). This means that the immigrant/alien has now the *ability* to

identify with the adopted culture as all others in the dominant culture which is what is necessary since cultural identity even at a national level is always in process, unfixed, and incomplete. The fallacy of national culture lies in the postulation of its own completion, when in fact it can never remain static, unmoving, unchanging, and non-adaptive to cultural diversity if it wishes for civil harmony and social integration of all its members—a problem that will be discussed in chapter three.

Lacan's idea of *jouissance* is helpful for thinking through the question of nostalgia for the immigrant. As Wright explains, "Later in his career, Lacan argued that we go through life seeking what he called the 'objet a', through which we attempt to recover the pleasure (Lacan calls this '*jouissance*') associated with our early unity with the mother" (84). This *jouissance* is a retrospective fantasy. Immigrants also attempt to recover the *jouissance* that they may have had with their cultures of origin before immigrating, or conversely, for second- and third-generation immigrants, a *jouissance* that they enjoyed before they realized that they felt alienated from the national cultural identity by questions like "but where are you *really* from?"

One thing to note is that the separation that still exists between the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt*—which according to Lacan cannot be fulfilled by the *imago* because it "is given to him only as a gestalt, that is, in an

exteriority in which, to be sure, this form is more constitutive than constituted," and which "symbolizes the *I*'s mental permanence at the same time as it prefigures its alienating destination"—constitutes, when projected over the immigrant, the impossibility of a completed identity because the *imago* has been seen (Lacan 95). All *imagos* in popular culture are of course like:

> the specular image [which] seems to be the threshold of the visible world, if we take into account the mirrored disposition of the *imago of one's own body* in hallucinations and dreams, whether it involves one's individual features. Or even one's infirmities or object projections: or if we take note of the role of the mirrored apparatus in the appearance of *doubles*, in which psychical realities manifest themselves that are, moreover, heterogeneous. (Lacan 96)

The images of diasporic individuals in popular culture will always be incomplete snapshots of (re)presented cultural identities—visible projections which stand in for the moment of gestalt; *imagos*, on the screen and in the culture at large, allow the moment of maturation in which the immigrant subject becomes the native subject.

The *imago* with mature cultural citizenship in popular culture might help the immigrant to come into being as a citizen, the slipperiness of the signifier – that externally performed cultural identity – maintains the

ambiguity of the cultural identity of the subject. Wright explains that "Lacan is specifically concerned with the interrelations between language and subjectivity – that is, he is still interested in how we come to have a sense of self" and that "this sense of self is no more and no less than a mere signifier, prey to the incessant flux of signification" (91). Therefore, cultural identity can never be complete as Lacan "maps the rhetorical terms 'metonymy' and 'metaphor', with metonymy describing the horizontal continuity of signs (with parts standing in for the whole) and metaphor describing the vertical substitution of signs, one for another" (Wright 91). Hence, Lacan would agree that any performance of cultural identity, while doubling for the moment of gestalt in subject formation, is also always a metonymy of presence for the immigrant—as it is for all subjects because an *imago* can only stand in for a part of the completed cultural identity.

In the application of Lacanian ideas to the sociocultural analysis of film texts, the "loss of *jouissance*" which accompanies the entry into the Real as the subject passes into the Imaginary and the Symbolic orders may be a form of nostalgia for the immigrant's loss of origins. The subject look to the imagined homeland as a "retrospective fantasy" (Wright 95), enjoyed with the mother *country* and original culture. The alienation of the immigrant and the quest to enter the dominant culture collide and the attempt to recover *jouissance* might be interpreted as nostalgia for the original country or the culture of origin.

Nostalgia for the Real, or loss of *jouissance*, which I propose is part of the fallacy of fixed original cultures—which are currently represented as national cultures—leads to a further divide between nations and their subjects of cultural difference. I would add that for those in the dominant culture, the Real can never be recalled and the slippages inherent in the performance of the national cultural identity on the level of the Imaginary, and the attempt to reconcile the "illusion of wholeness first glimpsed in the mirror [will] always to fail to fix identity" (Wright 93), will always mean that the national cultural identity of any nation is impossible to secure in place. The aim of discourse should then be social cohesion rather than fixity of cultural identity. If discourses of nationhood were focused on the project of social cohesion and not the task of recapturing a "*jouissance*" as part of their return to original culture, their "entry into the Symbolic [would] enable communication" (Wright 94). Thus, the representation of cultural identity, the psychical *imago* of immigrants, could have a reformative effect on alienation for spectators or readers.

Recoding Signs: Alienation and Translation

In the use of Lacan for discursive analysis of film texts, it is important to note that although I draw comparisons between Lacan's ideas of subject formation in the mirror stage and the possibility for the spectator to experience momentary fulfilment of cultural citizenship via identification

with the *imago* in the adopted society, the former is not neatly compatible with the latter as an explanatory framework. To elaborate, I return to the split in the subject during the mirror stage:

> This moment of the infant's identification with its reflection, even as it makes the pre-oedipal 'I' possible, is also, paradoxically, the moment that makes *complete* unity and *complete* identity simultaneously impossible! Here, we come upon the first split in the Lacanian split subject. The infant, as it becomes a self, is also split from itself because what it identifies with – its reflection – is *only* an image. Very obviously, one's reflection is not oneself, but something exterior, separate, necessarily always different from one's internal life. (Wright 83)

In the examination of the immigrant's need for an *imago* in the dominant culture I suggest that a reflection of oneself within popular culture provides a way for the immigrant to experience him or herself as a subject of cultural citizenship within the dominant culture, but it is still limited as a representation that is bound in a discourse of cultural identity that the spectator can either identify with or reject.

The distinction must be made between the film's *imago* or representation of cultural identity and the individual's internal self-representation of cultural identity. This distinction recognizes the constant

negotiation of an individual's cultural identity without fixing her in an *imago*, which would be a reductionist practice; as the image is only a picture captured on film with particular intended and unintended referents and meanings, it would, if thought of as a fixed metonymic identity, trap the immigrant in a new set of stereotypes. It is not a representation of an untouched internal essence, because all identity is constructed through images/signifiers.

If the first instance of Lacan's alienation is the subject's split from the external image at her moment of ego formation, and when the subject enters the Symbolic order and leaves the Real, the second happens as the subject necessarily uses the language of the family to communicate. The subject, once indoctrinated and born into a language system, must use it as a tool to communicate with others: "Lacan believes that the subject is necessarily alienated in language insofar as language already exists before his birth and insofar as his relations with other human beings are necessarily mediated by language" (Chiesa 37). When the child is born into the family, language is already being used in the home environment and to talk to her. Even when she is pre-linguistic, and even when she gains by becoming a subject in language and submitting to language use, the child is alienated in language, because language also sets her apart from the Real.[25]

[25] From the Lacanian point of view, being in the real is not desirable as he determined that path would lead to psychosis.

Having studied Lacan's concept of subject alienation I ask the following question: Could the immigrant undergo a third alienation from the non-native language? The concepts of identity construction in Lacanian theory and postcolonial studies raise the question of why all the films I am examining contain Indian languages. Have the directors made these choices as a way of relating to the intended audience of Indians, or to make the White audience feel Other?—or does it have more to do with the Lacanian psychoanalytic and post-structuralist idea that language precedes the formation of the person's consciousness and ego, or in this case the language of the dominant culture precedes the arrival of the immigrant. If we are in fact born into language systems as Saussure describes, the point at which the individual undergoes a second alienation by being born into their own families (Chiesa 40) is perhaps followed by a third as a result of migration.[26]

I must clarify that I use the word "language" in terms of Foucault's concept of discourse, viewing it as imbedded with ideologies that are specific to local cultures and societies. Language may be spoken in two locations, but the meaning and contexts can differ significantly within socio-cultural

[26] See Rita Keresztesi's *Strangers at Home: American Ethnic Modernism Between the World Wars* for another application of Lacan's mirror stage to the immigrant experiences of alienation through both the incomplete cultural citizenship in America and the immigrant's alienation via language in America.

and historical settings.[27] Thus, the third site of alienation for the immigrant transpires when she must adapt the language, discourse, and ideology of the dominant culture.

If we extend Lacan's notion that "[t]he child's unconscious is formed by the speech of those who surround him as well as by his own" (Chiesa 45) to the cultural citizenship of the immigrant, then we could consider that the immigrant's unconscious is also formed at least in part by the speech of those around him in the dominant culture and by those cultural artefacts that reflect the speech and discourse of the centre and margins. This birth into language, the second site of alienation, is followed by another splitting of the subject and the third alienation of foreign language and cultural discourse and the splitting of the postcolonial subject (Bhabha, Said). As Said demonstrated with the project of Orientalism, when the hegemonic discourse of the West took hold in the Oriental as well as the Occidental subject, the use of the Western language and discourse by the immigrant formed the immigrant unconscious during the third alienation via language. What is signified to the immigrant via the dominant culture's language problematically produces a feeling of cultural inferiority against the backdrop of Western culture, and an uneasiness of cultural citizenship

[27] On the cultural relativism of language and discourse see Stuart Hall, "Encoding, Decoding."

as the immigrant's subconscious reads the marginal position as inferior to the powerful cultural centre.

I offer that the filmmakers' use of Indian language in their films could therefore be read as an inconsistent but persistent withdrawal to a slightly less alien space. I return to Deepika Bahri's review of *The Namesake* to support my idea:

> The use of Bengali to mark moments of intimacy, difference, and comfort is necessarily absent from the book. One notices in the film, that as time goes by, Ashoke and Ashima speak more and more in English, but their last phone exchange just before he suddenly dies in Cleveland (the city's name interestingly evokes separations and cleavage) is, poignantly, in Bengali. When Gogal returns from Cleveland with his head shaved (as his father had ritually shaved his, scaring Gogal as a child, when his grandfather passed away) he unexpectedly chooses Bengali as the language in which to tell his mother he wanted to do this when she tells him there was no need for it. ("The Namesake" 12)

Importantly, language in the film is specifically used to configure the characters along a spectrum extending from immigrant to American in cultural identity and community membership. As Ashima and Ashoke become more American and less alien in their adopted homeland their use

of English amplifies the change. Conversely, Gogal's sudden use of Bengali also marks his desire to return to a comforting and less alien place, and perhaps indicates his nostalgia for his childhood in which he learnt and used Bengali with his family and father before mostly abandoning the language, his family, and the Bengali culture as he made his way into his adult life. The characters' use of language also demonstrates a significant difference in direction for Gogal and his parents as they fulfill differing needs and enter different periods in their lives.

To explore this difference I return again to the idea of the third alienation of the immigrant. When new immigrants come to the West, as Ashoke and Ashima do to America, they must acquire the local language to communicate and find acceptance in a community. Hence, they position themselves towards the dominant culture, making themselves less alien in their adoption of English. In contrast, Gogal's change to using Bengali marks a shift in his desire to belong to the Bengali community and culture, and to reconnect with his family and his deceased father. His shame that he has turned his back on his family and culture is perceptible in his apology as he sobs into his deceased father's pillow when he goes to collect the man's belongings.

I now turn my attention back to the question of *what*, as filmmakers, Mehta, Chadha, and Nair attempt to accomplish through their presentation

of the *imago* as well as their use of Indian language in their films. How does Lacan's statement "The unconscious is made of signifiers" and therefore "[s]ignifiers form the unconscious" relate to the films or to the directors? What does Nair demonstrate through her use of Bengali? I use the example of Gogal, whose use of Bengali Bahri also sees as poignant:

> Kal Penn's [the actor playing Gogal] somewhat unconvincing Bengali accent notwithstanding (arguably justifiable since he has grown up in America), the sound of another language on his tongue alerts us to a shift in his relationship to his mother and his culture even if we did not understand the meaning of the words without the subtitle. It is the difference of sound that teaches us that words can mean what they do in multiple ways. ("Namesake" 12)

There are two types of signs according to Bahri's assessment of Gogal's Bengali speech. The first signs are arbitrarily assigned, and the audience is also forced to confront whether or not they understand the utterance. The second sign to which Nair draws attention signifies language's power to influence cultural identity construction on an external level; the internal level is marked by Gogal's change of feelings. Gogal's spoken Bengali can be explained in the following way:

> (1) the signified corresponding to the <u>conceptual</u> element—and not to the real object denoted by a referent; (2) the signifier, corresponding to the <u>phonological</u> element—however, the signifier does not simply

> correspond to the sound of an actual act of speech but is, rather, an "acoustic image" of that sound. Signifier and signified are linked together in a bi-univocal way, and thus form a sign. (Chiesa 47)

There is therefore a gap in language and no universality in applied meaning.

As Bahri explains in her analysis of Nair's use of languages in *The Namesake*:

> Once the film has attuned us to the difference of languages and contexts, we also observe that the Bengali name *Ganguli* must be spelled by Ashima and translated on the phone to the intern at the Cleveland hospital ("G like Green"… "N like napkin," etc.) in English words and unfamiliar names for known things. By this time, Ashoke Ganguli has already passed away, existing now but as a name and a story to tell in the linguistic resources available to us. ("Namesake" 13)

Nair's intellectual project is illustrated in her reassignment of language and identity through her artistic production of film. She redraws the sign of what or who is an Indian in America by deconstructing and reconstructing signs. This is exemplified by her recoding of who or what is signified by the acoustic signifier of linguistic diversity:

> We also learn that English and Bengali are not the only choices available to Indian immigrants from Bengal. Moushumi's difference from Gogal is marked through her use of French. Moushumi's cell phone rings to announce "Bonjour Madame," and perhaps it is ironic that her betrayal of Gogal (and their shared languages of communication, English and Bengali) is communicated to us through her exchange with her lover Pierre in French in her mother-in-law's kitchen as they fry samosas for a party. (Bahri, "Namesake" 13)

Nair's use of language to characterize Moushumi as different from Gogal is also indicative of Nair's larger project: to represent the diversity of Indian cultural identities in her work. She departs from expected signs to signify Indian cultural identities, and thus from representations of Indian culture as static or something that is acquired and then held in stasis. If all three directors, as demonstrated by Nair, attempt to redraw the image of the Indian, they also attempt to change the entire sign, and the unit of language and discourse. As Lacan explains, "The signified doesn't just provide an envelope, a receptacle for signification. It polarizes it, it structures it, and brings it into existence" (Lacan qtd in Chiesa 48). Lacan's theory "demonstrates that the signified can never be referred to as one single signifier but is, rather, the product of a complex interaction between signifiers" (Chiesa 48). That signs make reference to other signs for

meaning as part of the (re)presentation of Indian cultural identity via a recoding of signs is evident in the work of Nair, Mehta, and Chadha.

Since these unconscious signifying "chains are created according to the laws of metaphor and metonymy, and are responsible for generating signification at the conscious level," the filmmakers use Indian and English language and images (which in film also act as signifiers, as images provide a visual rather than an "acoustic image") to expand a new sign which is signified in the consciousness of the audience. Nair's film "does not simply suggest that language marks difference but perhaps more profoundly that language is a trap, an escape, and a refuge all at once" (Bahri, "Namesake" 13). As the signifier proceeds the signified, according to Lacan, the filmmakers work at the level of the unconscious, producing new signifiers to create changes in the language and discourse around Western Indian cultural identity.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ARTIST AS INTELLECTUAL: GENDER AND SUBJECTIVITY

> What I wish to analyze is specifically the production of the 'third world woman' as a singular monolithic subject in some recent (Western) feminist texts. The definition of colonization I wish to invoke here is a predominantly *discursive* one, focusing on a certain mode of appropriation and codification of 'scholarship' and 'knowledge' about women in the third world by particular analytic categories employed in specific writings on the subject which take as their referent feminist interests as they have been articulated in the U.S. and Western Europe. (Mohanty 172)

In this chapter, which is divided into two parts, I examine the following question: how has the filmmakers' subjectivity, gender and cultural citizenship influenced their representations of Indian cultural identity? I will look at their work for its counter-narrative properties, as I also examine how their gender is significant to their work by applying a feminist lens to their narratives and subject positions that is informed by Spivak's and Mohanty's postcolonial feminism.

In part one I analyze the stereotypical representation of Indian women in both Bollywood and Hollywood and provide examples through a discussion of the Bollywood film *Lagaan* and Chadha's Hollywood film *Mistress of Spices* (made with her husband Paul Mayeda Berges). These

examples open up my discussion of how the film directors' cultural citizenship influences their work. I also introduce the concept of Dharma as it relates to cultural citizenship to adopt a perspective derived from Eastern ideology and discourse. This attempt to incorporate Eastern thought into my thesis marks a codification of "scholarship" and "knowledge" about Indian women that hybridizes Eastern and Western thought, thus exemplifying a postcolonial feminist approach to academic scholarship that examines subject positions in relation to discursive production.

In her 1984 essay "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse," Chandra Talpade Mohanty states that,

> Any discussion of the intellectual and political construction of 'third world feminism' must address itself to two simultaneous projects: the internal critique of hegemonic 'Western' feminism, and the formulation of autonomous, geographically, historically, and culturally grounded feminist concerns and strategies. (172)

Western feminist scholarship must pay attention to the strategies of hegemonic Western feminism and to *local* feminist concerns and strategies. Therefore, we must examine these filmmakers by first attempting to position them, and their cultural memberships, in order to understand the project of representing diasporic women on film. To accomplish this task, I look at their films, specifically their representation of gender, by deconstructing some of the images that they offer to their audiences. I

address the need for contextually-based feminist readings of non-Western subjects and texts to contest Western-centric feminism, with its presumed universality of the category "woman," and explain its relationship to the films under discussion—specifically in terms of the community membership, and therefore cultural citizenship, of the directors.

I

The Representation of Women in Bollywood

> The ambiguity surrounding sexuality and its manifestation and the incredible weight of figures (especially female ones) from ancient scriptures which define Indian women as pious, dutiful, self-sacrificing, while Indian popular cinema, aka "Bollywood", portrays women as sex objects. (Deepa Mehta in the official press kit of *Fire* 2).

One of the reoccurring themes in each of the films I discuss is the role of women in the family. Historically, the roles of women in Indian culture have been focused on their lives as wives, homemakers, and mothers. As such, marriage and a good married life have habitually been represented as the goal of women, even in contemporary Bollywood films. The representation of the good girl, good woman, and good wife in Bollywood has

often been tied to Indian religious mythology and the stories of the *Ramayana* and the *Bhagavad Gita* and the idealized femininity of mythical figures like Radha and Sita. The archetype of the good woman in contemporary Bollywood cinema is still congruent with the good girl and good wife, and as the Indian woman has been slow to make it into the main narratives of Western or Hollywood films, she has not moved far from the "home front" in mainstream Western popular culture—until recently, when films like these have represented her beyond her confinement in the home sphere.

As I described in section one, Indian cultural identity for the Occident was largely fabricated in colonial discourses. The Indian, or Third World woman, according to Gayatri Spivak, was shown to be in need of saving by white men, and it seems that she has needed saving ever since. The colonial stereotypes of the Indian woman deemed her incapable of achieving autonomy and without need of it. Thus, in colonial literary representations, she was incapable of escaping traditional patriarchal gender roles. In the Bollywood depictions of her, the Indian woman is often constructed as a female companion and the ideal mother figure—just as women were constructed in the ancient Hindu mythologies, which infiltrate discursive representations of women in the genre. In fact, even the Bollywood films that make specific claims of providing counter-narratives to colonial discourses, or of writing back to empire, have done little to represent women as agents of their own lives. I examine *Lagaan* as an example of a successful

Bollywood crossover film that aims to produce a counter-colonial discourse but maintains the industry's conservative representation of Indian women. I contrast Khan's representation of Indian women to Mehta's rewriting of Indian women in her film *Earth*. By including Mehta's films *Earth* and *Water*, I intend to demonstrate a pattern in her work of challenging the traditional construction of Indian women—a challenge that in turn functions as a recurring theme of her cinematic counter-narratives on identity representation. I also include these films set in India as examples of Mehta's participation in the transnational discourses around Indian cultural identities to which I contend she responds and "writes back" as she challenges the dominant representation of Indian women.

Figure 4. *Lagaan: Once Upon a Time In India*. Movie Poster. Dir. Ashutosh Gowariker, 2001. Aamir Khan Productions. IMDb. HS.Sachdev. IMDb. Web. 27 August 2012

Lagaan, which was written and directed by Ashutosh Gowariker, was produced by and stars Amir Khan, and was nominated for an Oscar in 2002 in the category of foreign language film. *Lagaan* retells the history of colonialism in India from the side of the Indians rather than from the British perspective. The film tells the story of how people in the village of Champaner react to the actions of the British command to raise the land tax, the *lagaan*, in their province. The villagers accept a wager in which they will not have to pay the tax if they beat the British army players from the cantonment in a game of cricket, which the villagers ultimately do win. The film takes to task the brutal treatment and exploitation of the Indians by the British Raj, and in the course of its historical narrative a composite national identity is produced and personified in the character of the male protagonist Buvan. The film offers a prominent counter-narrative to colonial discourse, however, by giving the British the active role and the Indians the reactive role. It thus perpetuates the Eurocentrism of historical knowledge in which history is built around Europeans. But filtering the production of history through this type of Eurocentric lens is unintentional in *Lagaan*, and is a product of a larger condition of the writing and exporting of Third World histories. As Dipesh Chakrabarty explains in his essay "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'Indian' Pasts," "The dominance of 'Europe' as the subject of all knowledge is produced in the third world" (224). Nevertheless, Gowariker's film does create a counter-narrative to the myth of British superiority in colonialist discourses, and

the defeat of the British at cricket allegorically signifies an overturning of Indian subordinate cultural status in British narratives.

In contrast to *Lagaan*, Deepa Mehta's 1998 film *Earth* does manage to avoid privileging Britain or Europe in its narrative of Indian history. Mehta's rendition of the India/Pakistan partition during Indian's Independence from British rule in 1947 focuses on the situation of a Parsi family during the conflict that arose between various cultural and religious groups. It is important to know that *Earth* does connect to European history, as it is the British departure from India and partitioning of the country that leads to the fighting; however, the British presence and active role in the narrative are almost a parenthetical aside to the story. *Earth* evades and overturns Chakrabarty's idea that narratives of Third World histories are fixed within European discourses of colonialism.

In *Lagaan*'s opening scene, Buvan, the protagonist, is hiding in the bushes thwarting the attempts of Captain Russell, who is the film's primary antagonist, to hunt small game, throwing stones at the animals and scaring them off before Russell can take a shot. Allegorically, this scene represents the colonizer's violence against the colonized, with the sport of hunting setting up oppositional binaries which are important to the representation of cultural identity in the film. The good/bad binary is blatantly obvious and has the effect of cementing the audience's loyalty to the Indian hero. Buvan is promoted from hero to *national* hero, thus perpetuating the idea of a

national aspect of identity. In *Bollywood: The Indian Cinema Story*, Nasreen Kabir explains that,

> The most effective way of showing a hero's true courage is to set him up against an evil villain. The greater the hero, the greater his opponent. This pairing of good and evil forces is a well established pattern in Hindi films; the villain becomes the hero's partner in carrying forward the film's narrative and provides the reason for a good old punch-up. (81)

Buvan is an embodiment of *Indianness* and is an idealized version of the Indian man.

In her essay "Postcolonial Bollywood," Makarand Paranjape adamantly supports *Lagaan*'s anti-colonial narrative and redrawing of history. Paranjape offers an overwhelming endorsement of the film, claiming that the Indians' defeat of the British at the game of cricket has larger colonial ramifications: "they seize the language of the colonizers to reinscribe themselves with it. Doing so they take control of their own self-representations and thus resist, subvert, and ultimately overturn the designs of their conquerors" (270). Yet while he celebrates the "construction of the nation in its idealized form," it is actually the site of identity disjunction in the film. In contrast to Bollywood's representation of Indians, "Nair and Mehta's female characters are constructed as Indian women with agency and not simply as ideological constructs of nationalism" (Moodley 67).

Paranjape's unblinking support of *Lagaan* stumbles in its inattention to the typecasting in the film, and his own acknowledgement that the subaltern may not be well represented: "Of course, women aren't allowed to play the game, but coach is a woman (Elizabeth) as is the team manager (Gauri, who also feeds the team)" (270). What the film disappointingly does not offer is a move outside the female archetype of the Indian woman depicted in many other Bollywood films. What Elizabeth and Gauri represent in film is stereotypical femininity. Elizabeth is a woman attempting to win her man (Buvan), and that is the reason that she offers to coach the team. She, like Gauri, who is not the team manager as much as she is the cook, is driven by her emotions to help the team. She rejects her own brother (Captain Russell) and is willing to forfeit this important relationship for her love of Buvan, which is pointed out when she is unable to answer her brother's question about why she would turn against him. Kabir quotes Bollywood star Rani Mukerji on the role of women in Bollywood films: "The ultimate goal of the heroine is to get her man in the end. That's the basic idea in all films, right from the 1930's to the year 2001" (59). Elizabeth and Gauri are two Radhas, representing stereotypical women and occupying traditional gender roles; to claim that they represent a resistance of traditional binaries ignores this basic fact.

Unfortunately, while *Lagaan* provides a heterogeneous characterization of Indian men of different castes, religions, classes, and

even (dis)abilities, it falls short of offering a challenge to the traditional role of Indian women and extends this subjugation to British women. *Lagaan* upholds an Indian female archetype which is based in Indian mythology and prevalent in many Bollywood films. Kabir confirms that often there are aspects of Indian epics like the *Mahabharat* and the *Ramayana* that get recycled in the themes and plots of Hindi films (8). The *Ramayana* story of Radha and Krishna is infused into the plot and characterization of *Lagaan*. In mythical story of Radha and Krishna, Radha is married to another man (a detail which ironically points to the divinity of her love rather than adultery), but meets a god named Krishna in the forest one day and falls deeply in love with him. There are actually many women in love with Krishna, and these *Gopis*, as they are called, collect all around him to hear him play his flute. Yet Krishna loves only Radha, and is devoted to her alone. In the *Ramayana*, the relationship between Radha and Krishna represents ideal and divine love, and this story also plays out in *Lagaan*.

However, in *Lagaan*, there are essentially two Radhas, Gauri and Elizabeth, with Buvan as the personification of Krishna. There is a scene in the film in which Buvan and Gauri sing and act out the story of the mythical lovers during the village's holiday celebration of Krishna's birthday. In this scene the *Gopi* that Gauri is jealous of is Elizabeth. Later in the film Buvan declares his love for Gauri, and Radha and Krishna are brought together.

The second case of the Radha/Krishna myth is presented in the final scene of the film. Elizabeth passes by in a procession as the British leave the cantonment and she stops to bid farewell to the villagers whom she helped win the cricket match. In a display of Indian piety she reaches for the feet of Buvan's mother, an act of reverence in India, and is blessed by her. This action reconfigures the desire or love Elizabeth feels for Buvan. The film's narrator states that Elizabeth returns to England with Buvan in her heart, never marries, and remains devoted to him throughout her life. Her love is elevated to the status of the divine love that Radha has for Krishna, who is not only her lover but also her god.

The use of *Ramayana* mythology in *Lagaan* builds on the idealized representation of cultural identity projected in the film, which upholds the tradition in Hindi cinema. Although Buvan has the choice of Gauri or Elizabeth he sticks with tradition and chooses Gauri, of whom his mother approves. Gauri's role as Radha casts her as an ideal woman and as an Indian woman; she is also the only socially acceptable choice for Buvan. Kabir explains that in Hindi cinema, "when it comes to making big decisions, especially that of whom the hero or heroine will marry, the Hindi film always reverts to tradition, demonstrating the respectful return to the status quo that the audience demands" (2). The maintenance of the status quo is actually the maintenance of an idealized Indian cultural identity—based on notions of a fixed identity and *imago*—with which audiences in the West have little chance to identify. Although Kabir asserts that it is "Hindi

film's insistence on tradition [that] enables cinema audiences to define what it means to be Indian, outlining the values by which an Indian must live" (2), it is actually the responsibility of the filmmakers to produce what the film's audience can, or cannot, identify with. *Lagaan*, and Bollywood films like it, promote a set of ideal characteristics of Indian cultural identity that represent the dominant group in India, and the values of marginal groups there and those of the Indian diaspora are rarely, if ever, idealized in Hindi cinema.

In contrast to *Lagaan,* Mehta's *Earth* departs from Bollywood in its representation of colonial history and Indian gender identities. Like her film *Fire,* which, in its depiction of homoeroticism, provides an even more startling departure from stereotypical gender roles for Indian women, *Earth* displays Mehta's intellectual ingenuity in constructing Indian cultural identities which challenge traditional narratives and discourses around culture and gender roles.

Indian Women in Hollywood

In addition to the problematic portrayal of Indian women in Orientalist discourses and Indian Bollywood cinema, the misrepresentation of Indian women in Western popular culture and Hollywood has remained reductive, inaccurate, and based on stereotypes of Indian cultural identities. The marginalized public presence of Indian women in Western popular culture, and their lack of representation as heroines or protagonists in films,

has resulted in few expanded representations of the *imago* of Indian women with which to identify. As I mentioned in chapter one, the representation of Indian women in Western popular culture has been both limited to and based on stereotypes developed through Orientalist narratives. However, Hollywood films have produced a negligible challenge to these stereotypes. The representations of Indian women in the West have also been problematized by the neo-Orientalist globalization of Indian cultural identity and the reductive homogenization of mixed colonial and diasporic identities. The misrepresentation of Indian women in the West has also been complicated by their occasional portrayal as principal figures in Western films, which represent them in ways that are often entangled and yet incongruent with Orientalism's exotic illusions of them.

One such example is Paul Mayeda Berges's 2005 film *Mistress of Spices*, which was jointly produced by Berges and his wife Gurinder Chadha. This film differs slightly from *Lagaan*'s archetype of Indian women in that it is based on neo-Orientalism and the production of a fixed exotic identity. It demonstrates the Western misrepresentation of female Indian cultural identity. As such the film falls short of presenting the intricacies of cultural identity as constructed and in process. Surprisingly, Chadha's involvement in this film, in contrast to *Bend it Like Beckham*, does not help it to avoid clichéd representations of Indian cultural identities. Instead, it is grounded in cultural stereotypes of Indian immigrants and does not seem to offer any counter narrative to stereotypes of cultural identity.

Mistress of Spices begins with the following epigraph displayed across the screen:

> India is an ancient land famed for its myths, magic and traditions.
>
> But when its people leave to start new lives
>
> in the faraway lands of America and Europe,
>
> what happens to the magic left behind?
>
> This is an immigrant's tale about keeping the magic alive…

The film, an adaptation of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novel, is set in San Francisco, tells a story of an Indian woman who runs a spice shop, and depends heavily on exoticism to appeal to its intended Western audience. The portrayal of the shopkeeper, who is bound by tradition and custom to follow the three rules which require her to "never to use the spices for her own desires, never to touch the skin of another human being and, most inconvenient, never to leave her California shop" (Gates E20), offers no resistance to pervasive stereotypes of obedient Indian or Oriental women. Tilo is completely obedient to her pledge and her master until she is attracted to a man who falls off his motorbike outside her shop. She then breaks her pledge as she is overtaken by her new feelings and attraction. Rather than consciously deciding to change her circumstances and her monastic lifestyle and deviate from the governing rules of her master, Tilo is compelled by female desire, which is unmediated, untamed, irrational, and damaging to those around her. Her broken pledge is reduced to

irrational female desire, which she soon realizes she cannot continue to feel or display, and she pledges once again to control herself by denying herself fulfilment of her desires.

When Tilo realizes that bad things are happening to the people around her as a direct result of her betrayed pledge, she sets her spices on fire and stands on top of the burning pile. The scene recalls both sati generally, as a demonstration of her union in body and soul with her husband—in this case demonstrating her devotion to the spices as their mistress—and recalls the scene of Sita's self-immolation to prove her fidelity and purity in her marriage to her husband Ram in the Hindu *Ramayana*. However, the director fails to translate the significance of the fire scene for Western audiences and Tilo's actions implicitly function to contrast the traditional and strange behaviors of an Indian woman to the progressive and normalized behaviors of Western women. The film validates neo-Orientalism through its persistent depiction of Tilo as a backward, exotic, immigrant Other.

Tilo is played by the Indian Bollywood actress Aishwarya Rai, who is a popular persona and celebrity in India. However, it appears that casting Rai in Western films does not suit the actress's Bollywood acting style, which is based on melodramatic unspoken nuances and coy looks. Using Rai to represent an American Desi woman was an unfortunate choice which Chadha and her husband repeat in their film *Bride and Prejudice*, which

attempts to retell Jane Austen's story. Berges's direction of Rai's Tilo shows a calm, one-dimensional, and restrained characterization of an Indian woman, which fixes her identity as an exotic, nurturing, self-sacrificing spice mistress. Berges's construction plays directly into the sexualized images of immigrant women in the West which are the empty content of common stereotypes, and it is my supposition that the film's lack of commercial success and poor reviews may be due in part to the improbability of the *imago* of Tilo or the representation of other Indian characters on the screen.

In *Variety Magazine*, Adam Dawtrey quotes Gurinder Chadha speaking about her husband's film: "Paul feels the book in a different way to me, and he'll make a film that is a bit more resonant to Americans. I'm quite bold about saying I'm British and I'm also something else. In America, that's a bit more complicated, and Paul will be more sensitive to that" (8). Her comment is specious in its inference that, firstly, her Japanese-American husband is more capable of presenting a story of Indian immigrants to Americans than Chadha, an Indian immigrant to Britain, and secondly, that in America to say that one has a hyphenated cultural identity is more "complicated" than in the UK. While Chadha seems to recognize the dangers of homogenizing Indians as a global diaspora given the particularities of cultural environment and national citizenship, any acknowledgment of difference is completely lost in this film, which shows

the Indian immigrant woman in terms that accord with virtually every conceivable Orientalist stereotype.

I will discuss Chadha's position as an intellectual immigrant woman, her representation of British Asian and American Desi women, and her arguably more complex depiction of female Indian cultural identity in *Bend it Like Beckham* further on in this chapter. For now, let me simply state that what both *Lagaan* and *Mistress of Spices* have in common is that they offer narrative representations of Indian women as not merely subordinate to men, but also Western women.

***The Namesake*: New *Imagos* of Second-Generation Men and Women**

Mira Nair's 2006 film *The Namesake* is based on a novel by American novelist Jhumpa Lahiri. Nair, born in India and educated both in India and the United States, currently lives in New York City where she is an Adjunct Professor in the Film Division of the School of Arts at Columbia University. *The Namesake* focuses on the life of the Ganguli family in America, and the film's title points to the protagonist, who is named after the Russian author Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol. The audience bears witness to Nair's finely crafted cinematic display of the struggle of Gogal Ganguli in coming to terms with occupying the liminal space between the Bengali culture of his parents and his American cultural "roots," both of which profoundly shape the constitution of his subjectivity. The film displays his complex and

continuous negotiation of cultural identities as "tensions within selves, with the added complexities of migration and intergenerational cultural discord" (Hawkins and Jackson 191). In his review of the film, "Identity Crisis: Mira Nair's 'The Namesake,'" Richard Alleva explains that "the name 'Gogal' is a magic nexus of life affirmation and world culture" as depicted in the scene in which Gogal's father Ashok is saved, after nearly dying in a train wreck, by "a rescue worker, who at first thought Ashok was dead, [and] noticed the volume [of the Russian author's short stories] trembling in his hand" (18). More important than its life-affirming quality is the name's function in signifying Gogal's identity crisis. The name "Gogal" was meant to be a temporary nickname while his parents decided on his proper name of "Nikhil." When he begins school at age four he insists on being called "Gogal," but he rejects the name and becomes "Nick" when he goes to college, a period of transition when he separates himself both physically and figuratively from his parents and his Bengali culture. He later comes to understand the importance of the name Gogal when his father finally tells him the story of the train wreck. As the anticipated scene finally plays out, Gogal's reaction and the touching moment of connection between them does not satisfy viewers by neatly closing the gulf between father and son. The name Gogal "epitomizes his cultural confusion" for so long, and as Alleva describes, "It's neither an Indian name nor an American one, and the kid feels neither American nor Indian—just plain weird" (18). Alleva further writes that "Gogal steadies himself, emotionally and culturally, by accepting the destiny meted out to him within the larger destiny of his

entire family, [and] is something you can discover only by watching the movie carefully." His observation is inconsistent with his clearer assertion that "Nair sums nothing up neatly, instead conveying everything by tiny and large gestures, memorable facial expressions, startling vistas, truthful comedy and ironic congruence. The images though often gorgeous, contain no simple explanations" (18). If Nair's representation of cultural identity as a negotiation were to be summed up neatly it would offer no challenges to the reductive homogenization of identity. Containment and closure would be antithetical to the representation of cultural identity, which—as defined by Stuart Hall and Homi Bhabha—is always in process and constant flux.

Alleva takes another look at the construction of identities when he notes that "in the movie's foreground are emotional discontents, family fissures, farcical developments, and, above all, the shakiness of identities in a shrinking world" (18). Along with presenting of an *imago* of a second-generation Indian-American man, Nair carefully constructs the female characters in the film, who like Gogal are coping with constant confusion and conflict around their cultural identities. Nair has the additional challenge of confronting the traditional gender roles of Indian women that are expressed in the discourse both inside and outside of Indian culture. In *The Namesake* Nair also takes on the task of deconstructing the idea that marriage and family life are the central goals of Indian women's lives.

This deconstruction of traditional ideas of gender roles and family life is primarily undertaken through the representation of Gogol's marriage. Alleva writes that after Gogal's father has the unexpected and tragic fatal heart attack Gogal "marries an Indian, but this proves a disaster since his wife [named Moushumi] is a thoroughly Europeanized intellectual, sexually liberated, academically chic, and comfortable with her self–invented identity, while Gogal can only flounder about looking for his" (18). However, Alleva fails to mention Moushumi's infidelity and her confusion and frustration with the roles she thinks she is expected to play. Right from their initial meeting as adults, Moushumi displays obvious embarrassment about the failure of her first engagement when she tells Gogal that he must be the only Bengali in the Eastern United States not to know about it. Her immediate reference to her failed attempt to marry emphasizes the pressure she feels to fit into the culturally prescribed role of a Bengali woman while living as an American—in short, her conflict between who she thinks she must be and who she wants to be. Her subsequent behaviour in the film, and her constant demonstration of conflicted feelings, such as her angry statement that despite having been offered a teaching position at the Sorbonne in Paris she will stay in America with Gogal and be "a good Bengali wife," reveal the slippages in her negotiation of her identity as a Bengali-American woman. Moushumi, like Gogal, also "flounders" as she struggles to realize her desires and construct her own identity.

In her film review of *The Namesake*, Deepika Bahri explains Nair's challenge to stereotypical gender norms in her characterization of Moushumi:

> As an alternative to customary representation of Indian womanhood, Moushumi joins Aditi (Vasundhara Das) and the sexy Ayesha (Neha Dubey) in *Monsoon Wedding* and Meena (Sarita Choudhury) in *Mississippi Masala* to offer a complex character whose coordinates have been mapped by the trademark epiphenomena of modernity: migration and/or globalization. No longer content to fulfill dutifully their roles as custodians of tradition, these women might all be said to betray a fragile social structure with the diversity of experiences and choices available to them. (Bahri, "Namesake" 14)

Whether or not Moushumi is likable in her betrayal of Gogal is not as important as her departure from traditional assigned gender roles in both Indian or mainstream North American cultures. Moushumi herself seems to come to the point where her internal desire trumps what has been externally prescribed to her as the life that will best suit her as an Indian and American woman.

Gogal's mother Ashima is another character that Nair depicts as challenging gender stereotypes of Indian women, although on a more subtle level than with Moushumi. When Ashima meets her future husband, she arrives home and serves him and his family tea and keeps her gaze modestly

downwards, behaving in an expected manner, and re-enacting the role of a "good bridal prospect". The scene is so commonplace in Indian culture that it is instantly recognizable by generations of Indians as personal experience of arranged and/or marriage via introduction. However, before Ashima enters the room to which she has been summoned, she sees her potential husband's shoes in the hall and slips them on her own feet. Many years later in America we see Ashima, in a spirit of joviality, revealing to her husband that it was his shoes that won her over. Alleva asks: "But what actually was it about those shoes? The American brand? Or the fact that they fit her snugly, demonstrating that his feet were no bigger than hers? Was it the promise of America that attracted Ashima, or did the snugness convey a happy portent: if the shoe fits, wear its owner—sole mate as soul mate?" (18). Or is it a light moment in the film which demonstrates Ashima's openness to experiencing all the possibilities that life has to offer her, while at the same time foreshadowing the negotiations she will have to make to fit into American life after her marriage?

Figure 5. *The Namesake*. Ashoke (Irfan Khan), Ashima (Tabu), scene still.
Dir. Mira Nair, 2006. Fox Searchlight Pictures. IMDb. A. Genser. Web. 27 August 2012.

Ashima's initial choice to marry and move to America is predicated on a traditional acceptance of the expectation on a young woman to marry—through an arrangement or introduction—someone acceptable to her family. After moving to the United States with her new husband, Ashima has flashbacks in which her former life in India is shown in a glamorous technicolor hue. This detail is important as the scenery of the film reflects her mood and isolation in America. The landscape and the weather in America is almost always uninviting, cold, and dreary, and the audience associates this environment with Ashima's isolation as they read her expressions. What Ashima's environment demonstrates is that family life

does not necessarily lead to happiness for Indian immigrant women. Her happiness is mitigated by aspects of her community life and membership and by the conditions and relationships of family, her own personal interests, and her goals and choices.

As a first-generation Indian-American woman, Ashima occupies a position markedly different from that of both her both daughter and daughter-in-law. The language and laughter of her daughter, and the worldliness of her daughter-in-law, stand in stark contrast to Ashima. She does not attempt to constrain her own daughter, who marries a Black American man, with inherited marital traditions. While her daughter-in-law does feel the pressure to marry an Indian man, she refuses to contain her desires within the expected life of a traditional Bengali woman, breaking her marriage vows and breaking out of the need to be the "good" Bengali wife and woman. Nair depicts the heterogeneity of Bengali culture in the Eastern United States where women and their roles, circumstances, choices, and identities are diverse, in constant movement, and require ongoing negotiation.

In her exploration of the second-generation characters in *The Namesake*, Farah Shariff explains when that the gap between first-generation immigrants and their second-generation children begins:

> Initially unaware of the harsh contrast between Eastern and Western culture, first-generation immigrants discover in the midst of

> raising their children that they send conflicting messages to their children, hoping that they will fit into the new environment yet remain true to Eastern cultural ideals. (459)

This initial split in the discourse around identity affects the alienation of second-generation immigrants, who must sort out the conflicting messages as they struggle to define their values and goals within the contexts of their lives in multicultural Western societies.

I recognize two separate instances of alienation in the psychosocial process of identity production for immigrants. Lacan writes of the first as the disjuncture of the subject when the *imago* is recognized as an external projection of the self. I offer the second as the alienation the immigrant feels from her adopted culture. Shariff quotes Salmar Akhtar's explanation of the immigrant experience:

> Immigration from one country to another is a complex psychosocial process with lasting effects on an individual's identity. The dynamic shifts, resulting from an admixture of 'culture shock' and mourning over the losses inherent in migration, gradually give way to a psychostructural change and the emergence of a hybrid identity. (459)

However, rather than the result of the "emergence of a hybrid identity," as Akhtar suggests, "culture shock" is actually a product of alienation from the dominant culture. Like Lacan's moment of alienation, culture shock

presents the perception of both *the lack* and *the search* for *jouissance*; the old cultural self and non-immigrant self begins in that moment. This search is seen over and over in Ashima and her husband's lives, and is reflected in Nair's portrayal of their isolation within their American surroundings. Ashima's return to India at the end of the film is a return to her former self, a native non-immigrant and non-alien subject.

However, I extend Shariff's psychosocial moment to the second generation and perhaps beyond it—somewhat like W.E.B. Du Bois's double consciousness. The alienation felt by the first generation is not mitigated by distance from the ancestral original culture for the second generation and is repeated as a double consciousness in the adopted country. This moment of alienation is the creation of the double consciousness described by W.E.B. Du Bois in his 1903 book *The Souls of Black Folk*:

> The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa; he does not wish to bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he believes—foolishly, perhaps, but fervently—that Negro blood has yet a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and

> spit upon by his fellows, without losing the opportunity of self-development. (DuBois 365)

There is a difference between the split experienced by immigrants, their children and subsequent generations. I speculate that the first generation's search for *jouissance*/nostalgia and their experience of alienation or double consciousness is different from that of their children. First generations, as demonstrated by the parents in *Bend it Like Beckham* and in *The Namesake*, while struggling to fit into their new countries, are not portrayed as rejecting their "original" Indian cultures even in the midst of bewildering isolation in new countries. The parents are depicted as well rooted in their self-identification as Indian, much like Naipaul's traveling companion discussed in chapter one, who naturalizes his Indianness as *being* while purporting that Naipaul himself is the postcolonial Indian *acting* Indian. Second generations in these films cannot recall a naturalized, pre-constructed Indian self, and their entire cultural identity including its referents, such as Gogal's "Bengaliness," is never pinned on their psyches, as it is pinned on Gogal's mother. As with the concept of diaspora—with its nostalgic links to original cultures and the illusion of return—there is no return for the second generation of characters in these films, only the current life of constant cultural identity negotiation.

The agony of the double consciousness is witnessed in Gogal's identity crisis, which Shariff painstakingly details:

> The film chronicles the cross-cultural experiences of Gogal, the protagonist, through the rejection and the subsequent exploration of his Indian culture. The disavowal of Gogal's own name is used as an extended metaphor throughout the film to explore larger issues of integration, assimilation and cultural identity. The name "Gogal" only fills the young American with dissonance and shame which infiltrate his entire life, soon to be riddled with one identity crisis after the next. (460)

The identity crisis with which the characters of Gogal, Mehta's Sue and Rahul, and Chadha's Jess contend also reflects the films' cross-cultural audiences. The examples of cultural identity negotiation on screen provide important *imagos* in which Indo-Canadian and British Asian audiences can view their own psychosocial processes of alienation and identity construction.

But again, such processes are distinct for first and second generations. The parents do not experience what theorist Slavoj Žižek, in his use of Lacan's concepts of identity, offers identity—that is, as "a point from which we are being observed as the difference between how we see ourselves and the point from which we are being observed as the difference between the Imaginary and the Symbolic" (Shariff 461). Shariff explains that in the case of his rejection of his nickname for the anglicized name

"Nick," Gogol is struggling to negotiate between the Imaginary and the Symbolic:

> According to Žižek (1992), in Lacan's theory of forename and family name, the first designates the ideal ego or the point of imaginary identification. The family name comes from the father—it designates the name-of-the-father or the point of symbolic identification; the agency through which we observe and judge ourselves. According to Žižek (1992) the fact that should not be overlooked in this distinction is that 'i(o) is always already subordinated to I(O); it is that which dominates and determines the image, the imaginary form in which we appear to ourselves likable' (108). On the level of formal functioning this subordination is attested by the fact that the nickname which marks i(o) also functions as rigid designator, not as simple description, this demonstrating that names can hold great emotional and psychic significance for an individual. (162)

Externally Ashima does not appear to experience a struggle between her ideal ego—the imaginary form in which she appears likable to herself—and her ego-ideal—the agency through which we observe and judge ourselves. The struggle however is actually allegorically emphasized in her cultural isolation in "cold" America. On her first day as an immigrant new bride in America Ashima seeks out the laundromat and proceeds to unintentionally shrink and ruin her new husband's clothes. As she struggles in her new home, scenes such as this externalize the subsequent conflict between her

image of herself as a good Indian wife (her imaginary identification), and her cultural and physical environment and immigrant status (her symbolic order), which supersedes her attempts to make herself and her life likeable.

While this conflict is clear in Ashima's case, it is even more prominently represented as a struggle between the ideal ego and the ego-ideal for the characters of Jess in *Bend it Like Beckham*, Sue and Rahul in *Bollywood/Hollywood*, and Gogal and Moushumi in *The Namesake*. Their negotiations of cultural identity—the constant flux between control of the symbolic order of their families' inheritance of an immigrant identity and the imaginary order of Western identities—is particularly obvious. It is an ambivalent *imago* that will be familiar to the films' audiences of second-generation immigrants.

Bahri's account of her experience of the *imago* which Nair creates in *The Namesake* supports my grounding of the *imago* in popular culture and film. Bahri writes that "Though I had read the novel already, it was clear to me that the film would be even more personally evocative because it could re-enact a drama the book could only describe" ("Namesake" 10). Bahri draws a distinction between experiencing the external spectral image, as it is physically depicted in the film, and experiencing the rendering of the characters internally in the reader's mind. The marked difference is important when recognizing the value of the director's cultural production

and the effect of an external *imago* on the cultural citizenship of its audience. Nair's creation of the *imago* powerfully evokes a connection between the audience and the film for Bahri and for myself, and as I have suggested, she moves towards fulfilling her self-described dharmic potential as she delivers the marginalized American Desi into American popular culture, simultaneously displaying the possibilities for plural cultural citizenship.

Canadian Cultural Citizenship and the Diasporic Indian Female *Imago*: Deepa Mehta's Sue in *Bollywood/Hollywood*

As I discussed in my introduction, even though I draw upon Indian cultural referents in my self-representation, it is a particular Indian culture that I have learned living in the West. It has been influenced by the fantasy genre, familiar from watching Bollywood films, and therefore I do not make claims to accurate read Third World women. Moreover, I am not Spivak's native informant, a term I discuss in my reading of her ideas further on in this chapter. However, if lived experience is of any scholarly value, as I believe it is, I wonder if my analysis of second generations of Indo-Canadian women has more authority than someone in Spivak's position who comes from India; the opposite claim has been made by other scholars. The power of experiential effect is debatable as all knowledge can be deconstructed and reconstructed by anyone with the appropriate tools and methods.

However, I evoke this difference in subject positions to study my personal response to the *imago* of Sue in Deepa Mehta's *Bollywood/Hollywood*. Mehta's character Sue reflects the persona of a woman of Indian descent who straddles the boundaries of Indian and Canadian culture, a filmic *imago* which represents my own Indo-Canadian identity. She readily adapts her identity to her surroundings, and demonstrates the instability of cultural identity and the constant slippages in the representation of cultural identity, unlike the static character of Gauri in Gowarikar's *Lagaan*.

Sue represents and identifies herself as both Canadian and Indian in the film. She also allows another character, Rahul, to construct an identity for her in which he calls her Spanish, as he thinks that she is *too Western* to be an Indian woman. Mehta's characterization of Sue as a second-generation Canadian woman who is too Western and not Indian enough for her father, looks Spanish, and does not seem Indian to Rahul puts Sue, whose real name is Sunita, in an interesting place. Mehta draws the audience's attention to the gender issues around men's construction of women's identities in Sue's relationship with her father and her pretend boyfriend Rahul. Sue is defined by both men externally; however, she resists being subject to either man's representation of her as she plays with and subverts the labels both attempt to pin on her. Sue decides who she is, or rather Mehta decides for her.

Figure 6. *Bollywood/Hollywood*. Sue (Sunita) Singh (Lisa Ray). scene still. Dir. Deepa Mehta, 2002. All Movie Photo. K. Woroner. Web. 27 August 2012.

The *imago* that Sue provides for the audiences, especially audiences comprised of second-generation Indo-Canadian women who like Sue cannot be tidily summed up as being either Indian or Western, is intricately tied up with the issue of identification. The Indian woman lives in that liminal space in which she performs both cultural identities: the Indo-Canadian woman with community membership in both the marginalized Indian culture in Canada and the dominant Canadian culture. The character of

Sue is somewhat disjointed as she shifts back and forth between being one thing and being another; however I think that a step back from the screen and its individual scenes reveals that Mehta has demonstrated that Sue is, whether she is wearing one mask or another, Indo-Canadian. Mehta fulfills her dharmic potential as an artist, an intellectual, and an Indian woman by displaying the possibilities of dual identities that are not at odds with membership in Canadian society. This is also indicative of her categorization as "Canadian Postcolonial" filmmaker, who produces texts that "raise important issues of hybridity and identity" (Melynk 168). Mehta demonstrates that subcultural memberships do not have to presuppose a rejection of Canadian culture; they are complicated and at times conflictual, but that complexity allows for a dynamic cultural citizenship. Mehta recodes the sign of cultural citizenship by establishing the Indian (the signifier) as Canadian (the signified).

Dharma and Community Membership

In *Culture and Citizenship*, Brian Turner explains the relationship between community membership and cultural citizenship in terms of shared cultural practices: “Community membership and personal identity are obviously cultural attributes of modern citizenship, and civic culture can be defined as the cultural arena of citizenship practices which ultimately interpellate citizens and categorize individual behaviour within a code of public values and virtues” (Turner 12). The code of public values and virtues that interpellates citizens can also be described as an aspect of Dharma

which encodes civic responsibilities. In exploring the film directors' positions as intellectuals, I will emphasize their community memberships and their roles in creating film characters. I discuss the liminal space between their two community memberships in Eastern and Western cultures in terms of the Hindu philosophical idea of Dharma. Dharma is a multivalent term of great importance in Indian society and relates to an individual's social and religious self-conduct. Not limited to Hinduism, it is also a part of Sikhism and Buddhism in India and is a common cultural philosophy shared by many groups. In Hinduism, the context of its most familiar expression in Indian popular culture, Dharma connects individuals' responsibilities with their station in life:

> In popular usage, dharma means a way of life, ethical law, positive law like civil law and criminal law, and simply religion. It denotes truth, knowledge, morality and duty. It is the truth about the state and function of the world, the truth about how to eliminate its evil tendencies and the truth about its immutable spiritual potentiality. It is knowledge in the sense that once one becomes aware of dharma, one acquires the knowledge to become free from the bonds of phenomenal existence. It is morality, for it contains a code of moral conduct that is conducive to spiritual purity and maturity. It is duty, for whoever professes dharma has a duty to comply with its norms and achieve the goal that it sets forth. (Paramahamsa 6)

Dharma can be roughly translated as “law, duty, harmony or essential truth,” depending on the context. The idea that Dharma is present in the general psyche of Indian popular culture is evident in the extent to which it is a governing philosophy in Bollywood films wherein “good” characters use Dharma for spiritual guidance and to determine their social rights and responsibilities. The role of Dharma as a mechanism of social and cultural governance can be linked to the concept of cultural citizenship which Turner discusses on the level of rights and responsibilities.

In following one’s Dharma, individuals self-govern their actions in their community according to the customs of law, obligation, and socially agreed-upon values and ethics that then dictate community membership. Therefore, to be a member of an Indian culture, a person is expected to follow a socially prescribed Dharma, law, or duty with respect to family, community, and society. A person’s Dharma and accompanying roles are “righteous duties” which are affected by age, class, occupation, and gender. Dharma is an interesting concept for its capacity to contribute a certain set of culturally prescribed responsibilities to people within a community; however, its governing capacities also propel negative aspects of civic responsibilities which limit individual choice and maintain the acceptable status quo within Indian society. I propose that the ideology of Dharma can be applied from two directions to the work of Mehta, Chadha, and Nair. The first aspect that I wish to focus on is that of gender which will lead into my discussion of their work as intellectuals producing films which challenge

the status quo of gender relations. Their practices of cultural citizenship and their effects on the representation of national and cultural identity will be discussed in chapter three.

Dharma and Gender

> We women, especially Indian women, constantly have to go through a metaphorical test of purity in order to be validated as human beings, not unlike Sita's trial by fire (Deepa Mehta in the official press kit of *Fire* 2).

The enduring discourses of traditional cultural norms and values around gender roles which are remnants of discourses of cultural norms of gender relations in India often revolve around the traditional place of women in Indian society offering judgements of when to marry, how to marry, and even what to cook the person whom you do marry. Mehta acknowledges these discourses and her films often ask the questions: "Do we, as women, have choices? And if we make choices, what is the price we pay for them?" (Mehta in the official press kit of *Fire* 2).

As Mehta acknowledges, cultural norms and gender roles are habitually about family life and are traditionally taught to Indian women through the rhetoric of cultural normativity. They are modeled through role playing within family units, disseminated through cultural education gained via popular culture, and learned from the religious dogma and

education in which Indian cultures are steeped. Not surprisingly, gender issues around the role of women in Indian families and society are confronted in several of the films made by Chadha, Mehta, and Nair. The cultural production of Chadha and Mehta are emblematic of their subjectivities, which Foster relates to the empathetic knowing displayed in Nair's texts:

> Nair operates from a postcolonial feminist rhetorical space, one that speaks for the dislocated exiles of inequality toward class, gender, race, ability, nationality, age, and sexual orientation. Her feminist rhetoric is not limited to addressing women's circumstances alone, and her ethos is one of "empathetic knowing,"….an important concept to talk about within the context of current debates about who can speak for whom….empathetic knowledge can be a tool for rupturing hegemonically perceived power/knowledge relationships. (Foster 115)

Foster has described Nair's films' feminist counter-narratives, in relation to empathetic knowledge, a theme which corresponds to my connection of their subjectivities and to a Dharmic response from Nair, Chadha, and Mehta to "rupture" the hegemonic structures of Indian women.

The importance of these film directors' cultural productions and their work as intellectuals is their production of new representations of Indian cultural identity in Western popular culture. Returning to Lacan's idea that

images or *imagos* are what we connect with, as that which is seen in a mirror, and a necessary part of the process of self-recognition and becoming a subject, the directors also produce counter-representations and narratives to the marginalized and at times negative representations of Indian women. The new images of Indian women in their films can be viewed as an antithesis to the Oriental view which excluded them from being represented in positive and progressive terms within Western popular culture. These new *imagos*, needed for the subjects to become part of the culture of their adopted homelands, bring them into being and normalize their presence in Western cultures for themselves and for others. Without these images Indians are always alien and unable to see themselves in the culture in which they now live. If the image is always negative, derogatory, and anti-feminine, then that *imago* enters the unconscious to produce a negative self-image of the immigrant or the "Oriental" that will always consign second-class and alien status to that self who is still in a powerful homogenizing position vis-à-vis normative discourses and cultural citizenship.

The idea of Dharma, of cosmic righteous duty and truth, can be applied as a lens to the production of the *imago* in the films in my study in two ways. The directors' cultural citizenship in Indian and Western communities has culminated in a dharmic obligation to represent Indians within the institutions of Western cultural production in ways that help both themselves and their communities gain mature subject positions via the appropriate *imagos*. All three directors first established themselves as

members of the cultural community, and particularly the film community, through their genesis as documentarians and screenwriters, and by initially working on mainstream film and television productions. They all initially practiced artistic production within the predetermined code of public values and virtues to which their Western film production communities implicitly subscribed. This was necessary in order to gain access to "cultural capital" and the marketplace of cultural production. Once they had access, they produced films through which they redefined certain codes of public values and virtues affecting both the interpellation of Indian identities and of Indian diasporic filmmakers. What is important here is the idea of dual cultural citizenship in the centre of the dominant culture. As legitimized producers of popular cultural artefacts, the filmmakers made films from the centre while simultaneously exercising citizenship as diasporic women in the periphery of Western cultures. It is in these dual roles that I situate their roles as intellectuals, specifically artist-intellectuals, thus linking their Dharma rights and responsibilities to their film production in a unique way.

The directors, having achieved success in Hollywood and/or Western visual media markets that occupy the popular cultural centers of their Western societies, returned to the margins to fulfil their Dharma by

claiming their cultural citizenship as Indians.[28] They also redefined their own Dharma as artists and intellectuals through their representation of the cultural diversity of Indians as both Indians and Westerners.[29] They demonstrate the plurality of Indian cultural identities by redefining the status of Indians as Westerners for all factions of their audiences. These film directors challenge the representation of the roles of Indian women living in the West, and in Mehta's case in India, by providing depictions of women which are not based on cultural and gender stereotypes. In essence, they offer alternative *imagos* for Indian diasporic audiences. Their representation of Indian cultural identity as both Western and diverse is a demonstration of their redefinition of their Dharma in order to gain cultural citizenship for their audiences via identification with the *imagos* in local films.

---

[28] Michael Walsh asserts that within Jameson's relational paradigm of cultural capital to economic capital is the idea that cultural responses also take place from the center: "If the economic is central and the cultural is a response to the conditions of the economic, then the cultural responses must be made out to be central as well" (494). The connection between economic capital and cultural capital verifies that in order to make their films featuring Indian cultural identities the filmmakers had to be positioned within the economic centers of the modes of cultural production, which corresponds to their biographies' thematic progressions. However, I do not fully agree with Walsh's interpretation of Jameson because it conflicts at the point that their films must reproduce the cultural centers' discourses.

[29] See Naficy's concept of "accented cinema," applicable to all three filmmakers, in which he places diasporic/postcolonial filmmakers in an interstitial location of marginality to Bollywood and Hollywood.

II

The Position of the Intellectual According To Gayatri Spivak

[Edward] Said's book was not a study of marginality, not even of marginalization. It was the study of the construction of an object, for investigation and control. The study of the study of colonial discourse, directly released by work such as Said's, has, however, blossomed into a garden where the marginal can speak and be spoken for. It is an important (and beleaguered) part of the discipline now. As this material begins to be absorbed into the discipline, the long established but supple, heterogeneous, and hierarchical power-lines of the institutional "dissemination of knowledge" continue to determine and over determine its conditions of representability. It is at the moment of infiltration or insertion, sufficiently under threat by custodians of a fantasmatic high Western culture, that the greatest caution must be exercised. The price of success must not compromise the enterprise irreparably. In that spirit of caution, it might not be inappropriate to notice that, as teachers, we are now involved in the construction of a new object of investigation—"the third world," "the marginal"—for the proliferating but exclusivist "Third World-ist" job descriptions to see the packaging at work. It is as if, in a certain way, we are becoming complicitous in the perpetration of a "new orientalism."

(*Outside in the Teaching Machine* 56)

In this section I again return to the question: how has the filmmakers' subjectivity, gender and cultural citizenship influenced their representations of Indian cultural identity? I examine the filmmakers as intellectuals by exploring their textual representation of the film characters in relation to the postcolonial theory of Gayatri Spivak and Chandra

Mohanty. Firstly, I revise Spivak's understanding of the subaltern to unearth her marginalized Western cousin with the aim of interrogating her representation in Gurinder Chadha's films *Bend it Like Beckham* and *Bride and Prejudice*. Secondly, I examine Deepa Mehta's films *Heaven on Earth* and *Water*, positioning her intellectual production in terms of Mohanty's work on Western feminist scholarship. I would argue that both Mehta and Chadha bring awareness of their subjectivity as producers of texts and discourses that extend in sometimes contrasting ways into their representations of Indian cultural identity in their films.[30]

In his study of accented cinema, Naficy aims to "put the locatedness and the historicity of the author back into authorship" (34) of the films as he contends that the "filmmakers as authors are nuanced by their own extratextual tensions of difference and identity" (35). I utilize the same lens as Naficy to read the subjectivity of the filmmakers and their texts. As authors of cinematic discourses, Mehta, Nair, and Chadha "are not just textual structures or fictions within their films; they are also empirical subjects, situated in the interstices of cultures and film practices, who exists outside and prior to their films" (Naficy 4).

---

[30] See Khorana's appraisal of *Heaven on Earth* as exemplary of Mehta's "socio-political imperative" to "write/visualize" diasporic women into being (460), which also corresponds to my thesis of Mehta and her texts.

Comparative literature professor and postcolonial theorist Gayatri Spivak is well known for her work on the authorial positionality of the intellectual in the production of knowledge. Spivak employs a deconstructionist methodology in her own writing, resulting in a critical unpacking of her subject position as a Western academic in a style of writing that is egregiously difficult to follow. The flow of her writing is interrupted by such a large number of references to other writers, topics, and fields of study that few may be able to appreciate the constant breaks in their reading of her work, to say nothing of her self-reflexivity which can feel like a private conversation between herself and a few of her colleagues. However, her model of postcolonial feminist criticism is central to any discussion of postcolonial identity construction and her hermeneutic strategies continue to inform postcolonial theory and criticism.

Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" emerged as a marker of scholarship for ideas around the intellectual's position and responsibility when producing knowledge about marginalized groups and in particular marginalized women in the Third World.[31] In the essay, Spivak begins to formulate several concepts having to do with the subject position of the speaker as object and subject, which she discusses in great detail in her

[31] Many scholars including Spivak (in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*) have written on her seminal text "Can the Subaltern Speak?" See Morris's edited book for several philosophical discussions of her original ideas which includes JanMohamed's text advancing Spivak's subaltern to discuss US slavery. See also Warrior's use of Spivak to discuss issues of indigenous subalternity, a topic which I also reference in footnote 35 on Mohanty.

subsequent texts. In what follows, I will use aspects of Spivak's theory to extend my reading of the filmmakers from their positions as authors of texts and producers of cultural discourse to a reading of them as intellectuals. I will then attempt to position them in relation to their cultural citizenship and the concept of dharma which I have derived from the South Asian cultures with which they are connected in order to illuminate the possibilities that are opened up when academia includes more work on popular culture.

Before launching into a discussion of the directors' positions as intellectuals it is necessary for me to extract Spivak's ideas from her writings in order to employ them as epistemological strategies for studying the films under analysis. Spivak's theory of subalternity and voice has been pivotal in beginning conversations about the gap between the oppressed subject and academic scholar, and between the subaltern and the speaker.

In her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak discusses the act of sati and its politics during the colonial rule of India. Sati became a battle site for the imperialist masters, for as Spivak writes, "The dissimulation of imperialism as the establisher of the good society is marked by the espousal of the woman as *object* of protection from her own kind" (123). Sati was the practice of widow self-immolation on the funeral pyres of a deceased husband. At the time sati happened in India, it was an occasional rather than usual practice and it "was not caste or class-fixed in any rigid way"

(Spivak 121). Spivak goes on to explain that "The abolition of this rite by the British in 1829 has been generally understood as a case of 'white men saving brown women from brown men'" (121). Thus, the abolishment of sati was a sign of civilizing the Indians by indoctrinating them into European lifestyle practices, and was an effort to establish a hegemonic discourse around the superiority of the European masters. Just as the establishment of English language was used in India to embed British cultural and political ideologies and values into Indian societies, political acts such as the abolishment of sati were meant to contribute to the project of modernizing and Westernizing Indian society.

In her examination of sati Spivak asks the following question: "How should one examine the dissimulation of patriarchal strategy, which apparently grants the woman free choice as *subject*?" (123) A woman committing sati was caught between British law which made sati a criminal act, and the Hindu Right's rhetoric of promoting cultural tradition. The Hindu supporters of sati exalted it as righteous and courageous by citing reasons related to marital unity, with the act viewed as a means of a wife maintaining the marital bond with her husband. The space in which the widow exercises her own free will to choose to commit sati or not was lost in the rhetoric of both sides (Spivak 125). The laws that banned sati resulted in "the free will of the constituted sexed subject as female [being] successfully effaced" (125), as her choice was confined to the choices of white men or brown men's discursive power and influence. Spivak's assessment of

sati in colonial India and the suicide of a young female political activist in 1926 led her to write the following conclusion to the question in her title: "The subaltern as female cannot be heard or read" (130). The subaltern has no place from which to speak, she is spoken for and of, as a subject, but is herself outside of the conversation. Moreover, the contradiction is apparent; once the subaltern does have agency of voice she is no longer the subaltern.

Spivak's Subaltern and her Marginalized Western Cousin

Spivak's idea of subalternity is an interesting lens from which to examine the representation of cultural identity in Gurinder Chadha's UK film *Bend it Like Beckham*. Looking at the film I query whether the soccer coach Joe can be read in terms of "white men saving brown women," and as a neo-colonial "modernizing" force vis-à-vis the attitudes and lives of the brown people he encounters. Were this complex question to be answered in the affirmative, it would mean that the director, Chadha, disseminates the same imperialist sentiment of the colonials that were on a mission to save brown women in India. Donnell implies that Chadha's film "plays knowingly against easy and naïve versions of the imagined Asian woman as a victim of her culturally regressive family and community" (47), knowingly has white man save brown woman from brown family. The temporal and spatial location, together with the attitudes of Jess and her Indian family, must also be taken into account before we determine whether the coach does indeed function to save Jess, thus aligning her with her subaltern cousin from the Southern hemisphere.

How can I frame my reading of Jess in terms of Spivak's theorization of the positionality of the academic? I do not seek to describe the same woman when we speak of the subaltern. I am looking at Chadha's Jess, who may be a marginalized figure in the UK, and Spivak is looking at the subaltern Indian in India. The gap here—one that characterizes the work of many other postcolonial theorists who have not yet been able to articulate, to describe, and to relate the task of speaking for the marginalized woman in the West—is one that must be worked through in the context of this study. This woman has cultural affiliations with the East but is indeed Western in citizenship on a legal level and is heading towards full citizenship on a cultural level.

Spivak's subaltern does not speak, cannot speak, and is the unheard Third World woman. I propose that the subaltern woman has a Western counterpart: the brown, yellow, or black immigrant or second-generation diasporic woman, who lives in the West and is not seen or heard in the dominant Western culture except in misrepresented terms. As I explained in section one, the term "diaspora" is limited in its capacity to encompass the heterogeneity of Indians and their respective hybrid cultures and cultural identities. However, the figure of the Indian diaspora, in particular the British Asian, the Indo-Canadian, and the American Desi, are types of diasporic figures that I am examining in this study. These figures are not aligned with Spivak's subaltern woman in the sense of having a complete

lack of voice, yet they are aligned with her subaltern woman in the context of the marginalization that they experience in their adopted homelands, as they too reside outside of the dominant culture, and until recently did not have a public face or voice in their respective societies. This woman, who has been without representation in the West, who is only imagined by a neo-colonialist Western media, is remembered, produced, and written into existence by the film directors in question. This is important because Gurinder Chadha's character of Jess provides second-generation female immigrants with an *imago* to which we can relate, because of our lived proximity to the narrative experience of Jess as opposed to a woman in India.

Figure 7. *Bend it Like Beckham*. Jess (Parminder Nagra), scene still. Dir. Gurinder Chadha, 2002. 20 Century Fox. IMDb. C.Parry. EW.com. Web. 27 August 2012.

To begin my analysis I formulate the following questions: What is the place in which Jess exercises her free will? Does it happen in this film? Does Chadha align Jess's free will with her happiness? And, is her free will exhibited in the act of attaining her primary goal of fulfilling her desire to play soccer, irrespective of her romantic involvement with the coach? I assert here that Jess demonstrates free will in the film through playing soccer, an activity outside of the realm of normative behaviour for Indian girls in her West London community.[32]

Her free will is demonstrated in her defiance of her parents' stated opposition to the sport as culturally inappropriate for "a young Indian woman." Chadha also positions other Indian girls in the film in contrast to Jess. They come to the park to *watch* young Indian men play soccer, rather than playing soccer themselves and with men. Chadha elevates and equates Jess's display of soccer skills, and her enjoyment of the sport at any personal cost, to a display of free will. Chadha also juxtaposes Jess's free will against the instances when the desires of her parents and of her coach interfere with her own. Her resistance to her parents takes the form of lies and a difficult negotiation of her priorities and the pressure of her parents to conform. It is important to note that at some point in the film she does acquiesce to their desires. Her coach's initial attempt to advance their

[32] May seeks out Chadha's challenge to British monoculturalism and colonial narratives in her analysis of *Bend it Like Beckham*, seeing Jess's "free will," as I have conceptualized her agency, in terms of a "pursuit of individual/collective determinism" (248).

personal relationship when he determines that she is now released from the bonds of her cultural restrictions is because her parents have "come round" (read: modernized/Westernized), and are allowing her to move overseas to play soccer. Prior to the end of the film, when her choice changes, Jess tells Joe that permission to play soccer is enough of a change for her and her family, and rejects the prospect of a romantic relationship with him.

Figure 8. *Bend it Like Beckham*. Jess (Parminder Nagra), Joe (Jonathan Rhys Meyers), scene still. Dir. Gurinder Chadha, 2002. 20 Century Fox. IMDb. C.Parry. EW.com. Web. 27 August 2012

Jess's initial reaction to Joe's advances could be read in two ways. Jess's rejection to a physical and romantic relationship with her coach can be read as either her maintenance of "good Indian girl" persona as her choice is to respect her parents and their cultural restrictions on romantic relationships. Her prior kiss with the coach, when she was away from home, dressed up by the other players to look more Western, and drinking for the

first time was represented as a reaction to being in a foreign environment. Her actions that evening in Germany reflected the intoxication by both alcohol and the foreignness of her situation.

How does this reading of Jess's actions relate to Spivak's famous assertion? In her essay, Spivak examines historical information about sati as well as its application to mythological goddess figures and states that "To see this [the mythological story of sati] as proof of the feminism of classical Hinduism or of Indian culture as goddess-centred and therefore feminist, is as ideologically contaminated by nativism or reverse ethnocentrism" as imperialist attitudes (129). Interestingly, Spivak's comment returns us to Hall's concept of representation and the idea that some things cannot be directly translated from one cultural context to another and must be (re)presented as an interpretation, opening up the possibility of misappropriation under a Western lens or different epistemological system. The reading of Jess's actions as compliant with familial wishes can also be contaminated by nativism or reverse ethnocentrism. For Indian audiences, she represents another instance of a "good Indian girl."

Conversely, a second reading of her rejection interprets Jess's refusal of a romantic relationship in terms of her negotiation of Western social and cultural norms—that is, in terms of her choices around the extent to which she is willing to integrate into the dominant culture. This reading of Jess's decision illustrates the slippages in cultural identity, which is constantly in

flux. From the viewpoint of a diasporic audience, her negotiation may go unnoticed as such viewers constantly perform similar negotiations themselves and such a slippage in the cultural identity of the *imago* on screen reflects the constant slippages of self-identification in everyday lived experience. For Western audiences, her choice to reject coach Joe's romantic overtures may be seen as the maintenance of tradition, a situation which she then rectifies in one of the last scenes of the film when she kisses him in the airport; here the white man finally saves the brown girl from her brown family.

In the finale of the film Joe unexpectedly comes to the airport to bid Jess farewell, approaching her again with romantic hopes and kissing her as her parents stand distracted only meters away. Jess's (re)attachment to a man, the first being her father, in the final scene of the kiss was a disappointing Hollywood ending to the film. The final public kiss between Jess and her coach appears like a disavowal of the carefully constructed East-West struggle that is represented at other points in the film. The abrupt change in Jess's attitude towards her private struggles with her attraction to coach Joe and her culturally imbedded Indian beliefs is, in the least, a puzzling choice for Chadha. Previously, and especially in presence of her parents, Jess adheres to Indian private versus public codes of acceptable behaviour. The public kiss, which strongly deviates from Indian customs, appears so suddenly that it may curiously signal a change and slippage in Chadha's own ideas and negotiation of cultural integration.

Before I unpack Chadha's apparent change of attitude towards the appropriation of Western, or in this case British culture and attitudes, and her positionality as the film's director, I want to return to Spivak and a breakdown of the position of native informant versus her idea of and the use of essentialism as a strategic position.

Spivak's Discreditable Native Informant

As I have explained, Spivak aligns the figure of the subaltern with a woman in the Third World who cannot speak or be heard. She is outside of the conversations of which she is the subject, and represented by people who can only speculate about her as observers. This brings me to Spivak's figure of the native informant. In her book *A Critique of Post-Colonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*, Spivak explains her concept of the native informant in the following passage:

> I think of the "native informant" as a name for that mark of expulsion from the name Man—a mark crossing out the impossibility of the ethical relation. I borrow the term from ethnography, of course. In that discipline, the native informant, although denied autobiography as it is understood in the Northwestern European tradition (codename "West"), is taken with utmost seriousness. He (and occasionally she) *is* a blank, though generative of a text of cultural identity that only the West (or a Western-model discipline) could inscribe. The practice of some benevolent cultural nativists today can be compared to this, although the cover story there is of a fully self-

> present voice-consciousness. *Increasingly, there is the self-marginalizing or self-consolidating migrant or postcolonial masquerading as a "native informant."* I am discovering the native informant clear out of this cluster…. These moves, in various guises, still inhabit and inhibit our attempts to overcome the limitations imposed on us by the newest division of the world, to the extent that, as the North continues ostensibly to "aid" the South's crucial assistance to the North in keeping up its resource-hungry lifestyle is forever foreclosed. In the pores of this book will be the suggestion that, the typecast of the foreclosed native informant today is the poorest *woman* of the South. But the period and texts under our consideration in this chapter will produce—to cite Gramsci's uncanny insight—the native informant(s) as a site of unlisted traces. (emphasis added, 6)

As someone situated in academia, am I, as Spivak claims, guilty of being a native informant in my supposition that I am a "good critic" of these films? By her definition, a native informant (and importantly, Spivak claims not to be one) is a person, much like people engaging in "Orientalist practices," who informs on a culture or people with whom they self-identify by (mis)representing them in their research. I note here that in this analysis I have attempted to apply the approach of "strategic essentialism" when unpacking and repacking these representations of Indian cultural identity and gender, although as in Spivak's differentiation between native

informant and strategic essentialism this difference may be a superficial category. I am quite keenly aware that as an academic I am not speaking strictly from the margins of society but rather with a knowledge base that comes with experiencing membership in both certain marginalized communities and elite educational communities. It is from this space that I attempt to produce a discourse within my study informed by multiple cultural associations and memberships.

According to Spivak, as academics (i.e. ineluctable native informants), we must shift our approach to theory in order to study our subjects. Spivak explains her point in the following excerpt from *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*:

> My point is that we in the humanities, dealing with the position of the other as an implied "subject"(ive) position, must also vary our assumptions depending upon the text with which we are dealing. Paradoxically, every questioner who enters the book trade does so as a species of "native informant" or has been trained from infancy, for hours everyday, even if reactively, in some version of academic culture that has accommodated these three fellows [Kant, Hegel and Marx], often in their radical margins but sometimes also in their conservative centers. I write in the conviction that sometimes it is best to sabotage what is inexorably to hand, than to invent a tool that no one will test, while mouthing varieties of liberal pluralism. (CPRC 9)

Therefore my use of Spivak's subalternity to discuss a woman in the West who resides in the crevices of Western culture is possible and I follow her own example.

Reproducing Spivak's Strategic Essentialism

I employ Spivak's adjuvant concept of "strategic essentialism" to speak of my *subject*, since the term "native informant" is not really useful other than to condemn the work of some scholars, and what is more, as I examine it I find that it does not readily apply to my work. In *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, Spivak includes an interview with Ellen Rooney in which she explains her concept of strategic essentialism:

> [Ellen Rooney] You've examined the question of essentialism throughout your work, and you've said a number of different things about it, at times warning against defining women in terms of woman's putative essence and stressing the possibility that essentialism may be a trap, and, at other times, most recently in working on the text of the Subaltern Studies Group, talking about the "*strategic* use of a positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest." I'd like to talk about the necessary risks of taking what may seem to be essentialist positions; about how we can signal the differences between a strategic and a substantive or a risk essentialism; about the possibility of mobilizing people to do political work without involving some irreducible essentialism; ultimately,

how we can determine when our essentializing strategies have been traps, as opposed to having strategic and necessary positive effects?

[Gayatri Spivak] Strategy works through a persistent (de)constructive critique of the theoretical. "Strategy" is an embattled concept-metaphor and unlike "theory," its antecedents are not disinterested and universal. "Usually, an artifice or trick designed to outwit or surprise the enemy" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). The critical moment does not come only at a certain stage when one sees one's effort succeeding. It is not only in that moment of euphoria that we begin to decide that we had been strategic all along. The strategic use of an essence as a mobilizing slogan or masterword like *woman* or *worker* or the name of nation is, ideally, self-conscious for all mobilized. This is the impossible risk of a lasting strategy. Can there be such a thing? At any rate, the critique of the "fetish-character" (so to speak) of the masterword has to be persistent all along the way, even when it seems that to remind oneself of it is counter-productive. Otherwise the strategy freezes into something like what you call an essentialist position, when the situation that calls forth the strategy is seemingly resolved. The Subaltern Studies Group started working as a counter-movement within South Asian history as written even by politically correct historians trying, among other things, to fabricate a national identity in decolonization: a different structural position from someone working from within the U.S. university. If

> one is considering strategy, one has to look at where the group—the person, the persons, or the movement—is situated when one makes claims for or against essentialism. A strategy suits a situation; a strategy is not a theory. And if one is considering "positivism," one might take into account the importance of positivism in the discipline of history in the nineteenth century. (IOTM 3-4)

What Rooney points out in her question to Spivak is the apparent contradiction in her work which, like other postcolonial theories, criticizes essentialism, yet makes use of marginality as a subject position from which to work. Spivak's suggestion to call for an examination of the positionality of the academic is useful but how it plays out in an actual use of strategic essentialism without the academic automatically equating the two is a grey area. If I am to situate myself in the margins of society in order to produce a critique of the dominant culture's representation of Indian cultural identity, and examine the work of film directors who also make claims of membership in marginalized communities, then I will at some point be informing, summarizing, and generalizing in my work. What is the effect of looking at the films that are produced within the dominant culture, and as I have already determined in my section on citizenship and Dharma, are also produced from the margins?

To understand her "strategy" better I turn to two scholars, Stephen Morton and Sangeeta Ray, to more clearly examine Spivak's concept. In his

2003 book *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*, Stephen Morton explains Spivak's use of strategic essentialism in the following way:

> The idea of strategic essentialism accepts that essentialist categories of human identity should be criticised, but emphasises that one cannot avoid such categories at times in order to make sense of the social and political world....For minority groups, in particular, the uses of essentialism as a short-term strategy to affirm a political identity can be effective, as long as this identity does not then get fixed as an essential category by a dominant group. (75)

What Morton so clearly explains is that Spivak's theory of strategic essentialism relies out of necessity on a binary system of categorization, and as a political strategy reengages in the essentialist labeling of a cultural group in order to gain ground and speak as a collective political entity. Spivak's idea is closely related to Stuart Hall's concept of identity formation and uses "points of identification" as cultural referents to inform cultural identity ("Cultural Identity and Diaspora" 113). Hall's configuration of cultural identity relies on the notion that identity is "unfixable" and always changing, as are the cultural referents that inform it. Spivak's strategic essentialism is a restating of Hall's concept but places greater emphasis on the need for awareness of the political implications of self-definition using essentialist cultural referents. Spivak points out that cultural referents must never be fixed on a person or group by an outside dominant force; such a strategy would produce the undesirable effect of intensifying the process

of "Othering" through fixed essentialism and would support the continued hegemonic control of the minority group.

In her 2009 book, *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: In Other Words*, Sangeeta Ray writes that,

> Rather than a mode of reading, strategic essentialism becomes a mode of address, a buzz phrase denoting one's situated subject position for engaging in a feminism that refused essentialism. Spivak herself has relied on such positionings, deliberately and often contradictorily insisting on the politics of naming, because she refuses the positioning of the postcolonial migrant academic as Third World, especially when it comes to gendered subjects engaged in academic feminism. (109)

If this is Spivak's intention, to interrupt the academic from positioning herself as the Third World, then there are few academics in the field that currently fall into this positioning. And, in the case of academics like myself, who are studying the so-called Indian diaspora, the problem is that we have outgrown Spivak's problem. I am no longer speaking for and about the Third World, I am speaking of the *subject* in the West.

Is a return to essentialism a necessary strategy, as Spivak has suggested in her concept of "strategic essentialism"? Or does such a move foreclose on the possibility of effectively and permanently deconstructing

the stereotypical representations of Indian cultural identities in the West by replacing one stereotype with another, thereby homogenizing the representation of Indian cultural identity while maintaining the marginalized Indian diaspora's hegemonic relationship to the dominant culture, race, class, and gender? Do the directors of the films under study avoid the charge of nativism because they are strategic in their use of essentialism?

The strategy of returning to the margins to speak can be connected to the directors' representations of themselves as simultaneously located in the margins and at the centers of cultural production. Ray explains that Spivak seeks to engage the centre and produce counter-hegemonic discourses of dominant cultures: "Spivak reminds us of how the center always needs its margins and when 'certain peoples' have been asked to cathect the margins it sometimes forces them to see themselves as marginal. When this happens, the 'only strategic thing to do is to absolutely present oneself at the centre'" (110). This idea of using the marginal position *as centre* and producer of knowledge of the marginal group is what Ray points to in Spivak's use of essentialism as a strategy. This way of taking hold of the narrative of self-representation by a marginalized group for the purpose of political opposition against the centre paradoxically puts the marginal figure in the centre as the representative of that group and thus relies heavily on essentialism to carve out its positionality as such. This positionality can be directly traced in the work of all three film directors

whose work is studied in this thesis. From the Spivakian perspective of strategic essentialism, these directors have all entered the centers of popular cultural production by *authoritatively occupying* and speaking from the margins.

Spivak's political intentions in advocating strategic essentialism and their relation to the films and directions under study become clearer in the context of Ray's gloss. Ray quotes Spivak as saying, "Since one cannot be an essentialist, why not look at the ways in which one is an essentialist, carve out a representative essentialist position, and then do politics, according to the old rules, *whilst remembering the dangers in this*?" (110). In essence, Spivak is advocating for the minority to return to its position as native, and use that role to speak, *with authority*, of that minority position. One must realize that such a stance may lead to homogenization of the minority group and to the danger of the dominant culture taking the representation of a minority subject as "*the* minority" and "*the* minority voice," by authorizing it and fixing its position, despite whatever stereotypes and (mis)appropriations are recorded in the discourse. Yet, this is a danger of all cultural representation. If, in *Bend It Like Beckham*, one considers the difference between Jess, her sister, their cousins, the Indian men Jess plays soccer with, and her gay Indian friend Tony, one realizes that Chadha manages to combat the total homogenization of Indian cultural identity by representing Indians, within the subset that she is representing, as diverse and heterogeneous. Chadha's position is a difficult one for the producer of

any representation of a marginalized cultural identity, as there is always the danger of essentialist labels emerging through the very representation that was meant to defeat the unflattering stereotypes formed and disseminated within the dominant culture.

In a largely positive assessment of Chadha's *Bend it Like Beckham*, Huq agrees with Donnell's description of the film as "'both a feminist and a postcolonial triumph ... [which] ends with a more celebratory and harmonious version of cosmopolitan conviviality" than Stuart Hall or Paul Gilroy could have imagined'" in its representation of "football-playing females [who] upset received ideas of Asian femininity being simply about doe-eyed, sari-clad girls" (6-7). While I agree that her film challenges the portrayal of subordinate Indian women, it is important to note that I cannot generalize all the films that I have examined, particularly those of Gurinder Chadha's, as successful counter-narratives to the (mis)representation of Indian cultural identities. Chadha's adaptation of Jane Austen's novel in her 2004 film version *Bride and Prejudice* was disappointing not only

commercially but also in its portrayal of stereotypes (see Dargis).[33]

This film, which has the added problem of inadequately challenging the gender roles of Austen's time, is a remarkable contemporary example of the colonialist narrative of "white men saving brown women," especially in the case of the character of Lakhi (Lydia Bennet), who needs to be saved from running off with Johnny Wickham (Mr. George Wickham) by William "Will" Darcy (Fitzwilliam Darcy), much as Lydia needed to be saved two hundred years before. If the director had produced a retelling of this story that sought to make the British Asian woman the subject rather the object of the narrative, then the ending would have offered a powerful illustration of the capacity of the brown woman to save herself, however the film "deliberately evades the postcolonial logic of cultural confrontation" (Eckstein, Korte, Pirker, and Reinfandt 50). Chadha does attempt to redefine the character of Lalita (Elisabeth Bennett) by representing her as an independent British Asian woman who challenges both the gender and cultural stereotypes propelled by colonialist discourses. However, Chadha's Lalita displays little advancement from Elisabeth Bennett, which makes Lalita's conformity to gender stereotypes seem more problematic than Austen's given the contemporary time period and setting. In her article "From British 'Pride' to Indian 'Bride': Mapping the Contours of a Globalised (Post?)Colonialism,"

---

[33] Griffin notes a culturally biased contrast between the reviews of the film: "what American critics tend to characterize as 'failure,' Indian reviewers paint as paradigmatic of a director straddling different cinematic traditions" (537). Postcolonial criticism's self-reflexivity attempts to account for such cultural biased reading, which as Spivak stresses must be with the recognition of subjectivity of the reader.

Suchitra Mathur explains Chadha's ineffective characterization of Elizabeth Bennet as Lalita:

> This is most obvious in the film's gender politics where it blindly mimics Bollywood conventions in embodying the nation as a woman (Lalita) who, however independent she may appear, not only requires male protection (Darcy is needed to physically rescue Lakhi from Wickham) but also remains an object of exchange between competing systems of capitalist patriarchy (Uberoi, 207). At the film's climax, Lalita walks away from her family towards Darcy. But before Darcy embraces the very willing Lalita, his eyes seek out and receive permission from Mr. Bakshi. Patriarchal authority is thus granted due recognition, and Lalita's seemingly bold "independent" decision remains caught within the politics of patriarchal exchange. This particular configuration of gender politics is very much a part of Bollywood's neo-conservative consumerist ideology wherein the Indian woman/nation is given enough agency to make choices, to act as a "voluntary" consumer within a globalised marketplace that is, however, controlled by the interests of capitalist patriarchy. (Mathur)

What Mathur points out is that Chadha's characterization of Lalita as an independent woman working in the family business does not translate into her autonomy as subject. She is still the object of exchange between her father and Darcy, as witnessed in the exchange of knowing looks of

agreement between them. In this exchange, she is shown to be acting within the acceptable parameters of behaviour for her father.

I found in my examination of the filmmakers an interesting and somewhat expected dissonant cultural discourse of hybridity, particularly in the films of Chadha. More often than Nair and Mehta, Chadha tends to position herself and her work within an already constructed rhetoric of European and Western superiority. However, she makes attempts to resist the reductive view of British Asians that the application of Eurocentric lens brings forward. Applying Spivak's ideas, we see that Chadha may in fact not fully take up the position of strategic essentialism to construct her characters and their referents; rather, she often adopts the rhetoric of the dominant culture to govern their behaviors. Mehta and Nair, however, take a slightly different approach; their narratives seem to be constructed more squarely through the lens of the margins, providing more resistance to Western models of cultural domination. I propose that the difference in representation might be attributed to the biographical contexts and corresponding psychosocial conditions of the directors themselves.

Chadha lived in Britain from infancy and her earliest possible memories were likely constructed within the confines of British cultural discourses. This is different from Nair and Mehta, who likely dealt with the

sudden alienation of moving to the West as adults.[34] The ability to counter neo-Orientalist discourses in their films is perhaps a reflection of Nair's and Mehta's personal formation of self as I discussed earlier in relation to Lacan. For these filmmakers, and for myself as an academic, the formation of the self and the ego, along with the instances of alienation in the margins of a Western dominant culture, correlates to one's subject position as artist and intellectual. As a tool to position the directors as intellectuals and myself as an academic, and as a means to deconstruct the projects of both filmmaker and scholar, Spivak's theory ultimately proves useful to my study of film.

Western Feminist Approaches to the Postcolonial and Diasporic Subject: The Application of Chandra Mohanty's Feminism to the Study of Film

Chandra Talpade Mohanty's 1984 essay remains one of the authoritative texts on Western feminist scholarship as it relates to colonial and postcolonial discourse, and is applicable to contemporary cultural and globalization studies. Mohanty problematizes the "mode of appropriation and codification of 'scholarship' and 'knowledge' about women on the subject which take as their referent feminist interests as they have been articulated in the U.S. and Western Europe" (172). As such, Western feminist discourse continues to carry out the project of "making Other" the Third World woman and, as Spivak has also written, the Third World woman is thus spoken for,

---

[34] In *An Accented Cinema*, Naficy marks an interesting differentiation of three types of accented filmmakers: exilic, diasporic, and postcolonial ethnic and identity filmmakers (11-16). According to his categories, Nair and Mehta are diasporic and Chadha falls into the third category of postcolonial ethnic and identity filmmakers.

as she is spoken of.[35] I wonder then about the diasporic Indian woman and if she can be spoken of without misrepresenting her in discourses that codify her as always marginal to the centre, and marginal to Indian men. What is suggested about the diasporic woman and her life in the West in the representation of these filmmakers? And how should such representations be read by an Indo-Canadian female academic like myself? Ultimately, I reject the idea that diasporic women of the middle and working classes cannot be represented in film, which my study of them seem to validate. These films depict the woman who lives in the West—a cousin of the subaltern woman of the East—who has until recently lived silently without a public *imago* in the margins of Canadian, British, and American national cultures.

Deepa Mehta's 2008 film *Heaven on Earth* makes an attempt to show the Western cousin of the subaltern woman in a film that appears in equal parts somewhat disjointed and depressing. The film is about a Sikh woman who comes to Canada via an arranged marriage and then enters into

---

[35] In "'Under Western Eyes' Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles," Mohanty revisits her earlier text which I have used to frame my analysis in preference of its vibrant call to dislocate Western feminism's inherent Eurocentric discourses. The self-reflexive examination of her previous text revises her mandate to reject Western feminists' universalism as she states that the "challenge is to see how differences allow us to explain the connections and border crossings better and more accurately, [and] how specifying difference allows us to theorize universal concerns more fully" (505). Mohanty's additions to her previous ideas also include a recognition that a "visible and activist women's movement no longer exists," which is my reason for adopting her earlier text's strategies in this dissertation: a return to more rigorous feminism is necessary to confront the current post-feminist/anti-feminist representations of women and men in the media that has a regressive reliance on gender stereotypes reminiscent of midcentury sexism. See Anderson, Gill, and Harvey's recent texts on the need to revive feminism to combat the resurgence of sexism in popular culture and politics.

miserable bondage with her abusive husband, his callous mother, and his indifferent family, all of which compounds her isolation in a foreign land. While the circumstances may make it appear that the narrative tells a universal story of marriage gone wrong and "a statement about female solidarity in the face of tradition-based domestic abuse" (Melynk 77), or explores a typical Bollywood theme of family struggle, the film is very careful to demonstrate that the location of struggle is in Canada and that it is a Canadian story as well as an Indian story. Unfortunately, the problem of new brides coming from India into abusive households in Canada is hidden from public view but does happen; one only has to go as far as local hospitals and community centers to see signage in Punjabi, among other languages, asking women to come forward when they need help. While Mehta's movie did not see much commercial success in Canada, I suggest that it does offer a site of "autonomous, geographically, historically, and culturally grounded feminist concerns and strategies" (Mohanty 172) in its portrayal of the story of an Indo-Canadian woman's life.

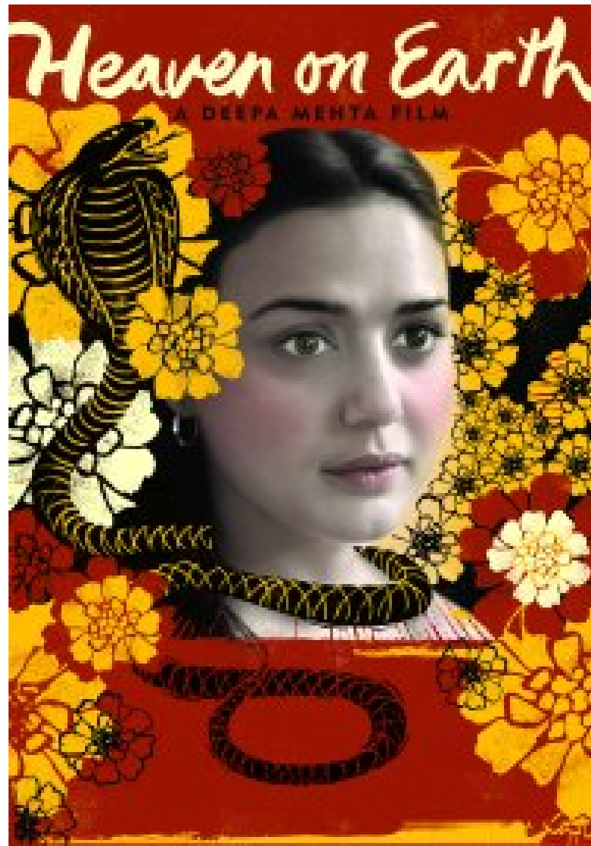

Figure 9. Movie Poster for *Heaven on Earth*. Hamilton-Mehta Productions, 2008. Mongrel Media. Web. 27 August 2012.

One of the ways that Mehta's film is culturally grounded in a discursive mode within an Indian locale is in the use of an Indian fable to present the story, with a king cobra taking the form of the abusive husband in the imaginings of his young unhappy wife. In the fantasy element of the film, the main character Chand begins a tender relationship with a snake which has taken the form of her husband Rocky. Unlike her real husband, the snake-husband is kind to her; the fantasy acts as an escape from her actual abusive relationship. When her in-laws suspect that she has been spending time with another man she must prove to the family that she had been faithful to her husband and that she was tricked by the snake. Chand reaches into a hole in the garden to retrieve the snake as proof of her

fidelity. This scene also evokes the story of Sita, in the Hindu text the *Ramayana*, who, after being kidnapped by Ravana and rescued by Hanuman, is forced to show her faithfulness by stepping into flames to demonstrate her purity. Mehta's *Heaven on Earth* works within boundaries of storytelling that are culturally grounded. The film draws in a particular audience which straddles both Canadian and Indian identities and therefore may need a corresponding *imago.*

As a critic of this film, I fall into the unique position of being situated in that fissure of Indian and Western. However, unlike the main character Chand for whom it seems *being* Canadian is an aporia, the film itself *is* a Canadian film. I think that this might be the most striking feature of Mehta's film and films like hers. I therefore ask: How should we situate Mehta's film within the context of Canadian films about people in Canada? At what point does this film become about Canadians and not only about immigrants? Is there a point at which "Canadian" also *means* immigrant to Canada? For some audiences without the cultural referents to make this a personal story, and for audiences that do not identify with the onscreen *imagos,* this film may seem like it confirms the stereotype of 'problem' immigrants in Canada who are outside of the dominant culture. By personal story, I mean a narrative in which the audience identifies with the film and characters, those sights at which the *imago* is present for them. I do not restrict this identification to Indian audiences as such texts could also share

themes with others in Canada and the *imagos* on the screen could have more to offer in terms of identity referents outside of the designation Indian.

However, what do the *imagos* on the screen mean to the community membership of those in the audience who do identify with the story or characters? Does it help them to feel more Canadian and less outside of the community at large? I offer the following idea: the film could demonstrate that feeling lost and alone in Canada is part of the Canadian condition and does not preclude one from being Canadian. This film could offer up the marginalized Other in Canada as a Canadian condition for some—that is, a part of their Canadian identity, whether or not it collides with the dominant culture's gender and cultural norms. Ideologies in the context of national cultures will always be in contest with each other. In Canada the ideology of individuality clashes with the ideological underpinnings of our government. The government provides a social safety network and makes policies that will benefit the masses rather than afford autonomous decision-making to individuals. Such ideological clashes are common and unavoidable and are determined on a case specific level for government, groups and individuals.

Whether or not it was Mehta's intention to offer this story as a Canadian story, for some audiences her film may add these *imagos* to the Canadian identity. However, we must be careful in adding this interpretation to the discourse of what is Canadian, and to maintain its

heterogeneous condition rather than resort to a homogenous idea of Otherness or Canadianness. Mohanty contends that the "assumption of privilege and ethnocentric universality, on the one hand, and inadequate self-consciousness about the effect of Western scholarship on the 'third world' in the context of a world system dominated by the West, on the other, characterize a sizable extent of Western feminist work on women in the third world" (174). Since I have been educated in the Western tradition of feminism I too must be self-conscious of my own reading of Mehta and my research into the other film directors' work, while at the same time attempting to stand above the gap that has become synonymous with the characterization of the Indian diaspora.

As I explained earlier, the term "diaspora" denotes a homogeneous group of Indians and fails the test of describing the heterogeneity of Indian cultural identities of differing geographies, generational divides, cultural affiliations, socio-economic realities, and so forth. The idea that I want to assert here is that Mehta's film *Heaven on Earth* is perhaps her best effort toward maintaining the heterogeneity of what I have called the Western cousin and counterpart of the "Third World woman," who is a Canadian woman.

In order to be rigorous in my reading of these films I must attempt to recognize my privilege, a requirement of scholarship that both Spivak and Mohanty have demanded. Therefore, I do note that there is indeed a gap

between myself as critic and scholar and the films' subjects. Mohanty notes that "middle-class urban African or Asian scholars producing scholarship on or about their rural or working-class sister which assumes their own middle-class cultures as the norm, and codifies working-class histories and cultures as Other" (173) are a problematic feature of scholarship produced by even those women who are educated in the West, but identify themselves as part of a marginalized cultural or ethnic group. While this gap cannot be filled, it is recognized in the awareness that even as critics we must understand that we are creating a discourse about a subject or *subjects* and we are representing something that can only be secondarily known as a reproduction rather than the actual subject. Even Plato realized that there were inherent dangers in the representation of an object, or in this case a subject; however, whereas he saw inherent evil in representation I see that if we can represent cultural identity whilst acknowledging its inherent gaps.

It is important to acknowledge that literature, film, and other cultural products can be seen as anthropological artefacts which depend on particular historical, socio-economic and political climates for their production. Likewise, in the investigation of these artefacts, scholars, including myself, must become aware of their own agendas; as in my coding of Chand's and Mehta's intellectual production as constructing a discourse of what it means to be Canadian. Whether Mehta was aware of the slippage of identity in her reproduction of the *subject* of an Indo-Canadian woman

struggling with isolation and abuse, the film can be housed in the term "artefact." That it not to say that my extension of Chand's or Mehta's roles as producers of a new representation of a Canadian identity is inappropriate; however, it does mean that in order to avoid the charge of exploitation that Mohanty makes against Western feminists and in order to avoid the meta-narrative of Western feminism, I must recognize that my reading of this film is an interpretation rather than a translation. Therefore, I seek to avoid Mohanty's three analytic presuppositions that lead to what she calls an "ethnocentric universalism [which] is produced in certain analyses" (175):

> The first analytic presupposition I focus on involves the strategic location of the category "woman" vis-à-vis the context of analysis. The assumption of women as an already constituted, coherent group with identical interests and desires, regardless of class, ethnic or racial location, or contradictions, implies a notion of gender or sexual difference or even patriarchy which can be applied universally and cross-culturally. (The context of analysis can be anything from kinship structures and the organization of labor to media representations.) The second analytical presupposition is evident on the methodological level, in the uncritical way "proof" of universality and cross-cultural validity are provided. The third is a more specifically political presupposition underlying the methodologies and the analytic strategies, i.e., the model of power and struggle they imply and suggest. I argue that as a result of the two modes – or,

> rather, frames – of analysis described above, a homogeneous notion of the oppression of women leads to an "average third world woman." This average third world woman leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually constrained) and her being "third world" (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized, etc.). This, I suggest, is in contrast to the (implicit) self-representation of Western women as educated, as modern, as having control over their own bodies and sexualities, and the freedom to make their own decisions. (Mohanty 176)

To address Mohanty's first problem—that of the assumption that woman as a category presupposes the "historically specific material reality of groups of women" (176)—in my reading of diasporic Indian women represented in films and as producers of film, I offer the following defense of my scholarship: Although it is my task to look at the production of these films in terms of the joint group membership their directors have in a specific gender and culture, I assert that there is a distinctive difference between the representations of site-specific cultures in their respective films. Thus, I have attempted to study the films within the contexts of their local sites, which precedes the establishment of a homogenous grouping of them, that is, the formation of a standard category. While these films and film directors have some shared cultural referents, I note the importance of locating them in terms of a *glocal* rather than a homogenous *global* discourse. There is a

distinction in the representation of the lives of British Asians in Gurinder Chadha's *Bend it Like Beckham*, American Desis in Mira Nair's *The Namesake* and Deepa Mehta's *Bollywood/Hollywood*, and in my reading of the female characters. It is never my intention to establish all the female characters in these films as a coherent group and as another example of the oppression women face. Rather, I purposely attempt to examine the films within the contexts of their community memberships,[36] even as I recognize that they share elements of disavowing the negative discourses of Indian women and of the diaspora within their individual narratives.

In chapter three, I discuss the implication of globalized representations of Indian cultural identities and the need for a glocalized representation of such identities which is constituted within specific geographies and societies with the goal of gaining cultural citizenship on a national level. Thus, rather than framing the characters or the directors within a universality that is without cultural, historical, or geographical grounding, which would only serve to homogenize their representations, I advocate, as Mohanty does, for local and in this case feminist readings of texts and film narratives.

[36] McKiernan also emphasizes the importance of relating to cultural community membership to film in his text.

Therefore, rather than seeing Chand as an example of the oppression of women, I have grounded my reading by noting that Mehta produces a character that imagines a fictitious reality within her own cultural traditions to escape her isolation as a new immigrant to Canada and her abusive familial conditions. While Mehta portrays a historical problem with the roles of Indian women in the family, her story takes place in the context of the conditions of life for a Canadian female immigrant within a specific familial environment, or a certain economic status. Chand's problems are compounded by the underlying anger her new husband has for his own living conditions. He too is caught in the bind of Eastern familial expectations and pressures, frustrated with his status as an immigrant, and saddled with the material constraints of his life in Canada. Her husband's oppression compounds Chand's, and the story unfolds in the context of the cultural specificities of their lives rather than as a universal narrative of women's oppression. Mehta made the following statements about the film's narrative in a 2008 interview:

> The film is not about 'domestic abuse,' it's about 'abuse.' It is also about the emotional erosion of human beings. In fact, the role of Rocky (Chand's husband) is one of a man who is also abused by circumstances that bind him to act out. There is also the abuse related to the circumstances of each of the other members of the family. So the film is not about domestic abuse but about abuse — how we abuse our parents and siblings and how they abuse us. Also, on the larger scale, how we're abused by society. This for me is a very

> important theme of the film. Moreover, coming to the West from the East can also be an abuse if you're not prepared for it. When the theme becomes more than just domestic abuse, then you have to look at the wider picture. How do you convey that wider picture to have the desired effect on your audience? The only thing I could think of was quiet so you can have that moment of distance from the point when the abuse happens. (Girn)

Mehta herself avoids aligning her film with a meta-narrative of domestic abuse and the victimization of women by men, which as Mohanty points out is a universal condition of subordination often cited by Western feminists. She attempts to locate her film locally within a particular place as a particular story of abuse that happens on many levels in her film. She includes the abuse that Rocky, Chand's husband, faces within the context of the pressures placed on him by his family's economic dependence. Mehta constructs the representation of Chand within a particular familial environment and a particular social experience of immigrant isolation in Canada. Therefore her film can be read as a specific site of feminist resistance which creates a local discourse around Indo-Canadians rather than as a grand narrative about all immigrant women in Canada, all Indo-Canadians, or a global narrative of the "Indian diaspora." Mohanty points out that feminist scholar Elizabeth Cowie's strategies for feminist scholarship, which position the construction of women within specific discourses and spaces rather than as a universal category preceding

discursive construction, model appropriate Western feminist scholarship by virtue of its localization:

> Elizabeth Cowie, in another context, points out the implications of this sort of analysis when she emphasizes the specifically political nature of kinship structures which must be analyzed as ideological practices which designate men and women as father, husband, wife, mother, sister, etc. Thus, Cowie suggests, women as women are not *located* within the family. Rather, it is *in* the family, as an effect of kinship structures, that women as women are *constructed*, defined within and by the group. (180-181)

Figure 10. *Water*. Kalyani (Lisa Ray), Chuyia (Sarala Kariyawasam), scene still. Dir. Deepa Mehta, 2005. Hamilton Mehta Productions. D. Saltzman. Web. 27 August 2012.

With her film *Water*, Mehta is particularly able to avoid the charge of making "woman" correlate to a subordinate class by highlighting "the political nature of kinship practices." Mehta's film *Water* tells the story of a group of widows in India who are cast out of their homes and communities and forced to live together in a dwelling for widows. Within its larger narrative of the treatment of Indian widows, in which she also presents the tragedy of child brides, her film focuses on the particular cultural and historical constraints of their lives by displaying the power struggles and exploitation of women within the group. Although such struggles could be read as resulting from their gender and economic oppression, Mehta's portrayal of the oppressive female head of the house gives viewers the sense that this woman would have the same lack of morals and exploitative tendencies no matter her life condition. Her relationship with the widows demonstrates the deplorable conditions of widows in India and reminds the audience that the people involved in the treatment and exploitation of woman are not always men.

Mohanty effectively explains the problem of conveniently pre-constructing women as an underclass ahead of acknowledging their socio-economic and family conditions:

> Because women are thus constituted as a coherent group, sexual difference becomes coterminous with female subordination, and power is automatically defined in binary terms: people who have it (read: men), and people who do not (read: women). Men exploit,

> women are exploited. Such simplistic formulations are historically reductive; they are also ineffectual in designing strategies to combat oppressions. All they do is reinforce binary divisions between men and women. (Mohanty 183)

As I illustrated in my introduction, Mehta's critical representation of widows' lives in India was so highly contested in the country that some theatres refused to show the film due to the threat of violence from people who refused to allow any critique of the established cultural systems of dealing with widows in India. Their fury may have been further fueled by the fact that Mehta is a woman herself, who in addition to providing a critique of gender relations in India, has dual citizenship in the West. As a result of her duality, it may have been easier to situate her as a degenerate Other woman corrupted by the West, and no doubt her "Western identity" was used against her film in the protests. Bollywood films have a long history of portraying women in dangerous situations, often as the victims of male violence and oppression. But Mehta's film was not a counter- narrative to all Bollywood cinematic depictions of violence against women. Yet her attempt to frame the harsh penalties inflicted on child and adult widows forced to live as social outcasts as a problem of Indian society led to Mehta herself being cast out of India as an Other. Those opposed to her film attempted to revoke her community membership: her Indian cultural citizenship. It seems community membership in any nation is a contentious topic when the dominion of the centre is challenged.

Perhaps most problematically for her critics is the refusal on the part of Mehta to strip the film's narrative of its contextual grounding by universalizing her critique. Mohanty writes that "Western feminist writings on women in the third world subscribe to a variety of methodologies to demonstrate the universal cross-cultural operation of male dominance and female exploitation" (185). She uses the example of women wearing the veil to make her point regarding Western feminism's drive towards universalism: "The argument goes like this: the greater the number of women who wear the veil, the more universal is the sexual segregation and control of women" (185). However, Mohanty notes that Iranian women who wear the veil (the specific example that she uses to illustrate her argument) do so in ways that attach different meanings to the object depending on historical context (e.g. the Islamicization of Iran versus Western cultural dominance). There is a clear distinction between the reasons that women have worn the veil in different historical periods, yet the veil has often been used as a universal symbol of the oppression of women.

This need to examine the cultural contexts of the discourses under analysis is also mirrored in postcolonial critic Franz Fanon's critique of Western discourse and scholarship in his controversial essay "Algeria Unveiled." Fanon writes that the French colonial administration in the 1930s began a battle for hegemonic control over the Algerians by directing their initial efforts towards unveiling Algerian women to save them from oppression and then move them, followed by their families, into the colonial

society desired by their French masters. Fanon explains the French colonial administration's will to dominate Algerian society by simultaneously liberating and asserting control over Algerian woman:

> This enabled the colonial administration to define a precise political doctrine: 'If we want to destroy the structure of Algerian society, its capacity for resistance, we must first of all conquer the women; we must go and find them behind the veil where they hide themselves and in the houses where the men keep them out of sight.' It is the situation of the woman that was accordingly taken as the theme of action. The dominant administration solemnly undertook to defend this woman, pictured as humiliated, sequestered, cloistered…It described the immense possibilities of women, unfortunately transformed by the Algerian man into an inert, demonized, indeed dehumanized object….Converting the woman, winning her over to the foreign values, wrenching her free from her status, was at the same time achieving a real power over the man and attaining a practical, effective means of destructuring Algerian culture. (37-39)

As with the abolishment of sati, which Spivak describes in "Can the Subaltern Speak?", the unveiling of women described by Fanon is an instance of "white man saves brown woman from brown man." The French try to influence the Algerian woman and her society by demonstrating Western superiority in the colonial mission to secure its hegemonic control structure. Fanon suggests, in the struggles of the Algerian Revolution the

veil, for women, becomes a sign of colonial resistance. Fanon explains that, "The veil was worn because tradition demanded a rigid separation of the sexes, but also because the occupier *was bent on unveiling Algeria*," women in the Algerian revolution used the veil as a strategy of resistance against the French administration not as a mask of their own repression ("Algeria Unveiled" 63).

Therefore, if I read Chand as another example of the universal sexual segregation and control of women and the oppression of Indian women by Indian men, then I ignore the conditions of her isolation and abuse by assuming that they were in place before she was constructed in the film. Chand's reactions to her abuse by Rocky, her terrible relationship with her mother-in-law, her entry into and isolation in a foreign country, her attempt to secure her husband's love by drugging him, and her retreat into a surreal relationship with a snake are not signs of the universal sexual segregation and the control of men over women. Chand is a thinking, active, and creative woman who is struggling to change her fate and circumstances. Moreover, Chand cannot be tossed into the universal category of the marginalized Other when the normative descriptors of Western feminism like agency or autonomy are used to measure her. Her position as an immigrant woman is complex and offers a challenge to the acceptable roles for Indian women within Indo-Canadian family structures. Mehta makes this challenge within the codes of an Indian cultural discourse, in the form

of the fable, and from the perspective of a female Indo-Canadian filmmaker produces a cultural grounded representation of identity.

The second method of unscrupulous scholarship that Mohanty aligns with Western feminism seeks to establish a "universal cross-cultural operation of male dominance and female exploitation" (186). She takes issue with the use of concepts like "reproduction, the sexual division of labor, the family, marriage, household, patriarchy, etc…without their specification in local cultural and historical contexts" to provide "explanations for women's subordination, apparently assuming their universal applicability" (186). I have covered this point several times in my previous discussion of Mehta's film *Heaven on Earth*. However, I will say that in the case of *Water*, analysis of the film in terms of its historical setting of India in 1938 must be considered as well as the conditions of child marriage and widowhood within a certain cultural group of rural Indian villagers. This context needs to be examined apart from the film's story before scholars analyzing *Water* name such practices as examples of female oppression that is the universal condition of all Indians, or Third World women. Rather than seeing the oppression and exploitation of widows in India as a condition of women everywhere or as a meta-narrative of general female oppression, which Mohanty states would result "from a confusion between and collapsing together of the descriptive and explanatory potential" of gender roles in society, the film must be viewed and considered in the context of a "historically specific explanation" of the gender norms and conditions of a

certain community in India at a certain time (186). This does not mean that I reduce the film's theme to a historical tableau which is irrelevant to the situation of widows in India today; within certain sects, classes, and communities the maltreatment of widows continues to follow the historical pattern. The reason for the oppression of widows needs to be located within the context of past and present cultural environments; attitudes towards them must be explained, rather than being shown as a "normalized" and general Indian view of women that can be applied to all Indian women, because "widow" cannot, like "third world woman," be a subordinate category of its own.

The third methodological problem Mohanty writes of is the confusing "use of gender as a superordinate category of organizing analysis with the universalistic proof and instantiation of the category. In other words, empirical studies of gender differences are confused with the analytical organization of cross-cultural work" (187). Mohanty reiterates her emphasis of the need for localized feminist scholarship that is produced within cultures to counter the misappropriation of Third World women's daily lives in a type of Orientalist discourse.

Ultimately, Mohanty's criticism is based on the problem of Western feminism which "assumes 'women' have a coherent group identity within the different cultures…. because women as an already constituted group are *placed* within religious, economic, familial, and legal structures" (188-

9). She also states that the production of women as a "superordinate category" which is always in opposition to the superordinate category of "men" thus,

> necessitates the assumption of what Michel Foucault calls the 'juridico-discursive' model of power, the principal features of which are 'a negative relation' (limit and lack), an 'insistence on the rule' (which forms the binary system), a 'cycle of prohibition,' the 'logic of censorship,' and a 'uniformity' of the apparatus functioning at different levels. (189)

Mohanty explains that Foucault's view of power relations insists that "Power relations are structured in terms of a unilateral and undifferentiated course of power and a cumulative reaction to power" (189), and therefore any resistance to the power centre would mean a reversal of the power condition; in the case of the powerlessness of the widows that were cast out of their homes, the reverse should happen if there is resistance to the power dynamic. This, however, as Mohanty points out, would simply be a reversal of the power dynamic, thus maintaining the same paradigm with a reversed axis and the same need to resist and be liberated would be remain. Movement away from such a paradigm necessitates not placing women and men in a superordinate category with precedence to the individual or culturally constituted group's socially created roles and issues.

What is clear in Mohanty's criticism is the dangerous self-inflation that Western feminists can unintentionally create, positioning themselves at the centre of normalcy in terms of appropriate markers of women's living conditions, attitudes, goals and roles in society. My investigation of Mehta's *Water* is framed by a critique of the abhorrent circumstances of child widows which should not be taken to imply the view that arranged marriage in general is inferior to the process of self-selection of spouses common to Western countries. The institution of arranged marriage in India is based upon cultural ideas around religion, caste, family, economic and social resources, and traditional culture. Therefore, my criticism of the arrangement of child marriages examines the following views, held by some within Indian communities: families must unburden themselves from the duty of selecting grooms for their daughters; daughters can place economic strain on families within rural communities because girls are not expected nor able to provide income for their families; girls are not expected to take care of elderly parents; girls of a certain age are offloaded to join other kinship units and fulfill the roles of wives and mothers; and finally the naturalization of traditions within certain communities upholds the practice of child marriage. Individual differences in attitudes towards child marriages exist within these communities, and although there may be a lack of uniform support for them, power relations on a local or family level influence the outcomes of such marriages. Situating an attack on child marriage within a discourse of Western values of individualism, gender equality, and the sanctity of childhood would ignore the histories of the local

cultures in which the practice takes place in favor of Western values and cultural practices, and would relegate any ideas, practices, and people outside of that to the status of Other. What needs to be avoided is the situation whereby "[l]egal, economic, religious, and familial structures are treated as phenomena to be judged by Western standard. It is here that ethnocentric universality comes into play" and the focus on "third world difference" (Mohanty 190) becomes implicit.

Mohanty focus on the power dynamic between East and West, which is reminiscent of the critique of Orientalist practices; in her analysis, Europe becomes the global cultural centre leaving everywhere and everyone else to the status of Other. Just as the Occident used the Orient to define itself in terms of what it was and what it was not, some Western feminism uses third-world women for its self-representation by setting up the binary of us and them:

> For in the context of a first/third world balance of power, feminist analyses which perpetuate and sustain the hegemony on the idea of the superiority of the West produce a corresponding set of universal images of the "third world woman," images such as the veiled woman, the powerful mother, the chaste virgin, the obedient wife etc. These images exist in universal, ahistorical splendor, setting in motion a colonial discourse which exercises a very specific power in defining, coding, and maintaining existing first/third world connections. (191)

Furthermore "this mode of feminist analysis, by homogenizing and systematizing the experiences of different groups of women in these countries, erases all marginal and resistant modes and experiences" (191). In the case of Mehta's *Heaven on Earth*, Chand's attempt to improve her situation with her husband take place when she uses a medicinal root to induce his affection, and it is also exhibited in her retreat into the fantastical, which leads to the act of seeking to prove her fidelity by reaching into a garden hole to produce a magical snake that has tricked her. The notion that Mehta is both proprietor and instigator of Chand's actions is lost and rendered inert if the film is read through a Western lens. If Mehta's film is not situated within the cultural and historical site of Indo-Canadian communities, then it is all too easily read as a narrative on the backwardness of Indians in Canada and as a call for them to adopt the ostensibly superior values and culture of Canada's dominant centre. Mehta's directorial efforts are then incorrectly viewed as promoting the hegemony of Western culture within the context of a Canadian society advocating the disavowal of Other cultures; this view would be a simplification of her agenda and a damning interpretation of her works as discriminatory and repressive tools that dishonor her dharmic responsibilities of cultural citizenship in the process. Ultimately, examining the specificity of a character's culture, class, history, and geography alongside her gender leads to a heterogeneous representation of her experience, and that of a particular group of women, as constitutive of an

individual narrative rather than emblematic of a larger meta-narrative of Western feminist production.

CHAPTER THREE

HYBRIDITY, MULTICULTURALISM AND NATIONAL IDENTITIES: A PLURAL CONCEPT

Postcolonial criticism extends from post-structuralism, through Marxism and feminism, and into cultural criticism in a way that is equally innovative and confusing. Since postcolonial literature and theory were my initial fields of academic study, early research for this project was based on the notion that postcolonial criticism is the most useful theoretical lens to examine diasporic Indian cultural identities. However, there are also significant gaps in the use of postcolonial criticism to theorize and discuss the second and subsequent generations of "diasporas" in the contexts of Western culture and cultural citizenship. In *Figures of Dissent*, Terry Eagleton has written a half-scathing, half-praising essay on postcolonial theorist Gayatri Spivak in which he points out that "ethnic minorities within metropolitan countries are not the same as colonised peoples" (162), claiming that there is a gap in postcolonial theory when it comes to discussing minorities in Western metropolises. The work of postcolonial critics like Mohanty, Spivak, and Bhabha do offer tools with which to deconstruct the discourses of identity representation, as illustrated in my analysis of Indian cultural identity in film. However, the gap Eagleton identified is being bridged in the study of film by critics such as Naficy, Desai, and Ilott, who focus on transnational and diasporic filmmakers. Their analysis addresses the historical void in earlier postcolonial, and cultural theory to examine how immigrant and second generation diasporic

figures in multicultural nations—namely, those visually marked as Other at this historic moment—might be included and accepted as both subjects and citizens in Western societies.

In this chapter I will discuss the need for "glocal" representations of cultural identities to combat the homogenizing capacity of "globalized" representations of the cultural identities of diasporic groups. This conversation then leads into my discussion of theorist Homi Bhabha, who has attempted through his concept of hybridity to address the construction of cultural identities which have been affected by migration in profound and permanent ways. I apply Bhabha's ideas to Deepa Mehta's film *Bollywood/Hollywood* as I work out how Mehta creates identities that are local, Indian, and Canadian. To conclude the chapter, I also examine recent sociological work on multiculturalism and the project of social cohesion in order to situate the potential value of film, and the work of these filmmakers, in aiding in the procurement of cultural citizenship in Western nations by pointing toward a new direction in the construction of plural national identities that challenge the exclusionist strategies of monoculturalism.

A Critique of Bhabha's Hybridity and Mimicry

Stuart Hall writes, "Meaning depends on the relationship between things in the world – people, objects and events, real or fictional – and the conceptual system, which can operate as *mental representations* of them" ("Representation, Meaning and Language" 18). Bhabha's study focuses on the "mental representations" of culture and cultural identity. He sees those psychological representations as having meaningful effects both internally and externally in societies and cultures. In his 1983 essay "The Other Question," Bhabha establishes the aim of postcolonial criticism as the antithesis to "[t]he objective of colonial discourse [which] is to construe the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction" (41). "Construing" or misrepresenting colonial subjects was fundamental to the process of colonization and to the establishment of cultural and political hegemony. It is on the basis of an agenda to counter colonial discourse and subsequently pejorative neocolonial discourses that Bhabha launches his criticism of language, literary texts, and culture. The focus of his cultural analysis is the fissures and splits in colonial and other antagonistic discourses, and he discerns the emergence of a "third space of enunciation" as an interstitial space in which discourse can be deconstructed to reveal its negative and subjugating effects.

In his book *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha writes about practices around representing cultural identity and the discourses surrounding those

representations using the post-structuralist theories of Jacques Lacan and the discourse theory of Michel Foucault. Bhabha sees that the process of representing afflicted identities through "inappropriate signifiers" locates them outside of traditional cultural norms and classifications:

> Those inappropriate signifiers of colonial discourse – the difference between being English and being Anglicized; the identity between stereotypes which, through repetition, also become different, the discriminatory identities constructed across traditional cultural norms and classification, the Simian Black, the Lying Asian – all these are *metonymies* of presence. (128)

Bhabha refers here to the problematic misrepresentations and translations of identity as they cross and collide with conceptual systems. Bhabha proposes the idea that in the coming together of cultures, through imperialism or as a result of migration, discriminatory and negative "Other" identities become "metonymies of presence" standing in for cultural identity. In this context, "native" or "Oriental" identities are constructed in such limited ways in colonial discourses that the diminutive—which is almost always negative—is taken as representative of the whole. This is the idea upon which Bhabha builds his theory of mimicry, and the site at which he formulates his theory of hybridity to counter colonial representations of cultural identities.

Bhabha deploys the term "hybridity" to move away from the binary oppositions that have historically located and dominated the colonized "Other" through the rhetoric of us and them. His idea of hybridity, which he locates as a site for cultural difference through a reworking of Derridian différance ("Difference" 123), embraces a more informal construction of cultural identity. Drawing extensively on Derrida, Bhabha grounds his theory in the post-structuralist belief that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is characterized by plurality in terms of the range of potential significations. In a characteristically "linguistic turn," as it is explained by Hall (*Representation* 19), Bhabha determines that there is also a plurality of the subject, and that the location of culture and site of cultural identity are constructed through an unstable chain of referents which inform ever-shifting representations. Bhabha conceptualizes hybridity as that space "where cultural differences 'contingently' and conflictually touch" while resisting "the binary opposition of racial and cultural groups…as homogeneous polarized political consciousnesses" (*Location of Culture* 296).

As an alternative to essentialist notions of ethnicity or race, Bhabha's theory of hybridity is based on the idea that identity is a socio-historical construction. In fact, identity categories—whether of race and ethnicity, or gender and class—are seen by post-structuralists like Michel Foucault and by Bhabha as something that is assigned though *discourse* rather than inherent. According to Foucault, discourse is "'a group of statements [the *episteme*] which provide a language for talking about – a way of *representing*

the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment'" (emphasis added, qtd. in Hall, *Representation* 44). Knowledge, truth, and thus identity are produced and constructed though language, discourse, and representation. To reiterate, Bhabha's insistence on this aspect of plurality, of what can be signified in language as it is constructed and arbitrarily assigned, is based on the idea of social-constructivism. However, there are two challenges to overcome in Bhabha's theory of hybridity as a result of conflicts with social-constructivist thinking.

The first conflict in Bhabha's theory is integral to the concept of hybridity. This is the assumption that there is an origin of culture and a linguistic, cultural and/or racial "native" self. In the *Location of Culture*, Bhabha treats identities as hybrid and formed though transculturation as a result of colonization, migration and globalization. His discussion of the cultural referents or informants of these hybrid identities infers that there are cultural origins or starting points upon which they depend. However, since culture and identity are socio-cultural constructions, the assumption must be that all people have hybrid identities. According to post-structuralist views of discourse that ground his theory, Bhabha would have to see all identities as constructed through discourse and shaped through social and historical context, such that both colonized and colonizer are hybrid subjects. The tension lies in the assumption of origins—that primary cultures come together like primary colors to form new hybridities. This tension between Bhabha's conceptualization of hybridity and the principles

of post-structuralism on which it is based seems to negate the very premise of hybridity.

The second and equally significant challenge to Bhabha's construction of hybridity lies in its dependence on a system of endless referents which leads to deferral of meaning. The idea that there is a plurality of potential significations and a subsequent deferral of meaning is a problem of theories like Bhabha's which take as their starting point the assumptions of Derridian deconstruction. A major criticism of deconstruction—which is related to the presumed plurality of the subject—is that the endless chain of signification does not produce meaning. Bhabha's theory enters the dangerous territory of implying that the plural subject cannot be meaningfully represented—that it is too amorphous and ambiguous to be stated, understood, pictured or presented. As a result, constructions of identity that are based on ambivalence and always in limbo do very little to erase the binaries that have historically been used—and continue to be used—to understand difference. Such constructions, in short, do not offer an alternative to the ubiquitous binary. Binaries, whether constructed negatively or positively, are used to project difference and provide stable points of reference. That which is signified is evident and momentarily fixed in a binary system. Bhabha's plurality seems to provide no means to eschew binary ways of thinking, understanding, and constructing difference in the representation of cultural identity. Bhabha's view that "a strategic displacement of value through a process of the

metonymy of presence" (*Location of Culture* 171) seems to contribute to the already considerable confusion around where to locate cultural identity, as such a process only enacts an endless displacement of meaning and identity.

As described in chapter one, identity can be viewed in alternative terms, as something that is dynamic, even as it is named or signified in relation to something else – that is, momentarily fixed – in order to be meaningful. In chapter one, my discussion of Said's *Orientalism* illustrated that constructing and representing identity has been a process of strategically placing people in opposition to one another in a binary structure for the purpose of gaining and maintaining power. Bhabha's intention is to demonstrate that the strategic (mis)appropriation of identity can be deconstructed with the tools of post-structuralism. But, identity cannot be left in a deconstructed form. It must be re-inscribed with a different agenda, and used in a new strategy with the aim of countering negative representations; there must be transparency around the production of representation, knowledge, and identity. This tactic would lead to informative and meaningful productions, and create counter-narratives to discourses which are produced underhandedly to misappropriate the agency and power of certain people and cultural groups. It is important to note that Bhabha's investigation of colonial discourse, and the subsequent effects of this discourse on historical and contemporary productions of cultural discourse and identity, has illuminated the ways that the strategic representation of cultural identity in capitalist economies

undermines the autonomy and agency of certain groups of people. However, there is a danger of using hybridity, like multiculturalism, as a meta-narrative which equalizes diversity and in so doing denies the class, gender, racial, and cultural differences which it wants to recognize.

Meaningful representation must be produced in an interstitial space, where a particular historical and cultural moment provides knowledge of and insight into peoples, cultures, societies, and historical periods. Identities can be portrayed and processed through tableaux or snapshots as reflective of a particular moment in a time, history, or life, and as we know from Foucault's theory of discourse and Hall's explanation of constructivism, are inscribed on subjects from within discourse and cultural spaces. That is why in the context of globalization there is a need for cultural discourses and practices to speak of, and about, second, third and fourth generations of minorities living in Western cultures whose cultural competencies have been inscribed from within those cultures at local sites of glocal representations.

In his essay "Of Mimicry and Man," Bhabha writes about mimicry's subversive effects on colonial discourses, positing it as a site of resistance. Despite the fact that Bhabha does acknowledge mimicry as "one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge" (*Location* 122), he imagines that the position of the mimic offers more than its original aim of "'normalizing' the colonial state of the subject" (*Location* 123). He

believes that what actually takes place in the process of mimicry is that "the dream of post-Enlightenment civility alienates its own language of liberty and produces another knowledge of its norms" (*Location* 123), meaning that, as the mimic man is only similar to and not the same as the Englishman, the perceived lack in the representation and construction of mimicry produces a "slippage" in which the mask of colonial discourse is cracked and something else, a different and counter-knowledge, is detected. This happens in that ambivalent space which Bhabha constitutes as in-between or interstitial in discourse.

According to Bhabha, the mimic man must become like the colonial master, appropriate his ideologies of English cultural superiority, and still maintain his status as Other: "colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*.... the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippages, its excess, its difference" (*Location* 122). Thus, the Englishman is the first-class citizen, while the mimic man educated in the habits, practices, and tongue of the Englishman is the second-class citizen; the native colonial is of the third class. However, in Bhabha's view of mimicry, the binary between us and them, the Other and the English, is still drawn between the Englishman and the rest, between being and becoming like the colonizer. It is confounding to find the place in which mimicry is not drawn into that particular binary.

Bhabha stipulates that "What emerges between mimesis and mimicry is a *writing*, a mode of representation, that marginalizes the monumentality of history, quite simply its power to be a model, that power which supposedly makes it imitable. Mimicry *repeats* rather than *re-presents*" (*Location* 125). He sees mimicry as a mode of colonial discourse which is ruptured as a result of the difference that arises when it becomes impossible to be "the same" as the colonizer. He believes that this gap leads to the presentation of a "partial" presence. Bhabha explains that colonial mimicry is an incomplete process because through it the colonial subject merely "repeats" and imitates the colonizers rather than *becoming* the same as them. The effect is one of mockery that produces excesses and slippages during the re-representation of colonial discourse.

W.E.B. DuBois notion of "double-consciousness" can be used to supplement what Bhabha refers to as a "partial" presence. The practice of mimicry can actually produce "double-consciousness" of "two unreconciled ideals," as exposure to British culture and Anglicization splits colonial identities in two. W.E.B. DuBois describes the rise of double-consciousness in the following passage from *The Souls of Black Folk*:

> After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself

> through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, *this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness*—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (emphasis added, 364-365)

DuBois vividly describes the condition of "being the same as, but not quite" of Bhabha's mimicry. His prose captures the agonizing partiality of identity felt when the individual realizes that he is only "repeating" not "re-presenting" that persona which he attempts to take on, and this "metonymy of presence" leads to DuBois' double-consciousness. What Bhabha describes as the ambivalent space of mimicry in which the mimic can detect the fissures and fallacies in colonial discourse is the state of double-consciousness. In this state the cultural discourse and perspective that the mimic man was naturalized into, the "native" culture he was socialized into and subject to before exposure to another, outside, and in this case British culture, does not disappear nor does the "monumentality of history" get dispersed or "marginalized." This persistence of the "naturalized" culture of the so-called mimic man influences his point of view and interferes with his assimilation into a different, colonial culture producing the gaps and conflicts between discourses that Bhabha refers to as "slippages." It is not

through ambivalence or slippages in the colonial discourse, made obvious by mimicry, that the strategy of the colonizers and of colonial discourse gets detected; it is an inevitable outcome of double-consciousness. However, whereas the mimic man was never taken outside of the influence of his "naturalized" culture in which the double talk of conflicting discourses was felt, the second or third generation of the diasporic individual's cultural identity seems to be dependent on a more complex hybridity of cultural referents and cultural citizenship practices.

Deepa Mehta's *Bollywood/Hollywood* and Homi Bhabha's Theory of Identity

My critique of Bhabha and my reflection on the condition of double-consciousness is best illustrated through a reading of a scene from Deepa Mehta's film *Bollywood/Hollywood*. The grandmother in the film demonstrates practices of mimicry, as defined by Bhabha, without seeming to recognize them as such, and she also depends on the conceptual systems or cultural discourses of Indian culture. She seems to have appropriated the formal dialect and high culture of the British; as an elderly woman of Indian heritage, she was likely educated in colonial India and exposed to the effects of colonialism first hand. The most obvious instance of mimicry is in her speech. The grandmother's sagacious advice is always delivered in the form of Shakespearian poetry. The effect is comical and showcases her Anglicized education in the canon of English literature and her belief in the wisdom of Shakespeare.

Figure 11. *Bollywood/Hollywood*. Grandma ji (Dina Pathak), scene still. Dir. Deepa Mehta, 2002. All Movie Photo. K. Woroner. Web. 27 August 2012.

Yet despite practicing mimicry through her demonstrating her knowledge of the English language and culture, the grandmother still insists that her family maintain its Indian customs. She is presented in more traditional dress than the other Indian characters, including her daughter-in-law who wears colored saris even though as a widow she would normally wear white, and she is also the matriarch of the family and as such is constantly directing the family as is customary for the eldest in Indian tradition. The grandmother shows that the adoption of colonial cultural practices does not always trump traditional cultural practices. What she displays is closer to double-consciousness than mimicry.

Bollywood/Hollywood offers a rich and complex portrayal of what it means to be an Indian in Canada. The representation of cultural identity in *Bollywood/Hollywood* presents a spectacle of diverse and mixed cultural

identities as the characters are constructed with shifting cultural and historical referents from both the East and West. All of the characters demonstrate exposure to and the influence of more than one cultural group and in that sense are examples of hybrid identities.

An analysis of Mehta's *Bollywood/Hollywood* characters also illustrates hybrid cultural identities ability to mitigate, dissolve, or disavow the binary model of centre and periphery, us and them, or East and West which facilitates the marginalization of cultural groups within Canadian culture. Her portrayal of Indian cultural identity within and *as* Canadian culture establishes binaries of difference that are constantly in play; they might be stretched, subverted and even dismantled, but they are always present. The main characters of Sue and Rahul around whom the film's story is established constantly negotiate their cultural identities as Indians and Canadians, and in Sue's case, for a short time, Spanish. Their identities waver and shift, becoming fixed only when they come into contact with other characters in the story. In contrast to his mother and grandmother, Rahul appears quite modern and Western, but in contrast to Sue, he is the traditional Indian whereas she is the Westerner. Indeed the plurality of Rahul's subject position is only constituted through his juxtaposition to various characters and is established through a binary of this—a traditional Indian—or that—a Westerner. Rahul is shown in relation to the centre and the periphery; to Western Canadian culture and Indian culture. He is only both Indian and Western when individually plotted along a line graph

which extends from the centre to the periphery. Mehta's characters illustrate the constant play or "slippages" in cultural identities. We are fooled into thinking there is a plurality of the subject when "them" becomes "us," but there is still always a "them." Certain identities or aspects of cultural difference make it into the centre but there always exists an opposing "them." If characters like Sue or even Rahul, with his "love-nest," make it into the centre of dominant Canadian culture, they are shown in opposition to the "them" of the old-fashioned, unassimilated and non-Western Other.

What Mehta shows us is the play in cultural competencies that takes place between the margins and the periphery. As we are introduced to Sue she is named as, and hence assumes the identity of, a Spanish woman; Rahul meets her at a bar and says, "You can't be Indian, can you? You look Spanish." Sue replies, "I can be whoever you want me to be." Rahul's assumption that she is not Indian places her outside of Indian culture and away from cultural competency and/or knowledge of Indian culture. Rahul, in one sense, is reclaiming his own agency in relation to the production of discourse about what it means to be Indian, and, in another sense, is misappropriating Sue's cultural identity. He hijacks her ownership of the ability to represent herself and removes her agency, inscribing her with another identity. He reverses the "us" and "them" binary that is familiar to colonial discourse. Thus, Mehta demonstrates the potential for identity to be assumed and misrepresented when is it drawn from the outside.

Within this representation of how and what an Indian girl is – according to Rahul, Sue does not have cultural competencies and thus is not Indian – something interesting takes place: a strategic subversion of the condition of colonial discourse. The construction of a Spanish cultural identity for Sue, and her assumption of that misappropriated identity, are a kind of reversal of Othering as it is elaborated in Said's *Orientalism*. Sue, when coded as Spanish, is exoticized by Rahul—she becomes the alluring European Other to his Indianness. Mehta's film demonstrates that differences can put binaries into play but that cultural identity is negotiated and understood through binary systems.

Hybridity in *Bollywood/Hollywood* is better seen as the negotiated space in which cultures come together, collide, and clash as they shift over time and space. These hybrid cultural identities also become new mixed, melded sites of diversity, giving rise to new subject positions along the spectrum of cultural identity. This spectrum in Mehta's depiction, which extends from a centre to a periphery, is still caught in a binary logic. Hybridity can be used to talk about Sue and the grandmother but their voices and positions in relation to the centre of Canadian culture are very different, as are their interests and priorities. Describing both Sue and the grandmother in terms of the hybridity of their cultural identities, or in terms of their plurality of subject positions, may not provide particularly meaningful or insightful interpretations of their diasporic cultural

identities. Instead, Sue and the grandmother can be plotted on a spectrum—a line which runs from the centre of Canadian culture to the periphery, from East to West. At different moments their positions on this spectrum can change, shift and generally move around but they are individually constituted and understood by their difference in (op)position to something else along a continuum which runs from one binary to another.

Hybridity, as a post-structuralist concept, and as explored in Mehta's film, may not provide enough stable points of reference to offer a meaningful representation of cultural identity in her film. Hybridity and its auxiliary term "mimicry," which Bhabha contends is a strategy to dissemble repressive colonial discourses of representation, reveal an inherent lack of agency which is especially apparent when compared to Mehta's strategy of representing the potential for cultural identity to subvert preconceived Western notions of Indian cultural identity as a marginal subcultural group. Bhabha discusses the issue of agency in his theory of cultural identity revealed in his essay on mimicry, which begins with the following quotation from Jacques Lacan:

> Mimicry reveals something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called an itself that is behind. The effect of mimicry is camouflage….It is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled – exactly like the technique of camouflage practised in human warfare. (*Location* 121)

Camouflage, or the act of becoming mottled, does not lead to agency, authority, or power; it leads away from it. In Lacan's idea of camouflage there is an anticipation of a strike against those being mimicked, with the subsequent illusion of agency. What happens through Bhabha's concept of mimicry is a sort of intelligence gathering about the opposing forces of colonization through a reading between the lines of colonial discourse, but there is no eminent force with which to strike back from the position of the mimic man or the plural hybrid subject. In the following passage, Bhabha considers that voyeurism gives rise to agency:

> The metonymic strategy produces the signifier of colonial *mimicry* as the affect of hybridity – at once a mode of appropriation and of resistance, from the disciplined to the desiring. As the discriminated object, the metonym of presence becomes the support of an authoritarian voyeurism, all the better to exhibit the eye of power. Then, as discrimination turns into the assertion of the hybrid, the insignia of authority becomes a mask, a mockery. (*Location* 172)

Bhabha believes that the metonymy of presence provides a strategy of resistance to colonial discourse. Mimicry and metonymy, which are constituted through hybridity, are meant to disavow the negative representation of cultural identity in colonial discourse by revealing discursive constructions that were meant and used to control colonial subjects. Bhabha then shifts to the state and strategy of "authoritarian

voyeurism," which is an active oxymoron. Here, Bhabha takes a leap from seeing to acting. This move to "resistance" must include a meaningful representation of cultural identity "to change the often coercive reality that they [colonial discourses] so lucidly contain" (Bhabha 172). Bhabha's theories offer a major contribution to the study of colonial discourse and provide a methodological strategy for deconstructing discourse and studying its effects. Yet the question remains: How can we make mimicry or hybridity represent a challenge to colonial discourse, or beyond its main feature of the recognition of the construction of colonial discourse?

The question is whether and at what site knowledge of discursive tactics affects discourses of dominance. Is it enough to ask a question without providing a response? Recognition does not immediately translate into disavowal. There is a step in-between during which colonial subjects must gain the agency and power to produce the knowledge about themselves. This is the point at which Bhabha's theory cannot become a strategy or practice to reinscribe colonial subjects with the agency of episteme to produce knowledge and control the regime of truth about their own cultural identities that were misappropriated in colonial discourses.

While Bhabha is useful to help to unveil discriminatory discourses, Mehta takes up an effective strategy of producing representations of cultural identity. As explained earlier, *Bollywood/Hollywood* reverses the positions of the centre and the margins of culture within the contexts of life

in Canada. This reversal becomes a tool for subverting the discourses of the dominant Western white culture in Canada. The main narrative takes place from the perspective of the Indian family rather than from the lens of the dominant culture. This flipping of the centre and the margins shakes up the naturalization of the dominant culture as the focus shifts to, and is presented from within, an otherwise marginal or peripheral Indian culture. A clear example of this change is when Rahul brings his white girlfriend Kim, to the house to meet his family. As she interviews Kim, Rahul's grandmother refuses to speak in English although she is fluent. The grandmother establishes her language and culture as the norm in her house, which forces Kim into a marginal position as an outsider. She then asks Kim what caste and village she is from. This question, a commonplace in her culture, further marginalizes Kim as she can only helplessly answer "Toronto." This reversal of the centre and margins, of "us" and "them," recurs throughout the film.

Figure 12. *Bollywood/Hollywood*. Rahul Seth (Rahul Khanna), Kimberly (Jessica Paré), Grandma ji (Dina Pathak), Dir. Deepa Mehta, 2008. Hamilton Mehta Productions K. Woroner. Web. 27 August 2012.

A second example of this reversal of the cultural centre and margin takes place when Rahul educates Sue, whom he still thinks is Spanish, about Indian culture. Being in the position of the centre, Rahul takes a hold of the discursive power to produce knowledge about Indian culture and to represent Indian cultural identity. As he educates Sue about being Indian, Mehta conveys her own view that cultural identity is a socio-historical construction rather than a racialized, biological essence. She links identity to possessing knowledge and cultural competency as opposed to simply *being* a certain cultural identity.

Before the party at his parents' house, Rahul tells Sue that he has a "star friend from India" coming to the party whom she must pretend to recognize, as all Indians know Bollywood films and actors. Popular culture in this film is Indian popular culture—Bollywood, not Hollywood. Rahul's younger brother also relates everything to Bollywood movies and heroes, and uses Bollywood as the cultural lens through which to read and understand life events. Mehta's reversal of centre and periphery is also present in the film's conformity with the conventions of Bollywood cinema. It is full of melodrama, relies on its several song and dance numbers to be entertaining, including the classic "Now we are falling in love" song, and incorporates clichéd dialogue. *Bollywood/Hollywood* has the potential to transform representation as it produces new discourses, especially in reversing the positions of the centre and margin. The effect is an exaggerated shake-up of cultural stereotypes and identity markers that illuminates the way in which cultural identity is constituted through socio-cultural construction.

Mehta's representation of cultural identity and her strategic reversal of centre and periphery demonstrate what Hall calls the issue of translatability Hall (*Representation* 22). Hall's model of socio-historical construction teaches us that discourse and *episteme* shape our ways of thinking, our ideologies, mores, and values, and are all constructed for us through our socialization into culturally based conceptual systems, which as we move from one culture to another must be translated to be

represented. The translatability of cultures through representation is increasingly important as the homogenizing force of globalization steadily brings different culturally based conceptual systems together. The production of a "glocal" representation of culture and cultural identity must also increase in order to combat inappropriate and homogenizing discourses. Bhabha contends that in future cultural analysis, "When we talk of the ever-expanding boundaries and territories of the global world, we must not fail to see how our own intimate, indigenous landscapes should be remapped to include those who are its new citizens; or those whose citizenly presence has been annihilated or marginalized" (*Location* xxii). Bhabha may have felt an unspoken need to produce glocal not globalized cultural identities in his recognition of the importance of landscapes in the representation of cultural identities, but for the time visual and discursive representations of cultural identity, such as Deepa Mehta's film, are to a greater extent producing legitimate counter-narratives to homogenizing and hegemonic cultural discourses of marginalized identities. Amy Fung states in her text on *Bollywood/Hollywood* that:

> The issue of a national identity only fractures when we consider the number of ethnicities using hyphenated identities. Between the private and public spheres of perceptions and expressions, second generation individuals can fluently flow between their learned and nurtured cultures, claiming stakes in both territories…national identity, as well as ethnicity, are ongoing performances. (Fung 73)

Depictions like Mehta's, which portray Indo-Canadians as "locals," demonstrate alternative and plural national identities that effectively debase homogenizing cultural identities as well as fracture national identities. When simply placed under banners such as "diaspora" or "multiculturalism" cultural identities continue to be constructed within negative homogenizing stereotypes. In addition, as I discuss in the following section, excluding plural cultural identities from the representation of national cultural centers in policies of multiculturalism or assimilation does not effectively lead to social integration.

Globalization and "Glocalization"

> Difference of differentiation as the spirit and mood of the postmodern age has been celebrated on a global scale for three decades whereas at the same time globalized capitalism is globally erasing difference, imposing sameness and standardization on consciousness, feeling, imagination, motivation, desire, and taste through cultural, social and economic means. The world has never been so anxious to move beyond imperialism while imperialism has gathered unforeseen momentum today. All kinds of ethnic, racial, and cultural marginalities are forming a kind of historic bloc in critiquing and dissolving a hegemonic West, but never before has the West been so powerful as now. (Xie and Wang vii)

The study of the films of Deepa Mehta (Canada), Gurinder Chadha (UK), and Mira Nair (US) conveys the impression that these three celebrated directors of Indian origin in the West offer two diasporic figures of the Indian: the postcolonial immigrant and the hyphenated local Indian. The difference may also be conceived as the difference between the first and second generations in their films. The gap between the two reveals that there is a confusion in the representation of cultural citizens within their countries of residence—partly because of the interloping globalized figure of the "Indian diaspora," which I discussed in chapter one as synonymous with a homogenized cultural identity. Orientalism, Bollywood, globalized market capitalism, and the consumption of culture and cultural artefacts have come together to produce a global characterization of the Indian diaspora which presupposes the local representation of Indians and can

leach through attempts to represent Indian cultural identity as heterogeneous within local cultures. I suggest that this global diasporic Indian, however inaccurately, is produced through stereotypes of immigrant Indian parents that the first-generation parents in *Bend It Like Beckham* summon to mind.

The films that attempt to represent localized cultural identities offer an opportunity to interrupt the reductive images of homogeneous Indian cultural identity which are produced through global discourses. It is therefore possible for the filmmakers studied in this thesis to subvert the global characterization of Indian cultural identity, and in particular, the characterization of Indian female identity. Recall that filmic depictions of the Indian woman position her, in many instances, as the idealized object of the male gaze. A subversion of this portrayal would allow the brown woman to save herself from the brown man and the white man (see my reading of Spivak). The global figure at times eclipses the local; however, there are several points in these films where the reverse is true.

In the introduction to their 2002 book *Dialogues on Cultural Studies*, Shaobo Xie and Fengzhen Wang offer their thoughts on contemporary cultural, political, economic, and intellectual climates, as they adumbrate the ways that globalization is configured by various prominent scholars:

> Proponents of globalization celebrate it as an invigorating form of modernity that leads to universal prosperity, progress, and

> subjectivity. Opponents of globalization believe that globalization, originated in and perpetuated by the centers of capitalist power, emerges as western imperialism rerun by TNCS, IMF, Hollywood films, computer technology, and American values and lifestyles, which subjugates the previous third and second worlds to the first world's domination. How can such divergent views on the same historical phenomenon be best accounted for? (viii)

While Xie and Wang provide a model of globalization central to fundamental debates on the topic, the question they ask in the context of 2002 is the following: How do we reconcile the positions of two opposing views of globalization? It is a question that remains, and must be reframed, a decade later. Globalization, especially on the level of the exchange of popular knowledge through technological advancement, has proven itself unstoppable even though questions about which parties dominate the exchange of "global knowledge" are still relevant.

In his book *Post-Colonial Transformation*, Bill Ashcroft states that "The interchange between the local and the global appears to incorporate a power imbalance even more significant, and more diffuse, than that characterizing imperial relations" (Ashcroft 215). The problem of how to deconstruct global meta-narratives of cultural identities, by relying on global rather than local or transnational sources of local cultures, exemplifies the power imbalance that global knowledge enforces. The

American Desi is very different from the Indian in Abu-Dhabi and the Indian in postcolonial India. Much as colonialism produced literary characters such as Rudyard Kipling's Ameera ("Without Benefit of Clergy"), who was representative of a certain imagined Indian woman—dangerous, sensual, manipulative, and second class—the current era of late-capitalist globalization produces a mythical figure of Indian cultural identity propelled by the Bollywoodism of cultural identity along with the misappropriation of identity via the promotion, maintenance, and consumption of the Other. The production of a categoric "Muslim cultural identity" commonly associated with danger, backwardness, and terrorism points to the sinister homogenizing capacity of discourses of globalization. Moreover, the projection of a homogenous "global cultural identity" onto the Indian diaspora results in a representation of the Bollywood Indian as a global cultural identity that is especially problematic for women. All of which brings me to the importance of representations of Indian women *by* Indian women in the films that are the focus of this study.

A Critique of Bidirectionality: The Case for the Local

Globalization as read by many scholars is seen, and quite appropriately so, as Western cultural imperialism. It has also been further defined and labelled as neo-Orientalism, and sometimes as Americanization. Globalization must be examined in terms of its ideological practices and influences on cultural capital to understand how the

mechanisms of this so-called Western cultural imperialism take hold in local communities.

In *Post-Colonial Transformation*, Ashcroft presents his ideas—which are in line with thinkers like Homi Bhabha and Roland Robertson—on the bidirectional relationship of global discourses. Yet the concept of bidirectionality can exclude or downgrade some of the latent hegemonic structures of global discourses. I agree with Ashcroft's interpretation of Roland Robertson, to the extent that "the dominant and the subaltern do not exist in a simple and incontrovertibly oppositional mode" (215). Ashcroft uses Robertson to explain, "Neither is in their interpenetration a one-way process of 'contamination' from an imperial discourse to a colonial subject" (Ashcroft 215). It is a proposal that offers hope for dismantling the "globalized" representation of Indian diasporic subjects as a homogenous group.

The concept of bidirectionality presupposes the following:

> The *diffusion* of global influence makes the relationship between the local and the global all the more complex, because when we examine local cultures we find the presence of the global within the local to an extent that compels us to be very clear about our concept of the local. (Ashcroft 215)

The assumption is accurate in its estimation of the hegemonistic activity of globalized discourses of cultural identities (215). However, I would like to amend Robertson's idea "that the term 'glocalization' more adequately describes the relationship between the local and the global as one of interaction and interpenetration rather than of binary opposites" (215) to state that while the term "glocalization" describes the relationship between the local and the global as one of interaction and interpenetration, it implicitly recognizes the (re)production of cultures within their local sites as constructions of heterogamous opposition to those which are globalized, homogenous and involved in the reductionism of cultural diversity within any cultural grouping.

Although Ashcroft seems to be aligned with Bhabha's construction of ambivalence as an interstitial space in which the subordinate characters contribute to the polarizing view of themselves as subservient to Eurocentric discourses, this is a result of the systematic infiltration of the dominant groups' ideological systems into local discourses and self-representations, not a neutral process of cross-cultural exchange. As such I reject the idea of cross-cultural exchange since it is a result of hegemonic infiltrations of the local, and its consumption in the global market. Ashcroft defines the local as "a *sub-national* community of consumers," writing that "When we speak of the local we speak of a community which operates transversely to, or below the level of, those state apparatuses which organize representation in the interests of national identification" (215). In

addition to the "spatial location," the local "might be one identified with an ethnic, gendered, or cultural 'location'" (215). Ashcroft notes that the local "is a community small enough not to need to be 'imagined' as the nation" (215). On this point I diverge from Ashcroft as filmmakers like Mehta and Nair have constructed representations of the local at the level of the nation. In doing so, they have joined the local cultural community and the dominant culture to fracture the representation of a national cultural identity to into plural "national cultural identities." Furthermore, this plurality can take place while maintaining nationhood, reconfigured as the shared cultural practices of its citizens fulfilling their civic and cultural rights and responsibilities.

> Ashcroft supports his concept of the local with the reasoning that nations have clearly and historically defined structures of relationships to an "international" collectivity; that nations continue to exert hegemonic pressures of their own upon the production of culture; and that nations have sometimes become locked within what Barber calls the axial principles of our time: "tribalism" and "globalism" – a "McWorld" of homogenizing globalization versus a "Jihad world" of "Lebanonization." (216)

Clearly a structural change in the creation of nationhood and national cultural identity needs to take place in the representation of nation on either side of "McWorld" or "Jihad world," which clearly cannot be an

appropriate categorization of any nation, let alone represent any *multicultural* nation or its citizens. In contrast, the polarization of national cultural identity along this political axis could be avoided if countries (re)determined the goal and the politics of cultural citizenship and the representation of national cultural identity. As a result of this change, the cohesion of society via the acceptance of national identity as plural could take place by transforming the hegemonic structures, with their oppositional structure of dominant culture versus homogenized margins, currently prevailing under the banner of multiculturalism. Consequently, a heterogeneous cultural definition of the nation with the goal of an inclusionist discourse of social cohesion rather than cultural uniformity is both preferable and possible. Of course this is a grand goal, but as Mehta's representation of plural national identities in *Bollywood/Hollywood* and Nair's in *The Namesake* demonstrate, plural cultural identities already exist, as does their creative potential to define and transmit reimagined nationhoods.

I return to Ashcroft in order to analyze further the connections between social cohesion and the local production of identity. I agree with Ashcroft on the point that "many post-Cold-War national movements have generated a particularly bounded and xenophobic version of locality as a collection of coercive tribal pressures", and add post-9/11 nationalistic movements to his statement. He writes:

> This is only a more extreme version of the cultural homogenization of nationally constituted societies which has been proceeding since the eighteenth century (co-terminus with the rise of the concept of the 'international'). But it continues the general trend of the nation towards what we might call a suppressed locality (216).

I explained in my introduction that these xenophobic productions of national identities have hampered the project of social cohesion, even within those nations, mainly European states, aiming for political and social tolerance by endangering the peaceful co-existence of different cultural groups within nations.

Ashcroft's inquiry into globalization and recognition of the importance of the local also corroborates the emphasis that I have placed on the local production of cultural identities, and on the practices of cultural production of these filmmakers:

> The question remains whether this consumption of Western advertising, music and other forms of mass culture is simply another form of neo-colonialism. This is a familiar question, of course, and is dominated by the contested issue of identity, for we find that identities are constructed in a globalized world by continual, and ever more widening, process of interaction, appropriation and change. If globalism is not simply a result of top-down dominance but a transcultural process, a dialectic of dominant cultural forms and

> their appropriation, then the responses of local communities become critical. (216)

He goes on to explain his idea that the local is sub-national and operating below the level of the national as he points out the ability of the local to provide resistance:

> As we have seen, literary writing demonstrates that resistance, and the agency of the local, is most powerful when it is transformative. By "taking hold" of writing, whether as novel, history, *testimonio*, by appropriating political discourse and political structures, by interpolating educational discourse and institutions, transforming conceptions of place, culture, even economies, the post-colonial subject unleashes a rapidly circulating transcultural energy. That is to say, the subject exhibits agency to the degree that he or she participates in a circulation of influence between the global and the local. (216)

Therefore the local even within Ashcroft's category of the sub-national is in effect powerful enough to produce changes at a global level. Thus, it goes without saying that the local can in fact also affect the nation and the representation of nationhood. The local person or group can be raised to the level of the nation, and as demonstrate in my textual analysis of these filmmakers, the cultural native of the nation can also produce a glocal representation of cultural identity which challenges the representation of

global discourses of homogenous cultural groupings which have been problematically constructed under meta-narratives of universality, orientalism, globalization, and even under the heading of "diaspora."

Whitewashed Histories: From Multiculturalism to Monoculturalism

As I discussed in chapter one, Lacan provides a framework of identity formation in which nostalgia for the Real during the formation of the subject can lead to the search for lost *jouissance*, something which is never possible but nevertheless has its effects on the psychosocial level. Stuart Hall discerns the difference between using historical referents in our identity construction and relying on fixed origins:

> Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. ("Cultural Identity and Diaspora" 112)

However, the recovery of a historical "original culture" is the basis for monoculturalist social policies, and ultimately the reason that they fail to meet their ambitions for integrating immigrants and subsequent generations into cultural citizenships: because they are built on the false assumption of cultural fixity and ignore the obvious issue of racial difference. In her paper, "The Challenge of Cultural Diversity in Europe: (Re)designing Cultural Heritages through Intercultural Dialogue," Estella Rodrigues Garcia writes about the myth of ethnic and racial homogeneity in Europe:

> Europe mythically shaped its self-definition by "whitening" it, denying any recognition whatsoever of the cultural diversity of the people who inhabited the region for centuries (Shohat and Stam 1994). Since the 15th and 16th centuries, with the Renaissance, the invention of a common past involved emphasizing the Greek and Latin past, disconnected from any type of relationship with other cultures, religions or skin colors….the definition of European identity has been linked with the idea of a cultural homogenization, but above all, as the philosopher Rosi Braidotti has written, "this myth continues to be crucial for the legend of European nationalism." (50)

Historically, European cultures and nations have always been diverse, but this diversity has been whitewashed and forgotten in its modern history; a challenge to this preconception of seeming racial homogeneity has, however, been mounted by the immigration of racially different people. However,

European identities are not the only cultural identities which are subject to the myth of cultural or racial homogeneity. Confusingly the same type of whitewashing takes place in Canada. Brand has also condemned "the racist underpinnings of Canadian society" and "the dominant construction of Canada as white" ("A Working Paper on Black Women in Toronto" 220). Canada is a country just over 148 years old, yet in its representation of its national cultural identity, it recalls a cultural center of whiteness from English and French immigrants and relegates its original inhabitants to the margins along with other immigrant visible minorities. According to Marlene Nourbese Philip, Canada was founded on a belief system, still in practice, that places "white Europeans at the top of society and Native and African people at the bottom" (Frontiers 182). The concept of multiculturalism through which nations like Canada erect their national identities as based on whiteness forces visible minorities, not to mention Indigenous peoples, into the position of the Other.[37]

National identity has historically been defined in terms of "fixed identities, unproblematic nationhood, invisible sovereignty, ethnic

---

[37] Multiculturalism faces further criticism for its tendency to exclude indigenous difference in its majority/minorities or dominant culture/multiculturalism binary. Mohanty points out Radhika Mohanram's critique in which she "points out the differences between a 'multicultural' understanding of nation (prevalent in the United States) and a call for a 'bicultural' understanding of nation" in which indigenous people are situated in a binary with all immigrant, white and visible minorities (506-7). This challenge to multiculturalism as it is currently conceptualized further complicates its surrounding cultural politics and social policies. Although my dissertation focuses on postcolonial film and diasporic cultural citizenship, I see this additional opposition to multiculturalism as both important and in need of greater recognition and analysis.

homogeneity, and exclusive citizenship" (Mahmud 633; also see Hindess 1998). Canada has the potential to fall into the trap of illusionary monoculturalism if the project of multiculturalism fails to be revised and fails its goals of social cohesion as the country becomes more diverse. Bannerji warns that multiculturalism in Canada "segments the nation's cultural and political space [...] into ethnic communities. This results in fractured cultural communities, each with its ethnicized agents hooked into the ruling apparatus of the state" (7).

The official policy has not been revisited in Canada in light of this fundamental issue of belonging and cultural citizenship, and it is likely that there are no changes to multiculturalism on the horizon. Unlike Canada, the move away from multiculturalism in European states including the Netherlands and the UK is already taking place (Garcia 50). As discussed in chapter one, a move towards monoculturalism is also based on the illusion of fixed cultural origins. Although this is a dismal look at Canadian culture and perhaps an unlikely scenario, cultural analysts such as Bannerji and Kamboureli suggest more must be done to promote social cohesion in the margins as well as the centre.

The lack of social cohesion in some European countries has led to a dangerous support for the right. Xenophobia informs much of the nationalistic attitudes towards cultural assimilation in European and non-European countries. The research of Garcia, Dukes and Musterd, and Reitz

et al; corroborates the view of racial and ethnic inequality as a barrier to the complete cultural citizenship of visible minorities in Western counties, yet monoculturalism does not address this problem. Interestingly, the Canadian *Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS)* examined by Reitz's group showed that discrimination is a greater barrier to feeling Canadian for second generations of visible minorities than for their immigrant parents. Reitz and Banerjee explain this surprising result, which is yet another limit of the application of the term "diaspora" to all members of an ethnic group:

> The perspective of the second generation born in Canada is likely to be different than that of immigrants. It is likely shaped more completely by Canadian experience, more often leading to expectations for equality with other native-born Canadians. The native-born second generation has a different and more complex relation to Canadian society. They have a greater sense of personal investment in Canada and judge their experiences against higher standards. Their opportunity to return to an external "home" is far less, if it exists at all. It is partly for this reason that the expectation for equality may be more strongly felt. (134)

As I have explained, the younger generation of visible minorities in Western cultures cannot mirror the older, nor can they complete the mirroring of the dominant/national culture. This can be seen in the films' reverse cultural distancing of the marginal immigrant from her imagined "original culture," which takes place with several characters in the films.

The site of tension, in terms of what the original culture represents, is comparable in two examples from *The Namesake* and *Bend it Like Beckham*. In *The Namesake*, Gogal sees aspects of Indian culture as backward as a young man and is especially perplexed by them when he visits India. One instance is his effort to go jogging, which is thwarted by a servant who is made to follow "master" as he takes to the streets of Calcutta. Another is his refusal to ride in a rickshaw, which is being pulled by a man, because he sees the practice as feudal and an indication of the backwardness of the culture. Gogal attempts to distance himself from the Indian culture and push himself fully into the American cultural centre, as when he assumes the name "Nick"; this behavior demonstrates his position as second-generation immigrant who expects to *be* American and not merely live in the country. For Gogal there is no possibility of returning to the country of culture of his parents because he is as foreign in India as he is in America.

Figure 13. *The Namesake*. Gogol (Kal Penn), Ashima (Tabu), Sonia (Sahira Nair), scene still. Dir. Mira Nair, 2006. Fox Searchlight Pictures. About.com. Web. A. Genser. 27 August 2012.

Chadha's Jess presents another example of the second generation's contentious alignment with both the margins and the centre of Western, specifically British culture. When Jess is playing football she seems to have the same rights and responsibilities as any member of her team, until she is called "paki" by another player. Her coach's perplexing response—I know what you are experiencing since I am Irish—is intended to disarm Jess's anger, but is dismissive of the racially divisive attitudes that she faces. For her part, Chadha mistakenly homogenizes the experience of difference, whether cultural and racial, as the same moment of an inconvenient xenophobia, rather than exploring the gap that lies between experiences. In his text "The Rhetoric of Multiculturalism" Rajeev Balasubramanyam

denounces the film's espousal of assimilation stating: "for Jasminder [Jess] to assimilate, i.e. to be with Joe, she has to agree that color doesn't matter. She has to believe that Joe can understand her social experience even though he is white" (39).[38] It is likely that a non-white audience would notice the disavowal or racial difference, and xenophobia, so the slippage in her presentation of the issue may be attributed to the target "national audience" which she has unknowingly homogenized as white. The normative discourses of Western languages and cultures is part of the hegemonic underside that is present in all national discourses. Dukes and Musterd point out that in national discourses, "Often the 'own' identity in host societies is considered the norm and is not brought up for discussion" (1989). The result is that there is no possibility of integration for ethnic minorities who are not able to effectively mimic the dominant culture's ethnicity.

From the perspective of the Canadian researchers Reitz et al; social cohesion refers "to the capacity of a society to set goals and implement means for attaining them" (20). They stress that a cohesive society "can act as an effective unit" whereas a society lacking cohesion has "individuals or groups [that] fail to contribute to effective collective action [and the] lack of

---

[38] Denison and May have regarded Chadha's depiction of British multiculturalism as representative of her progressive enacting of cultural citizenship; however, she has been highly rebuked by critics such as Balasubramanyam, Eckstein et al, Heinen, and Giardina for her convivial representation of multiculturalism which normalizes White monocultural Britishness above Others.

unity may be reflected in conflict, which may or may not be violent" (20). The researchers who looked at the example of Dutch cultural diversity had a definition of social cohesion which closely resembled that of the Canadian researchers as they defined social cohesion as the "coherence of a social or political system—to the ties that people have with this system; to their involvement and solidarity with it and to a society that 'hangs together,' in which conflict between societal goals and groups and disruptive behaviour are minimal" (1984). While the methods and strategies for promoting socially cohesive nations are not readily agreed upon, the goals and necessity of social cohesion and cultural citizenship is clear.

Garcia recalls the work of anthropologist Arjun Appadurai and his call for cultural plurality over assimilation to deal with the ethnic diversity of European nations in order to create more social cohesion in those societies. In the 2000 UNESCO World Culture Report, Appadurai writes:

> Pluralism today – in the sense of cultural pluralism – is intimately bound up with the theory and practice of the modern nation-state – and its sustainability requires some fundamental rethinking of our ideas of governance, belonging and political recognition. In this sense the nation-state and its forms are a central part of the argument of this essay about the future of belonging. Cultural diversity, for anthropologists, refers to some socially stable arrangement for the coexistence of groups with different cultural identities. This coexistence has to have sufficient longevity, security and

> sustainability to allow the identities in question to be reproduced. For a cultural identity to be more than just a slogan, it must evolve creatively over time, and since relations between groups are always evolving, the challenge is how to guide this evolution in a creative and sustainable manner. This is the key to the idea of sustainable diversity or pluralism. Thus, while diversity may refer to a social fact or state, pluralism is a norm and a dynamic process that requires openness to changing cultural values both within and across societies. (111)

According to Appadurai, sustainable pluralism is key to the future social cohesion of multicultural nations. The problem with excluding the diasporic/immigrant/alien from the discourse of national cultural identity is that she will always remain alien and marginal and not self-identify with that adopted culture. As a result she will further alienate herself from and reject integration into that culture, thus negating the project of social cohesion within a nation. Stuart Hall explains this idea in relation to the power of Orientalist discourses:

> Not only, in Said's "Orientalist" sense, were we constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge of the West by those regimes. They had the power to make us see and experience *ourselves* as "Other". Every regime of representation is a regime of power formed, as Foucault reminds is, by the fatal couplet, "power/knowledge". But this kind of knowledge is internal, not

> external. It is one thing to position a subject or set of peoples as the Other of a dominant discourse. It is quite another thing to subject them to that "knowledge", not only as a matter of imposed will and domination, by the power of inner compulsion and subjective conformation to the norm. ("Cultural Identity and Diaspora" 112-113)

This implanted inner monologue of alienation will always result in damage to the subject bound by the shaming discourse and lower-class status of "Other", deemed "less than," "not equal to," and will occlude full community membership. How can people without community membership and full cultural citizenship be expected to take up the responsibilities that come with the lawful rights of legal citizenship? Without the condition of inclusion and equality, full cultural citizenship will not be achievable, leading toward social disharmony rather than social cohesion.

CONCLUSION

My answers to the research questions I raised and explored in this dissertation began with an interest in postcolonial cinema produced by Indian women in the West and its relationship to the complex problem of belonging in multicultural societies like Canada as well as to another country of origin. Deepa Mehta's film *Fire* depicts India as audiences have always seen it, filtered through a Bollywood camera lens and spectacularly foreign, yet intermingled with the illusory promise of a motherland for its Indo-Canadian and other diasporic audiences. However, unlike films made in India, Mehta's film has female characters with behaviors and attitudes which have previously been reserved on the big screen for Western white women, or women of the Indian diaspora, who have been depicted as, and are often considered by other Indians as, "too Western" to be proper Indian women, as compared to the representations of "good Indian girls" in Bollywood films. Her film is a postcolonial response to the representation of Indian women in colonial and neocolonial discourses, but a text of resistance to the representation of Indian women in India that subjugates resident and diasporic women.

The representations of Indian cultural identity in the films of Mehta, Nair, and Chadha, as well as the directors' postcolonial responses to historical constructions of Indians and in particular Indian women, also contends with the issue of belonging by representing Canadian, American, and British Indians as locals. Their work responds to a question asked of

many visible minorities: "but where are you really from?" For those who most clearly identify themselves with the dominant centers of Canadian, American, and British cultures, visible minorities and migrants are still performing rather than being cultural citizens. The "so what?" is that we have a problem in Canada, and the United States, and the UK, and Spain, Australia, Germany, Trinidad, and in the Netherlands, of giving some people, who have come to live in these countries, the false expectation that lawful citizenship leads to being from a place, and that they will automatically, or over the course of producing generations of family there, have an unquestioned, full cultural citizenship in their adopted homeland. It is a problem of marginalization, history, racial difference, the illusion of political policies of multiculturalism, the failure of tolerance as a method of cultural integration, and a consequence of nostalgia. The nostalgia for lost or endangered cultural origins, for cultural origins long believed to be static, fixed, and retrievable, can be felt by people in societies' powerful cultural centers, as well as people in the wings of those societies. The study of cultural environments, colonial history, the politics of gender, class, and identity leads to the view that Cultural Studies and the architects of government social policies should be rigorously working together on the project of social cohesion. Furthermore, these projects should be instigated within national borders to produce increasingly harmonized local societies and national cultures that can thrive, and advance technologically, socially, and culturally by actually integrating their lawful citizens into cultural citizenship, complete with cultural rights and responsibilities, to make

those nations and their people more harmonized as the world and local cultures become increasingly influenced by globalization.

The connection I make between film and social and cultural integration begins with the determination that films like other arts are more than entertainment; they are tools of mass and popular pedagogy and as cultural artefacts they record, rewrite, and imagine social, historical, and cultural moments for mass populations. Bill Ashcroft explains that film, to a similar degree as literature, has the power to be transformative as an increasingly important popular cultural production of discourse. Ashcroft explains that:

> Popular culture has often become the mode of a transformation of mass culture, in much the same way as "local" writing in colonized societies interpolated the ideology and assumptions of English literature, and gradually began to transform the concept of literature itself. But popular culture becomes critical in the engagement of the global by the local because it is already devoid of that particular hierarchy of value which characterizes the consumption of high culture such as canonical literature. (216-217)

By providing visual representations of people and events, real or imagined, films form particular discourses and knowledge about their subject material. Moreover, the influence of films on cultural knowledge has, in this postmodern climate, surpassed and usurped the influence of some high

culture mediums and increasingly it has also become an epistemological tool among academics to study the representation, and the construction of culture and cultural identities to uncover social discourses around cultural citizenship, and social cohesion.

The filmmakers I have chosen to examine have produced a particular discourse around hyphenated cultural identities of the Indian diaspora by representing their community membership and their inclusion in multicultural societies of Canada, the UK, and the US. In the book *Culture and Citizenship*, which in part addresses the issues around community membership and its effect on cultural citizenship, Brian Turner explains that, "This right to citizenship through community membership defines one's identity as a public person. Although citizenship is a formal legal status, it is, as a consequence of nationalism and patriotic sentiment, intimately bound up with the sentiments and emotions of membership" (11). Meaning that beyond the legality of citizenship, inclusion into community membership actually makes it possible to be publicly represented as part of that culture as well as the nation.

Applying *Imago* as a Strategy in the Project of Social Cohesion

While the critique of colonial domination may be the most easily noticeable aspect of postcolonial criticism, equally important in my opinion is the critique of the nation-state, and its claims to cultural monopoly, which disenfranchises culturally those who do not inhabit its terrain or relocate on its terrain as outsiders. The question of cultural identity in its relationship to both the cultures of origin and cultures at the point of arrival is obviously of great importance for diasporic populations.

(Dirlik qtd. in Xie and Wang 24)

The failure of multiculturalism to successfully legitimize the hyphenated identity as Western is evident in the continued dominant position of Anglo, Christian, and White identities in the process of labeling and normalizing the identity of Canadians. Although multiculturalism has attempted to offer hyphenated cultural identities as hybrid cultural identities natural to Western or European nations, another avenue, found in popular culture's representation of diverse *imagos* which split the singular "national" to plural "nationals," may be better.

The representation of plural cultural identities in popular culture is one example of a move forward towards hope for social cohesion in multicultural nations not by disavowing difference but by finally realizing what the acceptance of difference in cultural membership might look like. This representation is what Chadha, Nair, and Mehta seem to be offering

in several of their films which focus on Indian cultural identity and cross-cultural experience in the West.

It seems that the representation of the Indian *as a Westerner* and therefore also as an *alternate national cultural identity* could evade the tension of redefining the so-called "original national cultural identity" so that the diasporic figure could move closer to the cultural centre. The case for alternate or plural cultural identities may be an outcome of learning to deal with racial differences. In the case of Canada, it seems that the move toward legitimizing multiple national/cultural identities will be rather anticlimactic in nature, unlike the apparent conflict that such a move may incite in European countries, perhaps due to the propagation of the concept of "original cultures" that exists in Europe. This concept is different from the younger and more loosely knit idea of Canadian culture which stems from its colonial history. Unlike cuisine or music in the facility of their potential for cross-cultural incorporation into mainstream Western cultures, the category of race makes "Indianness," which presupposes racial difference, impossible for the majority culture to appropriate. Hybridity of race and culture cannot be accomplished without setting off fear-based opposition, perhaps on both sides of the racial divide, leading to a return to cultural essentialism from not only the political right but also the left and political centre. In some European nations, the imagined loss of cultural origins has led the centre, and the popular majority, to follow the right's opposition to the inclusion of different cultures and races in the definition

of national cultural identity. The right's call for retaining the real or imagined "cultural heritage" excludes, both socially and politically, cultures or races marked as different. Racial difference must be considered when thinking about "the third space" of hyphenated cultural identities, as the barrier of race still prevails even in multicultural nations like the United States. Though the United States now has a black President, the racial differences of hyphenated identities have not been completely sublimated as demonstrated in the racial divide of the American class system, which many Americans said was demonstrated in the lack of response to the mainly black communities affected by the Hurricane Katrina catastrophe and the recent demonstrations against the police treatment of black citizens.

The way to disarm the dominant culture's tenacious hold on "national identities" as "white identities" may lie in the artistic representation of *plural national cultural identities* as an epistemological strategy rather than in an official political push towards sure solutions to tolerance, integration, and hybridization. Perhaps these films hail the entry of the periphery into dominant cultural norms. What is being reworked in the wider societal acceptance of these films is the boundaries of cultural normativity, even without a complete counter-hegemonic turn. These films are emblematic of the counter-hegemonic production of cultural norms and the promotion of hyphenated Indian/Western cultural identities as national cultural identities. As such, these films and their female filmmakers are

unique and different from their Bollywood counterparts in India. The filmmakers have produced counter-narratives to Orientalist and neo-colonial globalized representations of Indian cultural identities.

What I see in these films is an attempt to produce representations of Indian cultural identities localized within the cultural centers of Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Interestingly, the difference in representations of diasporic identity becomes obvious when examining Chadha, Mehta, and Nair. There are points in Chadha's film *Bend it Like Beckham* in which the female protagonist could be interchanged with the title character in Nia Vardalos's *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, because both films slip into a homogenous characterization of "a modern ethnic woman who is actually very Western" by succumbing to the ideologies and values of the dominant cultures in the UK and the US. The construction of a homogenous identity displays Chadha's own hybridity, with British and Western values supported and upheld at various points in film, especially in the closing scene where Chadha favors "normalizing" the behaviour and attitudes of Jess and her family by modernizing them through an alignment with a discourse of universal norms indicative of Western cultural attitudes.

Nair's representation of Indian and American cultural identity in the film *The Namesake* is perhaps the most open for interpretation as her characters exhibit constant fluidity and movement in their explorations of

self-identity and community membership. Returning to Lacan, whose framework for the formation of the subject inspired parts of my study of cultural identity representation of these filmmakers' work, I have found that the *imago*, central to the formation of the subject, is also important for immigrant, second-generation, or diasporic peoples' practices of cultural citizenship in their adopted cultures. The exclusion of the representation of any subject from the dominant culture impedes the subject's attainment of true cultural citizenship, leaving her Other and alien.

In chapter two, I initiated a discussion of the directors' intellectual work in terms of the concept of Dharma. In ancient and modern Indian cultures the ideology of Dharma, from its social governing aspect, has been an effective tool for ascertaining the responsibilities as well as the rights of citizenship when determining and shaping citizenship on various levels to promote social cohesion. On a practical level, the use of Dharma, as a technique of coerced conformity to religious and cultural boundaries within Indian societies, is not without deep flaws. But the value of viewing it on a on a philosophical level, as an example of the potential to transmit cultural practices of responsibilities along with rights gained through community membership and cultural citizenship, should not be overlooked. The influence of Dharma on the film directors shows that a dialogue around citizenship practices and social cohesion is possible and even necessary if we are to attempt to create more *imagos*, on screen and in popular culture,

which represent the complex play and plurality of cultural identities, especially in multicultural nations.

What I have attempted to demonstrate in my research into the films of Chadha, Nair, and Mehta is the evocative power of their production of cultural identities on screen to (re)present and (re)imagine plural national cultural identities. Their films have the potential to be local sites of cultural transmission for the global revision of cultural identities by deconstructing homogenous representations of ethnic, racial, religious, or gender identities which misrepresent and suppress "the Local's" acceptance within the constitution of a national cultural citizenship. Ashcroft's support of the notion of the cross-cultural constitution of political discourse leads him to a conclusion that supports mine:

> *By appropriating strategies of representation, as well as strategies of organization, communication and social change*, through access to global systems, local communities and marginal interest groups can both empower themselves and influence those global systems. Although choice is always mediated by the conditions of subject formation, the *belief* that one has a choice in the process of changing one's own life or society can indeed be empowering. (emphasis added, Ashcroft 221)

The power of the films studied in this thesis to offer "strategies of representation" that can potentially transform cultural identities locally, and perhaps even transnationally, is as diverse at their audiences.

If the goal is to promote social cohesion, as I have discussed, it is necessary for societies to continue to diversify in response to the infiltration of globalization into nations and national cultures. It is important to deny, reduce, or reject the power of globally produced meta-narratives of homogenized cultural identities, which can have disastrous local effects. An example of this is the rhetoric of Islamophobia, now commonplace in the United States and some European countries, which rejects the enormous heterogeneity of the people it marginalizes, thereby eliding the different versions of Islam, the diverse ethnicities, the linguistic and political differences, and the geographic and cultural backgrounds. Glocalized representations of cultural identities can contest globalized narratives and resist their hegemonic tendency to deny local citizens and local identities, on the level of community and nation. All three directors' films have the creative capacity to challenge gender and ethnicity through the careful recoding of signs and discourses. They demonstrate the power of media texts to influence discourses of identity and belonging, redefine national identities of multicultural societies, and the significance of popular culture as pedagogical tool. Moreover, analysis of these films illustrates the creative potential of films to provide reflections of historical moments and corresponding discourses, and demonstrates that alternative modalities

such as film are a rich source of information about our modern cultural climate.

WORKS CITED

Abboushi, Jenine. "The Big Screen in the Transnational Novel." *Life without Media.* Eds. Eva Comas, Joan Cuenca, and Klaus Zillies. New York: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2013. Print.

Alleva, Richard. "Identity Crisis." Rev. of *The Namesake*, dir. by Mira Nair. *Commonwealth* 134.9 (2007): 18-9. Print.

Anderson, Kristin J. *Modern Misogyny: Anti-Feminism in a Post-Feminist Era*. Oxford : Oxford UP, 2014. Print.

Appadurai, Arjun, and Katerina Stenou. "Sustainable Pluralism and the Future of Belonging." *World Culture Report: Cultural Diversity, Conflict And Pluralism* (2000): 111-27. Print.

Arnold, Sarah. *Maternal Horror Film: Melodrama and Motherhood*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Print.

Ashcroft, Bill. *Post-Colonial Transformation*, New York: Routledge. 2001. Print.

Bahri, Deepika. "*The Namesake*: Deepika Bahri is Touched by Mira Nair's Vivid, Sonorous Account of Immigrant Life in an Adopted Home City." *Film Quarterly* 61.1 (2007): 10-15. Print.

Bahri, Deepika. *Native Intelligence: Aesthetics, Politics, and Postcolonial Literature*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2003. Print.

Balasubramanyam, Rajeev. "The Rhetoric of Multiculturalism." *Multi-Ethnic Britain 2000+: New Perspectives in Literature, Film and the Arts*. New York: Rodopi P, 2008. 33-42. Print.

Bannerji, Himani. *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2000. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 5 Aug 2015.

Baudry, Jean-Louis, and Alan Williams. "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus." *Film Quarterly* 28.2 (1974): 39-47. Print.

Belleau, Marie-Claire. " 'L'intersectionnalité': Feminisms in a Divided World; Québec-Canada." *Feminist Politics: Identity, Difference, and Agency.Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield* (2007): 51-62. Print.

Benwell, B. " 'A pathetic and racist and awful character': ethnomethodological approaches to the reception of diasporic fiction." *Language and Literature* 18.3 (2009): 300-315. Print.

Berges, Paul Mayeda, dir. *The Mistress of Spices.* Maple, 2006. Film.

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture.* New York: Routledge Classics, 2005. Print.

---. "On Minorities: Cultural Rights." *Radical Philosophy* 100 (2000): 3-6. Print.

---. “The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism.” *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Padmini Mongia. New York: Arnold, 1996. 37-55. Print.

Block, Marcelline. *Situating the Feminist Gaze and Spectatorship in Postwar Cinema*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. Print.

Boyle, Ellexis, and Sean Brayton. “Ageing Masculinities and ‘Muscle Work’ in Hollywood Action Film: An Analysis of *The Expendables*.” *Men and Masculinities* 15.5 (2012): 468-85. Print.

Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. Florence, KY: Routledge, 1996. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 5 Nov. 2014.

Brand, Dionne. *A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging*. Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2001. Print.

---. “A Working Paper on Black Women in Toronto: Gender, Race and Class.” *Returning The Gaze: Essays On Racism, Feminism and Politics* (1993): 220-42. Print.

Brennan, Sue. “Mira Nair.” *Fifty Contemporary Filmmakers*. Ed. Yvonne Tasker. New York: Routledge, 2002: 303-11. Print.

Brunton, Paul. *The Orient: Its Legacy to the West (The Notebooks of Paul Brunton)*. Vol. 10. Burdett, N.Y.: Larson, 1984. Print.

Bulbeck, Chilla. *Re-Orienting Western Feminisms: Women's Diversity in a Postcolonial World*. Cambridge University Press, 1998. Print.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Tenth Anniversary Edition*. London: Routledge, 1999. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 5 Nov. 2014.

Canada. Statistics Canada. *Ethnic Diversity Survey: portrait of a multicultural society*. 2003. 89-593-XIE. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2003. *Statistics Canada*. Web. 1 Nov. 2014.

Chadha, Gurinder, dir. *Bend it Like Beckham*. Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2003. Film.

---. *Bride and Prejudice*. Miramax Films, 2004. Film.

Chatterji, Shoma A. *Subject--Cinema, Object--Woman: A Study of the Portrayal of Women in Indian Cinema*. Kolkata: Parumita Publications, 1998. Print.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'Indian' Pasts?" *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Padmini Mongia. New York: Arnold, 1996. 223-247. Print.

Chen, Tina Mai, and David S. Churchill. *Film, History and Cultural Citizenship: Sites of Production*. 3 vols. New York: Routledge, 2007. Print.

Chiesa, Lorenzo. *Subjectivity and Otherness: A Philosophical Reading of Lacan*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT P, 2007. Print.

Dargis, Manohla. "Mr. Darcy and Lalita, Singing and Dancing." New York Times 11 Feb. 2005. Web. 5 Nov. 2014.

Dawtrey, Adam. "Film/International: London Eye: Hubby Makes Pic Debut." *Variety* 19 Apr. 2004:8. Print.

Demaria, Cristina. "Diaspora." *Encyclopedia of Consumer Culture.* Ed. Dale Southerton. London: Sage Publications, Inc., 2011. 448-450. Print.

Denison, Rayna. "Gurinder Chadha." *Fifty Contemporary Filmmakers.* Ed. Yvonne Tasker. 2nd ed. 2nd Vol. Oxford: Routledge, 2010. 98-107. Print.

Derrida, Jacques. "Difference." *The Routledge Critical and Cultural Theory Reader.* Eds. Neil Badmington and Julia Thomas. New York: Routledge, 2008. 126-148. Print.

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

---. "Bollywood Abroad: South Asian Diasporic Cosmopolitanism and Indian Cinema." *New Cosmopolitanisms: South Asians in the US*. Eds.

Gita Rajan and Shailja Sharma. Bloomington: Stanford UP, 2006. 115-37. Print.

---. "The Scale of Diasporic Cinema: Negotiating National and Transnational Cultural Citizenship." *Routledge Handbook on Indian Cinema.* Eds. Moti Gokulsing and Wimal Dissanayake. New York: Routledge, 2013. 207-218. Print.

Diawara, Manthia, *Black American Cinema*. New York: Routledge, 1993. Print.

Dirlik, Arif. "Rethinking Colonialism: Globalization, Postcolonialism, and the Nation." *Interventions* 4.3 (2002): 428-48. Print.

Donnell, Alison. "Feeling Good? Look again!: Feel Good Movies and the Vanishing Points of Liberation in Deepa Mehta's *Fire* and Gurinder Chadha's *Bend it Like Beckham*." *Journal of Creative Communications* 2.1-2 (2007): 43-55. Print.

Dossoumon, Mafoya. *Class and Gender Representation in Hollywood Movies.* Diss. Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, 2013. Print.

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folks*. Chicago: A.C. McClurg and Company, 1903. Print.

Dukes, Thea, and Sako Musterd. "Towards Social Cohesion: Bridging National Integration Rhetoric and Local Practice: The Case of the Netherlands." *Urban Studies* 49.9 (2012): 1981-97. Print.

Dwyer, Rachel. *All You Want is Money, All You Need is Love: Sex and Romance in Modern India.* London: Continuum, 2000. Print.

---. "Bollywood's India: Hindi Cinema as a Guide to Contemporary India." *Asian Affairs* 41.3 (2010): 381-98. Print.

Dyer, Richard. *White*. New York: Routledge, 1997. Print.

Eagleton, Terry. *Figures of Dissent: Critical Essays on Fish, Spivak, Žižek and Others*. London: Verso, 2003. Print.

Eckstein, Lars, Barbara Korte, Eva Ulrike Pirker, Christoph Reinfandt. "A Divided Kingdom? Reflections on Multi-Ethnic Britain in the New Millennium." *Multi-Ethnic Britain 2000+: New Perspectives in Literature, Film and the Arts*. Eds. Lars Eckstein et al. New York: Rodopi P, 2008. 9-21. Print.

Elbeshlawy, Ahmed. *America in Literature and Film: Modernist Perceptions, Postmodernist Representations*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2011. Print.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press, 2008. Print.

---. "Algeria Unveiled." *A Dying Colonialism*. Trans. Haakon Chevalier. New York: Grove P, 1967. 181. Print.

Foster, Gwendolyn Audrey. *Women Filmmakers of the African and Asian Diaspora: Decolonizing the Gaze, Locating Subjectivity*. 1st ed. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1997. Print.

Foucault, Michel. *Power*. Trans. Hurley et al. Ed. James D. Faubion. New York: New Press, 2000. Print.

Fung, Amy. "Deepa Mehta's Canadian, American, Indian Bollywood Musical: Showcasing Canadians their Country in *Bollywood/Hollywood*." *London Journal of Canadian Studies* 21 (2005/2006): 71-82. Print.

Gabbard, Glen O. *Psychoanalysis and Film*. New York: Karnac Books, 2001. Print.

Garcia, Estela Rodríguez. "The Challenge of Cultural Diversity in Europe: (Re)Designing Cultural Heritages through Intercultural Dialogue." *Human Architecture* 9.4 (2011): 49. Print.

Garrett, William. *Bad Karma: Thinking Twice about the Social Consequences of Reincarnation Theory*. Lanham: UP of America, 2005. Print.

Gates, Anita. “Mistress of Spices.” Rev. of *Mistress of Spices*, dir. Paul Mayeda Berges. *New York Times* 5 May 2006: E20. Print.

Ghosh, Shohini. *Fire: A Queer Film Classic.* Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2010. Print.

Giardina, M. D. “‘Bending it Like Beckham’ in the Global Popular: Stylish Hybridity, Performativity, and the Politics of Representation.” *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 27.1 (2003): 65-82. Print.

Gill, Rosalind. “Sexism reloaded, or, it's time to get angry again!” *Feminist Media Studies* 11.01 (2011): 61-71. Web. 5 Nov. 2014.

Girn, Raj. “An Intimate Look at *Heaven & Earth*: Through the Eyes of Producer/Director/Scriptwriter Deepa Mehta.” Interview with Deepa Mehta. *Open Chest with Raj Girn.* 1 Sept. 2008. Web. 5 Nov. 2014.

Gowarikar, Ashutosh, dir. *Lagaan: Once upon a Time in India.* Perf. Aamir Khan and Gracy Singh. Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment, 2000. Film.

Griffin, Hollis. “Songs from Nowhere: Integrating Music, Diaspora, and Gender in Gurinder Chadha's *Bride & Prejudice*.” *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 31.6 (2014): 531-41. Print.

Hall, Stuart. “Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation.” *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader*. Eds. Houston A. Baker Jr., Manthia Diawara, and Ruth L. Lindeborg. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996. 210-22. Print.

---. “Cultural Identity and Diaspora.” *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Padmini Mongia. London: Arnold, 1996. 110-21. Print.

---. “Encoding, Decoding.” *The Cultural Studies Reader*. Ed. Simon During. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 2007. 477-487. Print.

---. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Ed. Stuart Hall. London: Sage Publications Ltd, 1997. Print.

Harvey, Alison, and Stephanie Fisher. “ ‘Everyone Can Make Games!’ The post-feminist context of women in digital game production.” *Feminist Media Studies* (2014): 1-17, doi: 10.1080/14680777.2014.958867. Web. 5 Nov. 2014.

Hawkins, Perreire Blendine, and Melanie N. G. Jackson. “The Namesake.” *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy* 26.3 (2014): 191-3. Print.

Heinen, Sandra. "Multi-Ethnic Britain on Screen: South Asian Diasporic Experience in Recent Feature Films." *Multi-Ethnic Britain 2000+: New Perspectives in Literature, Film and the Arts*. Eds. Lars Eckstein, Barbara Korte, Eva Ulrike Pirker, Christoph Reinfandt. New York: Rodopi P, 2008. 65-78. Print.

Higbee, Will, and Song Hwee Lim. "Concepts of Transnational Cinema: Towards a Critical Transnationalism in Film Studies." *Transnational Cinemas* 1.1 (2010): 7-21.

Hindess, Barry. "Divide and Rule: The International Character of Modern Citizenship." *European Journal of Social Theory* 1.1 (1998): 57-70. Print.

Hirji, Faiza. *Dreaming in Canadian: South Asian Youth, Bollywood, and Belonging*. Vancouver: UBC P, 2010. Print.

Hogan, Patrick Colm. *Colonialism and Cultural Identity: Crises of Tradition in the Anglophone Literatures of India, Africa, and the Caribbean*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2000. Print.

hooks, bell. "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators." *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*. Ed. Amelia Jones. London: Routledge, 2003. 94-104. Print.

Huq, Rupa. "Darkness on the Edge of Town: Depictions of Suburban Asian London in Popular Culture." *Wasafiri* 27.4 (2012): 3-14. Print.

Ilott, Sarah. *New Postcolonial British Genres: Shifting the Boundaries*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Web. 25 Nov. 2015.

---. " 'We are the Martyrs, you're just Squashed Tomatoes!': Laughing through the Fears in Postcolonial British Comedy: Chris Morris's *Four Lions* and Joe Cornish's *Attack the Block*." *Postcolonial Text* 8.2 (2013): n. pag. Web. 5 Nov. 2014.

Iser, W. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Reception*. London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978. Print.

---. "Do I Write for an Audience?" PMLA 115.3 May, 2000: 310-314. Print.

Iwamura, Jane. *Virtual Orientalism: Asian Religions and American Popular Culture*. Cambridge: Oxford UP, 2010. Print.

Jaikumar, Priya. "Translating Silences: A Cinematic Encounter with Incommensurable Difference." *Transnational Feminism in Film and Media.* Eds. Katarzyna Marciniak, Aniko Imre, and Aine O'Healy. New York: Palgrave, 2007. 207-26. Print.

JanMohamed, Abdul. "Between speaking and dying: some imperatives in the emergence of the subaltern in the context of US slavery." *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*. Ed. Rosalind Morris. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010. 139-55. Print.

----. “The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature.” *Critical Inquiry* 12 (1985): 59-87. Print.

Jayaram, Narayana. *Diversities in the Indian Diaspora: Nature, Implications, Responses*. Cambridge: Oxford UP, 2011. Print.

Jeffords, Susan. *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1994. Print.

Johnston, Ingrid, and George Richardson. “Homi Bhabha and Canadian Curriculum Studies: Beyond the Comforts of the Dialectic.” *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies* 10.1 (2012): 115-37. Print.

Kabir, Nasreen. *Bollywood: The Indian Cinema Story*. London: Channel 4 Books, 2001. Print.

Kamboureli, Smaro. *Scandalous Bodies: Diasporic Literature in English Canada*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 5 Jul. 2015.

Kaur, Ravinder. “Viewing the West through Bollywood: A Celluloid Occident in the Making.” *Contemporary South Asia* 11.2 (2002): 199-209. Print.

Keenaghan, Eric. “Newly Discrepant Engagements: A Review of Three Recent Critical Works in Modernist Postcolonial Studies.” *Journal of Modern Literature* 29.3 (2006): 176-90. Print.

Keresztesi, Rita. *Strangers At Home: American Ethnic Modernism Between The World Wars*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005. Print.

Khorana, Sukhmani. “Diasporic Art: Writing/Visualising Back and Writing/Visualising into Being” *Refereed Proceedings of the Australian and New Zealand Communications Association Annual Conference, July 8-10.* Ed. T. Flew. Canberra: Australian and New Zealand Communication Association, 2009. 453-465. Print.

Koepnick, Lutz. “Consuming the Other: Identity, Alterity, and Contemporary German Cinema.” *Camera Obscura* 15.2 (2000): 40-73. Print.

Koshar, Rudy. “Foucault and Social History: Comments on ‘Combined Underdevelopment.’ ” *The American Historical Review* 98.2 (1993): 354-63. Print.

---. “Hitler: A Film from Germany: Cinema, History, and Structures of Feeling.” *Revisioning History: Film and the Con-struction of a New Past, ed.Robert A.Rosenstone (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994)* (1995): 155-73. Print.

Kumar, Keval J. "India's Many Popular Cinemas: Theoretical Perspectives." *Journal of Creative Communications* 6.1-2 (2011): 1-14. Print.

Kymlicka, Will. "A North American View." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 26.4 (2000): 723-31. Print.

Lacan, Jacques. "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the *I* as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience." *Ecrits: A Selection.* Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Norton, 1977. Print.

Livingstone, Sonia. "Relationships between media and audiences: prospects for audience reception studies." *Media, Ritual and Identity*. Ed. Tamarand Liebes and James Curran. London: Routledge, 1998. 237-255. Print.

The Mahabharata: A Modern Rendering. Tran. Ramesh Menon. New York: iuniverse, 2006. Print.

Mahmud, Tayyab. "Migration, Identity, and the Colonial Encounter." *Oregon Law Review* 76 (1997): 633. Print.

Mathur, Suchitra. "From British 'Pride' to Indian 'Bride': Mapping the Contours of a Globalised (Post?)Colonialism." *M/C Journal: A Journal of Media and Culture* 10.2 (2007): Web. 5 Nov. 2014.

May, Claudia. “What's Love Got to do with it?: (Un)Bending Identities and Conventions in Gurinda Chadha's Bend it Like Beckham.” *Culture and Religion* 11.3 (2010): 247-76. Print.

McKee, Alan. *Textual Analysis: A Beginners Guide.* London: Sage Publications, 2003. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 5 Nov. 2014.

McKiernan, DW. *Cinema and Community.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Print.

Mehta, Deepa, dir. *Bollywood, Hollywood.* Mongrel Media, 2002. Film.

---. *Earth.* Warner Home Video Inc., 1998. Film.

---. *Fire.* Perf. Shabana Azmi and Kulbhushan Kharbanda. Zeitgeist Films, 1996. Film.

---. “Fire: Official Press Kit.” Web. 5 Nov. 2014.

---. *Heaven on Earth.* Hamilton-Mehta Production Inc., 2008. Film.

---. *Bollywood/Hollywood.* Mongrel Media, 2006. Film.

Melnyk, George. *Film and the City: The Urban Imaginary in Canadian Cinema.* Edmonton: Athabasca UP, 2014. Print.

Metz, Christian. *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema.* Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1982. Print.

Miller, Toby. *Cultural Citizenship: Cosmopolitanism, Consumerism, and Television in a Neoliberal Age*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2007. Print.

Mohanty, Chandha Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader.* Ed. Padmini Mongia. New York: Random House, 2000. 172-197. Print.

---. " 'Under Western Eyes' Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles." *Signs* 28.2 (2003): 499-535. Print.

Mongrel Media. "Water: Official Press Kit." Web. 5 Nov. 2014.

Moodley, Subeshini. "Postcolonial Feminisms Speaking through an 'Accented' Cinema: The Construction of Indian Women in the Films of Mira Nair and Deepa Mehta." *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 58 (2003): 66-75. Print.

Moraga, Cherríe. "Refugees of a World on Fire: Foreword to the Second Edition." *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Eds. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldua. 2nd ed. New York: Kitchen Table/Women of Colour: 1983. Print.

Morris, R., ed. *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2010. Print.

Morton, Stephen. *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*. New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.

Mulvey, Laura. "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' Inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun* (1946)." *Visual and Other Pleasures*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Print.

---. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen* 16.3 (1975): 6-18. Print.

Naficy, H. *An Accented Cinema : Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. Print.

Naipaul, V. S., and Pankaj Mishra. *Literary Occasions: Essays*. 1st ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. Print.

Nair, Mira, dir. *The Namesake*. Perf. Tabu, Irrfan Khan and Kal Penn. Fox Searchlight Pictures/Mirabai Films UTV Motion Pictures, 2006. Film.

Paramahamsa, K.R., *Dharma*. Friendswood: TotalRecall Publications, 2008. Print.

Paranjape, Makarand. "*Postcolonial Bollywood*." *EVAM: Forum on Indian Representations* 1.1 (2002): 268-76. Print.

Philip, Marlene Nourbese. *Frontiers: Selected Essays and Writings on Racism and Culture, 1984-1992*. Stratford: Mercury Press, 1992. Print.

Pillania, Rajesh. "The Globalization of Indian Hindi Movie Industry." *Emerging Markets* 1-2 (2008): 115-123. Print.

Ponzanesi, Sandra. *The Postcolonial Cultural Industry: Icons, Markets, Mythologies*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Print.

Prince, Stephen. "Psychoanalytic Film Theory and the Problem of the Missing Spectator." *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies.* Eds. David Bordwell and Noel Carroll. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996. 83. Print.

Punathambekar, Aswin. "After Bollywood: Diasporic Media in an Age of Global Media Capitals." *Global Communication: New Agendas in Communication.* Eds. Karin Wilkins, Joe Straubhaar, and Shanti Kumar. New York: Routledge, 2013. 66-66. Print.

Rajan, Gita and Shailja Sharma. "New Cosmopolitanisms: South Asians in the United States at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century." *New Cosmopolitanisms: South Asians in the US.* Eds. Gita Rajan and Shailja Sharma. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006. 1-36. Print.

Ramayana: India's Immortal Tale of Adventure, Love, and Wisdom. Trans. Krishna Dharma. Nadia: Torchlight Publishing, 2004. Print.

Ray, Sangeeta. *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: In Other Words*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. Print.

Reitz, Jeffrey G, Raymond Breton, Karen Kisiel Dion, and Kenneth L. Dion, eds. *Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion: Potentials and Challenges of Diversity*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2009. Print.

Reitz, Jeffrey G. "Assessing Multiculturalism as a Behavioural Theory." Eds. Reitz, Breton, Dion, KK, and Dion, KL. *Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion: Potentials and Challenges of Diversity*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2009. 1-47. Print.

Reitz, Jeffrey G., and Rupa Banerjee. "Racial Inequality and Social Integration." Eds. Reitz, Breton, Dion, KK, and Dion, KL. *Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion: Potentials and Challenges of Diversity*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2009. 123-156. Print.

Safran, William. "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1.1 (1991): 83-99. Print.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993. Print.

---. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994. Print.

Schweinitz, Jörg, *Film and Stereotype: A Challenge for Cinema and Theory*. Trans. Laura Schleussner. New York: Columbia UP, 2011. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 5 Aug. 2015.

Seaford, H. "The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: An Opportunity Missed." *Political Quarterly* 72 (2001): 107-13. Print.

Selden, Raman, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. 5th ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2005. Print.

Shariff, Farha. "Straddling the Cultural Divide: Second-Generation South Asian Identity and *The Namesake*." *Changing English: Studies in Culture & Education* 15.4 (2008): 457-66. Print.

Shome, Raka. "Whiteness and the Politics of Location: Postcolonial Reflections." *Whiteness: The Communication of Social Identity* (1999): 107-28. Print.

Sorensen, Eli Park. *Postcolonial Studies and the Literary: Theory, Interpretation and the Novel*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Print.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?." *Wedge* 7/8 (1985): 120-30. Print.

---. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999. Print.

---. *Outside in the Teaching Machine*. New York: Routledge, 1993. Print.

Stevenson, Nick, ed. *Cultural Citizenship*. London: Sage, 2001. Print.

Tasker, Yvonne. *Spectacular bodies: Gender, genre and the action cinema.* New York: Routledge, 2012. Print.

Trivedi, Harish. "From Bollywood to Hollywood: The Globalization of Hindi Cinema." Ed. Revathi Krishnaswamy. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2008. 200-210. Print.

Turner, Bryan S. "Outline of a General Theory of Cultural Citizenship." *Culture and Citzenship.* Ed. Nick Stevenson. London: Sage, 2001. 216. Print.

Visser, Robin. *Cities Surround the Countryside: Urban Aesthetics in Postsocialist China*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 5 Aug 2015.

Walsh, Michael. "Jameson and' Global Aesthetics." *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies.* Eds. David Bordwell and Noel Carroll. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996. 481-500. Print.

Warrior, R. "The Subaltern Can Dance, and So Sometimes Can the Intellectual." *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 13.1 (2011): 85-94. Print.

White, Hayden. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. New York: John Hopkins UP, 2009. Print.

Wright, Colin. *Psychoanalysis*. Ed. Macdonald Daly. Nottingham: Critical, Cultural and Communications P, 2008. Print.

---. Message to the author. 5 December. 2013. E-mail.

Xie, Shaobo, and Fengzhen Wang. *Dialogues on Cultural Studies: Interviews with Contemporary Critics*. Calgary: U of Calgary P, 2002. Print.

Yuen-Carrucan, Jasmine. "The Politics of Deepa Mehta's *Water*." *Bright Lights Film Journal* 28 (2000) n.pag. Web. 5 Nov. 2014.

Žižek, Slavoj. *Enjoy Your Symptom!: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out*. New York: Routledge, 1992. Print.

---. "Pornography, Nostalgia, Montage: A Triad of the Gaze." *Reading Images* (2001): 148-57. Print.