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NOSTALGIA, DESIRE, DIASPORA

Funny Boy and *Cereus Blooms at Night*

In the early 1990s, newspapers catering to Trinidad's East Indian population were awash with heated arguments about the increasing popularity of chutney, a form of popular music and dance initially performed by Indo-Trinidadian women in the context of women-only, prewedding celebrations.[1] The furor surrounding chutney was fueled by the fact that, by the late 1980s, more and more Indian women were performing the songs and dances in public spaces rather than in the confines of their homes. This move from the private to the public prompted culturally conservative Hindu organizations in Trinidad to denounce chutney and its offspring, chutney soca, as "vulgar, degrading and obscene."[2] Echoing the controversies generated by Deepa Mehta's *Fire* and Ismat Chughtai's "The Quilt," the debates surrounding chutney music expose the imbrication of discourses of female sexuality, diasporic identity, and the "home" as domestic, communal, and national space. The chutney controversy in Trinidad, like the battle over SALGA's inclusion in the India Day parade in New York City, is yet another instance of how the space of public culture in the diaspora emerges as a contested terrain where heteronormative notions of female sexuality are both enacted and challenged. In the cases of both the chutney and India Day parade disputes, a diasporic male elite attempted to counter nationalist framings of the diaspora as the inauthentic Other to the

nation by positioning women's bodies as the site of an imagined communal purity and authenticity. Indeed, what particularly galled chutney's detractors was that the dancing was performed not only in public space but primarily by middle-aged Indian women. These women were seen, as one speaker from a Hindu cultural group put it, as "the once flower of the race, the personification of virtue and chastity, the epitome of humility and uprightness."[3] Such a statement makes glaringly apparent how colonial constructions of respectable female sexuality and proper womanhood as enshrined within the home, initially consolidated during the period of Indian indentureship in Trinidad, continue to resonate in the public culture of the postcolonial present. These constructions powerfully maintain the boundaries of communal identity in the diaspora.

The "chutney polemic," as the ethnomusicologist Peter Manuel terms it,[4] has received a fair amount of attention from scholars and critics interested in gender, nationalism, and popular culture. In her essay "Left to the Imagination: Indian Nationalisms and Female Sexuality in Trinidad," for instance, Tejaswini Niranjana carefully contextualizes the chutney phenomenon within histories of both Trinidadian and Indian nationalisms. Indian nationalist discourse in the early twentieth century, she argues, imagined the indentured Indian woman in Trinidad as licentious and immoral, so as to produce a female nationalist subject in India that was at once modern yet virtuous and chaste.[5] While Niranjana's analysis convincingly demonstrates the centrality of discourses of women's sexuality to nationalist definitions of "Indianness" in both India and Trinidad, it is unable to imagine the ways in which women's sexuality may exceed the heterosexual parameters put in place by these nationalist discourses. This blind spot becomes particularly apparent in Niranjana's understanding of chutney, which she frames as a representation of Indian women's sexual autonomy in the face of opposition from a Hindu male elite. Niranjana argues that for this elite, chutney raised the fearful specter of miscegenation between Indian women and Afro-Trinidadian men, given that it exposed Indian women's bodies to a public (male) gaze. As Niranjana states, "the disapproval of 'vulgarity' can be read . . . as an anxiety regarding miscegenation, the new form chutney becoming a metonym for the supposed increase in the relationships between Indian women and African men."[6] Indian women's bodies served as the terrain on which Indo- and Afro-Trinidadian men competed over the right to represent the nation. Certainly, as Niranjana suggests, the controversy

crystallized the ways in which diasporic nationalism is predicated on the notion of women's bodies as communal property. However, what remains unmarked in Niranjana's otherwise useful analysis is an acknowledgment of alternative forms of desire that may emerge within the women-only spaces where chutney music was originally performed. By presuming that Indo-Caribbean women's sexuality is always and everywhere heterosexual, Niranjana's analysis takes as a given what is in actuality discursively produced by successive waves of colonial and nationalist ideologies.

Similarly, Peter Manuel, in one of the only book-length accounts of Indo-Caribbean music and the "chutney polemic" in particular, betrays a simultaneous recognition and disavowal of the homoerotics of the dance space that chutney produces. Manuel writes that chutney dancing, like the sexually suggestive "wining" of Afro-Caribbean women at Carnival,[7] was "misinterpreted" by "outraged critics" as "lesbianism, but it is better seen as a celebration of autosexuality or female sexuality per se in a way that is not dependent on the presence of men . . . Accordingly, chutney's defenders have celebrated it as a form of women's liberation."[8] Manuel in effect evacuates the possibility of female homoeroticism by couching the pleasure that women derive from dancing with and among each other as evidence solely of (heterosexual) "women's liberation." As in Niranjana's analysis, the possibility that queer female desire (whether or not it is articulated as "lesbian") may in fact be an important component of the pleasures afforded by chutney dancing is abruptly foreclosed.

Interestingly, Manuel's history of the development of contemporary chutney soca traces a lineage back to the 1950s in Guyana, where "during wedding festivities, men would also dance in chutney style with one another or with male transvestite dancers."[9] Manuel contains and neutralizes this rather remarkable mention of histories of queer public cultural space by stressing that the Trinidadian men who today perform chutney may appear "effeminate" to the untrained eye but that "male partners should not be assumed to be gay lovers."[10] He later concedes, however, that "although male dance partners need not be assumed to be homosexual, the Trinidad chutney scene has opened space for a small but flamboyant gay subculture, which includes a popular semiprofessional transvestite film-style dancer. As has been the case to some extent in the United States, gay liberation in Trinidad has followed in the wake of women's liberation."[11] What is particularly striking in these statements is Manuel's attempt to reestablish the chutney scene as a predominantly hetero-

sexual space of "liberation" for straight women and, to a lesser extent, a queer space of "liberation" for gay men. Both Niranjana and Manuel, then, inadvertently replicate the nationalist framings of gender and sexuality that they set out to critique. They do so by enacting the familiar discursive move of equating queerness with men and femaleness with heterosexuality that I have traced throughout this book. Within this schema, queer *female* desire, pleasure, and subjectivity is indeed rendered impossible, and the queer public cultural space that the performance of chutney may produce and make available is effaced.

I open this chapter with an evocation of the chutney controversy in Trinidad, and the implicit heteronormativity of some of the scholarship that documents it, as it is yet another instance that reveals the necessity of an analysis of diasporic public cultures that is at once both feminist *and* queer. Without such an analysis, we remain unable to fully grasp the deep investment of diasporic and state nationalisms in disciplining female sexuality and legislating heteronormativity. As is evident from Niranjana's essay, a feminist reading of a diasporic cultural practice like chutney makes apparent how home as household, community, and nation is consolidated through the containment of unruly female bodies. A *queer* feminist reading, however, identifies the ways in which those bodies, desires, and subjects deemed impossible within dominant diasporic logic intervene into the public culture of the diaspora. These queer incursions into diasporic public culture reterritorialize the home by transforming it into a site where non-heteronormative desires and practices are articulated and performed.

The "chutney polemic" thus provides an unexpectedly useful point of entry into a discussion of a growing body of work that can be seen to constitute a genre of queer South Asian diasporic literature. This literary genre suggests an alternative formulation of home in the diaspora that powerfully challenges the hegemonic constructions of diasporic identity that were so in evidence during the chutney debates. A consideration of queer diasporic literature also makes evident the inadequacy and dangers of feminist theorizing of diasporic public culture that ignores its queer valences. Ismat Chughtai's "The Quilt," with its beautifully nuanced re-inscription of home through queer female desire, serves as an important precursor to this emergent genre, which must be situated in a skewed relation to the genres of "exile literature" and "immigrant literature."[12] If exile literature is marked by the trauma of forced separation from a homeland and a yearning for return, and the "immigrant genre" as defined by Rosemary

George alternately revels in "a detached and unsentimental reading of the experience of 'homelessness,' "[13] queer South Asian diasporic literature is necessarily characterized by yet another relation to home. While queer diasporic literature eschews claims to immutable origins and unsullied pasts on which dominant articulations of both the nation and diaspora depend, the specter of home—as household, community, and nation—continues to haunt it. Rather than simply doing away with home and its fictions of (sexual, racial, communal) purity and belonging, queer diasporic literature instead engages in a radical reworking of multiple home spaces. The queer diasporic body is the medium through which home is remapped and its various narratives are displaced, uprooted, and infused with alternative forms of desire.

In *Funny Boy*,[14] Shyam Selvadurai's 1994 novel in six stories, the upper-middle-class Sri Lankan Tamil narrator traces the seven years of his childhood and adolescence in Colombo that preceded the Tamil-Sinhalese riots in 1983, and his family's subsequent migration as refugees to Canada. This experience of migration forms the ground on which the narrative unfolds; the novel is structured in terms of remembrance, with the narrator Arjie recalling a "remembered innocence of childhood . . . now colored in the hues of a twilight sky."[15] Such a phrase, coming early on in the novel, seems to signal that the text can be comfortably contained within the genre of exile literature, one that evokes from the vantage point of exile an idyllic, coherent, pre-exilic past shattered by war and dislocation. Similarly, the novel's parallel narrative of Arjie's sexual awakening initially locates the text within an established genre of coming out stories, where the protagonist grows into an awareness of his "true" homosexual identity that places him outside the purview of home and family.

This narrative of migration and sexual exile with which *Funny Boy* begins is also referenced in Shani Mootoo's 1996 novel, *Cereus Blooms at Night*,[16] which opens in a small town in a fictionalized pre-Independence Trinidad. Early in the novel, we are privy to the growing attraction between the Indo-Trinidadian Sarah and the white daughter of the local reverend, as it emerges within the house in which Sarah lives with her husband and two daughters. Quite abruptly, however, the two women exit both the house and the narrative as a whole as they set sail for the "north," apparently unable to reconcile queer desire within the exigencies of the home. The sudden disappearance of the two women from the narrative may initially appear to be Mootoo's capitu-

lation to the familiar notion of a "lesbian" subject having to leave a Third World home of gender and sexual oppression in order to come out into the more liberated West.

A closer look at both novels, however, reveals a far more complicated relation between travel, sexual subjectivity, and the space of home as household, community, and nation. While *Funny Boy* references the familiar narratives of exile and coming out, it reworks the conventions of these genres and also rearticulates the very notions of exile and sexual subjectivity. Similarly, Mootoo's novel traces the various forms of travel and motion undertaken by sexual subjects both within the home and away from it. The disruption and remaking of home space through queer desire that marks all the queer diasporic texts I have engaged with throughout the book resonates particularly powerfully in these novels. While "home" in both texts is on one hand a seemingly static place that the various characters escape from and return to, it also produces and is marked by its own particular forms of travel and transitivity. As is the case with Chughtai's work, both novels map out Avtar Brah's notion of "diaspora space," which "includes the entanglement of genealogies of dispersion with those of 'staying put.' "[17] *Funny Boy* and *Cereus Blooms at Night* allow for an understanding of diaspora as produced both in the process of travel and "at home"; by importing home into the diaspora, the novels enact a similar reversal of the nation-diaspora hierarchy that, as I argued in chapter 2, is effected by transnational cultural practices such as Bhangra music.

South Asian Diasporic Texts in the House of Asian America

While queer diasporic literature reworks the formulation of home found in exilic and immigrant literatures, this genre also allows for a reconsideration of the place of South Asian American cultural texts within the frameworks of South Asian studies and Asian American studies. South Asian American cultural production has thus far rested somewhat uneasily between these two frames of reference that are often imagined in opposition to one another.[18] Yet in an essay written in 1991, Sucheta Mazumdar argues this apparent split between area studies and ethnic studies upholds a false binary that masks the explicitly transnational and internationalist thrust of an ethnic studies project at its very inception. As Mazumdar states, "The need is to define a new paradigm which contextualizes the history of Asian Americans within the twentieth-

century global history of imperialism, of colonialism, of capitalism. To isolate Asian American history from its internationalist underpinnings, to abstract it from the global context of capital and labor migration, is to distort this history."[19] Mazumdar's call for establishing and acknowledging the connections between area studies and ethnic studies has been taken up in much of the subsequent work on South Asian American and South Asian diasporic cultural politics.[20] The last few years have seen an explosion of work by South Asian scholars in the United States and Canada who situate the politics of South Asian diasporic cultures within the context of North American racialization on the one hand, and histories of colonialism, nationalism, and communalism in South Asia on the other. Such work marks an important intervention into both Asian American studies and South Asian studies: it links the current category of "South Asian American" to prior histories of anticolonial struggle in South Asia, as well as to the labor migrations precipitated by British colonialism in Europe, North America, East and South Africa, and the Caribbean.

Vijay Prashad's *The Karma of Brown Folk* can be seen to have inaugurated this new body of scholarship, in that it intervenes into both South Asian and Asian American studies by drawing the lines of connection between discourses of U.S. Orientalism and right-wing Hindu nationalism in the United States and South Asia. Prashad is careful to point out that the conservative discourses of community and culture in South Asia and the diaspora that he critiques are consolidated through particular gender ideologies that place an excess of meaning on South Asian women's bodies. Yet what remains to be further articulated is an analysis of how these conservative notions of "family," "kinship," "tradition," and "culture" in South Asia and the diaspora rely on the maintenance of heteronormativity.[21] Without such an analysis, the modes of activism and cultural production undertaken by queer and feminist subjects in the diaspora invariably appear secondary to "real" politics, such as that of the labor struggles of New York City's taxicab drivers that Prashad details.[22] I mention Prashad's book here because it is indicative of the crucial contributions made by a new body of South Asian American scholarship, while it also gestures to the particular points within such scholarship that await further elaboration. The novels of Selvadurai and Mootoo in turn constitute an important intervention into this body of work. While the imaginative landscapes of these novels similarly trouble fixed notions of the proper objects of Asian American studies or South Asian studies, queer South Asian diasporic litera-

ture builds on the analyses of Prashad and others inasmuch as they offer a more fully realized theory of how heteronormative notions of gender and sexuality are central to the maintenance of colonial, racist, and ethnic absolutist structures of domination. Such systems of logic, these novels suggest, are most fruitfully destabilized through alternative formulations of gendered and sexual subjectivity.

Other recent scholarship in South Asian American cultural studies more explicitly attempts to reconcile South Asian American cultural production with Asian American studies. Such work has often revolved around the questions of the inclusion, recognition, and acknowledgment of South Asian communities and cultures within the boundaries of Asian America. In the 1998 anthology *A Part Yet Apart: South Asians in Asian America,* for instance, Rajiv Shankar characterizes this relation between South Asians and the category of "Asian American" as follows:

> South Asians want their unique attributes to be recognized and their particular issues discussed; and some of them want this to occur within the Asian American paradigm, for they think that they must surely belong there. Yet they find themselves so unnoticed as an entity that they feel as if they are merely a crypto-group, often included but easily marginalized within the house of Asian America.[23]

It seems more useful to replace this preoccupation with belonging, visibility, recognition, and incorporation with the question of how a serious engagement with South Asian diasporic cultural production would force a radical reframing of Asian American studies as it was originally conceived. Rather than reiterating a plaintive call for inclusion, I want to suggest that this position of marginality or "ex-centricity" to a dominant Asian American paradigm is a potentially generative and fruitful one for South Asian diasporic cultural critics. It provides a space not from which to call for "belonging" within the "house of Asian America" but from which to rethink the very notions of house, home, community, belonging, and authenticity. The novels I discuss in this chapter mobilize three conceptual categories—"queer," "diaspora," and "South Asian"—that have until recently been ex-centric to the dominant model of Asian American studies, and that challenge and extend its scope in critical ways. A queer South Asian diasporic project is aligned with an increasing number of feminist and queer critics who, over the past decade, have taken exception to an early model of Asian American cultural nationalism, one that implicitly viewed the pro-

totypical Asian American subject as male, heterosexual, working class, U.S. born, and English speaking.[24] Such static notions of Asian American identity have necessarily given way to new models that take into account the shifting demographics of Asian American communities in the United States as well as the ever-increasing mobility of people, capital, and culture throughout the world.

Reconceptualizing Asian American subjectivity through the framework of a queer South Asian diaspora, then, disrupts the notion of the Asian American subject as essentially masculinist and heterosexual, as well as the belief that Asian American subjectivity is comprehensible exclusively within the boundaries of the U.S. nation-state. By placing South Asian cultural practices in productive relation to an Asian American studies paradigm, I am not making an argument for the incorporation and visibility of a heretofore orphaned and invisible group within the "house of Asian America." Indeed, arguments for inclusion do nothing to dismantle the very structures of inclusion and exclusion on which communities and identities are based. Rather, I am interested in how foregrounding queer South Asian diasporic cultural practices creates a different paradigm of Asian American studies, one that demands that we place analyses of sexual subjectivity and racialization within the United States and Canada in relation to older histories of U.S. and British colonialism in Asia and the Caribbean. The framework of a queer South Asian diaspora thus demands a remapping of Asian America, so that its borders extend north to Canada and south to Latin America and the Caribbean.

The reformulation of home through queer desire and subjectivity in queer South Asian diasporic literature situates it in contradistinction to the work that has become representative of South Asian American writing in North America, such as the fiction of more established writers like Bharati Mukherjee and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. The same developmental narrative that marks a film like Deepa Mehta's *Fire* structures Mukherjee's and Divakaruni's fiction as well: their female protagonists travel from an India that functions as the symbolic space of gender oppression and "old world dutifulness" (to use Mukherjee's phrase), to an America that fulfills its promises of progress, individual freedom, and feminist self-enlightenment.[25] Furthermore, in the writings of both Mukherjee and Divakaruni, this teleological progress narrative is coterminous with a narrative of heterosexual romance, within which the female protagonists are firmly situated. The familiar binarisms of East and West,

tradition and modernity, home and away, diaspora and nation that structure these examples of diasporic fiction are exploded by the queer diasporic novels of Selvadurai and Mootoo. Both texts exemplify an alternative mapping of Asian America: they are written by first-generation South Asian Canadians and negotiate the various legacies of colonialism and nationalist movements in the home spaces from which they came (Sri Lanka on one hand and Trinidad on the other) through the production of queer desire and affiliation. While both novels are only slowly making their way onto Asian American studies syllabi, it is precisely in the queer and diasporic dimensions of these texts that the most powerful and indispensable critiques of dominant formulations of national, racial, sexual, and gender identity are taking place.

Pigs Can't Fly: Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy*

"Pigs Can't Fly," the first story in *Funny Boy*, lays out the complex system of prohibition, punishment, and compulsion that governs and structures gender differentiation. The story tells of the childhood game that Arjie and his girl cousins play in the house of their grandparents, which entails an elaborate performance of a wedding ceremony. The pleasure Arjie takes in playing the part of the bride causes intense embarrassment and consternation for the adults, who decree that henceforth Arjie is to play with the boys. Arjie's eventual, traumatic banishment from the world of the girls and his forced entry into proper gender identification is figured in terms of geography and spacialization, of leaving one carefully inscribed space of gender play and entering one of gender conformity: Arjie is compelled to leave the inner section of the compound inhabited by the girls and enter the outer area where the boys congregate. Similarly, Arjie is barred from watching his mother dress in her room, which throughout his childhood has been the site of his most intense spectatorial pleasure. The gendered spacialization of the domestic sphere in the story mirrors and reiterates nationalist framings of space that posit the "inner" as an atavistic space of spirituality and tradition, embodied by the figure of the woman, as opposed to the "outer" male sphere of progress, politics, materiality, and modernity.[26] But by portraying the inner sphere not simply as a space of gender conformity but also of gender play and fantasy, the story refigures the gendered spacialization of the nation by revealing how non-heteronormative embodiments, desires, and pleasures surface within even the most hetero-

normative of spaces. As we have seen in the various texts I have engaged with throughout the book, this reterritorialization of domestic and national space takes place through a queering of public culture. For Arjie, dressing up as the bride—complete with shimmering white sari, flowers, and jewelry—is a way of accessing a particular mode of hyperbolic femininity embodied not only by his mother but by the popular Sri Lankan female film stars of the day.

Throughout *Funny Boy*, Selvadurai deftly makes apparent the ways in which institutionalized heterosexuality, in the form of marriage, undergirds ethnic and state nationalisms. Thus Arjie's queer reconfiguration of the wedding has implications far beyond the domestic sphere, in that it suggests other ways of imagining kinship and affiliation that extend further than the horizon of nationalist framings of community. The game itself, brilliantly titled "Bride-Bride," offers a reconfiguration of the contractual obligations of heterosexuality and gender conformity. Arjie installs himself in the most coveted role—that of bride—and makes it abundantly clear that the part of groom occupies the lowest rung of the game's hierarchy. Indeed, the game is predicated on the apparent non-performativity of masculinity, as opposed to the excessive feminine performance of Arjie as bride.[27] The game's title, then—"Bride-*Bride*," rather than "Bride-Groom" or simply "Bride"—references both the unimportance of the groom and the hyperbolic femininity embodied by the figure of the bride, as well as the potentiality of a female same-sex eroticism that dispenses with the groom altogether. In other words, the game not only speaks to a particular mode of queer male femininity and cross-gender identificatory pleasure but also suggests the possibility of a female homoeroticism located within the home that works through the absence and irrelevance of the groom. Indeed, we can read Deepa Mehta's *Fire* as (quite literally) staging the game of "Bride-Bride" within a female homosocial context.

Arjie thus sutures himself into the scene of marriage, radically displacing it from the matrix of heterosexuality and calling into question the very logic and authority of heteronormativity. "Pigs Can't Fly" encodes gender differentiation within multiple narratives, not all of which are necessarily pathologizing: while Arjie's father reads Arjie's cross-gender identification as unnatural and perverse, his mother is unable to come up with a viable explanation for the logic of gender conformity. When pushed by Arjie to explain why he can no longer play with the girls or watch her dress, she resorts to a childhood nursery rhyme, retorting in exasperation, "Because the sky is so high and pigs can't fly,

that's why."[28] Her answer attempts to grant to the fixity of gender roles the status of universally recognized natural law and to root it in common sense; however, such an explanation fails to satisfy Arjie, and his mother seems equally unconvinced by it but is unable to imagine an alternative order of things. Thus the varied, multiple discourses around gender that mark the domestic sphere militate against an overly reductive reading of "home" space as merely oppressive. Instead, gender conformity and nonconformity are narrativized through competing discourses in the story, where the rhetoric of nonconformity as perversion is undercut by the antinormative performance of gender in "Bride-Bride," as well as by Arjie's mother making apparent the nonsensical nature of gender codification.

The story ends with Arjie's dawning realization that he is doomed to being "caught between the boys' and the girls' worlds, not belonging or wanted in either."[29] This exile from the space of gender fantasy shadows the other, various exiles that Arjie experiences in each of the subsequent chapters. These follow a similar narrative arc as "Pigs Can't Fly," in that they end with Arjie's coming into consciousness of the gender, sexual, ethnic, and class constraints that limit his life and the lives of those around him, and that move him further and further away from the brief, idealized moment of gender fantasy and freedom of his childhood. For instance, Arjie's sexual encounters with his Sinhalese classmate Shehan, and his realization that such homoerotic sex has pushed him outside the purview of family as he has known it, produce a form of exile that is layered onto the previous ones and that prefigures the ones to come. Significantly, the initial sexual encounter between the two boys takes place not in the house itself but in the garage at the edges of the family compound. The literal and figurative remove of queer sexuality from the family scene is forcefully brought home to Arjie as he and Shehan rejoin his parents for lunch after their encounter in the garage. As he looks around the table at the faces of his parents, he realizes with horror that the act in the garage has opened up an unbridgeable distance between him and the rest of his family and has "moved [him] beyond his [father's] hand."[30] Arjie's sexual awakening and his realization that queer desire can only exist at the margins of home can initially be situated within the narrative tradition of the coming out story. Such narratives are often characterized as journeys toward an essential wholeness, toward the discovery of a true gay identity through a teleological process of individuation that is granted representative status. Indeed, the novel's title, *Funny Boy*, can be read as a

reference to Edmund White's 1982 narrative of gay coming of age in the fifties, *A Boy's Own Story.*[31] However, unlike White's text, where sexuality is privileged as the singular site of radical difference and the narrator's sole claim to alterity, sexuality in *Funny Boy* is but one of many discourses—such as those of ethnic identity and forced migration—all of which speak to multiple displacements and exiles. For instance, gender inversion in "Pigs Can't Fly" is not so much a primary marker of Arjie's latent homosexuality, a childhood signifier of adult homosexuality as charted along a linear narrative of sexual development that ends with a fully realized "gay" subject. Rather, cross-gender identification in the story takes on numerous, complex valences given the novel's engagement with questions of loss and memory in the context of diasporic displacement.

It is from the vantage point of "a new home . . . in Canada" that the narrator remembers the intense pleasure derived from the ritual of becoming "like the goddesses of the Sinhalese and Tamil cinema, larger than life" and of watching his mother dress.[32] Thus the narrator's evocation of these remembered instances of cross-gender identificatory practices and pleasures becomes a means by which to negotiate the loss of home as a fantasied site of geographic rootedness, belonging, and gender and erotic play. Indeed, if "home," as Dorinne Kondo states, is for "peoples in diaspora" that which "we cannot not want,"[33] home for a queer diasporic subject becomes not only that which "we cannot not want" but also that which we cannot and could never have. Home in the queer fantasy of the past is the space of violent (familial and national) disowning: if queer desire and gender inversion exile Arjie from the space of the family and the domestic sphere, his Tamilness exiles him from the home space of the nation. Cross-gender identification—through the game of Bride-Bride and in his mother's dressing room—allows Arjie to momentarily lay claim to domestic space and its gendered arrangements. The remembrance of such moments mediates the multiple alienations of the queer diasporic subject from "home" as familial, domestic, and national space. "Pigs Can't Fly" speaks to the centrality of South Asian popular cinema in producing a queer diasporic imaginary and reveals the ways in which queer subjects reaccess home through an engagement with, and intervention into, public culture. Evoking the uses of popular film for queer diasporic audiences that I discussed in chapter 4, for Arjie it is the icons of Sri Lankan cinema—images of "the Malini Fonsekas and the Geeta Kumarasinghes"—that act as the vehicle through which "home" is

conjured into being, mourned, and reimagined. Furthermore the specificity of the Tamil and Sinhala screen goddesses who fuel Arjie's fantasy life decenters Bollywood as the hegemonic cinematic force in South Asia and instead makes visible other, local points of cultural reference that are drawn on to produce queer diasporic public cultures.

The relation between cross-dressing and "home" spaces that the novel maps out echoes the anthropologist Martin Manalansan's depiction of the uses of drag within contemporary gay Filipino communities in New York City. Manalansan finds that for diasporic Filipino gay men, drag is inextricably intertwined with nostalgia, evoking "the image and memory of the Filipino homeland while at the same time acknowledging being settled in a 'new home' here in the U.S."[34] Similarly, the narrator's memory of cross-dressing in *Funny Boy* negotiates multiple cultural and geographic sites, while suggesting the uses of nostalgia for queer diasporic subjects. Arjie's performance of queer femininity radically reconfigures hegemonic nationalist and diasporic logic, which depends on the figure of the woman as a stable signifier of "tradition." Within a queer diasporic imaginary, the lost homeland is represented not by the pure and self-sacrificing wife and mother but rather by a queer boy in a sari. This project of reterritorializing national space, and the uses of drag in such a project, are explicitly articulated within South Asian queer activism and popular culture in various diasporic sites. In an example of the ways in which queer public culture reconfigures the nation, a SALGA flier for a party celebrating the publication of Selvadurai's novel depicts a sari-clad figure exclaiming, "Shyam was right! I look better in Mummy ki sari!" On the one hand, the flier makes apparent the ways in which the popular cultural practices (parties and drag performances) and literary texts like *Funny Boy* inform and produce each other and thus call into existence a space of queer diasporic public culture. The flier also replaces the woman-in-sari that typically stands in for India with a gay male/transgendered performance of queer femininity that references and remembers non-heteronormative childhoods in other national sites.[35]

The novel as a whole tracks various desiring relations, both hetero- and homosexual, such as those between the Tamil Radha and the Sinhalese Anil, between Arjie's mother and her Dutch-descended Burgher lover, and between Arjie and Shehan. None of these forms of desire fit within the logic of ethnic or state nationalisms, and they are disciplined and regulated by increasingly brutal means as the novel progresses. While "Pigs Can't Fly" concludes with

Arjie's traumatic awareness of the hegemonic power of dominant gender ideologies, the following chapter, "Radha Aunty," traces his growing awareness of dominant ethnic and nationalist ideologies, and their particular investment in gender and sexual normativity. Arjie's young aunt Radha has the misfortune of falling in love with a Sinhalese man, Anil, on the eve of a period of heightened violence against Tamils. This violence climaxes, at the end of the novel, with Arjie's family being expelled from Sri Lanka and seeking refugee status in Canada. Radha initially acts as a co-conspirator in Arjie's gender play; she takes delight in the pleasure that he derives from imagining in great detail her own future wedding ceremony and in dressing in her make-up and jewelry. After being violently attacked during a riot, however, Radha turns away from Anil and agrees to marry a more suitable Tamil businessman approved of by her family. The story makes clear how women's bodies become the literal and figurative battleground on which ethnic nationalist ideologies play out. By the story's end, the bohemian Radha is transformed into a "real" bride, with the heavy mask-like make-up, gold jewelry, flowers, and silk saris of Arjie's fantasy life. However, here the hyperbolic femininity of the bride is sutured firmly to heterosexuality and is annexed to the project of maintaining the inviolability of ethnic boundaries. In sharp contrast to the queerness of the wedding scene as performed by Arjie in "Pigs Can't Fly," the wedding in "Radha Aunty" serves to discipline bodies and desires that do not conform to ethnic absolutist notions of community. Here femininity signifies not gender play, fantasy, and pleasure but rather Radha's acquiescence to this logic of ethnic absolutism. The pathologizing of Arjie as a feminine boy, then, is revealed to be but one component in the same structure of domination that renders Radha's heterosexual, female body symbolic of communal purity and tradition.

The centrality of gender and sexual normativity in the consolidation of ethnic and state nationalisms, and the costs this consolidation exacts on queer and female bodies, are made further apparent in the novel's penultimate chapter, "The Best School of All." The story details the ways in which Arjie's school, where his father has sent him to become a "real man," functions as a site for the indoctrination of normative gender and sexual identity as well as ethnic affiliation. For instance, the boys must call their classmates by their surnames, which marks each student as irreducibly Tamil or Sinhalese. As the intimacy between Arjie and Shehan grows, they shift from calling each other by their ethnically marked surnames (Selvaratnam and Soyza) to their more neutral

given names. Echoing the ways in which queer female desire provides a space for the critique of communal politics in *Fire*, in *Funny Boy* queer male desire similarly interrupts the normative gender, sexual, and ethnic nationalist logic of the school space that stands in for Sri Lanka as a whole. Yet while queer desire here, as in Kureishi's *My Beautiful Laundrette*, undercuts the logic of ethnic/ racial purity and authenticity, it does not transcend it: after his house is burnt down during the riots, it occurs to Arjie for the first time that Shehan is Sinhalese and he is not; this realization becomes "a thin translucent screen" through which Arjie now comes to view Shehan.[36] Thus other vectors of power, difference, and privilege are woven into the very fabric of queer desire and are inextricable from it.

The novel's final section, "Riot Journal," makes all the more evident the ways in which the home is reconfigured in queer diasporic memory. The novel's episodic structure is abandoned here and the book shifts to present tense and first person as Arjie, in terse journal entries, documents the horrors of the 1983 massacre of Tamils by Sinhalese. This splintered, fragmented format brusquely interrupts the more conventional structure of the previous chapters and marks the fact that queer diasporic histories cannot be contained within a teleological, developmental narrative. In the midst of the carnage, Arjie has sex with Shehan for the last time before traumatically leaving with his family for Canada: "I have just returned from seeing Shehan. I can still smell his particular odour on my body, which always lingers on me after we make love . . . I am reluctant even to change my clothes for fear that I will lose this final memento."[37] The smell of Shehan's body lingering on Arjie's clothes becomes "a final memento" not only of a remembered scene of homoerotic desire but of Sri Lanka, of home itself. The text thus queers the space of Sri Lanka as home by disrupting the logic of nationalism that consolidates the nation through normative hierarchical sexual and gender arrangements; these arrangements coalesce around the privatized, bourgeois domestic space of home as a site of sanitized heterosexuality.

The mapping of homoeroticism onto the national space of Sri Lanka also challenges the implicit imperialist assumptions underlying conventional coming out narratives that locate the Third World as a site of sexual oppression that must be left behind in order to realize a liberated gay subjectivity. The moment in the narrative where Arjie remembers home through the smell of his lover's body encapsulates the text's deployment of what I would call a generative or

enabling nostalgia and homesickness. Here the home that is evoked signifies multiply: as both national space and domestic space, it is the site of homoerotic desire and cross-gender identification and pleasure, of intense gender conformity and horrific violence, as well as of multiple leave-takings and exiles. The text thus also complicates the axes of a conventional exilic novel with fixed points of origin and departure. Instead, Selvadurai's stories detail the layered crises and multiple losses, the leave-takings and exiles that occur within the site of home itself.

Home Work: Shani Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night*

As in Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* and Ian Rashid's *Surviving Sabu*, in *Cereus Blooms at Night* non-heteronormative sexualities travel within and away from the space of home and transform the very meanings of home in the process. Mootoo's novel allows for a conceptualization of sexuality in motion: in the context of diasporic movement and migration as well as in relation to those movements that occur within and across bodies that seemingly remain geographically rooted with the home. Unlike both *Funny Boy* and *Surviving Sabu*, however, Mootoo's novel provides a sustained articulation of a queer diasporic project that revolves around a complex model of female diasporic subjectivity, and allows us to consider what a queer diasporic project would look like with a female subject at its center. As such, it extends and brings into fruition the brief glimpse of a queered femininity suggested by Mina's performance in *East Is East*, as discussed in chapter 3. Like *Surviving Sabu*, *Cereus* responds to and revises the tropes of masculinity and unhousing that are so central to V. S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas.* Mootoo's radical reworking of homes and houses in *Cereus* provides a necessary counterpoint to Naipaul's melancholic vision of masculine failure as well as to Rashid's alternative yet still limited vision of a queer male genealogy.

A House for Mr. Biswas, published at the very moment of Trinidad's independence, fits quite comfortably into the mold of "national allegory" as articulated by Fredric Jameson in his oft-cited (and much debated) essay "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism."[38] Jameson's claim that in "all third-world texts . . . the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society" has been strongly criticized by many postcolonial critics.[39] Aijaz

Ahmad, for instance, takes to task Jameson's sweeping generalizations about "all Third World literatures," and his overly tidy oppositions between First and Third World literatures and readers.[40] Yet Naipaul's novel—following as it does Biswas's chronic failure to create "an adequate house in which to install an adequate self," as Rosemary George phrases it—easily allows itself to be read along the lines of Jameson's premise.[41] Conversely, *Cereus Blooms at Night*, which can be read as an important intertext to Naipaul's novel, does not resolve itself so easily into national allegory. Rather Mootoo's novel is primarily concerned with those subjectivities, desires, and modes of collectivity that escape nationalist narratives and that fall outside their teleological structures. While questions of housing remain central for Mootoo, her novel maps the violences that undergird the home as it is prescribed within the logic of colonialism. If Naipaul's novel is unable to imagine a way of "being at home" outside patriarchal colonial logic, Mootoo's text suggests alternative forms of kinship, affiliation, and genealogy that resist the logic of blood, patrilineality, and patriarchal authority on which Naipaul's vision of housing ultimately rests.

Mootoo's novel traces the physical and psychic costs of colonialism as they play out over variously gendered, sexualized, and racialized bodies. In contrast to the realist mode of Naipaul's novel, *Cereus Blooms at Night* is situated in a semi-fictionalized (post)colonial location: England is transposed within Mootoo's literary landscape into the forbidding-sounding "Shivering Northern Wetlands" while Trinidad is translated into a tropical Caribbean island called "Lantanacamara." The narrative unravels the life of Mala Ramachandin, who at the novel's opening is seen as a mute old woman in a Lantanacamara nursing home, and who has been befriended and cared for by the novel's narrator, an effeminate gay male nurse named Tyler. By means of shifts across time and narrative voice, we learn that when Mala was a young girl, her Indian mother Sarah fell in love and absconded with Lavinia, the white daughter of the local "Wetlandish" missionary family. Mala and her sister Asha are left to the mercy of their father Chandin, who as a young boy had been adopted by the white missionary family in their attempt to convert other poor Indian plantation workers to Christianity. After Sarah leaves him for Lavinia, Chandin turns abusive, raping Mala and Asha for years until Asha escapes and leaves the island; Chandin is eventually killed in a final violent encounter with Mala.

This synopsis does not do justice to the complexity of the text as it raises questions around the production and disavowal of queer bodies and desires in

the context of home as household, community, and nation. The novel's contestation of hegemonic colonial, national, and diasporic framings of sexuality and home spaces must be read against the sexual, racial, and gendered repercussions of indentureship in Trinidad. Clearly there is a risk in using a specific historical frame to situate a novel as self-consciously antirealist as Mootoo's. Nevertheless, the novel's framing of questions of home, sexuality, and movement is informed by the particularities of indentureship in Trinidad. Indeed the novel can be read as both a response to and repudiation of its various legacies, and it forces a consideration of indentureship as central to processes of racial, gender, and sexual subjectification in the Caribbean. Precipitated by Britain's continued need for cheap labor in the aftermath of slavery in the British colonies, half a million workers were brought from India to work on British Caribbean sugar plantations between 1838 and 1917 through a strategy of what Madhavi Kale calls "imperial labor reallocation."[42] Yet as Indira Karamcheti asserts, Indian indenture is often an erased narrative in Caribbean historiography and fails to signify against what she calls "the overwhelming, dominating presence of another people's displacement."[43] While a number of historians and cultural critics have pointed out the complex relations between slavery and indentureship in the Caribbean in terms of the maintenance of racial hierarchies and continued labor exploitation, there remains a need to fully articulate the effects of indentureship on colonial and postcolonial subject constitution in the Caribbean.

Feminist historians including Madhavi Kale, Rhoda Reddock, Patricia Mohammed, and others have begun this task in their work on Indian women and indentureship. Reddock's work, for instance, details the discursive production of the category of the Indian immigrant, and the Indian woman immigrant in particular, within a juridical framework of countless criminal and labor laws that sought to govern immigrant existence.[44] Indentureship was marked from its inception by a discourse of sexual morality, one which sought to curb the "erotic autonomy" (to use Jacqui Alexander's phrase) of Indian immigrant women.[45] Both the British colonial state and immigrant Indian men labeled single Indian women (who were the majority of those women who migrated) as outcasts, immoral, and prostitutes. Reddock and Mohammed argue that a variety of competing discourses and interests intersected in the need to control and legislate Indian female sexuality. First, Indian immigrant masculinity attempted to reconstitute itself through the control of "unruly" Indian female

sexuality. Second, Indian immigrant women were instrumental within the gendered discourse of anticolonial nationalism in India, where arguments against indentureship were articulated as safeguarding the purity and sanctity of Indian womanhood. Finally a Victorian discourse around domesticity and ideal womanhood sought to "domesticate" Indian women immigrants by transforming them from wage laborers to dependent housewives.[46]

This last strategy, of framing Indian women as housewives rather than wage earners, is important to elaborate as it has tremendous consequences for the creation of gender hierarchies and the regulation of Indian women's bodies during the post-indentureship period and beyond. Reddock points out that between 1870 and 1900, new legal mechanisms were put in place to keep Indians on the estates as a stable, self-reproducing work force. Earlier ordinances that sought to regulate the movement of workers—such as the 1847 Ticket to Leave Law that prohibited workers from leaving the confines of the estate—were compounded by new land laws. These laws facilitated the creation of Indian peasant proprietorship by giving male "heads of household" land instead of a return passage back to India. Simultaneously, under a systematic process of what Reddock calls "housewifization," women workers were increasingly removed from public wage labor to perform unpaid, privatized labor on family property. The colonial state thus legislated hierarchized, patriarchal, heterosexual nuclear family units as necessary for peasant farming. Significantly, this period saw a tremendous increase in violence perpetuated by Indian men against Indian women, often in the form of murder. Madhavi Kale argues that violence was used as a major method of control against Indian women who sought to assert their sexual autonomy in the face of increasing legislation that would keep them firmly within the confines of conjugal domesticity.[47] According to Prabhu Mohapatra, colonial authorities sought to prevent these "wife murders" in late-nineteenth-century British Guyana by strengthening marriage legislation and consolidating the male-dominated nuclear Indian family.[48] Thus the colonial state, in conjunction with Indian immigrant male interests, sought to legislate and naturalize hierarchical nuclear family arrangements within this newly constructed space of the Indian immigrant home. As Kale writes, "Indentured labor was peculiarly suited to imperial, post-emancipation conditions because it recognized and implicitly capitalized on a racial differentiation—indeed racial hierarchy—within the empire by contributing to naturalizing [and] universalizing a bourgeois-imperial sex-

ual division of labor that was not only predicated on, but also reproduced, women's banishment to the domestic: to domestic space, labor, identity."[49] In other words, heteronormativity and the consolidation of the domestic space were used as disciplinary mechanisms of the colonial state, both producing and keeping intact the racial, gender, and sexual hierarchies necessary for the continuance of a cheap and stable workforce.

As I suggested in my discussion of chutney music, recent critical attempts to unravel contemporary discourses of female sexuality in Trinidad stop short of fully exploring the linkages between the legislation of heteronormativity, the disciplining of female sexuality, and the consolidation of colonial systems of labor. The effacement of queer female desire and agency by contemporary scholars is particularly significant in the context of how rhetoric around Indian women's sexuality was mobilized by the British colonial state and Indian nationalists during the indentureship period. Madhavi Kale notes that the "sexualization of [Indian] women and the labor they performed was [central] to emergent bourgeois-capitalist notions of free labor, freedom and nation."[50] British proponents of the indentureship system were particularly concerned with couching indentured labor as "free" rather than coerced or slave labor, and this category of "free labor" became crucial to post-emancipation definitions of Britain as an imperial power. It also kept racial hierarchies in the colonies intact: Kale convincingly argues that "free" Indian labor was used as a means of disciplining and devaluing the newly emancipated black laboring population.[51] Indian women, however, were excluded from this category of "free labor" as they were seen as unfit for field labor and wage earning and were consigned to the space of the domestic. Indeed, as Kale asserts, "the model, ideal laborer was almost always male. The idea of free women laborers represented a contradiction in terms."[52] The process of "housewifization" had the effect of curtailing both the laboring and sexual agency of Indian women, in that it harnessed their sexuality and labor power to the maintenance of the heterosexual, conjugal family unit. Thus, by eliding queer female desiring agency in their analyses of contemporary discourses of Indian women's sexuality, cultural critics and scholars collude with the particular brand of heteronormativity initially put in place to legitimize continued labor exploitation under indentureship.

Cereus Blooms at Night opens up the space within which the normalizing discourses surrounding Indo-Caribbean women's sexuality can begin to be

unpacked. It is precisely the construction of home under indentureship as a site of the violent establishment of sexual and gender normativity that Mootoo's novel contests. The novel suggests that if heteronormativity—and more specifically heterosexuality—is a means by which to discipline subjects under colonialism, then one of the means by which to escape the sexual and gendered logic of colonialism is by escaping heterosexuality. Given the complex valences of home under indentureship, it is not surprising that Mootoo's novel is intensely preoccupied with evoking various home spaces: the white missionary home, the "native" home that Chandin's Indian plantation worker parents inhabit, and finally Chandin's own home, which his daughter Mala reterritorializes after killing Chandin. There are also those other shadowy home spaces that exist outside the island—Canada, Australia, the Wetlands—that characters disappear to and return from, and that place the island and its inhabitants within a larger framework of diasporic travel and movement. The white missionary home in the novel is figured as the quintessential English home in the colony, that space of "public domesticity" where the workings of "the empire are replicated on a domestic scale."[53] As Rosemary George has pointed out in her work on gender, domesticity, and empire, the setting up of home in the empire was seen as crucial to the consolidation of imperial rule. George states, "The management of empire [in colonial discourse] is represented as essentially home-management on a larger scale: there are doors to be locked, corners to be dusted, rooms to be fumigated and made free of pests, children (i.e. "natives") to be . . . educated . . . and disciplined, boundaries to be drawn and fences mended."[54] Similarly, the home of the missionary family into which Chandin the native/child is granted entrance is marked by order, thrift, and cleanliness, the attention to decorum and neatness that are the hallmarks of colonialism's "civilizing" project. George also points out that it is against a construction of the "native" home as lack or excess that the colonial home is able to invent itself. Indeed, Chandin—like Naipaul's Mr. Biswas—is as in thrall to the image of colonial domesticity and nuclear familial bliss as he is disgusted by the memory of his own parents' mud house, the odor from the latrine mingling with the smells of incense, spices, and coal. This attention to smell, as I will discuss, becomes crucial to the novel's framing of home.

The home that Chandin sets up after leaving the missionary household and marrying Sarah is a failed attempt at replicating the domestic idyll of the missionary home; it is also an attempt to reproduce the patriarchal nu-

clear family as it took shape under indentureship. Chandin, in a replication of Mr. Biswas's ordeals, tries and fails to build his dream house "of stone and mortar . . . with special rooms for this and that—a library, a pantry, a guest room."[55] The emergence of queer interracial desire between Sarah and her white lover within this home space, however, radically destabilizes the terms of colonial domesticity, unharnessing Indian women's sexuality from the propagation of the heterosexual, national family unit. As in Chughtai's "The Quilt" and Mehta's *Fire*, female homoerotic desire in Mootoo's novel emerges from within the patriarchal confines of the home, within the cracks and fissures of heterosexuality, and is inextricable from the violences of colonialism and misogyny. Queer desire enables Sarah to quite literally remove herself from the sexual, racial, and gendered logic consolidated under indentureship. Chandin's response to both Sarah's refusal to abide by this logic and his own subsequent loss of patriarchal authority is to habitually rape and abuse both Mala and her sister Asha. The horror of incest in the novel functions to make visible the trauma of indentureship and its repressed histories of gendered and sexualized violence; Mala's bruised and violated body becomes an archive of these histories.[56] Thus incest in the text has multiple valences: it represents the implosion of the heterosexual nuclear family as legislated under the colonial regime of indentureship. It also echoes earlier histories of gendered violence on which the heterosexual family unit under colonialism is predicated. This "other" home space, then, shadows the sanitized missionary home and lays bare all that colonialism both produces and seeks to disavow.

Chandin's death and Mala's subsequent remaking of her house mark the creation of an alternative space of "not-home," one that explodes the gendered and racialized terms of the domestic as set forth under indentureship. Ironically inhabiting the colonial construction of the native home as excess, Mala allows the house to become overrun with wild birds, insects, snails, and reptiles and lives not inside the house but on the verandah, surrounded by their sounds and smells. If the colonial missionary home is marked by economy, order, and sanitization—a distinct lack of smell—the alternative, antidomestic home space that Mala creates is marked by an excess of smell: the stench of decomposition and foulness intermingles with the heady, intoxicating aroma of cereus blossoms. Mala revises ideologies of "housewifization" set in place during indentureship, as well as the colonial injunction that urges good housekeeping as the gendered labor of empire: her housekeeping consists of carefully drying and

burying the corpses of snails and insects, of stacking furniture into impenetrable walls that serve not to protect the house from intruders but rather to carve out a home space outside the domestic.

For Mala as for Sarah, escaping the violences of the patriarchal colonial home is inextricable from escaping the violences of heteronormativity. The novel thus allows us to rearticulate queerness in the shadow of colonialism. Mootoo's text, echoing Mina's performance of queer femininity in *East Is East* and Chughtai's formulation of queer desire within the home, imagines queerness as residing not solely in particular bodies that are specifically marked as "lesbian." Mala, for instance, is explicitly named as queer in the novel in the sense that she extricates herself from the terms of heterosexual domesticity. Queerness in *Cereus* thus extends to all those bodies disavowed by colonial and national constructions of home: bodies marked by rape and incest; biologically male bodies that are improperly feminine, such as that of Tyler, the nurse who works in the old age home to which Mala is forcibly removed after her own home is burnt down; and biologically "female" bodies that are improperly masculine, such as that of Otoh, Tyler's lover.

Indeed, the character Otoh embodies the ways in which travel and movement occur within the space of home itself, within bodies that are in motion without leaving home. Otoh, we are told, is born biologically female but transformed himself so flawlessly into a boy over the years that no one in Lantanacamara, not even his parents, seems to remember that he was once a girl. The seamlessness of Otoh's transgender transition opens Mootoo to the charge that she has positioned Otoh as the quintessential transitional subject, a figure that acts as a metaphor for other forms of crossing and travel in the novel while denying the specificity of transgender subjectivity. However, I would argue that Otoh's seamless transformation—like Mala's radical antidomesticity—instead speaks to an antirealist system of logic the text sets forth. We can call this alternative logical system one of productive contradiction: indeed, Otoh's very name is an acronym of "on the one hand, on the other hand," his favorite phrase that betrays his propensity for seeing both sides of a situation but not committing to either. Rather than naming a disinvested sexual and gender fluidity, Otoh—like Mala, who lives in the inside/outside space of the verandah—can be seen as making inhabitable those liminal spaces deemed impossible within heteronormative logic: he is outside femininity yet within a nominally female body; he is situated within masculinity yet attracted to Tyler's

queer femininity. The logic of "on the one hand" embodied by Mootoo's characters is ultimately a refusal to adhere to the fixities of place, race, gender, and sexuality legislated by the colonial regimes of both slavery and indentureship. The gender and sexual ideologies of indentureship quite literally fix bodies in place; the various forms of transitivity and motion undertaken by Mootoo's characters both within and away from the space of home, then, must be read as working against this colonial injunction to fixity. If legislated heterosexuality, in the context of patriarchal family arrangements, is one of the primary means by which the colonial state keeps bodies fixed in place, then the novel suggests that queer bodies and queer desires become the means by which to escape the totalizing logic of colonial order. Clearly, however, this is not to suggest that movement or queerness in the novel can be conceptualized in terms of a celebration of an easy fluidity. Rather than leveling out the differences between the various forms of raced, gendered, and sexual movements that it traces, Mootoo's novel suggests the impossibility of viewing one particular trajectory to the exclusion of others. As in Selvadurai's novel, current movements and transitivities are always shadowed by prior displacements, and Mootoo maps the forced, traumatic, and painful movements precipitated by slavery, indentureship, and colonialism onto the very bodies of her characters. In other words, Mootoo grounds the movements of her characters within the continuing legacies of colonialism, while suggesting the strategies by which those subjects positioned outside the terms of communal belonging reimagine their relation to multiple home spaces.

At the end of Naipaul's novel, Mr. Biswas finally moves into his own house only to discover that it merely has the façade of the pristine domestic space he so longs for: the foundations are rotting, the roof leaks, the doors refuse to shut. Mr. Biswas dies in this space of failed colonial domesticity, unable to imagine another kind of home. At the end of Mootoo's novel, on the other hand, the various characters who have struggled against *and* inhabited the space of the home—Otoh, Tyler, and Mala—are united in the nursing home where Mala lives and Tyler works. The nursing home is another space of public domesticity marked by the strict enforcement of rules and regulations. Yet in this seemingly incongruous setting, violence finally gives way to desire as Tyler and Otoh find love and Mala renews her relationship, long dormant, with Otoh's father. It is, once again, Mala's "housekeeping" that allows this unlikely space—one that is opened by violence and maintained through queer alliance—to become the

location of a new form of collectivity. Signaling her refusal of the institutional strictures of the nursing home, Mala builds and rebuilds a wall in her room with its sparse furniture. What looks like the mind-numbing behavior of senility is of course a continuation of her life's work: the invention of new architectures of being and the erection of a counterdomestic space in the very heart of the home and nation.

In the novels of Mootoo and Selvadurai, desire must be conceptualized in motion, traveling as it does both diasporically and "in place." The characters in both novels, as in the other texts discussed throughout the book, infuse the space of home with multiple forms of queer desire, and thus lay bare the fiction of sanitized heterosexuality on which home as household/community/nation depends. Nostalgia as deployed by queer diasporic subjects is a means by which to imagine oneself within those spaces from which one is perpetually excluded or denied existence. If the nation is "the modern Janus," a figure which at once gazes at a primordial, ideal past while facing a modern future,[57] a queer diaspora instead recognizes the past as a site of intense violence as well as pleasure; it acknowledges the spaces of impossibility within the nation and their translation within the diaspora into new logics of affiliation. The logic of "pigs can't fly" becomes transformed, within diasporic public culture, into the alternative queer logic that allows for two brides in bed together, a marriage without a groom, pigs with wings. In other words, a queer diasporic logic displaces heteronormativity from the realm of natural law and instead launches its critique of hegemonic constructions of both nation and diaspora from the vantage point of an "impossible" subject.

NOTES

1 Impossible Desires

1. For an analysis of the racist ideology espoused by the British politician Enoch Powell in the 1960s, see Anna Marie Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality.*

2. See Ian Iqbal Rashid, "Passage to England," for a discussion of *My Beautiful Laundrette*'s reception by the "cultural left" in the UK in the 1980s.

3. In its most general sense, the term "communal" is used here and throughout the book to reference notions of community and collectivity; more specifically, my use of "communal" is meant to evoke the term "communalism," which in the South Asian context names a politics of religious nationalism and the persecution of religious minorities, particularly on the part of the Hindu right.

4. The category of "South Asian" encompasses populations that originated from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Annanya Bhattacharjee provides a useful gloss on the term, which gained increasing currency in the 1980s and 1990s within progressive communities in the United States in order to signal a broad politics of coalition that rejected the narrow nationalisms of mainstream South Asian diasporic organizations. Bhattacharjee notes that despite its progressive valence, "South Asian" as an identity marker remains a deeply problematic term, given its origins in area studies and cold war rhetoric, as well as its capacity to evade questions of Indian regional hegemony. See "The Public/Private Mirage," 309–10. Despite these limitations, I find the category "South Asian" invaluable in tracing the lines of commonality and difference between various experiences of racialization of diasporic communities within

different national locations. Clearly the history of racialization of immigrants from the Indian subcontinent is vastly different depending on religion, class, and nation of origin in each of these national sites. Nevertheless the term continues to be useful as it produces strategic transnational identifications that allow for a critique of dominant notions of community in both South Asia and the diaspora.

5. Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 245.

6. Ibid.

7. Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 2.

8. Ibid., 20.

9. Ibid., 6.

10. Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 245.

11. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 151–53.

12. Stefan Helmreich, "Kinship, Nation and Paul Gilroy's Concept of Diaspora," 245.

13. Braziel and Mannur, "Nation, Migration, Globalization," 7.

14. Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 244.

15. For an elaboration of how diasporic cultural forms reverse the diaspora-nation hierarchy, see Gayatri Gopinath, "Bombay, U.K., Yuba City."

16. Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 244.

17. For instance, as Anupam Chander documents, the right-wing Hindu nationalist government of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) issued "Resurgent India Bonds" following the international sanctions imposed on India after its nuclear tests in 1998. The BJP promoted the bonds by appealing to the diasporic nationalism of NRIs in an attempt to encourage them to invest in the "homeland." See Chander, "Diaspora Bonds." See also Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk*, 21, for a discussion of the Indian government's production of the category of "NRI" as an attempt to garner foreign exchange.

18. Another stark illustration of the double-sided character of diaspora was apparent during the savage state-sponsored violence against Muslims in Gujarat, India, in February 2002. The Hindu nationalist state government in Gujarat received the support of NRIs even while other anticommunalist NRI organizations in New York and San Francisco mobilized against the violence and the government's complicity in the killing and displacement of thousands of Indian Muslims.

19. Sunaina Maira, for instance, documents the ways in which second-generation Indian American youth in the United States are drawn to Hindu religious nationalist ideology as a way of fulfilling a desire to be "truly Indian." Maira, *Desis in the House*, 137.

20. I understand "globalization" and "transnationalism" as a range of processes that, following Arjun Appadurai's formulation, includes the global movements of labor, technology, capital, media, and ideologies. See Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference

in the Global Cultural Economy." While transnationalism is the result of the exigencies of late capitalism, I also concur with Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd's assessment that understanding transnationalism as the homogenization of global culture "radically reduces possibilities for the creation of alternatives"; "Introduction," in *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, 1. This book is therefore concerned with the particular cultural forms and practices that arise out of, and in contestation to, transnational capitalism.

21. Visweswaran, "Diaspora By Design," 5–29.

22. Vijay Mishra, *Bollywood Cinema*, 235.

23. Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk*, 74.

24. Jenny Sharpe, "Cartographies of Globalisation, Technologies of Gendered Subjectivities," forthcoming. I thank the author for permission to discuss her unpublished manuscript.

25. Some of the most influential works in the broad field of gender and nationalism in South Asia include the following: Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, eds., *Recasting Women*; Zoya Hassan, ed., *Forging Identities*; Lata Mani, *Contentious Traditions*; Ritu Menon and Kamala Bhasin, eds., *Borders and Boundaries.*

26. Key exceptions include Ruth Vanita, ed. *Queering India*; Giti Thadani, *Sakhiyani*; Shohini Ghosh, "*Hum Aapke Hain Koun . . . !*"; Paola Baccheta, "When the (Hindu) Nation Exiles its Queers."

27. See Purnima Mankekar, "Brides Who Travel," for an examination of representations of diasporic women's sexuality in Hindi cinema.

28. Tejaswini Niranjana, "Left to the Imagination." See also Madhavi Kale, *Fragments of Empire*, for a discussion of Indian women's sexuality in the British Caribbean and discourses of both Indian and British nationalism.

29. See, for instance, Lisa Lowe's analysis of Asian immigrant women's labor in "Work, Immigration, Gender."

30. For collections that begin to map out this terrain, see Arnaldo Cruz Malavé and Martin Manalansan, eds., *Queer Globalizations*; Elizabeth Povinelli and George Chauncey, eds., *Thinking Sexuality Transnationally.*

31. Following from George Mosse's groundbreaking analysis of sexuality in Nazi Germany in *Nationalism and Sexuality*, an important body of work has emerged over the past decade that has unraveled the complex interrelation between discourses of sexuality and those of the nation. For a few key examples of this increasingly large and complex field, see Andrew Parker, ed., *Nationalisms and Sexualities*; M. Jacqui Alexander, "Erotic Autonomy as a Politics of Decolonization"; Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather*; and more recently Licia Fiol Matta, *A Queer Mother for the Nation.*

32. Some exemplary instances of this growing body of literature in U.S. ethnic

studies include the following: Martin Manalansan, *Global Divas*; José Muñoz, *Disidentifications*; Juana María Rodríguez, *Queer Latinidad*; Robert Reid Pharr, *Black Gay Man*; Philip Brian Harper, *Are We Not Men?*; David L. Eng, *Racial Castration*; Roderick Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*; Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides.*

33. See Martin Manalansan, "In the Shadow of Stonewall," for an important interrogation of contemporary gay transnational politics.

34. Lowe and Lloyd, *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, 1.

35. The imbrication of narratives of "progress," "modernity," and "visibility" is made obvious in what Alexander terms "prevalent metropolitan impulses that explain the absence of visible lesbian and gay movements [in non-Western locations] as a defect in political conciousness and maturity, using evidence of publicly organized lesbian and gay movements in the U.S. . . . as evidence of their orginary status (in the West) and superior political maturity." Alexander, "Erotic Autonomy as a Politics of Decolonization," 69.

36. Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, 3.

37. I thank Alys Weinbaum for her thoughtful feedback on the question of translation.

38. Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive.*

39. Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 133.

40. Biddy Martin and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Feminist Politics."

41. For an elaboration of the notion of "staying" for queer subjects, see Anne Marie Fortier, "Coming Home."

42. Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, 29.

43. As such, I trace the genealogy of this project back to the rich body of radical women of color scholarship of the late 1970s and 1980s that insistently situated lesbian sexuality within a feminist, antiracist, and anticolonial framework. Such work includes Audre Lorde's *Zami*; Cherrie Moraga, *Loving in the War Years*; Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back*; Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*; Barbara Smith, ed., *Home Girls.*

44. Queer Euro-American scholarship has done the crucial work of revealing the heteronormativity of dominant U.S. nationalism. Such work includes Gayle Rubin's groundbreaking essay "Thinking Sex"; Michael Warner, *The Trouble with Normal*; Lisa Duggan, *Sapphic Slashers* and *The Twilight of Equality?*

45. Paola Baccheta, "When the (Hindu) Nation Exiles its Queers."

46. For a discussion of how the "Indian immigrant bourgeoisie" constructs itself as unnamed and universal, see Annanya Bhattacharjee, "The Habit of Ex-Nomination."

47. Bhattacharjee, "The Public/Private Mirage."

48. Maira, *Desis in the House*, 49.

49. I thank Chandan Reddy for asking me to elaborate on the specificity of different modes of domination.

50. José Rabasa, "Of Zapatismo."

51. Ibid., 421.

52. Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts.*

53. See Appadurai and Breckenridge, "Public Modernity in India," for an explication of the term "public culture" in relation to South Asia. The authors use "public culture" in contradistinction to Habermas's notion of the "public sphere" as a depoliticized zone dominated by the mass media. Instead, the term "public culture" captures the sense of resistance, co-optation, critique, and agency with which subaltern groups interact with popular culture.

54. José Muñoz theorizes the ephemeral nature of queer cultural production in "Gesture, Ephemera, Queer Feeling," 433. For an extended discussion of queer archives and public cultures, see Ann Cvetkovich, 1–14.

55. Dipesh Chakravarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 66.

56. M. Jacqui Alexander, "Erotic Autonomy as a Politics of Decolonization," 86.

57. Monica Ali, *Brick Lane.*

58. Ismat Chughtai's recently translated and reprinted work includes *The Quilt and Other Stories*, *The Heart Breaks Free*, and *The Crooked Line.*

59. Shyam Selvadurai, *Funny Boy.*

60. Shani Mootoo, *Cereus Blooms at Night*.

61. See, for instance, the following: Nice Rodriguez, *Throw It to the River*; Ginu Kamani, *Junglee Girl*; Lorde, *Zami*; R. Zamora Linmark, *Rolling the R's*; *My Mother's House* (dir. Richard Fung, 1993); Achy Obejas, *Memory Mambo.*

2 Communities of Sound

1. I borrow this apt phrase from Josh Kun. For a trenchant critique of Madonna's penchant for cultural theft and tourism, see his article "Sayuri Ciccone."

2. Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 12.

3. Muñoz understands "queer and Latino counterpublics" as "spheres that stand in opposition to the racism and homophobia of the dominant public sphere." *Disidentifications*, 143.

4. "Bombay, U.K., Yuba City."

5. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 16.

6. I elaborate on this relation between diaspora and nation that is effected by Bhangra music in "Bombay, U.K., Yuba City," 316–17.

7. While the Bhangra industry in the UK was, and continues to be, largely male-

dominated, there were important exceptions during the Bhangra boom of the 1980s. I ended my 1995 article by referencing the example of the 1991 song "Soho Road" by the popular Bhangra group Apna Sangeet. "Soho Road" is a duet between a male and a female vocalist that narrates diasporic movement through the travels of a female diasporic subject. As such, it works against the standard preoccupation with racialized masculinity or lost homelands that characterizes the lyrics of many Bhangra songs. See "Bombay, U.K., Yuba City," 317–18. My thanks to Rekha Malhotra for bringing this track to my attention. Virinder Kalra also cites the female Bhangra vocalist Mohinder K. Bhamra as one of the "founders of modern Bhangra." See Kalra's analysis of Bhangra lyrics from the 1970s to the 1990s in his article "*Vilayeti* Rhythms: Beyond Bhangra's Emblematic Status to a Translation of Lyrical Texts."

8. Recent work on South Asian American racial formation, for instance, shows how diasporic links to South Asia, both affective and financial, among South Asian American communities are used to support right-wing Hindu fundamentalist organizations in South Asia and in the diaspora. At the same time, organizations such as the New York–based Youth Solidarity Summer program are attempting to instill in South Asian American youth different visions of South Asian diasporic identity that are explicitly anticommunalist and progressive. See Vijay Prashad, *Karma of Brown Folk*, and Sunaina Maira, *Desis in the House*, for a historicization of South Asian American diasporic formations.

9. As Virinder Kalra notes, "it is the fact of dispersal, a sense of loss, a yearning for home and other themes concerned with migration which emerge from an analysis of Bhangra songs" of the 1970s and 1980s. The lyrics of many of the songs from this period betray a nostalgic evocation of rural Punjab, while also pointedly critiquing the racism that awaits Asian male migrants to the U.K. "*Vilayeti* Rhythms," 85–86.

10. Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 245. The sheer pleasure and exuberance of this new articulation of racial and national identity effected through Bhangra music is the 1980s is wonderfully captured in Gurinder Chadha's 1989 documentary *I'm British but . . .* (BFI, 1989).

11. See Anna Marie Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality*, for an excellent analysis of the simultaneous demonization of the "homosexual" and the "black immigrant" under Thatcherism.

12. Kalra, "*Vilayeti* Rhythms," 87.

13. Ibid.

14. Kalra provides the following translation for some of the lyrics of Kalapreet's track "Us Pardes": "In this land your dignity lies torn to shreds./Even with your pockets full/You still wander the streets like a beggar/You are riding about on a horse/With no direction./And you came to England my friend/Abandoning your home, Punjab./

People here value you/By the color of your skin./All day long you toil with your hands . . . Your brothers were hung in the fight for freedom/Today you humbly ask/For slavery!" "*Vilayeti* Rhythms," 88.

15. See Gopinath, "Bombay, U.K., Yuba City," 314–15, for a gender critique of Apache Indian's concert performance in New Delhi in 1993.

16. Ibid., 306.

17. See Maira, *Desis in the House*, for a valuable ethnography of South Asian club culture in New York City. See also Ashley Dawson, "Desi Remix."

18. See Dawson, "Desi Remix" (section 20) for an analysis of Mutiny's production of a transatlantic, antiracist, and progressive South Asian political movement.

19. See Claire Alexander's insightful ethnography of working-class Bangladeshi young men in London in *The Asian Gang*, 243.

20. Ibid., 229.

21. As ADF puts it on their 1998 track "Hypocrite": "Beware, this is the digital underclass/Coming from places you've only seen from your car/Accountant, lawyer, financial advisor/PR consultant, journalist, advertiser/We know your game and you think we're playing it/When the bill comes through the door you're going to be paying it!" Asian Dub Foundation, "Hypocrite," *Rafi's Revenge*, London Records, 1998.

22. The problematic mainstreaming of British Asian music in the 1990s is more fully explored in New York–based director and deejay Vivek Renjen Bald's riveting documentary *Mutiny* (2003). Bald clearly shows how the brief moment of media attention did not lead to any lasting opportunities for most British Asian musicians. I regret that because I only had the chance to view Bald's film after the writing of this chapter, I was not able to more fully engage with it here.

23. Koushik Banerjea, "Sounds of Whose Underground?," 65.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 67.

26. See Prashad, *Karma of Brown Folk*.

27. John Hutnyk and Sanjay Sharma, "Music and Politics," 59.

28. John Hutnyk, *Critique of Exotica*, 51.

29. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd, "Introduction," 15.

30. Prashad, *Karma of Brown Folk*, 38.

31. George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads*, 72.

32. Ibid., 75.

33. It is significant that Cornershop's single "Brimful of Asha" only shot to the top of the charts after it was remixed by Norman Cook, a collaborator with Fatboy Slim. This illustrates the circuitous routes that South Asian diasporic popular culture must travel in order to be audible to the mainstream.

34. Rupa Huq, "Asian Kool?," 79.

35. Ian McCann, "Bhangramuffin," 18.

36. Hutnyk, *Critique of Exotica*, 134.

37. See Gopinath, "Bombay, U.K., Yuba City."

38. It is important to note here that ADF's linking of antiracist politics and anticolonial nationalist histories is not unique to this particular moment in British Asian music. Indeed, as Virinder Kalra has documented, a central thematic feature of early British Bhangra bands in the 1970s and 1980s was the evocation of anticolonial nationalist heroes such as Singh in order to critique contemporary anti-Asian racism in Britain. See "*Vilayeti* Rhythms," 89–93.

39. Seminar on Feminist Interventions in South Asia, UC Santa Cruz, May 2–3, 2002. I thank the participants for their useful comments and suggestions regarding an earlier version of this chapter.

40. Josh Kun, "Rock's *Reconquista*," 259.

41. Asian Dub Foundation, "Black White," *Rafi's Revenge*, London Records 1998.

42. See Hutnyk, *Critique of Exotica*, 87–113, for an extended critique of the "souveniring of sound and culture" effected by white bands such as Kula Shaker who pepper their music and self-presentation with decontextualized South Asian cultural markers.

43. Asian Dub Foundation, "Jericho," *Facts and Fictions*, Nation Records, 1995.

44. See "Bombay, U.K., Yuba City" for a discussion of how Bhangra musicians in the 1970s and early 1980s saw Bhangra as a solution to feeling "lost" within a racial landscape organized around black and white.

45. Ashley Dawson, "Dub Mentality."

46. K. Anthony Appiah usefully summarizes Sassen's notion of global cities in the following terms: "They are not, like the cities of the past, at the hearts of geographically bounded regions whose economies they center: rather, then connect remote points of production, consumption and finance . . . The global city can become increasingly isolated from—indeed actively antagonistic to—a regional culture or economy." "Foreword," in Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and Its Discontents*, xii.

47. Dawson, "Dub Mentality," 14.

48. As Swasti Mitter defines it, an "enterprise zone" in the "First World" is similar to the export processing zones of the "Third World" and is set up with similar incentives to attract capital, offering investors exemption from property taxes as well as "considerable freedom from health, safety and environmental regulations." *Common Fate Common Bond*, 81. Chrissie Stansfield's 1987 documentary *Bringing It All Back Home* details the beginning of this transformation of the Docklands from a depressed working-class enclave into a state-subsidized zone of high-end businesses, shops, and renovated loft spaces. Importantly, the documentary makes critical linkages between the increasing

mobility of British capital as it engages in offshore production, and the growth of "enterprise zones" within the UK itself. The documentary also points to the increasing use in the early 1980s of a casualized female work force in the UK predominantly made up of Asian immigrant women.

49. Dawson, "Dub Mentality," 13.

50. See Swasti Mitter, "The Capital Comes Home," for a detailed discussion of Asian immigrant women in homeworking and sweatshop industries in the UK in the 1970s and 1980s.

51. Naila Kabeer, *The Power to Choose*, 4.

52. Ibid., 14.

53. Ibid., 216.

54. Mitter, *Common Fate Common Bond*, 130–31.

55. Zuberi, *Sounds English*, 220.

56. Hutnyk, *Critique of Exotica*, 68.

57. Ibid., 7–8.

58. Zuberi, *Sounds English*, 212.

59. David Hesmondhalgh, "International Times," 286.

60. Clara Connelly and Pragna Patel, "Women Who Walk on Water."

61. Sassen, *Globalization and its Discontents*, xxi.

62. Ibid., xxv.

63. Mark Anthony Neal, *Soul Babies*, 6.

64. The perils of this masculinist rendering of diaspora are also apparent in recent attempts to document the history of the Asian Underground music scene. For instance, in his important documentary film *Mutiny* (2003), Vivek Renjen Bald carefully traces the political and historical context of antiracist organizing in British Asian communities from the 1960s to the 1990s, out of which many of the Asian Underground artists emerged. Yet the contribution of women as well as queers (both men and women) to the creation of this scene as well as to the history of antiracist struggle in the UK remains somewhat muted in the film.

65. See, for instance, Kalra, "*Vilayeti* Rhythms"; K. Banerjea and P. Banerjea, "Psyche and Soul"; Claire Alexander, *The Asian Gang*, 240–41.

66. Kalra, "*Vilayeti* Rhythms," 96.

67. Ibid., 93–96.

68. This is Kalra's own translation of the Punjabi lyrics. "*Vilayeti* Rhythms," 94–95.

69. Ibid., 95.

70. Ibid., 94.

71. Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, 158.

72. Ibid., 164.

73. Mitter, *Common Fate Common Bond*, 123.

74. Aiwha Ong describes Taylorism or "scientific management" as "the essence of Fordist production." "The Gender and Labor Politics of Postmodernity," 71.

75. Kalra, "*Vilayeti* Rhythms," 95.

76. Mitter, *Common Fate Common Bond*, 123. Mitter defines the "ethnic sweatshop economy" as sweatshops run by (invariably male) racialized immigrant entrepreneurs that employ racialized immigrant women from their own community.

77. Ibid., 122.

78. Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, 156.

79. Ibid.

80. Aiwha Ong, "The Gender and Labor Politics of Postmodernity," 86.

81. Dipesh Chakravarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 66.

82. Ibid., 67.

83. Ibid.

84. Chakravarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 64.

85. Mitter defines "homeworkers" as individuals (predominantly immigrant women) who supply contractors with very low-wage, machining work that is classified as "unskilled." These contractors in turn supply manufacturers and ultimately retailers. Mitter's research documents the shift in the 1980s as low-wage garment industry jobs in East London and the West Midlands were increasingly transferred from factories and sweatshops to homeworkers. Homeworkers provide manufacturers "access to a captive and disposable workforce [which] becomes an essential strategy for reducing unnecessary overhead costs." "Industrial Restructuring and Manufacturing Homework," 47.

86. *Bringing It All Back Home* (dir. Chrissie Stansfield, 1987).

87. Chakravarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 64.

88. Monica Ali, *Brick Lane.*

89. Kabeer, *The Power to Choose*, 8.

90. Falu Bakrania, "Roomful of Asha."

91. Falu Bakrania, e-mail communication, March 31, 2004. I thank Falu Bakrania for sharing her thoughts with me, and for her feedback on this chapter. See Bakrania, "Re-Fusing Identities."

92. José Muñoz, "Gesture, Ephemera, Queer Feeling," 433.

93. Ibid., 431.

94. For an analysis of a male homoerotic tradition in Sufi spiritualism, poetry, and music, see Saleem Kidwai, "Introduction."

95. Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics." Warner distinguishes "publics" from "audiences" or "groups" through the following five characteristics. A public is (1) self-organized, (2) a relation among strangers, (3) addressed both personally and imper-

sonally, (4) constituted through mere attention on the part of the member of the public, (5) the social space created by the circulation of discourse. I thank Chandan Reddy for bringing this article to my attention.

96. Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," 51.

97. See, for instance, the review of Parveen's music by Munmun Ghosh, "Abida Parveen," where he describes her voice as "rich, manly and wholesome."

98. See José Muñoz, for an explication of what he terms "queer counterpublics" in *Disidentifications*, 146.

99. José Quiroga, *Tropics of Desire*, 151.

100. Sassen, *Globalization and its Discontents*, xx–xxi.

3 Surviving Naipaul

1. Claire Alexander, "(Dis)Entangling the 'Asian Gang': Ethnicity, Identity and Masculinity," 128. Hanif Kureishi's *My Son the Fanatic* (dir. Udayan Prasad, 1997) interestingly reverses this standard narrative of "traditional" parents and assimilated offspring by positing the father as a secular first-generation Pakistani immigrant who is baffled by his British-born son's turn toward radical orthodox Islam.

2. I am grateful to Rosemary George for alerting me to the reference to *Pakeezah* in this scene.

3. Ayub Khan-Din, *East is East: A Screenplay.* My thanks to Beheroze Shroff for alerting me to this text.

4. I borrow this phrase from Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, 158.

5. Rosemary George, *The Politics of Home*, 91–93.

6. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 152–53.

7. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema."

8. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 151–52.

9. See Robert Reid-Pharr, *Black Gay Man*, 70–72, for an analysis of Fanon's scathing critique of Martinican woman writer Mayotte Capecia in *Black Skin, White Masks.*

10. Ella Shohat/Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, 11.

11. José Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 11.

12. Vijay Mishra, "The Diasporic Imaginary," 445.

13. For an analysis of Naipaul's reception in the so-called First and Third Worlds, see Rob Nixon, *London Calling.* See also Michael Gorra, *After Empire*; and Bruce King, *V. S. Naipaul.*

14. Michael Powell, *A Life in Movies*, quoted in Arthur Pais, "Sabu's Daughter Scripts the Second Coming of 'The Thief of Baghad.' "

15. My thanks to James Kyung Lee for initially suggesting the uses of the notion of a

"Brown Atlantic." For a critique of Gilroy's Black Atlantic framework in relation to South Asian diasporic cultural production, see Gayatri Gopinath, "Bombay, U.K., Yuba City."

16. Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk*, 28–30.

17. Naipaul, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, 210. See Rosemary George's discussion of masculine failure in the novels of Naipaul and Joseph Conrad in *The Politics of Home*, 91–93.

18. George, *The Politics of Home*, 93.

19. Naipaul, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, 218.

20. Ibid., 275.

21. Ibid., 134.

22. Ibid., 120.

23. Ibid., 92.

24. Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*.

25. See Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*.

26. George, *The Politics of Home*, 93.

27. V. S. Naipaul, *The Mimic Men*.

28. I borrow this phrase from E. Ann Kaplan, *Looking for the Other*, 222.

29. Eng, "Heterosexuality in the Face of Whiteness," 358.

30. Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 11.

31. See Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 37.

32. Eng, "Heterosexuality in the Face of Whiteness," 363 n. 25.

33. Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle*; Reid-Pharr, *Black Gay Man*; Philip Brian Harper, *Are We Not Men?*; David Eng, *Racial Castration*; Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides*.

34. Reid-Pharr, *Black Gay Man*, 81.

35. Eng, *Racial Castration*, 223–24. See also Mark Chiang, "Coming Out into a Global System," 374–95, for an excellent reading of *The Wedding Banquet*.

36. Eng and Hom, *Q&A*, 1.

37. Eng, *Racial Castration*, 205.

38. Ibid., 16.

39. As Claire Alexander writes in her study of "Asian gangs" in the UK, "This 'between two cultures' identity crisis among Asian youth constitutes the dominant discourse" around Asian youth culture in mainstream media in the UK. "(Dis)Entangling the 'Asian Gang,'" 128.

40. Homi Bhabha, "Are You a Man or a Mouse?" 57–68.

41. Ibid., 58.

42. Anna Marie Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality*, 181.

43. Ibid., 23.

44. Harper, *Are We Not Men?*, x.

45. Bhabha, "Are You a Man or a Mouse?" 58.

46. Ibid., 63.

47. I am most grateful to Jody Greene for suggesting the connection between *East Is East* and *Mary Poppins*, and for pointing me toward Jon Simons's article.

48. Sumita Chakravarty, *National Identity and Indian Popular Cinema 1947–1987*, 270.

49. Ibid., 293.

50. Rachel Dwyer comments, "Many films, notably those of Meena Kumari and the courtesan genre, have been read as camp, and provide inspiration for drag performers, from Bombay's gay parties to London's Club Kali Chutney Queens." In *All You Want is Money, All You Need Is Love*, 52.

51. See Patricia Uberoi, "Dharma and Desire, Freedom and Destiny," 145–71, for an account of "podoerotics" in Hindi cinema.

52. As Sumita Chakravarty writes, "As an image of female oppression, of class oppression, and of psychic and moral ambivalence, the haunting figure of the prostitute can be a searing indictment of social hypocrisy and exploitation." *National Identity and Indian Popular Cinema*, 304.

53. See Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing*, 80–125.

54. Stacey provides a sophisticated analysis of escapism that Hollywood movies represent for female viewers by situating it within the specific historical context of 1940s Britain. See *Star Gazing*, 80–125.

55. A. Sivanandan, *A Different Hunger*, 131–32.

56. Stuart Hall, "Racism and Reaction," 25. Quoted in Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality*, 132.

57. Jon Simons, "Spectre over London," 1.

58. Ibid., 4.

59. Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality*, 130.

60. This enactment of the reliance of metropole on periphery is also evident on a formal level: Mina's performance slyly reverses the presumed lines of influence that exist between First and Third world popular cultural forms. Rather than the Bollywood musical (*Pakeezah*) being seen as derivative or imitative of the Hollywood musical *(Mary Poppins*), we can read the latter to be dependent on the form and structure of the former. In a film such as the much-applauded musical *Moulin Rouge* (dir. Baz Luhrmann, 2001), for instance, Bollywood is explicitly referenced as the template of the Hollywood musical. Mina's performance thereby makes apparent the various effacements engendered by contemporary discourses of race, gender, and class in Britain.

61. *Tongues Untied* (dir. Marlon Riggs, 1989).

62. Anne Marie Fortier makes a similar and related argument in "Coming Home" when she critiques the construction of queer subjects as urban subjects within contemporary queer studies. Such a construction, she argues, elides the ways in which some queer subjects choose to be simultaneously "out" while "staying put," often in small towns and rural areas.

4 Bollywood/Hollywood

1. Ziauddin Sardar, "Dilip Kumar Made Me Do It," 21.

2. For a discussion of the reception of popular Indian cinema among non–South Asian international audiences in North Africa, the Middle East, China, and Eastern Europe, see Ravi Vasudevan, "Addressing the Spectator of a 'Third World' National Cinema."

3. My discussion of popular Indian cinema is limited to "Bollywood" cinema—that is, Hindi-language films emerging from the Bombay film industry—which constitutes the largest and most influential sector of Indian commercial cinema. The immense complexity of the different regional and linguistic cinemas that make up Indian commercial cinema more broadly is beyond the scope of this discussion.

4. Key exceptions include Brian Larkin, "Indian Films and Nigerian Lovers"; Mark Liechty, "Media, Markets and Modernization"; Minou Fuglesang, *Veils and Videos.*

5. Vijay Mishra, "The Diasporic Imaginary," 446.

6. Vijay Mishra, *Bollywood Cinema*, 237.

7. Janet Staiger, *Perverse Spectators*, 2.

8. Ibid., 37.

9. Valerie Traub, "The Ambiguities of 'Lesbian' Viewing Pleasure," 309.

10. Judith Mayne, "Paradoxes of Spectatorship"; Chris Straayer, *Deviant Eyes, Deviant Bodies*; Patricia White, *unInvited*; Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing*; Jacqueline Bobo, *Black Women as Cultural Readers.*

11. Mayne, "Paradoxes of Spectatorship," 159.

12. Straayer, *Deviant Eyes, Deviant Bodies*, 53.

13. Traub, "The Ambiguities of 'Lesbian' Viewing Pleasure," 322.

14. White, *unInvited*, 32.

15. Ibid., 43.

16. Mayne, "Paradoxes of Spectatorship," 158.

17. White, *unInvited*, 197.

18. For recent influential studies of Indian popular cinema, see Ravi Vasudevan, ed., *Making Meaning in Indian Cinema*; Sumita Chakravarty, *National Identity and Indian Popular Cinema, 1947–1987*; Madhava Prasad, *Ideology of the Hindi Film*; Ashish Nandy, ed., *The Secret Politics of Our Desires.*

19. Lalitha Gopalan's *Cinema of Interruptions* signals a welcome and necessary shift within Indian film studies to a serious consideration of female spectatorship; her work takes to task conventional models of film studies that fail to "anticipat[e] audiences that also endow Indian popular cinema with meaning that exceeds its own intended horizon of address," 8.

20. Prasad, *Ideology of the Hindi Film*, 5 n. 14.

21. Ibid., 5 n. 5.

22. Ibid., 43.

23. Vasudevan, "Introduction," 10.

24. Ibid., 14.

25. Moinak Biswas, "The Couple and Their Spaces," 133.

26. Prasad, *Ideology of the Hindi Film*, 95.

27. Quoted in White, *unInvited*, 47.

28. White, *unInvited*, 47.

29. Prasad identifies the "feudal family romance" as "the dominant textual form of the popular Hindi cinema"; this form includes "a version of the romance narrative, an average of six songs per film, as well as a range of familiar character types"; *Ideology of the Hindi Film*, 30–31. Rachel Dwyer further elaborates on the song/dance sequence in Hindi movies: "A Hindi movie has a song every twenty minutes or so, with a total of between six and eight in a film. Songs are sung usually by the hero and heroine, possibly the vamp, but never by the villain. Songs fulfill several important functions, including advancing the narrative . . . They also allow things to be said which cannot be said elsewhere, often to admit love to the beloved, to reveal inner feelings, to make the hero/heroine realize that he/she is in love." In Dwyer, *All You Want Is Money, All You Need Is Love*, 113.

30. Vivek Dhareshwar and Tejaswini Niranjana, "*Kaadalan* and the Politics of Resignification," 191.

31. As cited in Prasad, *Ideology of the Hindi Film*, 88. Sumita Chakravarty also notes that the Indian censorship codes drew heavily on Hollywood's Hayes Production Code; *National Identity and Popular Indian Cinema*, 73.

32. Monika Mehta, "What Is Behind Film Censorship?"

33. Shohini Ghosh, "The Cult of Madhuri," 27.

34. Dwyer, *All You Want Is Money*, 113.

35. As Vijay Mishra writes, "the element of Bombay Cinema that circulates most readily is not the film as a complete commodity (which requires concentrated viewing for some three hours) but fragments from it," namely, in the song and dance sequences that are shown as discrete video clips and broadcast on cable television in the diaspora. Mishra, *Bollywood Cinema*, 261–62.

36. Lalitha Gopalan, however, cautions against labeling the song and dance sequence

as merely "extra-diegetic" and instead argues that it has a more complicated relation to the narrative. She argues that "song and dance sequences are not randomly strung together . . . but both block and propel the narrative in crucial ways." *Cinema of Interruptions*, 21. Nevertheless, the way in which song and dance sequences act as critical sites of narrative "interruption," to use Gopalan's term, allow them to function as spaces within the cinematic text that are particularly available to queer viewing strategies.

37. Chakravarty, *National Identity and Indian Popular Cinema*, 76.

38. Thomas Waugh, "Queer Bollywood, or 'I'm the player, you're the naïve one.' "

39. Prasad, *Ideology of the Hindi Film*, 83–84.

40. Staiger, *Perverse Spectators*, 32.

41. There is an established body of work on the relation between Indian national identity and popular cinema. See in particular Chakravarty, *National Identity and Indian Popular Cinema*, and Prasad, *Ideology of the Hindi Film*.

42. White, *unInvited*, 15.

43. Ibid., 14.

44. Sumita Chakravarty defines "parallel" cinema, also termed "new" cinema, as follows: "More generally, the new cinema has shared an interest in linear narrative 'realistic' mise-en-scène, psychological portrayal of character, the 'motivated' use of songs and dances (as and when required by the context of the film), explicit scenes of sexuality, and a disenchantment with the workings of the Indian political system." *National Identity and Indian Popular Cinema*, 267.

45. For a feminist analysis of the courtesan film genre, see Chakravarty, *National Identity and Indian Popular Cinema*, 269–305.

46. Ibid., 284.

47. My thanks to Juana María Rodríguez for suggesting this reading to me.

48. Veena Talwar Oldenburg, "Lifestyle as Resistance." Mary John and Janaki Nair have usefully critiqued such recuperative accounts of courtesanal cultures as positing an overly linear "golden age narrative" that traces the decline of sexual freedom with the advent of British colonialism. See *A Question of Silence?*, 12.

49. Rosemary M. George, *The Politics of Home*, 133.

50. The use of the English word to name female homoeroticism renders it implicitly alien and inauthentic to Indian national culture.

51. Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archives*, 66.

52. Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*, 95–104.

53. Ibid.

54. The intertextuality of *Razia Sultan* and *Mughal-e-Azam* is underscored by the fact that the director of *Razia Sultan*, Kamal Amrohi, wrote the screenplay for *Mughal-e-Azam* some twenty-five years earlier. See Ashish Rajadhyaksha and Paul Willeman, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema*, 42.

55. White, *unInvited*, 8.

56. Mehta, "What Is Behind Film Censorship?," section 30.

57. See Eve K. Sedgwick, *Between Men*, 21–27.

58. In one paradigmatic instance of the fate of female gender-crossing characters in Bollywood, *Mera Naam Joker* (My Name is Joker, dir. Raj Kapoor, 1970) featured the actress Padmini as a cross-dressing vagabond and circus performer named Minoo Master. Minoo Master's butch toughness, however, prefigures the inevitable revelation scene, where she is exposed as Mina, a curvaceous beauty who dons a sari, grows her hair, and eventually becomes the hero's wife. Minoo Master's domestication as Mina points to the ways in which masculine women in film are not allowed to exist more than momentarily and are inevitably feminized in order to be drawn back into heterosexuality.

59. White, *unInvited*, 47.

60. To cite just a few examples: *Moulin Rouge* (dir. Baz Luhrmann, 2001); British playwright Andrew Lloyd Weber's collaboration with Indian composer A.R. Rahman in the play *Bombay Dreams* (2003); *The Guru* (dir. Daisy Von Scherler Mayer, 2003).

61. The most visible examples are *Monsoon Wedding* (dir. Mira Nair, 2000), *Bollywood/Hollywood* (dir. Deepa Mehta, 2001), and *Bend It Like Beckham* (dir. Gurinder Chadha, 2002).

62. See Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk*, 11–20, for an explication of U.S. Orientalism.

63. This widespread misreading of *Monsoon Wedding* as a Bollywood film was usefully pointed out by Alexandra Schneider, "Bollywood." In a telling instance of this misreading, Michael Giardina comments in an otherwise excellent article that "in recent years Bollywood films such as *Monsoon Wedding* have become wildly popular commercial successes in Britain"; see "Bending It Like Beckham," 80, n. 10.

64. *Monsoon Wedding* production notes.

65. Waugh, "Queer Bollywood," 285.

66. Shohini Ghosh, "*Hum Aapke Hain Koun . . . !*," 84.

67. Patricia Uberoi, "Imagining the Family," 320.

68. *Monsoon Wedding* production notes.

69. Ibid.

70. Roger Ebert, "Monsoon Wedding."

71. See Tejaswini Ganti, "And Yet My Heart is Still Indian," for an account of how Bombay film producers indigenize Hollywood films and construct an "Indian audience" in the process.

72. See, for instance, Uberoi, "Imagining the Family," 309–52. See also Rustom Bharucha, "Utopia in Bollywood."

73. Arjun Appadurai and Carole Breckenridge, "Public Modernity in India."

74. Vijay Mishra, *Bollywood Cinema*, 218.

75. A significant exception is Shohini Ghosh's reading of the film in "*Hum Aapke Hain Koun . . . !*"

76. Ghosh, "*Hum Aapke Hain Koun . . . !*,"87.

77. Ibid.

78. Uberoi, "Imagining the Family," 319.

79. Ibid., 317.

80. Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*, 7.

81. Ibid., 67.

82. Ibid., 14.

83. Ibid., 69.

84. *Monsoon Wedding* production notes. Nair's self-presentation as the quintessential elite cosmopolitan consumer subject is blatantly apparent in a full-page spread in the magazine *Travel and Leisure*. The piece, entitled "Business Class," features a profile of Nair and details the products that she uses (Prada shoes, Dell laptop, pashmina shawl, bouquets of flowers "in *Monsoon Wedding* colors") in order to make time on the road feel like "home." The copy reads: "Splitting her time among three continents–her production company is in Manhattan, her family lives in Uganda and New York, and she spends at least one month a year in Delhi–Mira Nair leads a dizzying jet-set life." The article renders transparent the class privilege required to traverse national border and cultural spaces with ease. Lucie Young, "Business Class," 102. My thanks to Valerie Larsen for bringing this article to my attention.

85. Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, 3.

86. Vishal Jugdeo, e-mail correspondence, November 11, 2002.

87. *Monsoon Wedding* production notes.

88. Ghosh, "*Hum Aapke Hain Koun . . . !*," 84.

89. Ibid.

90. White, *unInvited*, 141.

91. Karen Leonard, "Identity in the Diaspora."

92. Michael Giardina, "Bending It Like Beckham," 71.

93. Ibid., 78.

94. Ibid.

95. The success of *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (dir. Nia Vardalos, 2002), or Chadha's own earlier film *What's Cooking* (2000), speaks to the unthreatening multicultural ethos and palatability of ethnic comedies that invariably mobilize a number of limited, recurring motifs, such as the family, generational conflict, weddings, and food.

96. Gurinder Chadha, production notes to *Bend It Like Beckham*.

97. My thanks to Tammy Ho for this insight.

98. The heavy-handed heteronormativity of *Bollywood/Hollywood* may speak to a

strategic decision on Mehta's part to avoid the controversy that greeted both *Fire* in 1998 and her next venture, *Water*, in 1999. The film shoot of *Water*, set in Varanasi and dealing with the question of Hindu widowhood, was successfully shut down by Hindu nationalists in 1999, whereupon Mehta returned to Toronto to begin shooting *Bollywood/Hollywood*. Aseem Chhabra, "*Bollywood/Hollywood* is not a Bollywood Film."

5 Local Sites/Global Contexts

1. Shohini Ghosh, "From the Frying Pan to the Fire," 16.

2. "Deepa Mehta's *Fire*."

3. Madhu Kishwar, "Naïve Outpourings of a Self-Hating Indian."

4. Shoma Chatterjee, "One Sita Steps Beyond the Lakshmanrekha." See Ismat Chughtai, *The Quilt and Other Stories*.

5. "Ismat Chughtai on *Lihaf*."

6. Geeta Patel, "Homely Housewives Run Amok," 10. I thank the author for sharing her unpublished manuscript with me.

7. Susie Tharu and K. Lalita, "Empire, Nation and the Literary Text," 214. For a critique of obscenity law in India, see Ratna Kapur, "The Profanity of Prudery."

8. Ratna Kapur, "Too Hot to Handle," 183–84.

9. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, "Introduction," in *Recasting Women,* 10. This collection sought to bring a gender analysis to bear on the Subaltern Studies Collective's project of renarrativizing Indian history "from below," that is, from the vantage point of peasant struggles and other movements that fell beneath the threshold of elite colonial, bourgeois, and nationalist histories. See the foundational work of Ranajit Guha, "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India," and "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency."

10. As Lata Mani argues, the nineteenth-century debates on the status of Indian women among colonial officials, missionaries, and the indigenous elite "are in some sense not primarily about women but about what constitutes authentic cultural tradition." "Contentious Traditions," 90.

11. Sangari and Vaid, *Recasting Women*, 11.

12. Amrita Chhacchi, "Identity Politics, Secularism and Women," 82.

13. Chhachhi, "Identity Politics," 94.

14. Paola Baccheta, "Communal Property/Sexual Property," 194.

15. Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, "Abducted Women, the State, and Questions of Honour."

16. Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem*, 7.

17. Other recent feminist collections to engage (to a limited extent) with the ques-

tion of sexuality include Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, ed., *Signposts*; Patricia Jeffery and Amrita Basu, eds., *Resisting the Sacred and the Secular*; Ratna Kapur, ed., *Feminist Terrains in Legal Domains.* Much of this scholarship, however, fails to fully explore the linkages between the production of heterosexuality and concomitant "perverse" or "abnormal" sexualities within colonial and nationalist frameworks.

18. See Mrinalini Sinha, "Nationalism and Respectable Sexuality in India." For an exemplary study of heterosexual masculinity and colonialism, see also Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity.*

19. Sinha, "Nationalism and Respectable Sexuality in India," 34.

20. Ibid., 44.

21. Ibid., 45. See Sinha, *Selections from Katherine Mayo's Mother India*, 277.

22. See Sinha, *Selections from Katherine Mayo's Mother India*, 277.

23. Ibid.

24. Sinha, "Nationalism and Respectable Sexuality in India," 45–46.

25. Ibid., 45.

26. Mary John and Janaki Nair, eds., *A Question of Silence?*

27. John and Nair, *A Question of Silence?*, 9.

28. Ibid., 19.

29. Ibid., 33.

30. Ibid., 36.

31. Mark Chiang, "Coming Out into the Global System," 375.

32. For example, one critic writes that "*Fire* is a plea for women's self-determination that . . . will probably strike viewers in this country as a bit obvious" (Walter Addeago, "*Fire* Cool to State of Marriage in India"). Similarly, other critics describe the film as taking place within the "suffocatingly masculine" and "pre-feminist" culture of contemporary India (see, e.g., Owen Gleiberman, "Take My Wife").

33. Roger Ebert, "*Fire* Strikes at Indian Repression."

34. See Margaret McGurk, "Tradition Broken in Indian Tale of Forbidden Love," and Bill Morrison, "Women on the Verge of a Cinematic Breakthrough."

35. Ashish Rajadhyaksha and Paul Willeman, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema*, 180.

36. For further contextualization of Chughtai's work in relation to the Progressive Writers Association and Urdu literature more generally, see Ismat Chughtai, trans. M. Asaduddin, *Lifting the Veil*, xi–xxiv. See also Chughtai, trans. Tahira Naqvi, *My Friend, My Enemy*, vii–xi.

37. Chughtai, *The Crooked Line (Tehri Lakir).*

38. Like many writers involved in the Progressive Writers Association, Chughtai intermittently worked as a scenarist and producer in the Bombay film industry from the 1940s to the 1970s, where she further explored these questions of class, gender, and

familial relations in the context of post-Independence India. Her husband, Shahid Latif, was a well-known Bombay film director and producer. Rajadhyaksha and Willeman, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema*, 80.

39. Chughtai, *My Friend, My Enemy,* 174.

40. Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*, 209.

41. See Chandra Mohanty's now-classic essay, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," for a critique of hegemonic discourses of Third World women's oppression, passivity, and victimization.

42. Eve K. Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 71. Of course, Sedgwick very deliberately limits her field of inquiry to Euro-American texts and makes claims only about these. Nevertheless, her formulations of the closet and concurrent tropes of silence and invisibility have become totalizing narratives in theorizing queer existence. Little attention has been paid to the different tropes of spacialization at work among differently raced lesbian and gay subjects within, say, a U.S. context. Martin Manalansan, for instance, has argued that notions of coming out and the closet are inadequate in narrativizing queer identity among gay Filipino men both in New York City and in the Philippines, where sexuality is always refracted through experiences of immigration. See Manalansan, "In the Shadows of Stonewall."

43. Chughtai, "The Quilt," 7.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., 8.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid., 9.

48. Ibid., 13.

49. Ibid., 19.

50. Ibid., 10.

51. For instance, the narrator comments, "I can say that if someone touched me continuously like this, I would certainly rot," and later, "imagining the friction caused by this prolonged rubbing made me slightly sick." Chughtai, "The Quilt," 11.

52. Chughtai, "The Quilt," 16.

53. See Susie Tharu and K. Lalitha, eds., *Women Writing in India, Vol. 2,* 135.

54. As Elizabeth Grosz and others have argued, psychoanalytic discourse as articulated by Freud and Lacan has seen "desire, like female sexuality itself, as an absence, lack, or hole, an abyss seeking to be engulfed, stuffed to satisfaction." See Grosz, "Refiguring Lesbian Desire," 71.

55. As Geeta Patel comments, "the women in ['The Quilt'] do not 'become' lesbians even though they engage in physical activities with each other. This form of not being a lesbian . . . raises the question about where (in what national/cultural/historical sites)

performance needs to be located in order for it to produce 'identity.'" See Patel, "Homely Housewives Run Amok," 10.

56. Chughtai, "The Quilt," 11.

57. Ibid., 16.

58. Ibid., 11.

59. See Valerie Traub, "Ambiguities of Lesbian Viewing Pleasure," 311.

60. A number of theorists have explored the linkages in Euro-American medico-moral and other discourses between various paradigmatic figures of female sexual transgression, such as the prostitute, the "lesbian" or female invert, and the working-class female. See, for example, Judith Walkowitz, *The City of Dreadful Delight*.

61. Chughtai, "The Quilt," 10. The way in which Chughtai's masculinization of desiring female subjects is informed by colonial-era Western sexological discourse on Indian female sexuality remains to be further examined. Havelock Ellis, for instance, noted that sex between women, which he deemed particularly prevalent in India, was practiced by women endowed with the penetrative power of enlarged clitorises. See Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, 208.

62. D. A. Miller, "Anal *Rope*," 130.

63. Chughtai, "The Quilt," 19.

64. "A certain naming" is Judith Butler's phrase in *Bodies That Matter*, 162.

65. "Ismat Chughtai on *Lihaf*."

66. See Ginu Kamani, "Interview with Deepa Mehta."

67. Kaushalya Bannerji, "No Apologies."

68. Outside the confines of the middle-class North Indian home depicted in *Fire*, female homoerotic desire may manifest itself in forms other than that of hyperbolic or queer femininity. As Geeta Patel has noted in her discussion of the controversy around the 1987 "marriage" of two policewomen in central India, the police barracks in which the two women lived constituted a site of complicated and explicitly gendered erotic relations between women. See Patel, "Homely Housewives Run Amok," 14–22.

69. See Judith Halberstam's *Female Masculinity* for a theorization of "masculinity without men."

70. Esther Newton, "The Mythic Mannish Lesbian."

71. See Newton, "The Mythic Mannish Lesbian," for a critique of nineteenth-century "romantic friendships" as proto-lesbian/feminist relationships.

72. Clearly, a Euro-American bourgeois space of "home" is not akin to the domestic space represented in *Fire*, given that the latter is marked by a history of British colonialism, anticolonial nationalism, and contemporary Indian (and Hindu) nationalist politics.

73. See Peter Stack, "Review of *Fire*."

74. Patel, "Homely Housewives Run Amok," 13–14. Partha Chatterjee, for instance, argues that the anticolonial nationalist elite of pre-Independence India created

an "inner" sphere as its hegemonic space, one that existed outside the workings of the colonial state. The figure of the woman came to embody this space of an essential, immovable Indian identity or tradition. See Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*, 133. Patel holds that Chughtai's critique of the notion of women as desexualized and static markers of "tradition" had much to do with the charges of obscenity leveled against "The Quilt" upon its publication.

75. Patel, "Homely Housewives Run Amok," 7.

76. "Hindu Militants Stage Lesbian Film Attacks."

77. "Attacks on *Fire* Due to Lack of Vision, Says Sathyu." See also the Campaign for Lesbian Rights, *Lesbian Emergence*, 17–19, for an account of the progressive, leftist framing of the *Fire* controversy in terms of "freedom of expression" and not sexuality.

78. Premiere of *Earth* (dir. Deepa Mehta, 1998), Asia Society, New York, December 1998.

79. "Deepa Mehta on *Fire*."

80. "Thackeray's Terms." Radha and Sita, are, as noted, names drawn from Hindu mythology while Shabana and Saira function in Thackeray's statement as generic Muslim names as well as specific references to Shabana Azmi, the star of the film, and to Saira Banu, the wife of actor Dilip Kumar, who was vocal in his support of the film. Eventually, Mehta did agree to change "Sita" to "Neeta" in the Hindi version of the film.

81. BBC *News Online*, December 9, 1998. http://www.bbc.co.uk.

82. George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads*, 7.

83. Sukthankar, Ashwini, et al., eds., *Lesbian Emergence*, 24.

84. For a critique of the cultural essentialism inherent in CALERI's stance, see Ratna Kapur, "Too Hot to Handle."

85. South Asian Lesbian and Gay Association, "Take a Stand in Support of Secularism, Freedom of Expression and Lesbian Rights in India."

86. South Asian Lesbian and Gay Association, "*Fire* in New York," 34.

87. As Vinay Lal comments, "The Ram Janmabhoomi Movement, which led to the destruction of the . . . Babri Majid, received considerable support from Hindus settled overseas, and the funding of Hindu institutions, temples and other purportedly 'charitable' enterprises by diaspora Hindus, particularly those from the United States, can be established beyond doubt." "The Politics of History on the Internet," 150.

6 Nostalgia, Desire, Diaspora

1. See Jocelyne Guilbault, "Racial Projects and Musical Discourses in Trinidad," for an analysis that usefully situates the debates around chutney and chutney soca in the context of the particularities of racialization and national identity in Trinidad.

2. As quoted in Peter Manuel, *East Indian Music in the West Indies*, 184.

3. Manuel, *East Indian Music in the West Indies*, 186.

4. Ibid., 171.

5. Tejaswini Niranjana, "Left to the Imagination."

6. Ibid., 128.

7. "Wining" refers to an Afro-Caribbean dance move that stresses pelvic rotation. See Manuel, *East Indian Music in the West Indies*, 174.

8. Manuel, *East Indian Music in the West Indies*, 175.

9. Ibid., 171.

10. Ibid., 174.

11. Ibid., 175.

12. See Rob Nixon for a discussion of the different valences of various terms used to describe displacement, such as exile, emigrant, expatriate, and refugee, in *London Calling*, 17–28. See Rosemary George for a useful distinction between exile literature and "the immigrant genre" in *The Politics of Home*, 174–75.

13. George, *The Politics of Home*, 175.

14. Shyam Selvadurai, *Funny Boy.*

15. Selvadurai, *Funny Boy*, 5.

16. Shani Mootoo, *Cereus Blooms at Night.*

17. Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*, 181.

18. For an excellent account of the historical split between Asian and Asian American studies, see Sucheta Mazumdar, "Asian American Studies and Asian Studies."

19. Ibid., 41.

20. For recent work on South Asian American cultural politics, see, for instance, Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk*; Amitava Kumar, *Passport Photos*; Matthew and Prashad, *Satyagraha in America*; Sunaina Maira, *Desis in the House.*

21. Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk,* 183.

22. See Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk,* 185–204, for a discussion of progressive South Asian organizing in New York City.

23. Rajiv Shankar, "Foreword: South Asian Identity in Asian America," ix–x.

24. The critiques that feminist and queer Asian American scholars have leveled, over the past two decades, at the groundbreaking anthology *Aiiieeeee!*, edited by Frank Chin et al., come to mind. See, for instance, Elaine H. Kim, *Asian American Literature*; Sauling Cynthia Wong, *Reading Asian American Literature*; Russell Leong, "Introduction: Home Bodies and the Body Politic"; David L. Eng and Alice Y. Hom, eds., *Q&A;* David L. Eng, *Racial Castration.*

25. See, for instance, Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine*; Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, *Arranged Marriage.* For a critique of the racial and gender politics of *Jasmine*, see Susan Koshy, "The Geography of Female Subjectivity."

26. For an analysis of the creation of "inner" and "outer" spheres in anticolonial nationalist discourse in India, see Partha Chatterjee, "The Nationalist Resolution to the Woman's Question."

27. See Judith Halberstam, *The Drag King Book*, for a discussion of masculine non-performativity in the context of female drag king performances.

28. Selvadurai, *Funny Boy*, 19.

29. Ibid., 39.

30. Ibid., 262.

31. See Robert McRuer, "Boys' Own Stories and New Spellings of My Name," for a critique of the coming out narrative as "necessary for understanding one's (essential) gay identity"(267) and of Edmund White's novel in particular.

32. Selvadurai, *Funny Boy*, 5.

33. Dorinne Kondo suggests this formulation of "home" in her essay on Asian American negotiations of community and identity, "The Narrative Production of 'Home,' Community and Political Identity in Asian American Theater," 97.

34. Martin Manalansan, "Diasporic Deviants/Divas."

35. However, the flier's use of Hindi (rather than Tamil or Sinhala) even when referencing a Sri Lankan text points to the ways in which (North) Indian hegemony within South Asia may be replicated within queer South Asian spaces in the diaspora.

36. Selvadurai, *Funny Boy*, 302.

37. Ibid., 309–10.

38. Fredric Jameson, "Third World Literature in an Age of Multinational Capitalism."

39. Ibid., 69.

40. Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory*, 95–122.

41. George, *The Politics of Home*, 91.

42. Madhavi Kale, *Fragments of Empire*, 5.

43. Indira Karamcheti, "The Shrinking Himalayas," 264.

44. Rhoda Reddock, "Freedom Denied."

45. M. Jacqui Alexander, "Erotic Autonomy as a Politics of Decolonization."

46. Patricia Mohammed, "Writing Gender into History."

47. Madhavi Kale, "Projecting Identities."

48. Prabhu Mohapatra, "Restoring the Family." Cited in Niranjana, "Left to the Imagination," 133.

49. Kale, *Fragments of Empire*, 174.

50. Ibid., 167.

51. Ibid., 36–37.

52. Ibid., 112.

53. George, *The Politics of Home*, 50.

54. Ibid., 51.

55. Mootoo, *Cereus Blooms at Night*, 51.

56. For a reading of how Mootoo's novel reframes questions of trauma and the incest narrative, see Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*, 140–55.

57. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 358.

7 Epilogue

1. Purnima Mankekar, "Brides Who Travel."

2. Indeed, in December 2003, the Indian congress passed a bill that was to smooth the way to dual citizenship for "Persons of Indian Origin" from particular nations in the West. A person holding this new form of "citizenship," however, would not be entitled to work or vote in India but could buy property and invest in its markets.

3. See the transnational Bollywood hit, *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (dir. Karan Johar, 2001) for another, particularly egregious example of this new genre of Bollywood films set in the diaspora. The film similarly relies on the diasporic female as the embodiment of national tradition and culture, invariably figured as Hindu. Here the diasporic woman is always shown dressed in the markers of respectable Hindu femininity (in a sari, *bindi*, and *mangalsutra*, the gold chain worn by married Hindu women) and becomes the most ardent advocate for Indian identity and familial loyalty in the film.

4. Within the logic of the film, this success only comes at the expense of other communities of color: the Indian diner is only able to succeed when it lures customers away from the Chinese restaurant across the street. This narrative of Indian versus Chinese immigrant success betrays Indian nationalist anxieties over China's ascendance to world power status in the battle for regional hegemony in Asia.

5. Thomas Waugh, "Queer Bollywood," 285.

6. This genre was solidified in the 1970s with a series of films starring the Bollywood icon Amitabh Bhacchan partnered with a male sidekick. See Bhacchan's films from the 1970s and early 1980s celebrating male friendship, such as *Zanjeer* (dir. Prakash Mehra, 1973), *Sholay* (dir. Ramesh Sippy, 1975), and *Dostana* (dir. Raj Khosla, 1980).

7. Waugh, "Queer Bollywood," 286.

8. José Rabasa, "Of Zapatismo," 421.

9. Cherry Smyth, "Out of the Gaps," 110. I thank Cherry Smyth for bringing Sekhon's work to my attention, and for initially giving me the opportunity to write about it for *Diva Magazine*. I am most grateful to Parminder Sekhon for permission to discuss and reproduce her work.

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