Contemporary Adolescent Fiction

from the South Asian Diaspora

Multicultural Children's Literature of the

Millennium and the Potential for Bibliotherapy

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Contents

Abstract

The study of children's literature from the South Asian diaspora has been mostly overlooked by postcolonial studies, cultural studies and children's literature studies alike. This thesis responds to this academic oversight and it is not only the first study to solely explore the diasporic experience presented in these novels, but also opens up an area of research which has great cross-disciplinary potential.

At the centre of this thesis is the argument that existing theories of identity negotiation offer only partial explanations of how young, second generation individuals negotiate their cultural identities, and that children's literature, by contrast, illuminates an alternative means of identity formation. There is no definitive cultural identity model which focuses solely on how post-migrant generations, including foreign-born migrant children, negotiate their cultural identities. Yet the fiction this thesis examines demands the need for precisely such a model. Drawing on the works of Homi Bhabha, Avtar Brah and Stuart Hall, the model that emerges from the fiction is best identified as what I have termed: *Overlapping Space*.

Engaging with a wide range of postcolonial, cultural and sociological theorists, the study focuses on novels published since 2000 and identifies how they offer a model of Overlapping Space identity formation. Engaging with Bali Rai's *What's Your Problem?* and Kavita Daswani's *Indie Girl* the thesis begins by identifying how issues of race and racism are still prevalent to contemporary concerns. Developing these concerns, the study draws on Marina Budhos's *Ask Me No Questions* and Mitali Perkins's *First Daughter: Extreme American Makeover* to investigate how media influences post-9/11 have affected young peoples' cultural self-identities. Shifting the focus from imposed 'home'land cultural alienation to self-imposed 'homeland' cultural estrangement through abjection, the study identifies the psychological effects of visiting ancestral homelands as depicted in Vineeta Vijayaraghavan's *Motherland* and Mitali Perkins' *Monsoon Summer* in order to demonstrate the experience of emotional situational ethnicity through unexpected enculturations. Continuing with the discussion of emotional situational ethnicity, using Narinder Dhami's novelization *Bend it Like Beckham* and Baljinder K. Mahal's *The Pocket Guide to Being an Indian Girl*, this thesis explores how young second generation members of the South Asian diaspora navigate between 'peer' and 'parent' zones and analyses the significant role that

subcultures can play in the approval of 'transgression'. Lastly, by focussing on Tanuja Desai Hidier's *Born Confused* and Bali Rai's *The Last Taboo*, this thesis continues its exploration in 'transgressive' behaviours and analyses the dating and interracial relationship cultural concerns presented in these two novels. By exploring these themes, issues and concerns, this study ultimately foregrounds each text's potential for bibliotherapy and demonstrates that, as well as making significant contributions to literature and cultural studies, these novels serve an important social function as well. Consequently, via the universalising bibliotherapeutic function of these novels, this thesis ultimately argues that these novels not only foreground and legitimise Overlapping Space identities but actively help build these identities as well.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

In March 2009 I met the author Hanif Kureishi at a writers' event organised by Kingston University. World-renowned and celebrated for his books and films which explore the South Asian diasporic experience, Kureishi's portfolio includes the film *My Beautiful Launderette*, and the novels *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album*.[1] Both Kureishi and his work have received much academic interest over the past twenty years and he undoubtedly makes an important contribution to many academic fields including literature, cultural theory, and postcolonial studies.

During this session, Kureishi was asked from where his inspiration to write stories originated. He responded that many things inspire him, but one particular anecdote sparked my interest. Kureishi – as a parent to teenagers – stated that he often plays the role of taxi driver to his children and their friends. During his chauffeuring duties, Kureishi is privy to his children's conversations, and these are fantastic sources of inspiration. I asked him whether he had ever considered taking what he had learned from these conversations to write a book aimed at younger readers which explored the South Asian diasporic experience. He said: 'Why? Who would read a book like that?'

Such a response is somewhat saddening and suggests that Kureishi sees no functional role for children's literature to explore cultural experiences. In addition, Kureishi's response also reflects the stigma attached to children's literature: writing for younger readers lacks credibility. However, this idea, as Peter Hunt argues, is nonsensical:

> There can be no question that texts in this area are culturally formative, and of massive importance educationally, intellectually, and socially. Perhaps more so than any other texts, they reflect society as it wishes to be, as it wishes to be seen, and as it unconsciously reveals itself to be.[2]

Reading about childhood experiences can help broaden our understanding of society; child characters, as Sujala Singh argues, 'function as bridges, as interpretive filters' from whom we can learn.[3] Children's literature from the South Asian diaspora, like all

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[1] Hanif Kureishi, *My Beautiful Launderette*, dir. by Stephen Frears (Channel Four, 1985); Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (London: Faber and Faber, 1990); Hanif Kureishi, *The Black Album* (London: Faber, 1995).

[2] Peter Hunt, *Children's Literature: The Development of Criticism* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 2.

[3] Sujala Singh, 'Postcolonial Children: Representing the Nation in Arundhati Roy, Bapsi Sidhwa and Shyam Selvadurai', *Wasafiri*, 41, (2004), 13-18 (p. 14). For an extended version of this article please see Sujala Singh, 'The Child and the Nation in Contemporary South Asian Literature', in *Peripheral Centres,*

children's fiction, offers both readers and academics a rich source of enjoyment as well as providing a cultural insight into the contemporary life of this diasporic community.

However, despite the contributions that children's literature from the South Asian diaspora has made to literature, this subgenre has been almost entirely ignored by the world of academia.[4] This thesis addresses not only the gap in current children's literature studies, but a gap in both cultural and postcolonial studies as well. As this subgenre of children's literature has been largely overlooked by these three major academic fields, my work, as well as making academic contributions to each of them, opens up an area of research with great cross-disciplinary potential.

A New Model of Identity Negotiation: Overlapping Space

At the centre of this thesis is the argument that existing theories of identity negotiation offer only partial explanations of how young, second generation individuals negotiate their cultural identities, and that children's literature, by contrast, illuminates an alternative means of identity formation.[5] There is no definitive cultural identity model which focuses solely on how post-migrant generations, including foreign-born migrant

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Central Peripheries: India and Its Diaspora(s), ed. by Martina Ghosh-Schellhorn and Vera Alexander (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006), pp. 183-194.

[4] See Appendix 2. For an excellent annotated bibliography list of Children's Literature from the South Asian Diaspora please visit Pooja Makhijani's website, *South Asia and the South Asian Diaspora in Children's Literature* (Makhijani, Pooja, *South Asia and the South Asian Diaspora in Children's Literature: An Annotated Bibliography, A Work in Progress,* <http://www.poojamakhijani.com/sakidlit. html> [accessed 11 October 2006]). To illustrate the extent of which children's literature from the South Asian diaspora has been overlooked in academia, it is useful to look at current literatures that engage with writers of South Asian origin. Jaina C. Sanga's *South Asian Novelists in English: An A-to-Z Guide* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003), refers to Farrukh Dhondy but not to other children's literature novelists like Bali Rai, Jamila Gavin, Jyotsna Sreenivasan, Mitali Perkins, Narinder Dhami, Rachna Gilmore, Ravinder Randhawa, Rukhsana Khan, Rukhana Smith, Sabrina Saleem, Shyama Perera, Suneeta Peres Da Costa, Tanuja Desai Hidier or Vineeta Vijayaraghavan. *South Asian Writers in Twentieth-Century Britain: Culture in Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) by Ruvani Ranasinha, mentions Farrukh Dhondy, Jamila Gavin and Ravinder Randhawa, but not to lesser known writers who also published towards the end of the twentieth century such as Rukhana Smith or Shyama Perera. Mitali P. Wong and Zia Hasan's *The Fiction of South Asians in North America and the Caribbean: A Critical Study Of English-Language Works Since 1950* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2004), refers to Mitali Perkins but does not mention Jyotsna Sreenivasan, Kashmira Sheth, Rachna Gilmore, Rukhsana Khan, Sabrina Saleem, Tanuja Desai Hidier, Uma Krishnaswami or Vineeta Vijayaraghavan all of whom are North American writers. Significantly, however, neither Mary Kandiuk's *Caribbean and South Asian Writers in Canada: A Bibliography of their Works and of English-Language Criticism*, (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2007), nor Paul Brians's *Modern South Asian Literature in English* (Westport: Greenwood, 2003) mention a single author from the South Asian diaspora that has written books for young readers. Although it is impossible to make reference to *all* the novelists whom I have cited, this thesis helps draw attention to the work that children's literature writers from the South Asian diaspora have produced that these collections, anthologies and critical texts have not been able to do.

[5] Please see pages 24-25 for an extended discussion on what I mean when I refer to the 'second generation'.

children, negotiate their cultural identities. Yet the fiction I examine demands the need for precisely such a model.

The model that emerges from the fiction is best identified as what I have chosen to term *Overlapping Space*. Drawing from both sociological and literary discussions of cultural identity, the Overlapping Space model demonstrates the ways in which second generation identities are reliant upon practices of enculturation. Using these sources, the Overlapping Space model ultimately illustrates how cultural identity choices for second generation migrants are negotiated.

Cultural identities are constantly shifting and changing, and the Overlapping Space model addresses how these changes are possible. The Overlapping Space model helps us understand the *internal* processes of cultural negotiation. Within this internalised site individuals debate, assess and renegotiate their diasporic cultural identities by *selecting and inviting* the elements that they have learned to duplicate from the parent cultures. Rather than developing a fixed hybrid identity which claims: 'I am "X" amount of "A" and "Y" amount of "B"' and so forth, Overlapping Space is a site within which the amount that is hybridised varies and is never constant. The individual is able to negotiate and renegotiate the cultural elements they want to use to create their cultural identity.

To illustrate very basically how the Overlapping Space model essentially works, it is useful to examine the following Venn diagrams:

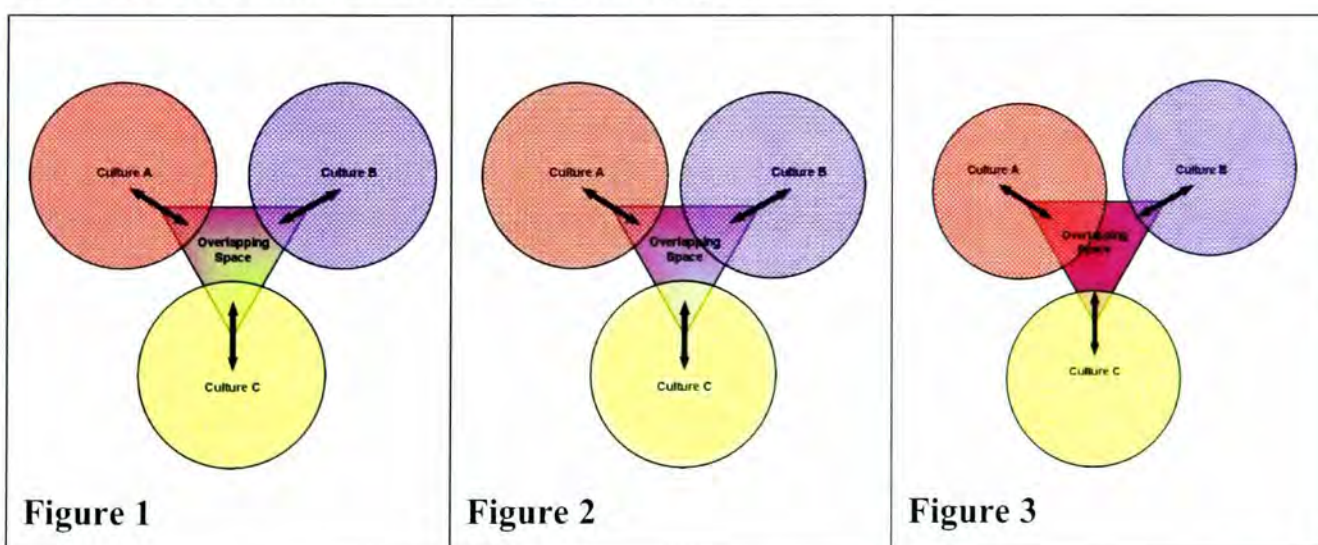**Figure 1**   **Figure 2**   **Figure 3**

Figure 1 demonstrates the potential influences that three cultures may have on an individual.[6] Although cultures are in themselves never 'pure' as they are redefined and

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[6] However, an individual can obviously be enculturated with more than three cultures. I myself am British, Mauritian, South Asian and Muslim.

remodified when they come into contact with other cultures, members within that culture know what defines their culture and how it differs from others because of certain guidelines and parameters. So, for example, if an individual feels that on a particular day they hold slightly stronger affiliations with 'Culture B' (Figure 2), this suggests that they invite a larger quantity of cultural codes associated with Culture B into their internal sites of Overlapping Space in order to form these affiliations. However, the next day, or even the next moment, they might feel a stronger affiliation with 'Culture A' (Figure 3); subsequently, within their internal site of Overlapping Space, they have modified the concentration/quantity of codes associated with their parent cultures to foreground Culture A.

The Overlapping Space model illustrates how diasporic cultural identities are renegotiable and how the concentration of hybridity varies constantly. As such, diasporic children are able to constantly redefine who and what they are in terms of their cultural identities. For example, sociologists Alejandro Portes and Rubén Rumbaut undertook an investigation in 1992 and another in 1995/6 to learn how diasporic children living in the US define their ethnic identities.[7] The two sets of tests were conducted on the same children and they discovered that there was a shift in the way that these children classified themselves ethnically, with 56 percent reporting 'a change in their ethnic self-definitions'.[8] Cultural identity shifts, and cultural affiliations move and change in precisely the way that the Overlapping Space model suggests.

Borrowing from Homi Bhabha, Avtar Brah, and Stuart Hall, the concept of Overlapping Space respectively fuses ideas of Third Space, diaspora space and translation. It differs, however, from earlier models of diasporic identities as it takes into account the influences that enculturation have on the individual and, in turn, the ways in which the individual negotiates their cultural identity as they navigate between cultures. As such, although elements of the Overlapping Space model can be applied to the experiences of the migrant generation, because of enculturation its main focus is the second generation.

The term 'enculturation' should not be confused with 'acculturation'. Whereas *ac*culturation is the adoption of another group's cultural traits or social patterns,

[7] Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
[8] Ibid., p. 156.

*en*culturation is, on a basic level, the learning of one's *own cultural group's characteristics*. Discussing enculturation, Ralph Linton states that:

> No matter what the method by which the individual receives the elements of culture characteristic of his society, he is sure to internalise most of them. This process is called *enculturation*. Even the most deliberately unconventional person is unable to escape his culture to any significant degree.[9]

Even though an individual may be 'unconventional', they will still hold some of the cultural influences that they have been exposed to. Enculturation, therefore, infuses the individual with certain cultural discourses which informs that person's cultural identity.

With regards to children and adolescents, *all* children undergo processes of enculturation. A child's cultural identity, therefore, is influenced and informed by the internalisation of certain cultural traits helping them to develop cultural affiliations. Many second generation migrant children develop affiliations with both their 'home' and 'homeland' cultures depending on how they are raised and the extent of their exposure to these cultures.[10] Through this process of enculturation, they learn to internalise both the cultural elements of their 'home' and 'homeland' environments which, in turn, grants them memberships of these cultures. Consequently, because second generation migrant children undergo this process of enculturation with two or more, often different, cultural frameworks, the idea of Overlapping Space addresses *how* these individuals negotiate their cultural identities.

The word 'overlapping' recognises the layering associated with identities which are enculturated with two (or more) cultural environments: essentially the different traits from the different cultures which construct an individual's identity overlap with one another within an internal space or site. As there is this overlapping of different cultural elements and influences, this model subsequently recognises the possibility for contradictions; that is, it acknowledges and accepts that the individual may side with ideas which seem contradictory *because* of this enculturation process with two (or more) different cultural spheres.

As a result of the enculturation process, children absorb and internalise the cultural codes of the parent cultures. Children learn to identify with the cultural spaces that they inhabit, and, as Diana Fuss argues, because identification 'makes identity possible', the cultural identities which these children develop are formed and dependant

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[9] Ralph Linton, *The Tree of Culture* (New York: A. A. Knopf: 1961), p.39.
[10] See pages 22-25 for my use of these terms.

on their surrounding environments.[11] As such, because of enculturation, diasporic children learn to absorb, imitate and recreate the cultural characteristics that they have learned.

In *Cartographies of Diaspora*, Avtar Brah offers a model of 'diaspora space' specifically located within the South Asian diasporic community, which identifies the point/junction where elements meet and undergo processes of hybridisation:

> Diaspora space is the intersectionality of diaspora, border, and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural, and psychic process. It is where multiple subject positions are juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed or disavowed; where the permitted and the prohibited perpetually interrogate: and where the accepted and the transgressive imperceptibly mingle even while these syncretic forms may be disclaimed in the name of purity and tradition.[12]

Diaspora space exists in recognition of the conflicts which take place at these junctions. Although Brah's model can be applied to the diasporic individual, it is available to be incorporated not just by 'those who have migrated and their descendants, but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous'.[13]

What is useful about diaspora space is its invocation of 'multiple subject positions': *multiple layers* of cultural hybridity and multiple forms of cultural influence.[14] However, whereas Brah's model allows for two subordinated groups to hybridise independently of the dominant culture, this process is impossible when looking at the construction of a hybrid cultural identity because the individual, as Linton suggests, will always have some exposure to the dominant culture(s). As such, the Overlapping Space model acknowledges that individuals can be influenced by many cultures – both 'dominant' and 'subordinate' cultures – all at the same time.

Additionally, it is useful to consider how Overlapping Space offers a partial departure from cultural studies, as represented by Stuart Hall's concerns. Hall's focus on the diasporic individual addresses the multiple layers of cultural influence that contribute to the construction of hybrid identities. He argues that as diasporic individuals 'we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities, any one of which we could identify with – at least temporarily', resulting in

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[11] Diana Fuss, *Identification Papers* (New York; London: Routledge, 1995), p.49.

[12] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 208.

[13] Ibid., p. 209.

[14] Ibid., p. 208.

diasporic identities 'which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference'.[15] In this context, diasporic individuals:

> [A]re obliged to come to terms with the new cultures they inhabit, without simply assimilating to them and losing their identities completely [as they] bear upon them the traces of the particular cultures, traditions, languages and histories by which they were shaped.[16]

Hall refers to this coming to terms with a new culture 'translation':

> People belong to such *cultures of hybridity* have had to renounce the dream or ambition of rediscovering any kind of 'lost' cultural purity, or ethnic absolutism. They are irrevocably *translated*.[17]

Ultimately cultural purity is lost as individuals merge and hybridise within themselves elements from both their 'home' and 'homeland' cultures; yet, despite this fact, individuals still reproduce the cultural codes found in the parent cultures. Looking specifically at how post-migrant generations have taken on translated identities, Hall writes:

> Third generation young Black men and women know they come from the Caribbean, know that they are Black, know that they are British. They want to speak from all three identities. They are not prepared to give up any one of them.[18]

There is evidence here of an idealising of the stability of the translated diasporic identity: an identity that does not deny any of its 'roots' and is confident with projecting elements from all these 'roots'. However, though an individual may feel confident about who they are, when placed in certain environments they might not want to, or feel able to, project their identities as self-consciously 'hybrid'. In addition, because of certain perceived cultural contradictions, they might have to temporarily suspend/withhold a different part of their cultural identity in order to project another:

> Identification thus makes identity possible, but also places it at constant risk: multiple identifications within the same subject can compete with each other, producing further conflicts to be managed; identifications that once appeared permanent or unassailable can be quickly dislodged by the newest object attachment; and identification that have been 'repudiated and even overcompensated' can reestablish themselves once again much later. The history of the subject is therefore one of perpetual psychical conflict and of continual

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[15] Stuart Hall, 'The Question of Cultural Identity', in *Modernity and its Futures*, ed. by Stuart Hall et al. (Oxford: Polity Press, 1996) pp. 273-325 (p. 277); Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. by Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1991), pp 222-37 (p.235).

[16] Hall, 'The Question of Cultural Identity', p. 310.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Stuart Hall, 'Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities', in *Culture Globalization and the World-System*, ed. by Anthony D. King (London: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 41-68 (p. 59).

change under pressure. It is a profoundly turbulent history of contradictory impulses and structural incoherencies.[19]

Identities for *all* individuals are therefore being constantly re-evaluated. Fuss's ideas about identifying with competing external stimulants illustrate that the diasporic child may be taught to embody contradictory identifications, highlighting the potential difficulties which arise when trying to assert an identity which speaks from several cultural standpoints. The hybridity that Hall champions, therefore, might not be practical in certain situations. By contrast, the Overlapping Space model illustrates how individuals are able to negotiate differences in cultural nuances which allow them to reconcile certain cultural disparities.

Yet it is the influential theories of Homi Bhabha which have come to dominate postcolonial discussions of identity that are most prominently called into question by this thesis. Bhabha, discussing hybridity in *The Location of Culture*, identifies a hybridised product that is 'neither the one, nor the other', but 'something else besides', something that is 'in between'.[20] Such statements assert that the product created is new precisely because it has merged elements from two entities, thus making the emergent product different. It is also different, however, because in the Third Space of enunciation where elements meet, intersect and are reproduced, such elements are transformed and reinterpreted. Elaborating on his ideas of hybridity, Bhabha argues:

> The importance of hybridity is that it bears the traces of those feelings and practices which inform it [.... And] *gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable,* a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation. [my italics][21]

Essentially, therefore, Bhabha argues that although the hybrid product contains 'traces' of the original, it reinterprets what it takes to create 'something different, something new and unrecognisable'. The hybrid product *does not* maintain the components of the originals in their original format, because within the Third Space of enunciation, during the process of reproduction, the originals are taken, merged and transformed.

Bhabha's concept of hybridity is often applied to the diasporic individual and the construction of hybrid cultural identities. However, when asked if his ideas of Third Space represent a type of identity, Bhabha says: 'No, not so much identity as

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[19] Fuss, *Identification Papers*, p.49.
[20] Homi K. Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory', in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 19-39 (p. 25); ibid., p. 28; ibid., p. 29.
[21] Jonathan Rutherford, 'The Third Space: Interview with Homi K. Bhabha', in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. by Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1991), pp 207-21 (p. 211).

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identification [… whereby] identification is a process of identifying with and through another object, an object of otherness' (my italics).[22] His model, therefore, does not represent identity and when we explore his ideas about hybridity we can see why.

Bhabha's model and ideas are focused on the moment of reproduction and the resultant product and seem less concerned with the origins of the hybrid product:

> If […] the act of cultural translation (both as representation and as reproduction) denies the essentialism of a prior given original or originary culture, then we see that all the forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. But for me *the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge.* This space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom [my italics].[23]

Here, Bhabha asserts that there are no longer 'original' cultures because all cultures are changed via reproduction so when a culture is recreated it is also redefined. When interrogating ideas of the nation, we can see why Bhabha distrusts the idea of 'original' cultures. Bhabha writes: 'Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time', so for Bhabha the 'original' does not matter because essentially one can no longer isolate the original elements as both nations and cultures have been reproduced, and thus redefined, multiple times.[24] As a result, Bhabha states that his model is not concerned with being able to 'trace [the] two original moments from which the third emerges' or with going backwards, because, as he illustrates, there is no longer such a thing as the 'original'.[25] This rationale suggests that the 'parents' of the product are no longer necessarily relevant. But, as Salman Rushdie argues, people's 'roots' are considered significant; the 'parent' original cultures which people are born into are important. In his influential collection of essays, *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie writes:

> 'We are. We are here.' And we are not willing to be excluded from any part of our heritage; which heritage includes both a Bradford-born Indian kid's right to be treated as a full member of British society, and also the right of any member of this post-diaspora community to draw on its roots.[26]

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[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid., p. 211.
[24] Homi, K. Bhabha, 'Introduction: Narrating the Nation', in *Nation and Narration*, ed. by Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 1-7 (p. 1).
[25] Bhabha in Rutherford, 'The Third Space', p. 211.
[26] Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Granta Books, 1991), p. 15.

Clearly, people's 'roots' and having the ability to lay claim to their 'home' and 'homeland' cultures are important: for the diaspora, what Bhabha refers to as the 'originals' are important.

Bhabha's arguments about hybridity and the hybrid product, however, are sound: what is produced *is* new as it is 'neither the one nor the other' but 'something else besides'.[27] This new thing is something that is 'in-between' the two originals yet separate. Bhabha's ideas about hybridity, nonetheless, cannot fully be applied to hybrid cultural identities.[28] Using myself as an example, I am *not* happy to say that I am *neither* British *nor* South Asian for two reasons. Firstly, the suggestion that I am 'neither the one nor the other' implies that I do not fit in anywhere and paradoxically seems to collude with the culture clash theories which Avtar Brah so persuasively critiques.[29] Secondly, as a result of enculturation, I consider myself to be part of both cultures. Within the British context I class myself as a British-Asian.[30] I agree that I am new, in the sense that I am a second-generation member of the South Asian diaspora. I see myself, however, as a product of these cultures; I *simultaneously* identify and feel as though I belong to both because although these cultures may not be 'pure', I recognise and acknowledge the guidelines and parameters that define each culture.

My biographical example not only declares my own interest in the project developed here, it also stands as illustration of how many second generation migrants identify with their parent cultures, to whatever degree, because they have been enculturated with one culture *and* the other. Second generation diasporic identities often embody certain cultural traits associated with their parent cultures; they, therefore, are made of the *one and the other*.

Whereas Bhabha argues that in that moment of enunciation the input elements are transformed, what also must be acknowledged is that although certain input elements may be reinvented, others are endorsed in the spirit of being faithfully

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[27] Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory', p. 25; ibid., p. 28.

[28] Ibid., p. 29.

[29] For a succinct and effective criticism of the term 'culture clash', please see Brah's '"Second Generation" or Asian-British?' section beginning on page 40 from *Cartographies of Diaspora*.

[30]Although some may argue that by implementing the hyphen, a hyphenated identity asserts that it is 'neither the one nor the other', but if one identifies with both parent cultures, then the hyphen simultaneously asserts that the individual classes themselves as both. If, however, an individual chooses not to identify with one aspect of their cultural heritage, say, for example, a second generation member of the South Asian diaspora wants to classify themselves as Indian, they equally, would not be happy with being told that they because they are members of a diaspora they are not fully Indian so cannot stake their claim to their Indian heritage.

recreated.[31] The elements that the diasporic child modifies and reinvents assert that child's uniqueness: they are an individual and not a clone; but because they feel that they faithfully reproduce some or most of the codes associated with their parent cultures, they hold the components to form a cultural identity which is how they are able to culturally identify with the parent cultures. In other words, children are individuals because they modify what they learn but, at the same time, they *also* identify with what they believe is a *faithful recreation* of elements from one parent culture *and* the other. Consequently, this cultural identity asserts the individual's membership to their parent cultures because they contain the cultural codes of *both the one and the other*.[32]

At the centre of the Overlapping Space model, therefore, there is recognition that though some cultural traits may have been modified, some elements can be *faithfully reproduced*.[33] Second generation diasporic individuals modify some of the cultural codes that they have learned from the parent cultures, yet they also duplicate some of the things that they have learned too: certain systems of beliefs, for example. Any model of identity needs, therefore, to recognise the desire for faithful reproduction in how cultural identities are negotiated.

Situational Ethnicity an Example of Overlapping Space

To illustrate precisely the workings of Overlapping Space as an interpretive framework against existing models, one can look at how the concept functions in a specific conceptual instance. When discussing second generation migrants, phrases which now seem to border on theoretical cliché such as 'culture clash', 'caught between two cultures' and 'identity crisis' are often used to describe these individuals' experiences.[34] Such terms inaccurately suggest that second generation migrants are somehow both culturally and emotionally lost and that they are lacking a sense of psychological stability and normality.[35] Rather, the internal sites of Overlapping Space illustrate how second generation migrants are able to employ a strategy called 'situational ethnicity'

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[31] Here, faithfulness is a subjective identification to an existing cultural practice wherein the individual believes that they are 'authentically' imitating the cultural elements that they have learnt. This reproduction enables the individual to feel as though their ties to their culture are truly genuine.

[32] As opposed to Bhabha's ideas of 'neither the one nor the other'.

[33] See footnote 31.

[34] See pages 24-25 for my definition of the term 'second generation'.

[35] For a discussion into the shortcomings of the term 'culture clash', please refer to Brah's '"Second Generation" or Asian-British?' section beginning on page 40 from *Cartographies of Diaspora*.

11

which allows the diasporic individual to navigate in and around different cultural frameworks.

Situational ethnicity is an extension of 'situational identity'. For example, people speak, act or behave differently when they are in the workplace compared to when they are out with their friends or with their families. The implementation of situational *identity*, therefore, is normal and is a day-to-day (even minute-to-minute) activity which *everyone* engages in because *everyone* has multiple identities. Situational *ethnicity*, however, factors in the cultural contexts and situations that the individual is in (or is going to be in) so that people adapt their personas to suit the cultural norms of that environment.

In order to employ situational ethnicity, second generation migrant youths employ their internal Overlapping Spaces. The enculturation process with both their 'home' and 'homeland' cultural spheres allows for the absorption and incorporation of cultural traits and codes into their identities. Existence within an Overlapping Space, therefore, allows them to assert which specific cultural elements are projected in a particular moment: from within the site of Overlapping Space, the individual can forge a particular cultural identity by selecting from the array of cultural elements they have absorbed.

Situational ethnic identities therefore illustrate the departure from conventional models of 'fully' hybrid identities. As Sunaina Maira suggests:

> [H]ybridity, though fashionable in theory and also literally in 'ethnic chic,' is not always easy to live, for families and communities demand loyalty to cultural ideals that may be difficult to balance for second-generation youth.[36]

Although the *idea* of culturally hybrid identities is theoretically valorised, the implementation of these hybrid identities within certain cultural frameworks is rejected because these identities may embody or assert qualities and traits in conflict with that culture's values. So migrant youths negotiate and appropriate their identities to suit the cultural environment that they are in. Employing this technique might suggest that individuals who implement situational ethnicity are placed under added strain: that is, diasporic individuals experience added difficulties and pressures as they always have to display a heightened awareness of their cultural position(s) when they move in and between different cultural frameworks, complementing 'identity crisis' theories.

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[36] Sunaina Maira, 'Identity Dub: The Paradoxes of an Indian American Youth Subculture (New York Mix)', *Cultural Anthropology*, 14, 1 (1999), 29-60 (p. 44).

However, those who only implement situational identities and not situational ethnicities *also* have to display an awareness of their projected identities and personas within different situations. In this context, the employment of situational ethnicity, like situational identity, is also a normal activity people become accustomed to using either consciously or unconsciously. Research into second generation South Asian youth experience, such as Maira's earlier research, and also the work of Kathleen Hall, supports these ideas.[37]

In a more recent study, Yasmin Sekhom and Isabelle Szmigin make similar observations about second generation Punjabi youth in Britain:

> All the respondents were happy and familiar with the notion of spanning the divide between their Punjabi heritage and the everyday facts of living in Britain. Situational ethnicity was an everyday occurrence for them.[38]

Interestingly, for Sekhom and Szmigin situational ethnicity theory needs to be extended to include '*emotional* situational ethnicity' (my italics), including:

> [T]he emotional responses to being a second generation immigrant: the mindsets, the thought processes, and the expected reactions by others from this group. This is a process that is not as linear and structured as in the indigenous population, but one that must take account of continually changing situations and one that needs to balance host and home country expectations.[39]

Employing situational ethnicity is not simply a conscious choice abstracted from emotion; people do not merely assert one of their cultural identities within a specific cultural environment because the situation demands it, their emotions and how they feel in terms of their ethnicity *in that environment* can also help to govern their projected identities.[40] So, when an individual is within a 'South Asian' environment, they may indicate a 'felt ethnicity' as more Asian. However, that same person, in another context or situation, for example in a 'British' environment, may *feel* more traditionally British. Such individuals learn to successfully negotiate and navigate between and within their cultures by employing situational ethnicity methods. Their ease with moving from one environment to the next indicates that, if anything, they are certainly not 'caught'

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[37] Sunaina Maira, 'Ethnic Identity Development of Second-Generation Indian American Adolescents', *Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association* (New York, 8-12 April 1996); Kathleen Hall, '"There's a Time to Act English and a Time to Act Indian": The Politics of Identity Among British-Sikh Teenagers', in *Children and the Politics of Culture*, ed. by Sharon Stephens (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 243-264.

[38] Yasmin K. Sekhon and Isabelle Szmigin, 'Conceptualizing Ethnicity and Acculturation of Second Generation Asian Indians in Britain', *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, 3 (2005), 1-18 (p. 9).

[39] Ibid., p. 5.

[40] This idea is developed further in Chapter Three.

between two cultures at all, but, as Andrew Lindridge et al. argue, are in fact 'cultural navigators'.[41]

However, even though the employment of situational ethnicity is an advantage for diasporic individuals, there is also a disadvantage. Hybridised cultural identities asserting affiliations with both 'home' and 'homeland' cultures may be rejected because those identities may conflict with the qualities and traits associated with the cultural environment the individual is in. For Maira, some diasporic individuals 'may have to keep certain situational identities rigidly separate, and sometimes hidden' suggesting that culture clashes still exist.[42] Subsequently, as people employ situational ethnicity in order to move around and between different cultural environments yet have to keep some parts of these identities 'hidden', there are evidently certain limitations to identity choices.[43] However the same rationale can be applied to those who operate solely using situational identity. Though these limitations may exist, situational ethnicity ultimately foregrounds the functionality of Overlapping Space identities.

Such positive possibility is evident in the ways in which young people are able to consolidate the contradictory forces that they are exposed to. Growing up within two or more cultural spheres can often expose the diasporic individual to contradictory sets of ideologies and beliefs. Ultimately, however, individuals understand these cultural contradictions and instead of being forced into an identity crisis, not knowing which ideology to side with, they develop multiple identities which 'allow[s] for competing cultural meaning systems'.[44] Consequently, the employment of situational ethnicity enables individuals to navigate between and identify with conflicting ideas. As Maira points out, a 'consistent, noncontradictory identity seamless with the larger cultural context [...] is not always possible for teenagers from immigrant families'.[45] Yet 'contradictory cultural schemas are not a sign of a fragmentation but rather are part of the total repertoire of identities available to individuals who enact different cultural self-schemas'.[46] On the surface, this double allegiance to competing cultural ideas seems hypocritical, however it is more complex than that.

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[41] Andrew Lindridge, et al., 'Imagined Multiple Worlds: How South Asian Women in Britain Use Family and Friends to Navigate the "Border Crossings" Between Household and Societal Contexts', *Consumption Markets*, 7, 3 (2004), 211-239 (p. 232).
[42] Maira, 'Ethnic Identity Development', p. 9.
[43] See pages 15-16 for an extended discussion with regards to the idea of 'choice'.
[44] Maira, 'Ethnic Identity Development', p. 8.
[45] Maira, 'Identity Dub', p. 43.
[46] Maira, 'Ethnic Identity Development', p. 11.

Situational ethnicity superficially seems to echo the ideas of 'culture swapping' whereby consumers 'borrow or buy the cultural trappings of *other* groups to form an identity' (my italics).[47] Again, it is useful here to return to personal experience to examine this reality. When I go clothes shopping I will usually wear jeans and a top, but when I got to a family function I will often wear a salwar kameez. However, I am not 'culture swapping'; that is, I am not borrowing and wearing the cultural markers of *other* groups, I am wearing the clothes associated with the cultures that *I feel that I belong to and am a part of*. As a second generation migrant, because of the enculturation process, I identify with my 'home' and 'homeland' cultures and I view wearing jeans and tops to the shops and salwar kameezes to formal family functions as normal.

Some people may suggest such actions exhibit a dual personality or a contradictory existence; however, because *everyone employs situational identities*, these accusations would be inaccurate. Individuals who employ situational ethnicities are doing what people who only operate using situational identities do, but they do so within different cultural frameworks. Situational ethnicity, therefore, is like a multilayered form of situational identity. Everyone has multiple personalities, identities and cultural schemas; however, those who are raised within two or more cultural environments learn that different aspects of their cultural identities need to be foregrounded at certain points and modified in others. It is not a hypocritical way of living. It is simply living a different type of situational identity, and one which the site of Overlapping Space allows people to negotiate.

Overlapping Space and Issues of 'Choice'

The Overlapping Space model operates with the assumption that, within a given situation or environment, the diasporic individual, because of enculturation, is able to choose which cultural traits they wish to project. However, as the use of situational ethnicity and situational identity illustrates, certain situations dictate that some identity choices within a particular cultural context might not be appropriate and/or may be rejected. The idea of free will is therefore questioned.

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[47] Laura R. Oswald, 'Culture Swapping: Consumption and the Ethnogenesis of Middle-Class Haitian Immigrants', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 25 (1999), 303-18 (p. 303).

Michel Foucault famously challenges ideas of choice and free will. Influenced by Antonio Gramsci's arguments about cultural hegemony and his idea of control through coercion and consent, Foucault argues that through the use of disciplinary power (which some people refer to as ideology) people are 'trained' and are 'made' by disciplinary forces which, in turn, negate the idea of choice.[48] Foucault argues that 'micro-penalties' are imposed on bodies to control peoples' use of time, their activities, behaviour, speech, bodily gestures, hygiene, and sexuality.[49] Though Foucault's theories can be seen as problematic because his ideas are context specific as they relate to his chosen case studies, he does, nonetheless, make some frighteningly valid arguments. People cannot be who or what they want to be because there are certain limits and guidelines which dictate what is appropriate behaviour in all societies. Following Foucault's argument, society ensures that no one has choice and the idea of free will is an illusion.

Nevertheless, even if we are choosing from a set of pre-existing options that are made available to us we still have a certain degree of control in the choices that we make. These choices are what make each person individual. So within the context of diaspora, even if the cultural identity options and affiliations available for selection are predetermined or limited, the individual is still choosing from these options that are available: within the site of Overlapping Space, an element of choice is still in operation.

South Asian Children's Literature as Bibliotherapy

If, as I argue in the chapters that follow, contemporary South Asian children's literature offers a literary exemplification of the Overlapping Space model, then one possibility of this which emerges strongly is a social function for such literature in terms of the messages it offers young readers. In particular, such literature can be seen to offer young South Asian readers what can be referred to as a bibliotherapeutic function. The word 'bibliotherapy' was coined in 1916 by Samuel Crothers and it simply means 'to treat through books'.[50] Speaking specifically about children in therapy, Heidi McCarty

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[48] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 170.
[49] Ibid., p. 178.
[50] Melissa Allen Heath, et al., 'Bibliotherapy: A Resource to Facilitate Emotional Healing and Growth', *School Psychology International*, 26 (2005), 563-580; John T. Pardeck, 'Bibliotherapy: An Innovative Approach for Helping Children', *Early Child Development and Care*, 110 (1995), 83-88 (p. 83).

and Lynne Chalmers argue that books can be 'therapeutic in the sense that they can help children work through a crisis.'[51]

Bibliotherapy was first used with children in 1964 and therapists continue to use this type of therapy to assist in the treatment of many issues.[52] Adoption, aggression, alcohol abuse, bullying, death and bereavement, delinquency, disasters, divorce and parental separation, drugs, emotional problems, family issues and violence, giftedness, incest, low self-esteem, rape, and special needs, to name just a few examples, have all been identified as possible issues that can be treated in this way.[53]

According to Eileen T. Nickerson, there are four stages of reading which can produce a bibliotherapeutic effect: involvement, identification, catharsis and insight.[54] Involvement allows the reader to be 'caught up' in the events of the story.[55] Identification is when the reader establishes a 'real or imagined affiliation' with the book.[56] Catharsis is the purging of emotion and, finally, insight is 'the awareness and clarification of the reader's own motivations, needs, and feelings'.[57] Thomas P. Hebert and Joseph M. Furner, however, add a further element to the bibliotherapeutic process: universalisation.[58] Universalisation is 'the recognition that our problems are not ours alone [...] we realize that we, as individuals, "are in this together".'[59]

In addition to this universalisation effect, bibliotherapy aims to assist its readers in other ways. Citing the work of L. Baruth and M. Burggraf, John Pardeck lists the many goals of bibliotherapy:

> (a) to provide information on problems, (b) to provide insight into problems, (c) to stimulate discussion about problems, (d) to communicate new values and attitudes, (e) to create an awareness that others have dealt with similar problems

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[51] Heidi McCarty and Lynne Chalmers, 'Bibliotherapy: Intervention and Prevention', *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 26, 6 (1997), 12-17 (p. 12).

[52] Lauren Myracle, 'Molding the Minds of the Young: The History of Bibliotherapy as Applied to Children and Adolescents', *The Alan Review*, 22, 2 (1995) <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals /ALAN/winter95/Myracle.html> [accessed 24 September 2009] (para 3 of 21).

[53] Heath, et al., 'Bibliotherapy: A Resource'; Lauren Myracle, 'Molding the Minds of the Young'; Zipora Shechtman, 'Bibliotherapy: An Indirect Approach to Treatment of Childhood Aggression', *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, 30, 1 (1999) 39-53; Dale E. Pehrsson and P. McMillen, 'A Bibliotherapy Evaluation Tool: Grounding Counselors in the Therapeutic Use of Literature', *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 32 (2005), 47-59.

[54] Eileen T. Nickerson, 'Bibliotherapy: A Therapeutic Medium for Helping Children', *Pshchotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, 12, 3 (1975), 258-261 (p. 258).

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Thomas P. Hebert and Joseph M. Furner, 'Helping High ability Students Overcome Math Anxiety Through Bibliotherapy', *Journal of Secondary Gifted Education*, 8, 4 (1997) <http://web.ebscohost. com/ehost/delivery?vid=11&hid=104&sid=3261b50d-101f-46d5-ab59-6733093476e 8%40sessionmgr4> [accessed 22 September 2009] (para. 30 of 35).

[59] Ibid.

[what is referred to as 'universalisation' above], and (f) to provide solutions to problems.[60]

Ultimately, by trying to help its readers, bibliotherapy tries to 'impart a sense of normality' upon the reader 'that otherwise might be absent.'[61]

There are three different types of bibliotherapy: clinical, developmental (sometimes called educational or humanistic) and what Zipora Shechtman calls cognitive bibliotherapy.[62] Clinical bibliotherapy is conducted by a therapist or a trained counsellor whereas developmental bibliotherapy often occurs in the classroom with a teacher acting as a guide.[63] With a suitable guide, the leader of the session can try to avoid inaccurate, negative or biased interpretations of the text.[64] There are, however, certain limitations to bibliotherapy: like other therapies bibliotherapy might not be effective on its own; it is not a 'fool-proof cure-all.'[65] Subsequently this type of therapy is useful to use in conjunction with other treatments.[66] Cognitive bibliotherapy differs from both clinical and developmental therapies, however, as it 'refers mostly to the self-administered methods in which written material is suggested to clients with minimal or no therapist contact.'[67]

This thesis argues that, in addition to the uses of literature for bibliotherapy identified in existing studies, literature can also serve a bibliotherapeutic effect in terms of issues of identity formation, racism, and cultural tension. As a consequence of engaging with the Overlapping Space model of identity formation, via the engagement with common problems, the books in this thesis offer readers potential ways to navigate their own identity questions, establishing as 'normal' the situational ethnicities and strategic choices they employ. Within such fictions, there are possibilities for identification, catharsis, involvement and insight, but most readily the potential of

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[60] Pardeck, 'An Innovative Approach', p. 83. See also John T. Pardeck and Martha Markward, 'Bibliotherapy: Using Books to Help Children Deal with Problems', *Early Child Development and Care*, 106, 1 (1995), 75-90.

[61] Marilyn Coleman and Lawrence H. Ganong, 'The Uses of Juvenile Fiction and Self-Help Books with Stepfamilies', *Journal of Counceling & Development*, 68 (1990), 327-331 (p. 327).

[62] Emily Stier Adler and Paula Foster, 'A Literature-Based Approach to Teaching Values to Adolescents: Does it Work?', *Adolescence*, 32, 126 (1997) <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/delivery?vid=5&hid=104&sid=3261b50d-101f-46d5-ab59-6733093476e8%40sessionmgr4> [accessed 1 October 2009]; Shechtman, 'Bibliotherapy: An Indirect Approach', p. 40.

[63] Pamela A. Kramer and Gail G. Smith, 'Easing the Pain of Divorce Through Children's Literature', *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 26, 2 (1998), 89-94 (p. 90).

[64] Shechtman, 'Bibliotherapy: An Indirect Approach', p. 40; Kramer and Smith, 'Easing the Pain of Divorce', p. 92

[65] Myracle, 'Moulding the Minds of the Young', para. 21 of 21.

[66] Pardeck and Markwood, 'Bibliotherapy: Using Books to Help Children', p. 82; Pardeck, 'Bibliotherapy: An Innovative Approach', p. 88.

[67] Shechtman, 'Bibliotherapy: An Indirect Approach', p. 40.

universalisation. Such narratives do not unrealistically offer utopian solutions to problems relating to cultural identity, but rather provide realistic consolation by giving readers the sense of a shared experience which erodes feelings of isolation and cultural alienation. Though the books explored in this thesis can be used by clinical and developmental therapists, the argument here is that such books can be read cognitively and independently of a therapist, offering an easily accessed and culturally formative experience.

The Present Study

My Motivations

Like Claire Alexander, Gayatri Spivak, Avtar Brah and many other researchers before me, my academic interest in this project is hugely personal and, throughout this thesis, I make reference to my own experiences in support both of the literary readings I offer and the sociological sources I refer to.[68] It is, in this context, important for me to acknowledge my own place in relation to the subject of this thesis – as a member of the diaspora these fictions focus on, with my own personal experience of living in an 'Overlapping Space'. As a child growing up in Ashford, Middlesex in the 1980s and '90s, I was very much a member of the ethnic minority both in the community and at school.

Clarendon Primary School: 1989

Echelford Middle School: 1993

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[68] Claire Alexander, *The Asian Gang: Ethnicity, Identity, Masculinity* (Oxford: Berg, 2000); Gayatri Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988), pp. 271-313; Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*.

Matthew Arnold School: 1997   Echelford Middle School: 1990

Throughout primary and secondary school, I was the only 'Asian' girl in my class, and in middle school I was in the same class as my best friend, Amita, and we were two of the three only 'Asian' girls in our year. Amita and I were (and still are) very close. Though we went to separate secondary schools, we used to tell people that we were cousins, and, speaking together in hindsight, we feel that although we are of different faiths and from slightly different backgrounds (my family are from Mauritius, Amita's from both Mauritius and Trinidad), our relationship throughout the years has remained strong because of our race and common ancestry. However, aside from Amita (and a few family friends outside of school) whom I could relate to, there was nothing else that could speak to me directly about my diasporic experience; there was nothing that explored the second generation South Asian diasporic experience in either literature, drama or film.

The only piece of literature that I was able to relate to on a superficial level was teen fiction writer Christopher Pike's novel, *Fall into Darkness*.[69] This novel really excited me because, unlike any other book that I had read as a child/adolescent, it had an African-American protagonist. Although I could not fully identify with the protagonist, I did, however, relate to her as a 'minority' member of society. I remember really appreciating this novel not only because I enjoyed the story, but because the protagonist was black which, for me, made this novel a unique reading experience.

Understandably, perhaps the main reason why I never came across a book which depicted the second generation South Asian diasporic experience when I was younger is because many of the writers who are writing today were themselves very young or had

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[69] Christopher Pike, *Fall into Darkness* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991).

not yet begun writing.[70] These writers, however, have grown up and their novels are filling the literary void that seemed to exist during my adolescence.[71] And it is not only the presence of these texts which has inspired me to conduct this research, but also the fact that, cumulatively, these novels establish the emergence of a new, exciting and unexplored sub-genre of literature which has a particular contribution to make to children's literature.

Definitions

This thesis relies upon a number of definitions which need to be clarified for their specific function in the current work. Generically, the thesis considers what is termed 'children's literature'. Yet this genre is broad as it ranges from the picture book aimed at toddlers, to the problem novel directed at those in their teens or older. The books in this study are aimed at adolescent, teenage and young adult readers whose ages range between twelve and twenty years of age.[72] For the purpose of this project, therefore, all the references to 'children's literature' 'the reader' or 'the implied reader' refers to this group.

Equally, this project engages with a particular cultural identity and geography: South Asia(n). South Asia refers to the Indian subcontinent and is made up primarily of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, The Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The term 'South Asian', therefore, is an umbrella term that refers to each of these countries. It is used, however, with an awareness that some people are uncomfortable with being referred to as 'South Asian', a term that seems problematic as it homogenises a very

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[70] Upon conducting research for this thesis, I discovered three novels which explored the South Asian adolescent diasporic experience in both the UK and the US: Rukshana Smith's *Sumitra's Story* (London: Bodley Head, 1982), Ravinder Randhawa's *Hari-jan* (London: Mantra, 1992), and Mitali Perkins's *The Sunita Experiment* (New York: Hyperion Paperbacks for Children, 1993; Later renamed *The Not-So-Star-Spangled Life of Sunita Sen*). Farrukh Dhondy's short story collections *East End at your Feet* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1976) and *Come to Mecca* (London: Collins, 1978), as well as Jamila Gavin's autobiography, *Out of India* (London: Pavilion, 1997), also engage with the South Asian adolescent diasporic experience. Although Spelthorne Libraries hold *Come to Mecca*, I never came across this or any of the other titles when I was younger.

[71] An article published in 1993 by Meena G. Khorana entitled, 'Break Your Silence: A Call to Asian Indian Children's Writers' *Library Trends*, 41, 3 (1993), 393-413, draws attention to this literary void.

[72] Thomas W. Bean and Karen Moni, 'Developing Students' Critical Literacy: Exploring Identity Construction in Young Adult Fiction', *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 46, 8 (2003) 638-648; Kenneth L. Donelson and Alleen Pace Nilsen, *Literature for Today's Young Adults*, 6th edn, (New York: Longman, 2001).

large group of diverse peoples, cultures and religions.[73] Discussing what they call 'catch-all' terms, Tim Coles and Dallen J. Timothy correctly identify that these umbrella categories 'mask important differences within wider diasporic communities as well as obscuring the particularities and complexities of trajectories and episodes of past identity formation.'[74]

Despite these disadvantages, however, the category 'South Asian' is retained in this thesis because it does nevertheless have some advantages. As Prema A. Kurien explains:

> [South Asian organisations] argue that there are many cultural similarities between individuals of South Asian background, and that in the U.S. they also face common concerns and similar treatment as 'brown-skinned' individuals. In addition, they empathize that there are growing subgroups of South Asian American – besides Pakistanis and Bangladeshis – such as Indian Muslim, Indian Christians, Sikh Bengalis, Indo-Caribbeans, and working-class Indians, all of whom feel alienated from the Hindu-centric vision of many of the Indian organizations and, therefore, favour a more inclusive South Asian American identity.[75]

Other than these positive connotations attached to the term 'South Asian', using this label has other advantages too. The category 'South Asia' is used to differentiate this region from the larger Asian continent which is particularly useful for research. Within the British context, the word 'Asia' refers largely to the Indian subcontinent; however within an American context 'Asia' refers to the *East* Asia. Therefore by using the term 'South Asia' this thesis explicitly locates the cultural context of this study.

Via its exploration of the South Asian diasporic experience in children's literature, this thesis engages with certain dichotomies such as 'East' versus 'West'; 'Home' versus 'Homeland'. These terms are deeply problematic and are subsequently only employed using inverted commas. Nonetheless it is important to address what is meant by these words.

Traditionally, when discussing the migrant experience, the words 'home' and 'host' countries were used to describe the place(s) where migrants inhabit(ed), wherein the former referred to the place that the migrant was 'from' and the latter to where they currently reside. These words are extremely problematic for several reasons –

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[73] See Prema A. Kurien, 'Being Young, Brown, and Hindu', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 34, 4 (2005), 434-469 (p. 457); Prema Kurien, 'To Be or Not to Be South Asian: Contemporary Indian American Politics', *Journal of Asian American Studies*, 6, 3 (2003), 261-288 (p. 262).

[74] Tim Coles and Dallen J. Timothy, 'Conceptualizing Diasporas, Travel and Tourism', in *Tourism, Diasporas and Space*, ed. by Tim Coles and Dallen J. Timothy (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 1-29 (p. 9).

[75] Kurien, 'To Be or Not to Be South Asian', p. 264.

particularly within the context of diaspora. The word 'host' suggests that the migrant is just visiting and is not, and cannot become, a permanent resident of the country that they are in. The migrant is given the status as 'guest' who has to return 'home' when they have outstayed their welcome. This word promotes a sense of unbelonging: the migrant is a nomad and whilst not living in their country of origin/birth, they are essentially 'homeless'. Ironically, however, the word 'home', within this dichotomy, reinforces the suggestion of unbelonging: people remain 'homeless' whilst they remain in their 'host' countries and can only belong once more when they are 'home'.

As the terms 'host' and 'home' are so problematic, the terms 'home' and 'homeland' respectively are employed as alternatives. The receiving country becomes the migrant's 'home' because, as Avtar Brah argues, 'diasporic journeys are essentially about settling down, [and] about putting roots "elsewhere".'[76] By establishing roots in a new country, this new country *is* the migrant's home. Equally many children of diasporic communities who are either born in their country of residence or are brought to it at a young age will often refer to this place as 'home'; it is their 'home'land: the place where they were raised and where they reside.[77]

'Homeland', therefore, refers to the diasporic's ancestral homeland: where their family originate 'from'. The word 'homeland' is perhaps most famously used by Rushdie in his collection of essays: *Imaginary Homelands*. Here, Rushdie uses this word in a similar format: the exile's 'homeland' is no longer their home but a place that they (or their family) have left.

As well as using the dichotomies 'home' and 'homeland', this thesis also refers to 'East' and 'West' in both a geographical and cultural context. Again, these terms are also problematic. Geographically, where does one draw the line between 'East' and 'West'? Is the line between 'East' and 'West' between Europe and Asia? If so, are all European countries (both East and West Europe) 'Western'? Or are some European countries more 'Western' than others? If so, why? If some countries are less 'Western'/more 'Eastern' than others, should maybe the lines between 'East' and 'West' be redrawn? None of these questions can be easily answered.

Similarly, defining 'Eastern' and 'Western' cultures is equally difficult. Edward Said argues in *Orientalism* that the Occident (West) views the Orient (East) as the exotic 'Other', whereby the word 'exotic' has connotations with being wild, morally

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[76] Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*, p. 182.
[77] Here the word 'home'land is different to 'homeland' as it is being used as a synonym for 'home'.

corrupt and unashamedly sexually overt.[78] However, 'Eastern' views of the 'West' are very similar – particularly within a South Asian context. In this framework 'Western' culture is seen as excessively liberal, morally nihilistic and lacking in bodily respect. The purpose of using these broad generalisations is to highlight some of tensions that result in trying to define 'Eastern' and 'Western' cultures. Though there are differences in all cultures around the world, it is difficult (and perhaps impossible) to try and list *all* the items that define one particular culture. It is also almost impossible to identify why one culture is different from another as cultures are not exclusive of one another. Interactions between cultures over the many thousands of years have seen them undergo hybridisation. Cultures are influenced by other cultures. So, to over simplify: some 'Eastern' culture is found in the 'West', and the 'West' in the 'East'.

As it is difficult to locate 'East' and 'West' physically and almost impossible to identify precisely what 'Eastern' and 'Western' cultures actually are, this thesis, when employing these words and ideas, relies on a broad set of assumptions: the 'West' and 'Western' cultures are associated with practices that are largely affiliated with America, Canada and the UK, and the 'East'/'Eastern' culture with South Asia.

Finally, this study frequently refers to second generation (and 1.5 generation) migrants; however, this term is deeply ambiguous.[79] In layman's terms, second generation refers to the children of migrants who have been born and raised in their 'home'lands. However, as people have migrated and have been raised in different countries for many hundreds of years, this in itself carries little meaning. For example, both my eldest cousin and I were born in England in 1971 and 1981 respectively, and we are both classed as second generation migrants. However, I have some cousins who are part of the same age group who have migrated from Mauritius; consequently their children, my nieces and nephews, who were born in the late 1990s and 2000s are *also* second generation. In my family alone, the number of second generation 'children' spans four decades: 1970s, '80s, '90s and 2000s. The second generation experience is therefore context specific and the phrase 'second generation' refers to a very broad range of people. In the context of this thesis, the 'second generation' largely refers to those who were born post-1990. In the instances wherein references to the second generation are made in general, for example in the development of the Overlapping

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[78] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Vincent B. Leitch et al. (New York; London: W. W. Norton, 2001), pp. 1991-2012.
[79] The 1.5 generation refers to foreign born migrants who have been raised in their 'home'land.

Space model and the discussion of tourism in Chapter Three, it is referring to second generation peoples across age bandwidths.

Textual Choices

Although the core texts selected for discussion in this thesis belong to the literary subgenre of children's literature from the South Asian diaspora, these novels represent different diasporic experiences: *First Daughter, Ask Me No Questions, Monsoon Summer, Motherland, Indie Girl* and *Born Confused* all focus on Indian-American experiences, whereas *Bend it Like Beckham, The Pocket Guide to Being an Indian Girl, What's Your Problem?* and *The Last Taboo* explore British-Asian experiences. I must therefore answer the question why, specifically, did I choose *these* books to write about?

These novels, regardless of geographical and localised cultural contexts, can be seen to focus on issues of race and racism, visiting homelands, youth subcultures and the sanction of 'transgression', and dating and interracial relationships. As these issues and themes are discussed across national boundaries, I have not restricted my discussion by geography. Rather, I have chosen what I feel to be the most salient diasporic children's novels to explore each particular issue/topic.

I appreciate that this rationale may be accused of trying to homogenise or universalise different socio-political contexts. I am, however, aware that a British experience is not the same as an American experience despite the similarities, but then neither is one localised British/American experience the same as another British/American experience. Take, for instance, the novels by Bali Rai and Narinder Dhami. Both writers and their work would be categorised as British fiction. Many of Rai's books are set in Leicester and Dhami's in London. However, when one compares the work of Rai and Dhami, although their novels share all the themes and topics that this thesis explores, their novels are in other ways completely different. Rai's books lean towards realist fiction, whereas Dhami's, towards 'chick'-lit. In addition, the growing-up experiences portrayed by these authors are also different: the lives of the young people in Leicester and the surrounding areas differ from those living in and around London. In fact, Rai's work, as this thesis illustrates, has more in common with the novels by American writers Tanuja Desai Hidier and Kavita Daswani. If, therefore, I were to concentrate my focus on one locale, because of national and in turn regional

differences, categories like 'British Fiction' and 'American Fiction' would need to be broken down into more specific categories: 'Leicester Fiction', 'London Fiction', 'New York Fiction', 'Washington Fiction' and so forth, which, for such a small genre like children's literature from the South Asian diaspora, would remove the possibility of useful comparisons and textual groupings.

This thesis, in its engagement with children's literature from the South Asian diaspora, argues for the possibility of this fiction to illuminate the function of the Overlapping Space model for the diasporic adolescent, as well as the bibliotherapeutic potential of such literary representation. The first chapter asks the question: is race(ism) still an issue? Engaging with Bali Rai's *What's Your Problem?* and Kavita Daswani's *Indie Girl* this chapter situates this thesis's contribution to cultural studies and to current antiracist concerns.[80] This chapter uses these books to highlight racism's continued presence in contemporary society and, drawing on the recent rise in New Ethics criticism, it foregrounds through the important discussions of race and racism why children's literature from the South Asian diaspora is such a significant area of literature that needs to be explored. More importantly, this chapter illustrates how the presence of racism attempts to invalidate people's hybrid Overlapping Space identities, offering a renewed understanding of the effects of racism. Interestingly, by focusing on the harmful effects on Overlapping Space identities, these novels, nonetheless, hold strong bibliotherapeutic potential for both victims and non-victims alike.

Developing the contemporary issues of race and racism raised in Chapter One, Chapter Two looks at how this genre of writing responded to the events of 11 September, 2001. Charting the vilification of South Asian images in the media this chapter looks at Marina Budhos's *Ask Me No Questions* and Mitali Perkins's *First Daughter: Extreme American Makeover*.[81] It focuses on how these novels illustrate the impact that the media's attention on these terrorist attacks have on their protagonists and the subsequent implication this attention has on the negotiation of the protagonists' hybrid Overlapping Space identities. Using these novels and discussions raised about identities, this chapter argues that these post-9/11 literatures foreground the importance

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[80] Bali Rai, *What's Your Problem?* (Edinburgh: Barrington Stoke, 2003); Kavita Daswani, *Indie Girl* (New York: Simon Pulse, 2007).
[81] Marina Budhos, *Ask Me No Questions* (New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006); Mitali Perkins, *First Daughter: Extreme American Makeover* (New York: Dutton Children's Books, 2007).

of autonomy: young people should choose who they want to be and not allow media pressures to inform their cultural identity choices.

Unlike the other discussions in this thesis, Chapter Three, using Vineeta Vijayaraghavan's *Motherland* and Mitali Perkins's *Monsoon Summer*, explores the experience of (re)visiting ancestral homelands and calls attention to the lack of extensive empirical research conducted in this type of travelling experience.[82] By focusing on these novels, this chapter shifts the focus from imposed cultural alienation explored in the previous two chapters and looks specifically at self-imposed 'homeland' cultural estrangement via the employment of abjection. Through the evocation of the uncanny it illustrates how these novels try to resolve and normalise this experience. Developing the concept of situational ethnicity to include *emotional* situational ethnicity, Chapter Three ultimately explores the psychological implications of these types of visits to identify the potential effects these visits can have on hybrid Overlapping Space identities.

Chapter Four, 'Subculture and the Approval of "Transgression"', looks at cultures of inclusion via the form of subculture. Engaging with Narinder Dhami's novelization *Bend it Like Beckham* and Baljinder K. Mahal's *The Pocket Guide to Being an Indian Girl*, this chapter looks at South Asian youth subcultures and the employment of situational ethnicity and argues that the creation of these youth groups enable young South Asians to *project and protect* their hybrid Overlapping Space identities.[83] By foregrounding the relevance that hybrid Overlapping Space identities play in the lives of young South Asians, this chapter argues that the novels seem to controversially suggest that young people need to look to their peers for their cultural identity developments rather than to their parents.

Finally, the last chapter confronts one major subject of South Asian cultural transgression which Chapter Four touches upon: dating and interracial relationships. Looking at Tanuja Desai Hidier's *Born Confused* and Bali Rai's *The Last Taboo*, this chapter analyses how these novels explore the theme of love and romance.[84] It engages with the cultural taboos and concerns that are associated with both *intra-* and *inter*racial

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[82] Vineeta Vijayaraghavan, *Motherland* (New York: Soho Press, 2001; repr. Somerset: The Chicken House, 2004); Mitali Perkins, *Monsoon Summer* (New York: Delacorte Press, 2004; repr. London: Simon & Schuster, 2006).
[83] Narinder Dhami, *Bend it Like Beckham* (London: Hodder Children's Books, 2002); Baljinder K. Mahal, *The Pocket Guide to Being an Indian Girl* (London: Black Amber Books, 2004).
[84] Tanuja Desai Hidier, *Born Confused* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 2002); Bali Rai, *The Last Taboo* (London: Corgi Books, 2006).

dating and argues that these texts are vital pieces of literature, not only because they engage with a subject that is of contemporary concern, but because these novels can potentially offer their readers a form of bibliotherapy via the universalising experience. This chapter argues that dating, in many ways, is the assertion and externalisation of hybrid Overlapping Space identities; consequently, this form of social activity helps facilitate the negotiation and renegotiation of one's cultural identity.

Children's literature is culturally formative. Novels focusing on the South Asian diasporic experience depict *what it can mean* to be of South Asian descent growing up in the 'West'. Like many adolescent fictions, they engage with the traumas of adolescence; yet they also illustrate how young people negotiate their hybrid Overlapping Space identities, in ways which sometimes challenge existing models of identity popular in both postcolonial and cultural studies. In addition, these novels offer their readers, of all ages and backgrounds, a rich reading experience. Young readers from different backgrounds are able to gain an understanding of the South Asian diasporic experience, and readers who are able to relate racially, culturally and/or religiously to these protagonists may find, other than a source of entertainment, a potential form of bibliotherapy via their identifications: these books tell their readers that they are not alone in their experiences and that other people share and go through the same experiences as them. However, the bibliotherapeutic functions of these novels extend beyond basic identification and more towards a specific universalisation experience. Through the developments of each of the characters, these literatures expand, foreground and celebrate hybrid Overlapping Space identities. Consequently these novels demonstrate to their readers that *their own* hybrid Overlapping Space identities are ultimately legitimate forms of cultural expression. The relative neglect of such texts in existing literary and postcolonial criticism is therefore an obscuration of what is a rich source of material for critical analysis.

Chapter 1: Is Race(ism) Still an Issue?

Introduction

Is 'race' still an issue? Are individuals still discriminated against simply for the colour of their skin? Are they sometimes made victims by those who are prejudiced because of their race? The simple answer to these questions is 'yes'. However recent world events challenge these ideas. The 2008 US presidential campaign won by presidential candidate Senator Barack Obama, who became America's first black president, lead many to rethink the question: is race still an issue? The fact that America voted in its first black president implies that perhaps the race 'issue' is not as prominent today as it has been historically. This suggests, as David Hollinger argues, that possibly parts of the world, at least, are moving beyond ethnicity, race and religion and more towards what Hollinger calls a 'postethnic perspective': a world in which cultural identity and heritage is no longer discriminated against.[1] Although Hollinger puts forward a compelling argument for why Obama is evidence of a movement towards postethnicity, he neglects to acknowledge the racist propaganda which followed Obama during his campaign trail for presidency.[2] Consequently, when one looks at Obama's journey to the White House, though he may symbolise a postethnic movement, his actual journey was surrounded by racial politics: confirming that both race and racism are still issues in modern day society.[3]

Recognising the contemporary relevance of racism, children's literature from the South Asian diaspora offers a critique of the utopianism of postethnicity. These books highlight that postethnic claims are context specific and, more specifically, that these

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[1] David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

[2] David A. Hollinger, 'Obama, Blackness, and Postethnic America', *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 54, 25 (2008) <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=31388536&site=ehost-live> [accessed 25 November 2008]. Racist anti-Obama images can be seen at: Alex Pareene, 'Racists Seek, Receive Attention For Anti-Obama Flyer', *Gawker.com*, 24 September 2008, <http://gawker.com/5054226/racists-seek-receive-attention-for-anti+obama-flyer> [accessed 16 December 2008]; and Barry Blitt, 'The Politics of Fear', *The New Yorker*, 21 July 2008 <http://archives.newyorker.com/?i=2008-07-21> [accessed 11 December 2008], front cover.

[3] According to the UK's Ministry of Justice, during 2007/08, 57,055 racist incidents were recorded by the police wherein 38,327 were racially or religiously aggravated offences (James Riley, Davnet Cassidy and Jane Becker, 'Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System 2007/8,' *Ministry of Justice*, 2009 <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/statistics.htm> [accessed 14 January 2010], p. xi). In 2008, the US Federal Bureau of Investigation recorded 7,892 victims of race hate crimes which incorporate race, religion and ethnicity (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 'Hate Crime Statistics, 2008: Victims', *Federal Bureau of Investigation* [2009], <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/hc2008/victims.html> [accessed 14 January 2010]).

claims neglect to acknowledge individuals' experiences with racism elsewhere. By acknowledging racism's continued presence in contemporary societies, these books draw attention to the harmful consequences that racism has for identity construction and ultimately the existence of hybrid Overlapping Space identities. By recognising and addressing how racism impedes cultural identity negotiations, these novels have very strong bibliotherapeutic potential.

In dealing with these issues, South Asian diasporic children's literature directly engages with debates surrounding the function of literature in relation to politics and society. Although race(ism) continues to be very often a part of the ethnic minority experience in both contemporary Britain and the US, as well as other parts of the world, questions arise as to how or whether or not these experiences should be addressed in art. For example, discussing black cinema, Isaac Julien and Kobena Mercer write:

> As black films tend to get made only one-at-a-time, each film text is burdened with an inordinate pressure to be 'representative' and to act, like a delegate does, as a statement that 'speaks' for the black communities as a whole.[4]

Such a perspective suggests that within black art there is a compulsion to address everything which is a part of the black experience and to attempt to speak not for individual or communal concerns, but for broader racial politics. Yet, as political ideas of blackness incorporate many diverse minority communities, black cinema, as an 'ethnic' text, may, as a result, be seen by majority cultures as representative of *all* these communities, thereby inadvertently homogenising the black experience. One way in which 'ethnic' art can avoid homogenising minority experiences, it seems, is by unsubscribing from the conventions which frame the genre: in order to move beyond race and ethnicity, literature should, as Mark Stein argues, become more postethnic.

In his book *Black British Literature: Novels of Transformation* Stein proposes a new mode of writing which he calls 'postethnic literature'. Stein states:

> I'm using the term here *not* to build upon and thereby defend the category 'ethnic literature'; hence *post* is not being used in the temporal sense of superseding, but rather in a contestatory fashion. In my usage, the term *postethnic literature* characterizes writing that shows an awareness of the expectations that so-called ethnic writing faces; I apply it to texts working through these expectations and going beyond them. 'Postethnic,' then, does *not* try to *transcend* the 'ethnic.' Instead, it disputes the confinements of the very category.[5]

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[4] Isaac Julien and Kobena Mercer, 'Introduction: De Margin and De Centre', *Screen*, 29, 4 (1988), 2-10 (p. 4).
[5] Mark Stein, *Black British Literature: Novels of Transformation* (Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, 2004), p. 112.

Postethnic literatures according to Stein go beyond what is expected from an 'ethnic' text; the subject matter is not confined by the ethnicity of the author; the author can resist the burden of representation.

Stein's idea that 'ethnic' writing should not be confined by 'ethnic' themes is one that is hard to disagree with. However, because we do not live in a postethnic world, it is difficult to overlook or ignore cultural and postcolonial readings of minority literatures. Nonetheless, if a minority writer does produce work which can be classed as 'postethnic', surely this text would not be categorised as 'ethnic' literature at all but maybe just 'literature'? For a text to be 'postethnic' it must have some engagement – however slight – with 'ethnic' themes. If it does not allude to themes that are used to categorise 'ethnic' literature as a genre, then how can a novel be classed as postethnic? A book which completely evades 'ethnic' themes would not be 'ethnic' or 'postethnic': it would just be literature. In this context, when Stein argues that postethnic literatures work through the expectations of 'ethnic' literatures, a dialogue is created between the novel and what it is 'supposed' to address. This dialogue tethers the book to the 'ethnic' literature genre, but because the novel does not explore the theme/concern like an 'ethnic' text is expected to or it refuses to develop certain 'ethnic' concerns that it alludes to, it becomes postethnic.

Stein's ideas about the postethnic, as he acknowledges, differ from Hollinger's use of the term.[6] Stein's rationale for the postethnic actually lends to ideas of the post*racial* most famously associated not with Hollinger, but with Paul Gilroy. For Gilroy, the postracial is the foundation for what he defines as 'planetary humanism', an attitude which acknowledges and questions the fact that, historically, 'black and white are bonded together by the mechanisms of "race" that estrange them from each other and amputate their common humanity.'[7] For Gilroy, if humanity can look beyond raciology – can become postracial – then it can unite under one race, the human race: a race which negates racial difference and in turn racial discrimination.

Although postracial ideas are certainly alluring, they have obvious shortcomings. In his attack on Gilroy's ideas on planetary humanism, Don Robotham

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[6] Hollinger suggests that within the postethnic, ethnic differences (which incorporate racial differences) are acknowledged yet respected: difference is normal and accepted. However Stein suggests that the postethnic negates race altogether: 'in my view neither history nor biology constitutes a primary basis for the fashioning of affiliations, and this is signalled by my use of the term *postethnic*' (p. 113).

[7] Paul Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2000), p. 17; ibid., p. 15.

accuses Gilroy of being 'color-blind'.[8] Robotham argues that, as Gilroy's ideas call for the abandonment of race, he inadvertently disregards the antiracist struggles that have been fought to promote racial equality. Similarly, when Stein claims that his ideas of the postethnic disregards history and biology he is open to similar attacks.[9]

Such concepts ignore the need to identify with cultural and ethnic positioning that is inferred in Overlapping Space models of identity. They also overlook the continued presence of racism in contemporary society. In such contexts, both Gilroy's planetary humanism and Stein's use of the word 'postethnic' are utopian ideals. Contemporary antiracist children's novels actually foreground the unrealistic nature of these approaches: through the significance of culture (as shall be explored in later chapters) but also, as explored here, through the continued spectre of racism as a haunting but fundamental force in contemporary society.

One reason that children's books problematise the move towards postethnic literatures is because children's literature, unlike literature intended for adults, involves a significant moral responsibility to its readership which means that it cannot simply skirt around or ignore the serious themes that it chooses to touch upon: if an author chooses to discuss issues of race and racism – or any other serious issue – they have a responsibility to their readership to explore their chosen concern fully.

This argument is, of course, deeply contentious within children's literature theory. Nevertheless, criticism of children's literature is dominated by questions concerning the social function of the book and, in turn, the role of the author: do authors have a responsibility towards their readership or only towards their art? Engaging with this discussion critic Zohar Shavit writes:

> Writers of children's books seem to regard as increasingly disturbing the social mandate given to them, and consequently the demand that children's literature must respond to the needs of the child. Where previously writers for children were willing to accept their instrumental task, in recent decades they seem to wish to challenge the responsibility they are ascribed as writers of books for children, and the educational idea of children's literature as a device for the proper raising of children.[10]

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[8] Don Robotham, 'Cosmopolitanism and Planetary Humanism: The Strategic Universalism of Paul Gilroy', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 104, 3 (2005), 561-582 (p. 575).

[9] Stein states: 'in my view neither history nor biology constitutes a primary basis for the fashioning of affiliations, and this is signalled by my use of the term *postethnic*' (Stein, *Black British Literature*, p. 113).

[10] Zohar Shavit, 'The Double Attraction of Texts for Children and How It Affects Writing for Children', in *Transcending Boundaries: Writing for a Dual Audience of Children and Adults*, ed. by Sandra L. Beckett (New York: Garland, 1999), pp. 83-98 (p. 86).

Equally, children's author Jill Paton Walsh, in response to the question, 'don't you feel any responsibility to your audience?', writes:

> The short answer is 'no'. How can I feel any responsibility to my audience when I don't know who my audience are? The effect of my books on them is totally unpredictable, and what cannot be foreseen or predicted in any way cannot be grounds for an obligation.[11]

Having argued she feels no responsibility towards her readership, Walsh ambivalently goes on to assert: 'I am not saying that if one were to deliberately and malevolently write a book with an evil and debauched viewpoint, one would be innocent of the damage done to young readers.'[12] Similarly, Nicholas Tucker argues that 'no successful children's writer could ever hope to get away with a morally nihilist vision of things in their books.'[13] Also discussing morality, controversial children's literature author Philip Pullman declares: 'You can't leave morality out unless your work is so stupid and trivial and so worthless that [nobody] would want to read it anyway.'[14] In all these comments there is a direct sense of children's authors' ethical commitments to their readerships.

The bibliotherapeutic function of South Asian diasporic fiction relies upon its ability to offer an experience of universalisation via realistic, and not utopian, engagements with childhood experience.[15] Thus whilst children's literature critic Peter Hollindale might argue that it is in the author's 'power (and may be his duty) to recommend an improved world, reflecting not what it is but what he hopes it might be', the need to be honest and truthful in such fictions discounts such an approach.[16] In these terms, the books engage with what Joan Aiken argues 'is the writer's duty to demonstrate to children that the world is *not* a simple place', and Karen McGavock's awareness that 'it is false to construct society in these [positive] terms, since children are implicated in a society in which problems are not always happily resolved, so

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[11] Jill Paton Walsh, 'The Writer's Responsibility', *Children's Literature in Education*, 4, 1 (1973), 30-6 (p. 30).

[12] Ibid.

[13] Nicholas Tucker, *The Child and the Book: A Psychological and Literary Exploration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 12.

[14] Philip Pullman quoted in: Angelique Chrisafis, 'Pullman Lays Down Moral Challenge for Writers', *Guardian*, 12 August 2002 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2002/aug/12/books.humanities> [accessed 12 January 2010] (para. 9 of 16).

[15] As discussed in the main introduction of this thesis, one of the elements of bibliotherapy is the possibility of universalising experiences – affirming that individuals are not alone in their experiences which some readers might find consoling.

[16] Peter Hollindale, 'Ideology and the Children's Book', in *Literature For Children: Contemporary Criticism*, ed. by Peter Hunt (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 19-40 (p. 33).

contriving a happy ending is likely to appear less convincing and satisfying to the reader who is aware of this.'[17]

When a children's writer chooses to write about a very serious issue – be it racism, bullying, self-harm, drugs or domestic violence, for example – they have an obligation to address and explore their chosen issue fully; that is, they cannot superficially engage with these concerns. In these terms, postethnic and postracial fiction becomes unrealistic, and therefore undesirable.

Such comments allude to the centrality of children's fiction in a wider trend in recent literary criticism – the move to 'new ethics' which foregrounds the socialising and ethical teachings that literature can have. According to Peter and Renata Singer, 'long before the rise of systematic philosophical thought [...] people have been making up stories in order to convey what they think about how we ought to live.'[18] Renowned ethical critic Martha Nussbaum argues that literature 'has the potential to make a distinctive contribution to our public life,' and that literary imagination is the 'essential ingredient of an ethical stance that asks us to concern ourselves with the good of other people whose lives are distant from our own.'[19] Additionally, Nussbaum strongly feels that novels provide 'a vivid reminder of a human sense of value and an exercise of the valuational abilities that make us fully human.'[20]

Nussbaum's ideas are reflected over thirty years earlier in the philosophical writings of author and philosopher, Iris Murdoch. Murdoch's moral philosophies helped influence the 'ethical turn' in the early 1990s and she argues that '[a]rt and morals are, with certain provisos [...], one. Their essence is the same.'[21] Murdoch's ideas appear revived in the writings of new ethics critics. For example, ethical critics believe, as Gayne Anacker writes, that ultimately 'stories can powerfully contribute to moral

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[17] Joan Aiken, *The Way to Write For Children* (London: Elm Tree Books, 1982), p. 16; Karen L. McGavock, 'Agents of Reform?: Children's Literature and Philosophy', *Philosophia*, 35 (2007), 129-143 (p. 138). Similarly, author Milton Meltzer argues: 'The books that I've written for children are intended to do more than simply convey facts. I hope they are works of revelation as well as information that help young readers to understand the world as it is and to realize that we need not accept that world as it is given to us [...] If they learn to confront life as it is, it may give them the heart to strive to make it better' ('The Social Responsibility of the Writer', *The New Advocate*, 2, 3 [1989], 155-7 [pp. 155-7]).
[18] Peter Singer and Renata Singer, *The Moral of the Story* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p. x.
[19] Martha C. Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), p. 2; ibid., p. xvi.
[20] Ibid., p. 47.
[21] Iris Murdoch, 'The Sublime and the Good', *Chicago Review*, 13, 3 (1959) 42-55 (p. 51).

development.'[22] Similarly, Michael DePaul and Colin McGinn respectively argue that the 'significant function of literature is to supply the kind of experience needed to develop a person's faculty of moral judgment,' and that 'fictional work can make us see and feel good and evil in a way that no philosophical tract can.'[23] Explaining why literature can broaden a reader's understanding of the world, and in turn their ethical knowledge, Murdoch claims that the 'most essential and fundamental aspect of culture is the study of literature, since this is an education in how to picture and understand human situations,' and that 'we all have an indefinitely extended capacity to imagine the being of *others*' (my italics).[24] Engaging with Murdoch's ideas, Anne Rowe and Avril Horner suggest that literature provides readers with a '*humanizing* experience of reading about those different from oneself that creates tolerance [and] sympathy' and that the 'moral work of the novel is to raise awareness, refine perception, evoke sympathy and love.'[25] Similarly, Daniel Schwarz argues that 'literature provides surrogate experiences for the reader, experiences that, because they are embodied within artistically shaped ontologies, heighten our awareness of moral discriminations.'[26] By reading about other peoples' lives, trials and tribulations, readers learn to empathise with situations and contexts that they might not have experienced first-hand which has the potential to enhance their moral and ethical outlook.

With the rise of the postmodern movement in the 1970s and 1980s, however, ethical criticism fell out of fashion.[27] Postmodern critics and writers felt that novels should be abstracted from ideology and avoid polemics. George Orwell actually suggests that writings which have a political agenda are not art: 'When I sit down to write a book, I do not say to myself, "I am going to produce a work of art". I write it because there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw

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[22] Gayne J. Anacker, 'Narnia and the Moral Imagination' in *The Chronicles of Narnia And Philosophy: The Lion, The Witch, and the Worldview* ed. by Gregory Bassham and Jerry L. Walls (Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 2005), pp. 130-142 (p. 130).

[23] Michael R. DePaul, 'Argument and Perception: The Role of Literature in Moral Inquiry', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 85, 10 (1988), 552-565 (p. 563); Colin McGinn, *Ethics, Evil and Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 176.

[24] Iris Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*, ed. by Peter Conradi (London: Chatto and Windus, 1997), p. 326; Murdoch, 'The Sublime and the Good', p. 52.

[25] Anne Rowe and Avril Horner, 'Introduction: Art, Morals and "The Discovery of Reality"', in *Iris Murdoch and Morality*, ed. by Anne Rowe and Avril Horner (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 1-14 (p.2; ibid., p. 12).

[26] Daniel R. Schwarz, 'A Humanistic Ethics of Reading', in *Mapping the Ethical Turn: A Reader in Ethics, Culture, and Literary Theory*, ed. by Todd F. Davis and Kenneth Womack (Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 2001), pp. 3-15 (p. 5).

[27] See David Parker, 'Introduction: The Turn to Ethics in the 1990s', in *Renegotiating Ethics in Literature, Philosophy, and Theory*, ed. by Jane Adamson, Richard Freadman and David Parker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1-17.

attention, and my initial concern is to get a hearing.'[28] However, in the 1990s, literary critics began to return to ethical critical readings.[29] And, as postcolonial and literary critic Sara Upstone argues, since the events of 9/11, both critics and writers alike are pushing a new branch of ethical criticism, 'new ethics', to the forefront of literary theory:

> Confidence in this view [that art should be divorced from politics, society, ethics and morals] which has been dominant since the rise of postmodernism from the late 1960s, has been shaken by the profound impact of 9/11 not just on authors themselves, but on critical and audience expectations of literary production and a correlative intellectualism.[30]

As a result of the 'war on terror' and subsequent global and political instabilities, readers are turning *back* to authors as the public intellectual. Commenting on the war in Afghanistan, the authors of a study co-founded by Manchester University and the London School of Economics argue that:

> We have contended that relevant fictional forms of representation can be valuably set alongside other forms of knowledge about development such as policy reports or scholarly writing, as valid contributions to our understandings of development. In this way, literary accounts can be seen – alongside other forms – as an important, accessible and useful way of understanding values and ideas in society. Many of the fictional accounts of development-related issues which exist, reveal different sides to the experience of development to more formal literature and may, sometimes, actually do a 'better' job of conveying complex understandings of development in certain respects. While fiction may not always be 'reliable' data in the sense of constituting a set of replicable or stable research findings, it may nevertheless be 'valid' knowledge in that it may be seen, 'to reflect an external reality'.[31]

In response to this report, Upstone argues that novels 'are vital in helping the West to understand the global circumstances which may breed inequality, political instability and – ultimately – terrorism,' and that 'giving literature this privileged status is something that writers themselves have placed great emphasis on in the post-9/11

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[28] George Orwell, 'Why I Write', in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell: An Age Like This. 1920-1940*, ed. by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (London: Secker & Warburg, 1968), pp. 1-7 (p. 6).

[29] See Simon Haines, 'Deepening the Self: The Language of Ethics and the Language of Literature', in *Renegotiating Ethics in Literature, Philosophy, and Theory*, ed. by Jane Adamson, Richard Freadman and David Parker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 21-38.

[30] Sara Upstone, 'Literature's Crisis of Confidence: The "War on Terror", Politics, and the Public Intellectual', *Current Issues in British Literature Symposium* (Kingston University, 17 October 2009), p. 2.

[31] David Lewis, Dennis Rodgers and Michael Woolcock, 'The Fiction of Development: Literary Representation as a Source of Authoritative Knowledge', *Journal of Development Studies*, 44, 2 (2008), 198-216 (p. 208-9).

period.'[32] Taking into consideration the contemporary political, international and theoretical climate, one can see how current antiracist children's literature is so relevant to today's literature studies. These novels contribute to this recently revived need that books should offer answers: that literatures hold the key in helping people make sense of the world that they are living in – essentially the need for books to have a bibliotherapeutic function.

In terms of racism, one of the authors focused on in this thesis, Narinder Dhami, makes this refusal of postethnic approaches explicit in her comments:

> I don't think one can 'touch' on racism in children's books, as one perhaps can in books for adults – it needs to be an integral and necessary part of the plot, and it has to be explained or shown to be wrong or unjust.[33]

If a children's book engages with the issue of racism, Dhami suggests, it should not only be realistic but also moral in its approach. This is reflected in many adolescent fiction novels from the South Asian diaspora which present antiracist perspectives, such as Narinder Dhami's *Bindi Babes*, Kashmira Sheth's *Blue Jasmine*, Anjali Banerjee's *Maya Running* and Rachna Gilmore's *Group of One,* as well as Bali Rai's *What's Your Problem?* and Kavita Daswani's *Indie Girl*, which are the focus of this chapter.[34] In such representative strategies there is the risk, of course, that such texts may paradoxically in fact collude with racist ideologies because, as Julien and Mercer point out, such an approach may inadvertently contribute to the homogenising of the South Asian diasporic experience – confirming racist ideas that 'they are all the same'. Nevertheless, even though there may be this danger, many voices speaking out against racism is significantly better than a few voices or no-one speaking out at all, which is also why children's literature problematises the move towards postethnic literatures.

Antiracist children's novels comment on the societies that they represent: *Indie Girl* on contemporary US life and *What's Your Problem?* on the UK. What these books show is that although both the US and the UK have antiracist laws in place, legislation does not negate all forms of racial victimisation.[35] The continued relevance of ethnic

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[32] Upstone, 'Literature's Crisis of Confidence', p. 14; ibid.

[33] Narinder Dhami, 'Racism in Adolescent Fiction', private email to Shehrazade Emmambokus, 17 December 2008.

[34] Narinder Dhami, *Bindi Babes* (London: Corgi Books, 2003); Kashmira Sheth, *Blue Jasmine* (New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004); Anjali Banerjee, *Maya Running* (New Delhi: Puffin Books, 2005); Rachna Gilmore, *A Group of One* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001); Bali Rai, *What's Your Problem?* (Edinburgh: Barrington Stoke, 2003); Kavita Daswani, *Indie Girl* (New York: Simon Pulse, 2007).

[35] In the US, the 'Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994' defines 'hate crime' as 'a crime in which the defendant intentionally selects a victim, or in the case of a property crime, the property

origin makes a postethnic or postracial perspective utopian, and means that bibliotherapeutic function requires some novels to offer the depressing realism of this situation, including a problematic relationship to the possibilities for the sort of secure ethnic identities implied by the Overlapping Space model. Daswani's *Indie Girl* and Rai's *What's Your Problem?* look at different forms of racism: new and old racism respectively. The latter – also referred to as 'biological' racism – is associated with blatant and direct abuse, either physical or verbal, for example, name-calling; however, the former is less explicit. New racism – also known as 'cultural' racism – is a slightly more subtle form of racism whereby the perpetrator's actions or comments have racist undertones but do not have the characteristics of old racism.[36] An example of new racism, for instance, is when a group of people are stereotyped in a certain way and they are victims of prejudice because of their associations with this stereotype.[37]

The ways in which Daswani and Rai expose contemporary racism in the US and the UK reveals that utopian ideas of postethnicity only exist in specific locations and contexts. In their promotion of antiracism, they not only focus on the experience of imposed 'home'land cultural alienation but offer some readers surrogate experiences of racism which, in turn, can help them to develop their moral and ethical outlook. In such terms, these novels potentially provide the readers who relate to these texts with a vital

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that is the object of the crime, because of the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person' (Congress of the United States of America, 'Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act 1994', *GPO: US Government Printing Office*, <http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=103_cong_bills&docid=f:h3355enr. txt.pdf> [accessed 8 Jul 2009], p. 301, Section 280003). In the UK, the 'Public Order Act 1986' states that: 'A person who uses threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or displays any written material which is threatening, abusive or insulting is guilty of an offence if – (a) he intends thereby to stir up racial hatred, or (b) having regard to all the circumstances racial hatred is likely to be stirred up thereby' (United Kingdom Parliament, 'Public Order Act 1986', *Office of Public Sector Information*, <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1986/pdf/ukpga_19860064_en.pdf> [accessed 8 Jul 2009], p. 12).

[36] Tariq Modood suggests that new racism and cultural racism are interchangeable ideas (Tariq Modood, *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity and Muslims in Britain* [Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press, 2005], p. 11).

[37] Paul Gilroy, for instance, argues that new racism denies that '"race" is a meaningful biological category' so that the focus of skin colour is transferred to culture instead (Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* [London: Unwin Hyman, 1987], p. 60). An example of 'new' racism can be found in the study conducted by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) entitled 'Wrong Then, Wrong Now'. It claims that in an attempt to combat terrorism since 9/11 the US 'federal government immediately focussed massive investigative resources and law enforcement attention on Arabs, Arab Americans, Muslim, Sikhs, and South Asians' because these individuals are, since 9/11, stereotyped as potentially dangerous (Civil Rights Organisation, 'Wrong Then, Wrong Now: Racial Profiling Before & After September 11, 2001', *Leadership Conference on Civil Rights* <http://www.civilrights.org/publications/reports/racial_profiling/> [accessed 14 September 2007], p. 4). The report cites an incident wherein a motorist was pulled over by a policeman, searched, then accused of being a Bin Laden supporter because he was Arab demonstrating that this man was singled out and discriminated against because of the cultural stereotypes associated with Islam (ibid., p. 22).

source of bibliotherapy, something which is not only a fundamental purpose of these novels but also testament to the increasingly ethical positioning of contemporary fiction more generally post-9/11. Whilst such an approach problematises the existence of hybrid Overlapping Space identities it also makes the need for such identities even more urgent, with direct relevance for young contemporary audiences.

Indie and 'New' Racism

Published in 2007, Kavita Daswani's *Indie Girl* follows the exploits of a fifteen-year-old Indira (Indie) Konkipuddi, who, when trying to get a job, is forced to confront 'new' racism post-9/11. As such, Indie's predicament exposes readers to new racism and its effects. Readers who relate to Indie's experiences, therefore, may find this novel bibliotherapeutic because they know that they are not alone in their experiences, which some may find consoling. Readers who have never experienced racism, however, are through the text given surrogate experiences of what it means to be a victim of racial discrimination and see the harmful effects it has on hybrid Overlapping Space identities. Consequently this books, like all novels, have the potential to improve society's ethical outlook, which, as new ethics critics suggest, is the function for today's literature.

Indie dreams of becoming a fashion journalist and spots her opportunity to break into the industry when she learns that *Celebrity Style* magazine is offering one candidate a summer internship within their teen fashion department. However, despite having the right qualifications for the job, Aaralyn Taylor, the editor of the magazine, does not see Indie's potential because Indie is of Indian descent.[38] Instead of considering Indie for the summer internship, Aaralyn offers her a job as her weekend babysitter:

> 'Look, Indie. I don't know about that internship. But maybe there is another way you can help me.'
> I stood there silent, perplexed.
> 'Where are you from, anyway?' she asked.

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[38] According to the American 'Civil Rights Act of 1964', under section 703, it is unlawful employment practice 'to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race color, religion, sex or national origin' and 'to limit, segregate, or classify his employees in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex or national origin' (Congress of the United States of America, 'Civil Rights Act of 1964', *The National Archives*, <http://www.archives.gov/ education/lessons/civil-rights-act/> [accessed 9 Jul 2009], section 703). Similar provisions are made in the UK under the 'Race Relations Act 1976' (United Kingdom Parliament, 'Race Relations Act 1976', *Office of Public Sector Information*, <http://www.opsi.gov.uk /acts/acts1976/pdf/ukpga_19760074_en.pdf> [accessed 9 June 2009]).

'Here,' I replied. 'I mean, I'm Indian. My parents are from Calcutta. But I was born here.'

'Do you have any experience with children?' she asked.

'I have an eight-year-old brother,' I replied, confused by the question. 'Why?'

Aaralyn paused for a second.

'I hear people from your part of the world are good with domestic duties,' she said, glancing at a lilac-painted fingernail. 'I have a kid. He's two. I'm desperate for a weekend babysitter. I can't seem to find anybody who's interested in giving up their Saturday afternoon to hang out with a baby. If you're interested...'[39]

Daswani explicitly associates Aaralyn with new or 'cultural' racism. Martin Barker, in his 1981 book, *The New Racism*, argues that the rationalisation for new racism is based on the assumption or the idea that it is 'in our biology, our instincts, to defend our way of life, traditions and customs against outsiders – not because they are inferior, but because they are part of different cultures.'[40] Expanding on these ideas Gilroy writes:

> The new racism is primarily concerned with mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. It specifies who may legitimately belong to the national community and simultaneously advances reasons for the segregation or banishment of those whose *'origin, sentiment or citizenship'* assigns them elsewhere. [my italics][41]

New racism does not concern itself with 'race' like old/biological racism does, but with 'origin, sentiment [and] citizenship' – essentially culture. Within the context of new racism, cultural concerns have usurped and replaced traditional racial concerns, which is made evident via Aaralyn's questioning.

In the exchange between Indie and Aaralyn, Aaralyn's 'part of the world' comment demonstrates that she is concerned with Indie's Indian culture and not her race. Clearly Aaralyn aligns Indie with certain cultural stereotypes associated with Indian women: Indian women are better at domestic duties not because of their skin colour but because of Indian tradition and culture. Indie's cultural heritage, therefore, 'must' imbue her with the qualities and traits required for babysitting, hence Aaralyn offers her this job.

Gilroy's comment, when discussing cultural stereotypes, that 'England's black settlers are forever locked in the bastard culture of their enslaved ancestors, unable to

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[39] Daswani, *Indie Girl*, pp. 35-6.

[40] Martin Barker, *The New Racism: Conservatives and the Ideology of The Tribe* (London: Junction Books, 1981), p. 23.

[41] Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black*, p. 45.

break out into the "mainstream" alternative', is profoundly relevant to this novel.[42] Within the context of *Indie Girl*, the 'mainstream' alternative job is the internship. However, because Aaralyn 'locks' Indie within an Indian stereotype, Indie cannot 'break out' of this cultural association. By associating or 'locking' Indie within her own prejudices about Indian women, Aaralyn not only denies Indie access to the mainstream but tries to legitimise this segregation through the suggestion that the abilities of Indian women are mutually exclusive from the abilities of 'proper' American women. In this conversation, Indie's abilities (or presumed lack of them) have nothing to do with her skin colour. Rather, because Indie is 'from' a different culture, she is too culturally different to be able to fulfil a role deemed part of the mainstream culture.

Here we can clearly see the type of 'othering' that Edward Said offers in *Orientalism*.[43] It seems that, instead of projecting the negativities of American culture on to Indian women, Aaralyn seems to be making a backhanded compliment by suggesting that American women are less apt at mothering duties in comparison to Indian women. However, when placed in context, readers can see the dichotomy that Aaralyn sets up: Indian women are more 'natural', and by extension 'backwards', whereas American women are advanced and intellectually superior. Cultural positioning and supposed cultural superiority facilitates the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that Gilroy describes, and by 'othering' Indie, Aaralyn denies Indie's identifications with American culture, which, in turn, not only disregards Indie's hybrid Overlapping Space identity, but actually rejects it as well. In other words, by undermining Indie's 'Americanness' because of her associations with India and Indian culture, Aaralyn ignores Indie's hybrid Overlapping Space identity which, in turn, refutes the possibility that such an identity could exist.

Developing its criticisms of new racism and illustrating its effects on hybrid Overlapping Space identities, this novel looks at how language, as a marker of cultural heritage, is also used to affirm and reinforce cultural superiority:

> I began singing a Hindi song about a horse and carriage, bouncing Kyle up and down on my lap as I chanted 'ghoda ghoda gadi' over and over again.
> I didn't hear Aaralyn step into the hallway looking for us.
> 'What *are* you doing?' she asked, looking a little peeved.

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[42] Paul Gilroy, 'One Nation Under A Grove: The Cultural Politics of "Race" and Racism in Britain,' in *Anatomy of Racism*, ed. by David Theo Goldberg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), pp. 263-82 (p. 267).
[43] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Vincent B. Leitch et al., (New York; London: W. W. Norton, 2001), pp. 1991-2012.

'Oh, it's just a Hindi song my parents used to sing to me and my kid brother,' I explained. Kyle had started fussing, wanting me to start up again.

'Well, I'd appreciate it if you wouldn't do that,' she replied. 'He's very impressionable. I want his first language to be perfect English, not some gibberish.'[44]

Here the 'newness' of new racism is rendered rather as the resurrection of the cultural prejudices which have always substituted more obvious biological racism. For example, Aaralyn's comments are little different to those of early nineteenth-century anti-slavery campaigner Alexander Crummell. Although Crummell, as an abolitionist, might be seen to reject the more explicit notes of biological racism, he nevertheless sustains a discourse of cultural difference which centres on linguistic hierarchies. So for Crummell there were in African languages 'definite marks of inferiority connected with them all, which place them at the widest distance from civilized languages.'[45] This is little different to Aaralyn's perspective almost one-hundred and fifty years later. By speaking in Hindi, Indie 'confirms' Aaralyn's prejudices; conversing in a language which – in Aaralyn's eyes – is clearly imbued with what Crummell calls 'definite marks of inferiority', Indie inadvertently legitimises Aaralyn's self-imposed position of cultural superiority.

This superiority is confirmed by the fact that Aaralyn elevates the English language by referring to Hindi as 'gibberish'. Again, what is seen here is the perpetuation of historical prejudice. In Crummell's praise of the English language he agrees with Dr. John Leighton Wilson's ideas about 'Negro' dialects: that they are 'harsh abrupt, energetic, indistinct in enunciation, meagre in point of words, abound with inarticulate nasal and guttural sounds, possess but few inflections and grammatical forms, and are withal exceedingly difficult of acquisition.'[46] The word 'gibberish' here echoes such sentiments. As Aaralyn's reaction to Hindi is aligned with archaic ideas about the inferiority of 'other' languages, it is evident that contemporary American society has not moved beyond nineteenth-century racist assumptions associated with language and culture, which not only negates postethnic claims but foregrounds the unrealistic nature of such utopian claims.

The moral function of Daswani's novel emerges in this context as it develops its antiracist discourse. Indie was raised in a bilingual environment and speaks very good

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[44] Daswani, pp. 86-87.

[45] Alexander Crummell, 'The English language in Liberia' in *Postcolonialisms: An Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Gaurav Desai and Supriya Nair (Oxford: Berg, 2005), pp. 132-42 (p. 137).

[46] Ibid.

English, the narrative presenting her as often eloquent despite being only fifteen years old. That Aaralyn has not noticed Indie's language capabilities questions her intellectual superiority. Yet, simultaneously, the fact that Aaralyn does not acknowledge the flaw in her 'gibberish' retort highlights how frustrating and resistant these ideologies are. From a bibliotherapeutic perspective, the realism of this encounter and its potential for universalising function takes precedence over a utopian resolution in which Aaralyn realises the error of her assumptions.

This exposure of new racist ignorance and the refusal to defer to utopian resolution pervades the novel. Aaralyn does not think that Indie's ideas about fashion deserve credit:

> 'What do you think? Basic black or this orange?' [...]
> 'The orange,' I said.
> > Juno turned to look at me, and Aaralyn was expressionless.
> > 'It'll look amazing with your hair. Like Marcia Cross at the Golden Globes, remember? You'd be surprised. Just remove the flower thing. It'll break up the length, won't highlight your lean shape. And defiantly metallic gold shoes – the Louboutins I glimpsed in there the other day.'
> > I didn't know what had come over me. It wasn't as if I had consciously decided to speak. But the words just came out of my mouth, an outgrowth of the celebrity images I always carried around in my head.
> > 'Juno, what do you think?' she asked. She completely ignored me, and I was suddenly embarrassed. What made me think Aaralyn Taylor would listen to me? Juno, noticing this exchange, looked up at his wife.
> > 'The orange I think,' he said, smiling.
> > Aaralyn studied the dress closely. 'You might be right,' she said to Juno. 'Let me go try it on.'
> > When she emerged fifteen minutes later [...] she was ravishing. [...].
> > 'Don't look too impressed,' she said [to Indie]. 'My team left right before you got here. You didn't think that I could manage all this on my own, did you?'
> > She was wearing the beaded flower around her wrist, like a corsage. [...] But as she approached me, she took the flower off, and handed it to me.
> > 'Here, for you,' she said, thrusting it into my hand. [...] I had never even *seen* anything from Vera Wang except the pages of a magazine, and here was I, not just *touching* it, but actually *owning* it.
> > 'That might have some value on eBay,' she said with a toss of her shiny hair. 'Just in case you decide to sell it.'[47]

This exchange reveals Indie's knowledge: she easily recognises Christian Louboutin shoes and Vera Wang dresses just upon sight and clearly, as Aaralyn follows Indie's suggestions – despite claims to the contrary – fashion advice from Indie is highly credible. Despite this expertise, however, Indie is *never* recognised by Aaralyn and she

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[47] Daswani, *Indie Girl*, pp. 108-9.

does not get the internship. In fact Aaralyn gives the job to Indie's schoolmate, Brooke. The strength of Aaralyn's sustained prejudice encourages readers to potentially share Indie's deeply held frustrations. As such, *Indie Girl* is potentially an excellent source of ethical teachings. Readers who can identify with Indie's experience may understand how Indie feels each time Aaralyn aims her disparaging remarks towards her, and may be offered the consolation of a universalising bibliotherapeutic function. Equally, for those who have not experienced racial or cultural discrimination, through Indie's repeated victimisation, the text helps illuminate the trauma this causes: by illustrating the different ways in which Aaralyn victimises Indie, the reader may develop a greater appreciation for the effects of new racism and how it undermines and rejects the possibility of hybrid Overlapping Space identities. As such, the text is a perfect exemplification of the social responsibility of children's literature, a concern which cannot be glossed over by utopian or even idealistic attitudes.

The ways in which Indie reacts to Aaralyn's racism in this context is significant. Rashmi Singla highlights that there are three ways people react to being racially victimised: 1) passive, which is 'characterised by apathy [and] passive acceptance of race discrimination', 2) active constructive, wherein victims strive 'for better results, [and] active[ly] participat[e] in resistance to and struggles against racism', or 3) active destructive, whereby victims are associated with 'anti-social activities and violent behaviour.'[48] In different terms, Philomena Essed describes these reactions:

> Immediate emotional reactions can include anger, frustration, [and] powerlessness. Targets of racism have been found to employ a range of behavioural responses: speak up, remain silent, ignore racism, work harder to prove them [the racists] wrong, pray, get violent, repress the memory.[49]

Aaralyn's treatment provokes a range of reactions: Indie's suffering shifts from something which is active to something which more passive.[50] This is evident, for example, in Indie's response to Aaralyn's lack of recognition of her role in a high profile story she contributes to:

I wanted nothing more to do with her or the magazine.

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[48] Rashmi Singla, 'South Asian Youth in Scandinavia: Inter-ethnic and Intergenerational Relationships', *Psychology & Developing Societies*, 17, 2 (2005), 215-35 (p. 222); Rashmi Singla 'Youth Relationships and Ethnicity: A Social Psychological Perspective', *Young*, 12, 1 (2004), 50-70 (p. 61); ibid.

[49] Philomena Essed, 'Everyday Racism', in *A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies*, ed. by David Theo Goldberg and John Solomos (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), pp. 202-16 (p. 213).

[50] See Singla, 'South Asian Youth in Scandinavia', and Singla, 'Youth Relationships and Ethnicity'.

I had not realized the extent of my *bitterness* until I saw the issue, the same one that contained a lead story on Trixie Van Alden, a story which Aaralyn wouldn't even have if it hadn't been for me.

When I left the house that Sunday, she hadn't even said 'thank you.' [...] Then she shut the door on me, leaving me to wait outside for my father to come and pick me up. [...] I had fought back tears because I didn't want my father to see me upset. But I felt *hollow* inside. I felt I had been *used*. [...]

I closed my eyes for a minute and started to tell myself that I should feel proud. All along, for all these years, I had dreamed of one day being able to contribute to a publication like *Celebrity Style*. Now, I had actually done it; sure it was in a roundabout way, and I certainly got no credit for it. But it was better than nothing.

But no matter how hard I tried to tell myself this, something inside still *hurt*. I realized then that giving Aaralyn the story was only half my objective that day; the rest was winning her approval. I thought one would give me the other. Obviously I was wrong. And the fact that I was wrong on something so elemental left me with a *dull ache* inside. [Emphasis added][51]

The range of emotions here – from active bitterness to a 'dull ache' – reflects both Singla's and Essed's definitions. The shift in 'pain' for Indie moves from being 1) emotionally active, 2) to emotionally passive, and 3) to being emotionally drained. The level of control that she has at each stage decreases. In a bibliotherapeutic context, it is significant that the novel offers a range of emotional responses, not only offering a complex psychological portrait, but also allowing for the widest range of identification with the differing experiences of individual readers, at differing stages of their own responses to racism.

Refusing utopian representations in these terms does not mean denying readers any sense of consolation. Clearly, for Indie, holding back tears requires a lot of effort, but because she manages to do so, she is somehow able to control her frustrations.[52] This display of control may give some readers who have faced a similar form of victimisation a sense of empowerment: though they may not be able to control feeling alienated from their 'home'land cultures or how they are treated by others, they may be able to control – to some extent – how they react. In a bibliotherapeutic context, the function of the novel is not to offer an unrealistic solution to endemic racism, but rather to offer a potential way to address the problem of how to respond to such prejudice.

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[51] Daswani, *Indie Girl*, pp. 166-8.

[52] Indie frequently bursts into tears frequently (often involuntarily) throughout the novel (see, for example, Daswani, *Indie Girl*, pp. 34, 55, 138, 177, 178 and 184). So by *not* crying, Indie clearly reappropriates some form of control.

Jaspal and 'Old' Racism

Whereas *Indie Girl* focuses on new/cultural racism and how this racism can be pervasive in contemporary society, Rai's *What's Your Problem?* focuses on old/biological racism. In doing so, this novel explicitly illustrates how UK antiracist and pro-multicultural policies are not always successful.[53] Fourteen-year-old Jaspal Sangha and his family move from Leicester to a small village near Nottingham to set up a local newsagent. However, upon moving to this village, Jaspal and his family become the victims of serious race-hate crimes perpetrated by a local Neo-Nazi group, 'The Brotherhood of the White Fist', a subdivision of The National Front. As he is the only 'brown' teenager in his school, Jaspal soon falls victim to Jason Steggles (Steggsy), a newly recruited Brotherhood member, and his gang of racist teenage thugs.[54] However, Jaspal's life is made even worse when he starts to date Jemma, Steggsy's step-sister. This novel is extremely powerful in its portrayal of how 'old' racism functions in today's world and the climax of the story sees the death of Jaspal's mother and the hospitalisation of his father. Though truly shocking, such a narrative exposes the reader to the horrors of being made a victim of this type of racism, overtly signalling that old racism is not 'old' or simply relegated to the past but is an issue, like new/cultural racism, in the present.

Rai's note to the reader explains that he wrote his novel with the aim of creating an antiracist text, and his intentions are made explicit in the book's opening lines:[55]

> My dad scrubbed the window of our newsagent's shop with a mixture of hot water and bleach. The graffiti sprayed on it began to drip down the glass and the letters mingled into each other. The words became unreadable.
> The words had said: *Paki Scum Go Home!*[56]

This opening is very shocking in the context of the novel's adolescent audience. The title of the chapter is, ironically, 'A New Start?' Although most readers are probably aware that this novel addresses racism and subsequently might expect the story to be told with a grim tone, this title, whichever way it is read, does not necessarily prepare

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[53] For UK antiracist policies, please see the 'Race Relations Act 1976' and the 'Public Order Act 1986'.
[54] Rai, *What's Your Problem?*, p. 4.
[55] Many authors, like Rai, express similar motivations for why they write antiracist novels. Fellow children's literature author, Marie Lee, states: 'I want readers to know [...] that behind every racial slur there's a person, and in this light, I believe books have the capacity to educate' (Marie G. Lee, 'How I Grew', *The Alan Review*, 22, 2 (1995), <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/winter95/Lee.html> [accessed 25 June 2009], para. 15 of 18).
[56] Rai, *What's Your Problem?*, p. 1.

the reader for the opening lines. New starts are associated with beginning afresh, and the ambivalence of the question mark may be easily missed. Rai's linguistic choices, with the words 'Paki' and 'scum' on the opening page, are intended to produce a powerful reaction. This opening not only foregrounds the significance of old racism in contemporary society but also engages the reader on an emotional level so that through their discomfort they either become familiar with or are able to relate to the unease felt by the victims of old racism.

Rai continually surprises and shocks the reader throughout the novel via Jaspal's revelations in order to reinforce the prevalence of 'old' racism.[57] For example, Jaspal states:

> I had been happy in Leicester. I had a school I liked and I had friends. I had a life. Now I was being picked on at my new school. Spat at and called names. And no-one cared. Not my dad. Not my mum. And most of all, not my school teachers. [...]
> I wanted to be somewhere where I could get away from the *daily racial* abuse and bullying. A place where my parents weren't afraid for their lives after dark. A place where my dad didn't have to wash racist graffiti off the shop window. And my mum didn't have to clean up the dog shit posted through the letterbox. Somewhere like our old home. [my italics][58]

Jaspal's isolation is established in sentences where he lists the things that he used to have. The juxtaposition between this situation and what he now receives asserts that he feels that he has nothing left anymore. Getting support from 'no-one', the novel offers a vision of profound loneliness and alienation. By focusing on his parents' victimisation as well as his own, old racism is presented as commonplace and timeless. Equally, the matter-of-fact tone and the list-like structure of this paragraph suggest that graffiti and excrement related incidents are in fact 'daily', just like the abuse and bullying that Jaspal receives at school.[59]

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[57] See Essed, 'Everyday Racism', pp. 202-16.

[58] Rai, *What's Your Problem?*, pp. 3-5.

[59] According to the UK Home Office, for some victims of race-hate crimes, 'persistent harassment and abuse may be an ongoing aspect of day-to-day existence' (Home Office, 'Hate Crime – The Cross-Government Action Plan', *Home Office* [2009] <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/hate-crime-action-plan/hate-crime-action-plan2835.pdf?view=Binary> [accessed 14 January 2010], p. 2). Additionally, offences involving faeces is not unheard of either. According to *A Human Rights First*, which are based in the US, 'low-level violence [... like] excrement through the letter box' is the 'most pervasive racist violence in Europe and North America' subsequently highlighting the transnational commonality of this type of crime (Michael McClintock 'Everyday Fears: A Survey of Violent Hate Crimes in Europe and North America', *A Human Rights First* [2005] <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/discrimination/ everyday-fears-083105.htm> [accessed 14 January 2010], p. 5). See also *Lawrence Steering Group: Community Involvement Strategy, Home Office* <http://police.homeoffice. gov.uk/publications/equality-diversity/stephen-lawrence-inquiry/community-strategy-report?view=Binary> [accessed 17 December 2009]; Anonymous, 'Race Hate Crime "Up

Interestingly, here the bibliotherapeutic function of the text works simultaneously for both victims of abuse, and those who might perpetrate it. The events documented by Jaspal encourage the reader to feel uncomfortable and concerned for the family: particularly as he reveals that the family are, after dark, living in fear for their lives. Moreover, the novel simultaneously urges the reader to feel further empathy and unease when the Sangha family are sent threatening letters by The Brotherhood of the White Fist, so that both potential abusers and victims are offered a point of identification:

> We will never allow this village to be contaminated by filth like you. Get out now and no harm will come to you. Ignore us and you will be made to pay the price. [...]
> You have been warned.[60]

And:

> How many warnings will it take for your sub-human brains to get our message? Go home today or face the consequences. [...] Take your dirty culture and go back home.[61]

These letters may echo the feelings and opinions of some abusers. However, instead of coming across as reasonable, these letters seem slightly fanatical. The hate contained in these words appears irrational, making Jaspal feel both 'angry and scared'.[62] Consequently, Jaspal's reaction to these letters not only legitimises the emotional responses some victims of racism may have experienced, but demonstrates, as Dhami argues, that these racist sentiments are clearly wrong. As John Pardeck tells us, the purpose of bibliotherapy is to:

> (a) to provide information on problems, (b) to provide insight into problems, (c) to stimulate discussion about problems, (d) to communicate new values and attitudes, (e) to create an awareness that others have dealt with similar problems [what is sometimes referred to as 'universalisation'], and (f) to provide solutions to problems.[63]

Tenfold''', *BBC* (12 October 2004), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3736328.stm> [accessed 7 July 2009]; Angelique Chrisafis, 'Racist War of the Loyalist Street Gangs: Orchestrated Attacks on Minorities Raise Fears of Ethnic Cleansing', *Guardian* (2004), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2004/jan/10/northernireland.race> [accessed 14 January 2010]; and, Terri Judd et al., 'Britain's Muslim Scapegoats', *Independent* (2005), <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/britains-muslim-scapegoats-501389.html> [accessed 4 January 2010].

[60] Rai, *What's Your Problem?*, p. 11.

[61] Ibid., p. 53.

[62] Ibid., p. 11.

[63] John T. Pardeck, 'Bibliotherapy: An Innovative Approach for Helping Children', *Early Child Development and Care*, 110 (1995), 83-88 (p. 83).

What's Your Problem? may provide both victims and abusers with bibliotherapy: abusers, through reading this text, are offered, as Murdoch and Schwarz argue, a surrogate experience of being on the receiving end of such abuse adhering to items (a), (b) and (d) on this list, and victims who share Jaspal's emotional experiences recognise that their responses are not wrong nor uncommon – fulfilling item (e). Though reading these letters may not change a person's racist sentiments, their experience with racism is nonetheless broadened.

If *Indie Girl* focuses on the movement of passivity in response to racism, *What's Your Problem?* emphasises the anger which racism creates, perhaps correlative to the more direct 'old' racism Jaspal experiences. For the reader, the lesson from Jaspal's experience is in the destructive effects of racism has on Jaspal's ability to relate not just to those which might potentially abuse him, but also the people that he loves:

> 'Stuff what you said,' I told him. 'If it weren't for you I wouldn't be in this hellhole or suspended from school. You think I care what *you* want anymore?'
> My dad looked shocked.
> 'Mum's a mess. The shop gets attacked everyday. I can't walk home without getting beaten up or threatened and it's all because you didn't think about what Mum and me wanted!'
> 'You mind your...' he began to say.
> 'GET LOST!' I shouted, storming out of the door. [...]
> Over and over, in my head, I was blaming him. Not the stupid racists who had made our lives a misery but my old man. A man whose only fault had been to believe the rubbish about England being a tolerant place where racism was dead. I know I was wrong to think that way but at the time it was all I *could* think about. Stupid old man – bringing us here – just to get spat at and abused...[64]

Jaspal's behaviour here falls under Sangla's 'actively destructive' category, and parental abuse is a behavioural pattern identified in victims of discrimination by sociologists. For example, Barbara Cottrell and Peter Monk discovered that:

> Experiences of institutionalized racism led to a range of family difficulties. This dynamic has been explained through the theoretical concept of horizontal violence [...] in which members of an oppressed group react in abusive ways toward each other as a response to their victimization.[65]

Similarly, Beth Warner and Mark Weist write:

> Children, feeling trapped by the violence in their communities, turn to adults for support and reassurance of safety. When the adults are unable to provide such comfort, children tend to become angry and 'lash out.' Thus, aggression

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[64] Rai, *What's Your Problem?*, pp. 82-3.
[65] Barbara Cottrell and Peter Monk 'Adolescent-to-Parent Abuse: A Qualitative Overview of Common Themes', *Journal of Family Issues*, 25 (2004), 1072-95 (p. 1093).

becomes a coping mechanism, and these covictimized children soon become violent themselves.[66]

When Jaspal blames his father, Rai not only offers a sociologically accurate rendering of the effects of violence, he also, as a result, simultaneously connects with readers who are the individuals behind such studies.

This focus should not be taken to mean that the novel does not offer the same range of engagement as *Indie Girl*. As well as getting angry, Jaspal eventually begins to tolerate the abuse that he and his family receive:

> I stopped getting so angry over the comments about immigrants. I didn't get mad with the little kids who called my mum a brown slag and spat at her in the street. I stopped wanting to kill everyone that racially abused my dad as they bought their fags and papers and milk.
> Thinking about it now, it's quite sad that I *did* get so used to it. But when it's as everyday as watching your favourite soap opera, it becomes normal. Or at least you forget what *normal* is and go with what you get.[67]

Like Indie, Jaspal's passive attitudes realistically reflect the reactions associated with racial abuse. It seems that Jaspal's introverted and helpless attitude stems from what Anderson Franklin and Nancy Boyd-Franklin call 'invisibility syndrome,' wherein 'invisibility is defined as an inner struggle with the feeling that one's talents, abilities, personality, and worth are not valued or even recognized because of prejudice and racism.'[68] Explaining in more detail, Franklin and Boyd-Franklin write:

> In their episodic occurrence and provocation, racial slights are disorienting; they breed confusion and disillusionment. This outcome of every day racism becomes a part of the individual's intrapsychic structure; it is a catalyst for feelings of invisibility, which grow in response to the erosion of self-esteem.[69]

It is important to note that Jaspal, as a victim of racism, is very much 'visible'. That is, he and his family stand out in the community *because* of their race.[70] In this context, Franklin and Boyd-Franklin's 'invisibility syndrome' is more to do with one's loss of

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[66] Beth S. Warner and Mark D. Weist, 'Urban Youth as Witnesses to Violence: Beginning Assessment and Treatment Efforts', *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 25, 3 (1996), 361-377 (p. 366).

[67] Rai, *What's Your Problem?*, p. 56.

[68] Anderson Franklin and Nancy Boyd-Franklin, 'Invisibility Syndrome: A Clinical Model of the Effects of Racism on African-American Males', *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 70, 1 (2000), 33-41; Anderson J. Franklin, 'Invisibility Syndrome and Racial Identity Development in Psychotherapy and Counseling African American Men', *The Counseling Psychologist*, 27, 6 (1999), 761-793 (p. 761). See also Anderson J. Franklin, Nancy Boyd-Franklin, and Shalonda Kelly, 'Racism and Invisibility: Race-Related Stress, Emotional Abuse and Psychological Trauma for People of Color', *Journal of Domestic Abuse*, 6:2 (2006), 9-30; and, Naz Rassool, 'Flexible Identities: Exploring Race and Gender Issues Among a Group of Immigrant Pupils in an Inner-City Comprehensive School' *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 20:1 (1999), 23-36 (p. 35).

[69] Franklin and Boyd-Franklin, 'Invisibility Syndrome', pp. 36-7.

[70] Much like the Muslim/'Muslim' individuals and communities discussed in Chapter Two.

individuality. The racists ascribe Jaspal's body with certain stereotypes. *They* label *him*; *they* tell Jaspal 'what' he is regardless of *who* he actually is. By imposing this 'new' identity onto Jaspal, the 'real' Jaspal is smothered and buried; the 'real' Jaspal becomes lost and essentially invisible.

Jaspal's frequent and continued exposure to racism means he has essentially given up and is forced to accept his and his family's victimisation. Franklin and Boyd-Franklin emphasise the individual's 'intrapsychic structure' and claim that invisibility syndrome is a result of the erosion of self-esteem. However closer analysis into Overlapping Space identities can help us further understand the invisibility syndrome experience.

Like Indie, Jaspal's encounters with his abusers reject his hybrid Overlapping Space identity: by telling him and his family to 'go back home' the Brotherhood usurp Jaspal's natural right (because of enculturation) to call England his 'home'.[71] Essentially Jaspal is being told that he is not English, even though Jaspal thinks of himself as English (explored further in the proceeding section). Because of his racial markers, his abusers cannot *see* Jaspal as 'English'; as such they reject the possibility of a hybrid Overlapping Space identity: an identity which would contain both English and Indian cultural codes. This rejection ultimately invalidates and voids Jaspal's cultural identity which explains both how and why he feels invisible. As such, because of racism, Overlapping Space identities in certain contexts and situations cannot be fully realised.

Negotiating Overlapping Space in the Context of Racism

If the bibliotherapeutic function of these books is significant, they nevertheless are texts which also have profound implications equally for the assertion of the possibility for individuals to negotiate hybrid Overlapping Space identities. As demonstrated, in the context of extreme racism, such identities are themselves utopian. Consequently, the drive for these identities is itself a reason to highlight the need to erode racist attitudes through both legislation and education.

When faced with racial marginalisation, discrimination and victimisation, individuals are, as Gilroy argues, 'deprived of their individuality.'[72] People like Jaspal

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[71] Rai, *What's Your Problem?*, p. 53.
[72] Gilroy, *Against Race*, p. 15.

and Indie cannot be who they want to be precisely because they are denied the freedom of existence. When confronted by racism many individuals, as a coping mechanism, may employ self-preservation techniques. Franklin and Boyd-Franklin argue that racialised victims 'incline [...] toward alternative roles that appear able to resolve conflicted identity and provide acceptance.'[73] Likewise, Jean Phinney states that 'members of low-status groups seek to improve their status by "passing" as members of the dominant group [... or] alternative solutions are to develop pride in one's own group.'[74] In order to cope with marginalisation, individuals may choose to assimilate into the dominant culture or intensify their affiliations with their 'homeland' culture which is sometimes referred to as 'reactive ethnicity'.[75]

As developed in the introduction to this thesis, the Overlapping Space model operates with the assumption that people can create their cultural identities by choosing from the range of identity choices that they are enculturated with. However, as Michel Foucault's ideas point out, the idea of choice and free will has its limitations.[76] In order to cope with racism, identity choices are constricted. Though there is still some element of choice (individuals can choose either assimilate with or reject the dominant culture, or even choose to do nothing, which foregrounds the functionality of the Overlapping Space model) such choices, however, are very limited. Subsequently, one of the sad truths about racism is that while racism remains prevalent in contemporary societies, individuals *cannot be individuals*.

What's Your Problem? and *Indie Girl*, via their engagements with old and new racism, foreground the impossibly for all individuals to be individual. Racism's perpetuated presence severely impedes ideas of freedom of choice. Both Indie and Jaspal are forced to understand that when it comes to racial prejudice and discrimination one has to accept that racialised individuals may always be discriminated against and that racist or prejudiced individuals do not easily change. However, although both characters acknowledge this 'truth', neither demonstrate assimilation or reactive

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[73] Franklin and Boyd-Franklin, 'Invisibility Syndrome', p. 37.

[74] Jean S. Phinney, 'Ethnic Identity in Adolescents and Adults: Review of Research', *Psychological Bulletin*, 108, 3 (1990), 499-514 (p. 501).

[75] Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut state that 'reactive ethnicity is the product of confrontation with an adverse native mainstream and the rise of defensive identities and solidarities to counter it [... and is, as such,] a reaction to hostile conditions in the receiving society' (Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001], p, 284).

[76] See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin, 1991).

ethnicity techniques which is highly significant for the bibliotherapeutic potential of these novels.

As already mentioned, Indie does not get the internship, and just under halfway through the novel Indie actually acknowledges this fact:[77]

> I had grown up in America and saw myself as an American girl. Yes, I had that tongue-twisting name, got straight A's at school, and had the educated upper-middle-class parents, and therefore fit into most stereotypes that most people might have of us. But I was American, really. I listened to Beyoncé and shopped at West Seal and hung out at the mall and spoke with no trace of an Indian accent.
>
> [...] I imagined, in my prepubescent naïveté, having a similar column one day in a similar magazine. A photo of me would appear underneath, my skin dark and my hair black, and I would sign off, 'Indie Konkipuddi, editor in chief.'
>
> Even then, somewhere in my psyche, it felt unreal.
>
> Someone named Indie Konkipuddi stood virtually no chance of ever becoming an editor of a high-flying magazine. We might be hardworking and competent and law-abiding, we might win book awards and direct good movies and run investment banks and even become Nobel laureates.
>
> But we weren't the national news anchors, the chart-topping singing stars, the lead in a major Hollywood blockbuster [...]
>
> We were Americans but in name only. And although I had insisted on calling myself Indie, I still didn't have the right name for the job.[78]

In this extract Indie continually changes her use of pronouns, and the shifts from 'I' to 'we' establish that she recognises that she is a member of a larger migrant Indian community. However, although Indie freely associates herself with this group of people, she does not freely choose to associate herself with the stereotypes imposed upon this group. She nonetheless seems to recognise that because she fulfils *some* of these Indian stereotypes, she inadvertently – though involuntarily – seems to adhere to other peoples' ideas of what it means to be Indian: within racist discourse she does not have what Foucault describes as agency and in this respect her identity is somewhat determined by racist society. This society overlooks the fact that she has been enculturated with more than one culture which, in turn, actively refuses to acknowledge her hybrid Overlapping Space identity.

The statement: 'But I was American, really' echoes the opening of Hanif Kureishi's novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* in which the protagonist states: 'My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost.'[79] Indie's statement

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[77] Although there is a suggestion that Indie might get next year's internship, this possibility does not negate the fact that Aaralyn chooses a candidate less qualified than Indie for the job.

[78] Daswani, *Indie Girl*, pp. 96-7.

[79] Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (London: Faber and Faber, 1990), p. 3.

establishes that she, 'knows' that she is American, but because the word 'really' follows a slight pause there is equally the sense that she, like Karim, understands that she is still on the outside emphasising her experiences with imposed 'home'land cultural alienation. Even though she recognises that she is an American citizen, and most importantly *feels* American, Indie cannot help but acknowledge that she is only seen as an American 'in name only.' Even trying to change her name from 'Indira' to 'Indie' is futile as it cannot grant her full access or the privilege of being a 'full' American simply because she, like Jaspal, is not part of the dominant white culture: her racial markers imply that she is not 'wholly' American and overshadows the fact that she has been enculturated with both American and Indian culture which, by extension, dismisses her hybrid Overlapping Space identity.

Like Indie, Jaspal also learns that changing peoples' prejudices is very difficult and, in his case, impossible. Jaspal acknowledges this 'truth' when he and Cutler, a member of Steggsy's gang, have a heated conversation:

'So, what's your problem?' I asked, wanting to know what I had done to make him hate me.
'What problem?' he asked.
'All that racist stuff – what have I ever done to you?'
'Don't like your lot,' he said [...]
'My *lot*?' I asked. [...]
'Well you ain't English, are yer?'
I sat back in my chair and sighed.
'Where were you born, Cutler?' I asked him.
'In Mansfield – why, what's that gotta do with the...?'
'In England then?' I asked.
'Yeah,' said Cutler.
'Well, I was born in Leicester – that's in England, too.'
'I ain't thick,' he said.
'You must be, because I'm as English as you.'
'Nah, you ain't. You're a Paki.'
'No, Cutler – even my parents ain't from Pakistan – they're from India and I'm from England.'
'See?' he said. 'Your mum and dad are immigrants and anyway Leicester's full of 'em – me dad says so.'
'And he knows everything, does he?'
'I don't care,' he said, after a while. 'You lot ain't English like I'm English. This is my country.'
'And it's my country too. What are you – stupid?' I shouted. 'I watch the same football as you, I support England when they play. I eat chips and that ... that's all English, innit?'
'My dad says that England was a great country before all the wogs came over,' said Cutler.

But the thing was, I knew that Cutler would never change.[80]

Here, by asserting 'I'm from England', it seems that Jaspal attempts to dissociate himself from his Indian heritage. However, when defending his cultural identity he need not have mentioned India at all: he could have easily said 'I'm not a Paki. I'm from England' thereby ignoring his 'homeland' associations completely. Incidentally, by correcting Cutler and telling him that his family are from India and not Pakistan, Jaspal actually lays claim on his Indian heritage. As such, the comment 'I am from England' asserts that he is born in England and is, therefore, equally both English and Indian.

As well as drawing associations with India, Jaspal tries to prove to Cutler that he is just as 'mainstream' as Cutler is: they were born in the same country and they share the same interests. However, according to Cutler, these characteristics do not qualify Jaspal's English membership: Jaspal is not white so therefore cannot be English thereby forcing Jaspal to feel alienated from his 'home' culture. Rai, like Daswani, refuses to present a utopian world view to his readers. He foregrounds the existing significance that old racist ideologies have in today's contemporary world and illustrates that Cutler's ignorance denies Jaspal's right to claim his hybrid Overlapping Space identity.

The 'truths' that Indie and Jaspal are forced to confront demonstrate to readers how racism denies the possibility of hybrid Overlapping Space identities: identities which ironically have cultural traits in common with those who express racial intolerance. Rai demonstrates that Jaspal and Cutler share many 'English' traits. Equally the cultural similarities drawn between Indie and Aaralyn are symbolised through fashion. However, although Indie and Jaspal learn to accept that their abusers either cannot or will not reassess their prejudices, which ultimately challenge their hybrid Overlapping Space identities, neither character gives up these identities. Despite their difficulties and their enforced experiences with 'home'land cultural alienation, neither of them exhibit assimilationist or reactive ethnicity tendencies. In fact, as well as claiming their American/English identities, these characters also make their own connections to India and Indian culture. So, despite the fact that racism attempts to negate hybrid Overlapping Space identities by 'othering' victims, these characters refuse to bend. By remaining culturally neutral these books are able to extend their bibliotherapeutic potential as they legitimise the existence of such Overlapping Space cultural identities.
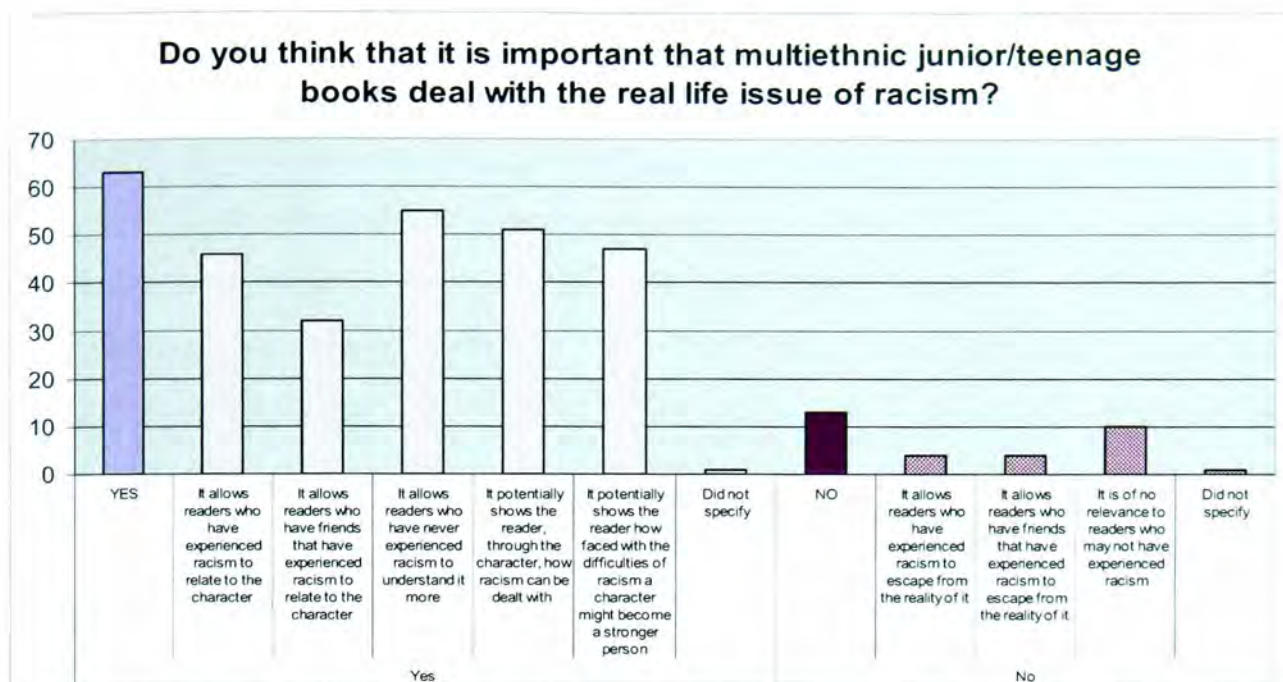
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[80] Rai, *What's Your Problem?*, pp. 73-6.

Bibliotherapy in Practice?

A central contention of this chapter is that realism is essential to bibliotherapy. *Indie Girl* ends unsatisfactorily and *What's Your Problem?* horrifically; yet whilst these endings might defy some readers' desires for a 'happily ever after' ending, they offer instead an honesty that is more educational, and more ethical. In practice, such narratives can be seen to make a more distinctive contribution to the needs of their readers.

As evidence of this, I offer a small scale experiment I undertook to test the bibliotherapeutic potential of such narratives in practice. In November 2007 in order to find out what young peoples' expectations were from reading an antiracist novel and to identify how books that have a pessimistic tone could offer readers a form of bibliotherapy, I conducted a survey at The Green School for Girls, Isleworth, London, a school with a very culturally diverse student body.[81] I asked 77 students between the ages of 12 and 16 whether or not they thought that multiethnic junior/teenage books should deal with an issue like racism. Some students replied stating 'no' because they made the valid point that racism might not have anything to do with the story: eighty-two percent of the candidates, however, said 'yes'. Out of the people who said yes, eighty-seven percent ticked the box 'it allows readers who have never experienced racism to understand it more' thus foregrounding the contemporary concern that literature plays an important role in ethical teachings:

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[81] As part of the survey I asked the candidates to write down their ethnicity. 48% of the survey identified themselves as 'British White', 47% as hyphenated British, and 5% as non-British.

Do you think that it is important that multiethnic junior/teenage books deal with the real life issue of racism?

I also asked the candidates to write down any additional comments that they would like to make. One candidate wrote: 'It shows the reader how not to be racist and how much it hurts and isolates the person who is faced with racism.'[82] Similarly another candidate wrote: 'It may help people get sympathy. Or give [the] reader empathy for the victim', whilst one person argued, 'It makes you start to think of the situation,' and another suggested, 'Maybe a reader might be racist and it might help them understand how hard it is.'[83]

All of these responses lend to the arguments made by ethical critics about the role of literature: that literature, as Murdoch and Schwarz argue, provides surrogate experiences for readers which can heighten their awareness of moral discriminations.[84] The candidates in my survey feel that antiracist novels might be able to help promote antiracism because people who have not been the victim of racism will have a better appreciation of the issue. Additionally, these individuals may also recognise how lucky they are not to have ever experienced this type of discrimination. As the novels *Indie Girl* and *What's Your Problem?* end with either the character feeling unfulfilled or completely broken, these novels not only illustrate the negative effects of racism, but they potentially fill this need for literature to raise awareness of how it *feels* to be racially victimised.

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[82] Candidate Number 19; 15 years old.
[83] Candidate Number 45; 12 years old, Candidate Number 71; 14 years old; Candidate Number 72; 12 years old'.
[84] Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics*, p. 326; Murdoch. 'The Sublime and the Good', p. 52; Schwarz. 'A Humanistic Ethics of Reading', p. 5.

However, *because* these novels end negatively *can the victims* of racism find a source of bibliotherapy in reading these books? One candidate in my survey pointed to the comment: 'it allows readers who have never experienced racism to understand it more' and stated that this was 'most important'.[85] Coupled with the comments cited above, these responses suggest that other than potentially being able to relate to the protagonists and drawing consolation from knowing that they are not alone in their experiences, some victims of racism may find comfort in the idea that these antiracist books try to help tackle the issue of racism by raising awareness in both aggressors and non-aggressors alike. It is therefore in this belief that some readers might find a form of bibliotherapy from these novels.

Additionally, some readers might find the actual content of the stories themselves bibliotherapeutic. For example Indie, at the end of the novel, confronts Aaralyn about her prejudices. Subsequently some readers might draw some comfort from Indie: although Indie is a victim of racism, she conducts herself with dignity (notably Indie tries very hard not to cry when she confronts Aaralyn) and she not only stands up for herself, but she manages to make her aggressor feel ashamed. Also as Indie has made alternative summer arrangements and plans to visit India with her cousins, Daswani illustrates that Indie does not put her life on hold. She continues to plan and look ahead despite the setbacks that her experience with racism has caused. Therefore some readers might find Indie's story not only consoling but perhaps inspirational as well.

What's Your Problem?, unlike *Indie Girl*, may not offer readers the same type of inspiration, nonetheless some readers can still find advice in the story. Firstly, Mr. Kitson, Jaspal's form tutor, asserts that if individuals are being racially victimised at school, they should inform their teachers so that something can be done about the problem. Although Jaspal acknowledges that resolving racial tensions in school does not solve the problems out of school, this message is still important to give to those who may be being bullied at school.

Secondly, some readers might feel comforted by reading about Jaspal's victimisation: if they relate to Jaspal's situation it might help them to know that (sadly) they are not alone. Jaspal tells the reader, 'I felt helpless. Useless.'[86] Similarly some victims might feel the same way. Although Jaspal is very frustrated with the way that he

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[85] Candidate Number 35; 15 years old.
[86] Rai, *What's Your Problem?*, p. 57.

feels, he demonstrates that it can unfortunately be normal to feel like this. As such, those victims who feel the same way may, again, find this novel bibliotherapeutic as they might find some comfort knowing that they are not alone in their experiences: although it is wrong to be forced to feel helpless and useless, it is not wrong to experience these emotions.

Though some victims may find these stories consoling, others may be enraged by Indie and Jaspal's experiences. Equally non-victims may feel the same way, and this is because these books are deliberately written to excite these kinds of reactions: these authors *want* people to feel angry about racism. Regardless of this fact some victims may, however, query the advantages of hybrid Overlapping Space identities: they may question the point of embracing their 'home' culture when individuals from this culture so vehemently reject them. As such these novels may inadvertently promote reactive ethnicity sentiments. However, both characters endeavour to maintain their hybrid Overlapping Space identities despite their victimisation. They both claim and maintain ties to their 'home' and 'homeland' cultures which may, in reality, be very difficult; nonetheless as neither Jaspal nor Indie concede to 'othering' pressures, these books support the right for individuals to pick and choose their own cultural identities. It would not have been difficult for Jaspal and Indie to demonstrate assimilation or reactive ethnicity tendencies – particularly as they have been enculturated with both their 'home' and 'homeland' cultures. However, by not giving in to pressures, they essentially fight for their hybrid Overlapping Space identities and in doing so readers can see how valuable these identities are.

Conclusion

Even though the presidential appointment of Barack Obama indicates that parts of the world may be moving towards a postethnic perspective, his path to presidency was not free from racist and/or prejudiced sentiment. Although racism is still an issue, this does not necessarily mean that children's literature and adult literature authors from ethnic minority backgrounds should feel obliged to address these concerns. Nonetheless, because racism *is* still an issue and because it affects those from different walks of life, there is a need to address this issue in novels for children and adolescents, and Kavita Daswani's *Indie Girl* and Bali Rai's *What's Your Problem?* do just this.

Although *Indie Girl* and *What's Your Problem?* foreground the importance of maintaining hybrid Overlapping Space identities despite discrimination and experiences of imposed 'home'land cultural alienation, neither attempt to show readers how to deal with the negative emotions that racism produces, highlighting that there is no emotional or psychological 'quick fix' for racial abuse: if both Indie and Jaspal emerged from their encounters unscathed or unaffected then these novels would undermine the seriousness of racism. The fact that these novels do not offer victims of racism solutions to potential emotional and psychological problems is actually essential for the bibliotherapeutic properties of these novels. By engaging with the psychological effects of racial abuse and the pressures placed on hybrid Overlapping Space identities, these novels demonstrate to victims that their experiences are not isolated and that varying negative emotional responses are not abnormal which may satisfy some readers in knowing. By refusing to present these readers with solutions or happy endings, these books do not belittle the actual experiences of racial victimisation. Instead, they demonstrate an appreciation of what it means to be a victim of racism. If children and adolescents are introduced to literatures which engage with ethical concerns (like racism) then these novels may modify the readers' outlook to reflect certain ethical sentiments.[87] As these young readers grow up, they practise the sentiments that they learn in the real world which counter and/or replace pre-existing negative discriminatory values. Although adult literature can help readers build on what they have learned, children's literature is instrumental in laying the foundations. In their refusal of utopian solutions, such novels are bibliotherapeutic both for those who have experienced racism, those who have not, and those who might perpetrate it. Nonetheless, what these novels demonstrate is that what is at stake in such antiracism discourse is the possibility of Overlapping Space identities, a possibility which emerges in the same post-9/11 context in the next chapter.

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[87] Obviously dangers lie in texts which try to perpetuate harmful and hateful ideals.

Chapter 2: 9/11 and the Media Aftermath

Introduction

Immediately following the World Trade Center and the Pentagon attacks on 11 September, 2001, the international news media was gripped by the events that took place. Television networks suspended their schedules to focus on these events; images of the Twin Towers collapsing were repeated on television screens; radio networks replayed eye-witness interviews; the front pages of newspapers were dominated with headlines and images of these attacks and whole newspapers were dedicated entirely to reporting the events that took place.

People were scared and afraid and the news media not only fed on this fear but seemed to perpetuate these feelings further. Images of Osama Bin Laden, the plane hijackers and the Taliban were seen on the television and covered the front pages of newspapers. Though not denying the tragic enormity of these events, many felt that the 9/11 coverage was not only at the expense of other world news but seemed to make efforts to portray Islam negatively.[1] Words like 'Jihad' and 'Islamic extremists' helped to fuel Islamophobic concerns. Equally, that events which portray Muslims as victims – for example the 2002 religious clashes in Gujarat wherein approximately 2,000 individuals, mostly Muslim, were killed – received less attention by 'Western' medias seemed to add to the media bias.[2] This news bias generated what John Hartley refers to as 'Wedom and Theydom', wherein in this instance 'them' are those who are linked in some way or another to Islam.[3] This system of inclusion and exclusion was further emphasised when the then US President, George W. Bush, famously addressed the world several days after the attacks stating that 'either you are with us, or with the terrorists.'[4]

This 'we' and 'them' mentality, coupled with the media's negative focus on Islam, affected many of those affiliated (real or imagined) with the religion. Firstly, as

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[1] Shakuntala Banaji and Ammar Al-Ghabban, '"Neutrality Comes From Inside Us": British-Asian and Indian Perspectives on Television News after 11 September', *Journal of Ethnic Migration Studies*, 32, 6 (2006), 1005-1026.

[2] Luke Harding, 'Frantic Search for British Sons Lost in Gujarat Riots', *Guardian* (24 April 2002) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/india/story/0.,821617,00.html> [accessed 13 October 2007].

[3] John Hartley, *Pictures of Politics* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 206.

[4] George W. Bush, 'Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People' (United States Capitol, Washington, D. C., 20 September 2001).

Pnina Werbner highlights, because most South Asian individuals are 'often racialised as "Pakis"' and are, by extension, linked to Islam, and secondly, as Vijay Prashad argues, because the word '*Muslim* has come to stand in for those who look or sound like immigrants.'[5] Many Muslim and 'Muslim' individuals were verbally abused, physically attacked or experienced prejudice because of their real or supposed relations to Islam which, following Louis Althusser's ideas regarding the media's role in disseminating systems of thought, the news media seemed largely responsible for.[6] Addressing the influential power the media has, Stuart Hall asserts that:

> Institutions like the media are [...] by definition, part of the dominant means of *ideological* production. What they 'produce' is, precisely, representations of the social world, images, descriptions, explanations and frames for understanding how the world is [...]. And, amongst other kinds of ideological labour, the media construct for us a definition of what *race* is.'[7]

Likewise other media theorists draw similar conclusions: Minelle Mahtani writes that the 'media provides an important source of information through which citizens gain knowledge about their nation, and our attitudes and beliefs are shaped by what the media discerns as public knowledge', and Yasmin Jiwani states that the media 'constitute a monopoly of knowledge, and through their practices of selection, editing, and production, they determine the kind of news we receive about our nation, culture and the rest of the world.'[8] Contemporary medias are able to influence and shape public opinion and, because of its ideological function, the media can also influence identity construction/choices.

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[5] Pnina Werbner, 'Theorising Complex Diasporas: Purity and Hybridity in the South Asian Public Sphere in Britain', *Journal of Ethnic Migration Studies*, 30, 5 (2004), 895-911 (p. 907); Vijay Prashad, 'How the Hindus Became Jews: American Racism after 9/11', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 104, 3 (2005), 583-606 (p. 586).

[6] Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism,* ed. by Vincent B. Leitch et al., (New York; London: W. W. Norton, 2001), pp. 1483-1509 (p. 1489). See also: Sunaina Maira, 'Youth Culture, Citizenship and Globalization: South Asian Muslim Youth in the United States after September 11th', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 24, 1 (2004), 219-231; Pnina Werbner, 'Theorising Complex Diasporas'; Committee on Religious Offences in England and Wales (CROEW), 'Islamophobic Attacks in the Wake of September 11', *The United Kingdom Parliament* <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/ld200203/ldselect/ldrelof/95/2102304.htm> [accessed 15 October 2007] ; Civil Rights Organisation, 'Wrong Then, Wrong Now: Racial Profiling Before & After September 11, 2001', in *Leadership Conference on Civil Rights* <http://www.civilrights.org/publications/reports/racial_profiling/> [accessed 14 September 2007].

[7] Stuart Hall, 'The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media', in *Gender, Race and Class in Media*, ed. by Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez (London: Sage Publications, 1995), pp. 18-22 (pp. 19-20).

[8] Minelle Mahtani, 'Representing Minorities: Canadian Media and Minority Identities', *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 33, 3 (2001), 99-187 (p. 99); Yasmin Jiwani, 'The Media, "Race" and Multiculturalism', in *Feminist, Research, Education, Development and Action Centre* (1995) <http://www.harbour.sfu.ca/freda/index.htm> [accessed October 10 2007].

Sociologists widely recognise the significant role contemporary medias play in influencing children and informing young peoples' identity development.[9] Reviewing ten years of research, Susan Villani states that 'children learn their behaviours and have their value systems shaped by media,' and that 'excessive media use, particularly where the content is violent, gender-stereotyped, sexually explicit, drug or alcohol influenced, or filled with human tragedy, skews the child's world view.'[10] Recognising the role that the media plays in shaping young peoples' self-identities, Marina Budhos's *Ask Me No Questions* and Mitali Perkins's *First Daughter: Extreme American Makeover* explore how the media affected young South Asian and Arab people's Overlapping Space identities post-9/11.[11]

Perkins's *First Daughter* tells the story of Sameera Righton, also known as 'Sparrow' by her close friends and family who, at the age of three, was adopted by American parents, Elizabeth and James, from an orphanage in Pakistan. Now at sixteen years old, Sameera leaves school in Europe to join her parents in the US to help promote her father's campaign for presidency. To help her father on this campaign, Sameera is given, as the subtitle of the novel indicates, an extreme American makeover to make her look and seem more 'American'.

Budhos's *Ask Me No Questions*, rather, tells the story of fourteen-year-old Nadira and her family who are living in the US in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Nadira's family, originally from Bangladesh, live in New York City. However, as their visas have expired, Nadira and her family flee to the Canadian border to apply for asylum for fear of how they will be treated in the US during the current political climate for two reasons: firstly because they are illegal immigrants and, secondly, because they are Muslim. In the endnote to her novel, Budhos explains that this novel was inspired by real events. She highlights that both Nadira's, and her sister Aisha's, experiences reflect those of many young Muslim/'Muslim' children living in America at the time of the 9/11 attacks and since. Budhos's postscript ultimately suggests that her novel was written with the intention of offering some of its readers a type of bibliotherapy.

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[9] Cornelia Pechmann, et al., 'Impulsive and Self-Conscious: Adolescents' Vulnerability to Advertising and Promotion', *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 24, 2 (2005), 202-221; Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, 'Adolescents' Use of Media for Self-Socialisation', *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 24, 5 (1995), 519-533.

[10] Susan Villani, 'Impact of Media on Children and Adolescents: A 10-Year Review of the Research', *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 40, 4 (2001), 392-401 (p. 392; p. 399).

[11] Marina Budhos, *Ask Me No Questions* (New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006); Mitali Perkins, *First Daughter: Extreme American Makeover* (New York: Dutton Children's Books, 2007).

Focusing on these two novels, this chapter asks: how do these texts engage with the media vilification of Muslim/'Muslim' groups post-9/11? How do they explore issues of cultural identity development post-9/11? Do the characters relate to the negatively stereotyped self-images presented in the media in the wake of these attacks and, if so, how far? Do they willingly internalise and accept these negative self-images? Or do they resist these images? What, therefore, are these novels suggesting about young developing cultural identities and how are these identities negotiated?

Drawing on media and cultural theory, this chapter will, using the Overlapping Space model, argue that these literatures foreground the importance of autonomy. It will begin by exploring how Muslim/'Muslim' individuals felt scapegoated and singled out as a result of the 9/11 media focus. By closely analysing the texts, and drawing from the works of W. E. B. Du Bois and Frantz Fanon, I will argue that these novels illuminate how the media facilitated the development of multi-person consciousness. As a result of multi-person consciousness, many individuals felt exposed and vulnerable, and to counter these feelings some young people, post-9/11, chose either to assimilate into the dominant culture or exhibited what are referred to as reactive ethnicity techniques. Engaging with sociological investigations analysing this phenomena, this chapter also traces how the characters work against the external pressures placed on them to reform their cultural identities. It therefore argues that the characters' struggles are ultimately able to offer readers who relate to these texts a form of bibliotherapy by recognising and in turn legitimising readers' experiences and responses to 9/11.

Media Attacks Post-9/11

As a result of the negative news focus on Islam post-9/11, many Muslim individuals felt victimised.[12] Recognising these feelings *Ask Me No Questions* and *First Daughter* explore how the news media seemed to attack these individuals in the wake of 9/11 and the effects of this focus.

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[12] Louise Cainkar. 'The Impact of the September 11 Attacks and Their Aftermath on Arab a Muslim Communities in the United States', *GSC Quarterly*, 13 (2004) <http://programs.ssrc.org/gsc/publications/quarterly13/cainkar.pdf> [accessed 15 October 2007]; Louise Cainkar, 'No Longer Invisible: Arab and Muslim Exclusion After September 11', *Middle East Report*, 224 (2002), 22-29; Tanja Dreher, *'Targeted': Experiences of Racism in NSW after September 11, 2001* (Broadway: UTSePress, 2006), <http://hdl.handle.net/2100/46> [accessed 15 October 2007]; Scott Poynting and Greg Noble, 'Living With Racism: The Experience and Reporting by Arab and Muslim Australians of Discrimination, Abuse and Violence Since 11 September 2001', *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission* (2004), <http://www.hreoc.gov.au/racial_discrimination/isma/research/UWSReport.pdf> [accessed 9 July 2010].

Through the use of metaphor and imagery, *Ask Me No Questions* depicts the news media as aggressors. Like her father, Nadira's uncle is also detained by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (renamed in 2003 as the US Citizenship and Immigration Services). After his release, Nadira watches her uncle watch television: 'He drops down on the sofa and switches on the TV with the remote. As he watches, I notice bruises and cuts on his forearms.'[13] Although this scene may seem like an insignificant act of watching television, this extract has to be read within the context of the entire book.

Throughout the novel, Nadira makes frequent references to television. For example, when her family get stopped at the Canadian border, Nadira states: 'It's funny how long it can take to arrest a person. You'd think it would be like on TV'; when the police come to arrest Uncle, she observes: 'The other man is young and is wearing a quilted vest. I've only ever seen one of those on TV'; when Nadira goes with Tareq to buy a social security card from an underground resistance group she makes three references to TV: firstly, when in the house, she states that she 'can hear the low warble of a TV', secondly whilst waiting to be seen she declares: 'I want everything to be the way it was before we went to Canada, when Ma and Abba let me watch TV for an hour every night'; thirdly, when she runs away from the house, Nadira says: 'I can see Tareq's silhouette looming in the doorway, the blue light of the TV through the lace curtains'; and finally whilst waiting for her father's case to be looked at in court, Nadira asserts: 'I keep expecting to enter some kind of huge courtroom, just like on TV.'[14] Although there are a few other references to television throughout the book, these quotations are the most significant as all these references to television are made when Nadira is in danger or feels threatened. For Nadira television has come to symbolise danger and, by extension, the news media as aggressor.

References made to the cuts and bruises on Uncle's arms as he sits and watches television reinforce this link. Though it is clear that Uncle got these injuries during his detainment, the fact that Nadira notices these wounds whilst he is watching television serves as a metaphor for those who felt scapegoated and attacked by the news media via its vilification of Islamic images post-9/11.

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[13] Budhos, *Ask Me No Questions*, p. 101.
[14] Ibid., p. 14; ibid., pp. 80-1; ibid., p. 121; ibid., p. 122; ibid., p. 123; ibid., p. 129.

First Daughter, like *Ask Me No Questions*, also focuses on how the news media's handling of 9/11 seemed to negatively target those with links – however tenuous – with Islam:

> She was only a few steps from the limo when someone blocked her way. 'Are you an American citizen, young lady?' a gruff voice barked. Sameera looked up at the grizzled man looming over her and got a whiff of the pizza he must have eaten for lunch. He shoved a microphone into her face.
> 'Don't answer him,' Tara called sharply from inside the limo.
> *Don't worry, I won't*, Sameera thought, trying to get around the foul-smelling man, who seemed about three times her size. *If I open my mouth I'll hurl on him.*
> 'I asked: ARE YOU A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES?' Mr. Halitosis sounded like he was speaking to somebody with a hearing problem. The other reporters had kept a respectful distance, and most of their questions had been friendly. This pit bull made them seem like poodles.[15]

Clearly the reporter's questions are extremely invasive and his intrusion is reinforced via his physical presence: he is physically too close, his offensive smell overwhelms Sameera, and his size blocks her from getting away. Mr Halitosis' breath sickens Sameera and her nausea symbolically reflects the discomfort felt by those classed as 'them' – those who felt that their national loyalties and ties were being questioned by the media post-9/11.

This encounter with Mr. Halitosis positions Sameera as the 'eternal' immigrant: someone who, regardless of their ties to their country of residence, will always seem to have outsider status or have their 'home' affiliations called into question. Discussing how the media post-9/11 perpetuated what she calls a 'morality of exclusion', Asu Aksoy writes:

> President Bush's rhetorical question – 'Are you for us or against us?' – was thrown at immigrant citizens, particularly those with Islamic backgrounds and beliefs. It was sensed that they might well feel 'against us'; that many immigrants, having come from undeveloped and poor zones of the world to the 'West', might well have good grounds (both economic and cultural) for being resentful towards their countries of adoption. In fact it was all too easy to imagine immigrant groups as anti-American in their responses to the events. One commentator in the *Guardian* did not hesitate to argue that Osama bin Laden's 'constituency is the immigrant and dispossessed, the internally displaced, second-generation migrants, refugees and rural communities which have fled from war and famine to unhappy and overcrowded metropolitan areas.'[16]

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[15] Perkins, *First Daughter*, p. 22.
[16] Asu Aksoy, 'Transnational Virtues and Cool Loyalties: Responses of Turkish Speaking Migrants in London to September 11', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 32, 6 (2006), 923–46 (p. 924).

The article Aksoy cites clearly groups all immigrants – including second generations – as 'them'; as 'other'; as eternal immigrants.[17] The encounter with Mr. Halitosis therefore not only highlights how the media questioned the loyalties of Muslim/'Muslim' individuals and groups post-9/11 but represents the discomfort experienced by those who felt scapegoated following the 9/11 attacks.

By depicting the news media as aggressors, both novels highlight the discriminatory reporting techniques and styles employed by the media, which to the general public may not seem explicitly obvious. As such, readers learn to appreciate how some Muslim/'Muslim' people not only felt victimised by media reports but, as the extract from *First Daughter* illustrates, that they were being attacked by the news media because of their real or imagined links to Islam. As such, readers may potentially begin to understand not only the emotions of those who felt targeted by the media but – particularly those who have been enculturated with their 'home' cultures – how alienated, vulnerable and exposed some young people felt. Consequently, readers might begin to understand the negative effects the media's focus had on hybrid Overlapping Space identities.

Multi-Person Consciousness: Feeling Visible

The aggressive reporting methods employed by the news media post-9/11 helped fuel tensions in the public. Coupled with the USA PATRIOT ACT which came into effect in October, 2001, the media helped to disseminate fear about the 'Muslim' other. For example, The *New York Times* published an article in November, 2001, entitled 'Rising Muslim Power in Africa Causes Unrest in Nigeria and Elsewhere', wherein the journalist states that posters of Osama bin Laden have become 'hugely popular' in Nigeria and that clashes between religious groups 'stem from the rise of Islam'.[18] As a result of this biased focus, the general public became increasingly afraid of Islam; however they were not the only ones who were afraid. The reporting methods employed by the news media helped spread fear amongst Muslim/'Muslim' communities as well, and incited what I have defined as 'multi-person consciousness.'

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[17] Article cited: John Mackinlay, 'Tackling Bin Laden: Lessons from History', *Guardian* (28 October 2001) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/oct/28/afghanistan.religion> [accessed 13 October 2007].
[18] Norimitsu Onishi, 'Rising Muslim Power in Africa Causes Unrest in Nigeria and Elsewhere', *New York Times* (1 November 2001) <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/01/world/rising-muslim-power-in-africa-causes-unrest-in-nigeria-and-elsewhere.html?pagewanted=print> [accessed 2 September 2010].

Multi-person consciousness borrows and fuses the ideas of what W. E. B. Du Bois and Frantz Fanon refer to as 'double-consciousness' and 'third-person consciousness' respectively.[19] Du Bois states that the world:

[O]nly lets him [that is, the black man] see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others.[20]

Du Bois asserts that the image of the black man is projected onto the black body and that the subject recognises this projection. Subsequently, s/he has two identities: they are firstly themselves, and secondly they unwillingly fulfil what their corporal bodies represent stereotypically. Similarly, when writing about the 'third-person consciousness', Fanon writes:

And then the occasion arose when I had to meet the white man's eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me. The real world challenged my claims. In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third-person consciousness.[21]

Fanon states that when he is looked at by the white man, he too is aware of what his body means to the world: in the 'white world' his body takes on a particular meaning which he has no control over, as such he sees himself via a third-person perspective in order to form this third-person consciousness. Both Du Bois and Fanon assert that they are consciously aware of what their corporeal bodies, and subsequently their racial identities, mean to the rest of the observing world, that is, the 'white' world. Consequently, they are forced to develop multi-person consciousness, and the media, since 9/11, helped elevate Muslim/'Muslim' consciousness too.

Explicitly highlighting the news media's role in the dissemination of fear amongst these minority groups post-9/11, and the subsequent heightened development of multi-person consciousness, Nadira states:

Even after September 11, we carried on. We heard about how bad it had gotten. Friends of my parents had lost their jobs or couldn't make money, and they were thinking of going back, though, like my father, they'd sold their houses in Bangladesh and had nothing to go back to. We heard about a man who had one side of his face bashed in, and another who was run off the road in his taxi and called bad names. [...]
    But things got worse [my italics]. We began to feel as if the air had frozen around us, trapping us between two jagged ice floes. Each bit of news

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[19] W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), p. 5; Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. by Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 1986), p. 110.
[20] Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, p. 5.
[21] Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 110.

was like a piece of hail flung at us, stinging our skins. *Homeland Security. Patriot Act. Code Orange. Special Registration.* [...] We watched the news of the war and saw ourselves as others saw us: dark, flitting shadows, grenades blooming in our fists. Dangerous.[22]

Nadira's claim that the news media made things worse for Muslim and 'Muslim'-looking people post-9/11 is substantiated by sociological investigations and reports.[23] The references to the hate crimes that targeted Muslim/'Muslim' individuals not only reflects the real after effects of 9/11 but highlights that this community were doubly frightened: frightened, like everyone else, by the threat of terrorism and frightened, because of multi-person consciousness, by how they might be treated because of their real or imagined relations to Islam.[24]

Clearly Nadira and the community whom she speaks for blame the news for their increased victimisation, and her use of metaphor reinforces this idea. Nadira claims that '[e]ach bit of news was like a piece of hail flung at us, stinging our skins.' Having already alluded to race hate crimes, the damage done to peoples' skin, in this context, is meant literally as well as figuratively. Additionally by using the word 'skin' Nadira draws attention to the news' racial focus which, post-9/11, centred on South Asian, Arab and/or Muslim looking people. Nadira further extends this argument when she states: '[w]e watched the news of the war and saw ourselves as others saw us: dark, flitting shadows, grenades blooming in our fists. Dangerous.' The word 'dark' has obvious racial connotations. Within the context of this passage, however, this word is used synonymously with the word 'dangerous' and by extension words such as 'mysterious', 'sinister' and 'malevolent'. The double meaning behind the word 'dark' is deliberately used to highlight how the media helped negatively brand Muslim/'Muslim' people.

This use of Islamic branding in the media, however, is not a phenomenon which emerged post-9/11. In his book *Covering Islam*, published in 1997, Edward W. Said states that '[f]urther back in the public's subliminal cultural consciousness, there was

[22] Budhos, *Ask Me No Questions*, p. 9.
[23] Cainkar, 'The Impact of the September 11'; Cainkar, 'No Longer Invisible'; Dreher, *'Targeted'*; Poynting and Noble, 'Living With Racism'.
[24] Anonymous, '"Islamophobia" Felt 5 Years After 9/11', *ABC News* (9 September 2006) <http://abcnews.go.com/print?id=2413473> [accessed 12 October 2007]; CROEW, 'Islamophobic Attacks in the Wake of September 11'; Civil Rights Organisation, 'Wrong Then, Wrong Now'; Dominic Casciani, 'UK "Islamophobia" Rises After 11 September', *BBC* (29 August 2002) <http://news.bbc.co. uk/1hi/uk/2223301.stm> [accessed 12 October 2007]; Maira, 'Youth Culture, Citizenship and Globalization'; Jay Rayner, 'Grim Truth About Race Hate', *Guardian* (27 March 2005) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2005/mar/27/race.foodanddrink> [accessed 15 October 2007].

the longstanding attitude to Islam, the Arab, and the Orient in general' and that these attitudes have enabled Muslims to become caricatured as 'oil suppliers, as terrorists, and [...] as bloodthirsty mobs.'[25] When looking at how Islam is handled by American and Western medias, Said illustrates that they engage with this religion with 'belligerent hostility' and that they use highly exaggerated stereotypes.[26] Equally the news in *Ask Me No Questions* appears to portray Muslim/'Muslim' people with similar hostility: as 'dark' and 'dangerous'. Consequently Nadira and her community, like Du Bois and Fanon, are forced via their multi-person consciousness to recognise that the negatively stereotyped Islamic images presented in the news media are supposedly meant to represent them which not only heightens their apprehension and their feelings of cultural alienation from their 'home'land, but their feeling of perceived visibility within the scrutiny of the public gaze.

First Daughter offers similar reflections. During James' presidency campaign, the Rightons become the victims of smear campaigns. The articles written about the Righton family and how they are treated in general by the media reflects not only how people associated with Islam were treated and represented by the news media post-9/11, but how the media helped generate and reinforce multi-person consciousness:

> The worst was a photo of Dad smiling down into Sparrow's face as they walked on the dance floor. 'Righton: Soft on Muslims?' read the caption.
>
>> As he clutched his Pakistani daughter in his arms, observers wondered if James Righton's foreigner-friendly approach during these frightening times might not be tough enough to fight the war on terror. We interviewed...
>
> Sameera stopped reading.[27]

The article headline, the photograph, and the references to Pakistan and the 'war on terror' aligns Sameera with Islamic extremism and highlight how the news media, post-9/11, not only demonised Islam but, by 'othering' Muslims, forced some young individuals to feel alienated from their 'home' culture. Ironically, Sameera, though born in Pakistan which is largely an Islamic country, is not Muslim; she is in fact a Christian, which in turn demonstrates how the news media post-9/11 misrepresented individuals. However, because she is loosely associated with Islam she, via the article, becomes the

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[25] Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (London: Vintage, 1997), p. 6.
[26] Ibid., p. xi.
[27] Perkins, *First Daughter*, pp. 106-7.

victim of negative media stereotypes which demonstrates how Muslim/'Muslim' images were negatively used post-9/11.

Having read this article Sameera, like Nadira, develops a media generated multi-person consciousness. This article forces her to recognise that she has no control over how she is represented or how others perceive her. Though Sameera freely accepts – and in fact embraces – her Pakistani heritage, the article forces her to acknowledge that her body is ascribed labels which are beyond her control: in this instance her body, for the news media, symbolises terror.

As a result of multi-person consciousness, the characters in *Ask Me No Questions* and *First Daughter* feel visible, exposed and vulnerable, reflecting the real-life experiences of many Muslim and 'Muslim' youths post-9/11. As stated, because of the media focus on Islam, Muslim/'Muslim' individuals became figures of suspicion and, as such, many became victims of race-hate crimes and attacks. As a result of this new visibility, Rita Verma notes that the events of 9/11 have 'created more barriers for the youth in their schools as they became the victims of racist slurs, threats and physical assault that were treated with apathy from teachers and administrators.'[28] Recognising these effects, *Ask Me No Questions* and *First Daughter* explore the impact that these new visibilities have on their protagonists in order to develop the negative effect that 9/11, in the same way that racism discussed in the previous chapter, had on young hybrid Overlapping Space identities.

Sameera, in an attempt to evade the paparazzi and the PR firm her father has hired, decides that the best way to conceal her identity so that she can go out is to wear her salwar kameez and hijab. However, although she succeeds in her covert mission and is not recognised as 'Sameera Righton: First Daughter-in-waiting', she actually draws more attention than intended:

> To her dismay, a woman on the train gave her a suspicious look. *What's up with her?* Sameera thought. *Does she recognise me?* Oh, well. She'd have to worry about that later. [...]
> The streets of George Washington University were bustling with Friday afternoon activity, and a still-sweating Sameera stopped an elderly woman and showed her the card [for directions]. 'You go straight down the street for three blocks, love,' the woman said, clutching Sameera's hands. 'And please, let me welcome you to America. We're *so* glad you're here and hope you'll consider becoming a citizen of this country.' [...]

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[28] Rita Verma, 'Trauma, Cultural Survival and Identity Politics in a Post-9/11 Era: Reflections by Sikh Youth', *Sikh Formations*, 2, 1 (2006), 89-101 (p. 89).

'Thanks, but I'm an American already,' she said, hating to disillusion this hospitable stranger.

Sure enough, the woman's face fell, and she released Sameera's hands. 'Really? I though you *must* be a newcomer, and I vowed, after 9/11 happened back in 2001, always to welcome newcomers, because those terrorists might have thought about what they were about to do if *someone* had been kind to them in this country. What do you think?'

So *that* was it. Sameera's veiled head was reminding people of all sorts of strange things.[29]

Sameera's encounter with these women forces her to re-acknowledge and confront her multi-person consciousness. In fact the incident with the first woman on the train draws unmistakable parallels with the experience Fanon cites when developing his third-person consciousness theory (he too, on a journey on a train, was singled out as a figure of suspicion). As such, this extract seems to explicitly lend itself to a Fanonian reading.

Undoubtedly both women associate Sameera with the image of a terrorist because her attire makes her look Muslim. The first woman clearly seems to fear Sameera as she regards Sameera with 'a suspicious look' and the second woman, it seems, is trying to stop a potential terrorist in the making. The reactions of these women help demonstrate how Muslim/'Muslim' people were – and still are – regarded with fear and mistrust after the terrorist attacks in 2001. As this novel is a critique of the ways in which the news media represented Islam post-9/11, the reactions of these women suggest that the news' use of sensationalism was successful in vilifying Muslim images which increased Muslim visibility in the public gaze.

Like Sameera, Nadira's sister, Aisha, not only displays multi-person consciousness but is also forced to acknowledge and confront her new and uncomfortable 'visible' status. Before 9/11 Aisha was a very confident teenager. Not only was she the eldest, most dominant and 'perfect' sibling, she was also the popular one at school: all the teachers liked her and she belonged to an elite circle of friends.[30] Nadira, however, was always the quiet one and, as such, the sisters were not that close. However their relationship changes after 9/11 when their father is detained by the Immigration and Naturalization Service:

That's when I realize that Aisha let me into her life because she's feeling left out of her own. [...] she's falling away into a corner. And she only feels safe with me, who knows what's really going on.[31]

[29] Perkins. *First Daughter*, pp. 181-2.
[30] Budhos, *Ask Me No Questions*, p. 3.
[31] Ibid., p. 91.

Although her friends still remain her friends, it is clear that Aisha does not feel as though she fits into her old life anymore. Coupled with the fact that Aisha seeks comfort from Nadira and not from any of her friends at school it indicates that she feels alienated and detached from the 'dominant' society. Aisha no longer enjoys being in the limelight and the text asserts that her new introvert personality is a result of the events of 9/11. Aisha, at the end of the novel claims 'we, the invisible people, became visible' which suggests that Aisha's retreat into a corner is her attempt at trying to make herself 'invisible' once more.[32] She used to enjoy being popular and 'visible' in this respect. However, because of the media focus on 9/11, her multi-person consciousness forces her to acknowledge that her body, for many people, has become associated with the image of a terrorist: she no longer draws attention because she is 'Aisha the popular girl at school'; Aisha feels that people are looking at her and judging her because she is Muslim.

Similarly, like Aisha, Nadira makes concerted efforts to be 'invisible'. Although *Ask Me No Questions* is written from Nadira's perspective in the first person narrative voice, Nadira seems more like an omniscient narrator rather than an actual character. She focuses on the actions and feelings of those around her as she documents what is happening. She even acknowledges her distance and detachment from the action when she claims that she is successfully 'not seen' and that '[s]ometimes the teachers forget me.'[33] Nadira's status as commentator and observer is reasserted via her collection and fascination with maps. For Nadira maps symbolise peoples' directions in life; however, when her family moved to America she says, '[h]ere we lived with no map. We became invisible, the people who swam in between other people's lives, bussing dishes, delivering groceries.'[34] Without a map her family became directionless, lost, insignificant and 'invisible' (which changes after 9/11). Nadira's preoccupation with maps symbolises her desire to help her family establish some roots: she wishes that their lives had 'routes' so that they take on new and fulfilling directions and purposes. As narrator and commentator Nadira is able to document and 'map' the lives of her family. This stance, however, places Nadira at the margins of her story which is highly significant. On the margins Nadira is slightly detached from the events that unfold, reflecting how some people post-9/11 had no control of what was going on around

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[32] Ibid., p. 151.
[33] Ibid., p. 2; ibid., p. 25.
[34] Ibid., pp. 57-8.

them. Equally, and perhaps ironically, on the margins Nadira can watch her life in the third person which enables her to re-appropriate a certain sense of invisibility.

Clearly, Sameera, Aisha and Nadira, because of their multi-person consciousnesses, become increasingly aware that their appearances make them more visible. And, specifically in Nadira and Aisha's case, to try and avoid scrutiny both girls make attempts at making themselves invisible. Their new visibilities make the characters feel as though they stand out; they feel exposed and isolated which reflects how some of the candidates from Verma's study felt post-9/11. Although these new visibilities make the characters feel vulnerable and alienated from their 'home' cultures, they eventually claim their exposure and actually use their new visibilities and their hybrid Overlapping Space identities to amend and correct the images perpetuated in the news media.

Claiming New Visibilities

Since 9/11 many Muslim and 'Muslim' individuals have felt as though they have been placed under public scrutiny. Discussing the effects of 9/11, Sunaina Maira writes that, 'questions of citizenship and racialization have taken on new urgent meanings for South Asian immigrant youth,' as such many young people, like those faced with racism discussed in the previous chapter, began to reassess their cultural identities in response to these questions.[35] When looking at studies which specifically explore identity formation of ethnic minority children, one can see why this is possible. Discussing the work of child psychoanalyst E. H. Erikson, Margaret Beale Spencer and Carol Markstrom-Adams write:

> Erikson speculates that minority and oppressed individuals may be prone to develop a negative identity as a result of accepting negative self-images projected onto them, not only by the larger society, but by their own group as well.[36]

Spencer and Markstrom-Adams argue that Erikson's theory does not solely explain the development of negative self-identities; however, when applying Erikson's ideas to Muslim/'Muslim' children and adolescents post-9/11, one can speculate that as a result of the negative media focus, the consequential development of multi-person

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[35] Maira, 'Youth Culture, Citizenship and Globalization', p. 119.
[36] Margaret Spencer and Carol Markstrom-Adams, 'Identity Processes Among Racial and Ethnic Minority Children in America' *Child Development*, 61, 2 (1990), 290-310 (p. 299).

consciousness coupled with the sensation of feeling 'visible' could explain why some young people, in order to recreate/re-appropriate feelings of belonging, felt compelled to reassess their cultural self-identities.

Reviewing almost twenty years of material exploring ethnic and social identity well-being, Jean S. Phinney identifies that 'being a member of a group provides individuals with a sense of belonging that contributes to a positive self-concept'; as such, 'members of low-status groups seek to improve their status by 'passing' as members of the dominant group [.... Or] develop pride in one's group,' and these types of reactions are observed post-9/11.[37] Focussing on Sikh youths post-9/11, for example, Verma observed that the individuals in her study either intensified their association with their 'homeland' cultures and their religion, or they tried to blend in with the dominant society whereby some individuals even went as far as cutting their hair.[38] The latter reaction is obviously the employment of assimilation techniques, however the former is referred to as 'reactive ethnicity' which Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut define as:

> Reactive ethnicity is the product of confrontation with an adverse native mainstream and the rise of defensive identities and solidarities to counter it [... and is, as such,] a reaction to hostile conditions in the receiving society.[39]

The decisions made to employ assimilation or reactive ethnicity techniques highlight the function of the Overlapping Space model. The people in Verma's study are able to shift their cultural identifications because they have been enculturated with both their 'home' and their 'homeland' cultures; because of their internal sites of Overlapping Space, these individuals can pick and choose from an array of identity choices a cultural identity that they wish to embody. Although this movement highlights the fluidity of cultural identity and how the Overlapping Space model facilitates these decisions, these choices are not entirely 'free'. They are influenced by the use of negative self-images presented in the media thereby highlighting, as discussed in the previous chapter, the constraints placed on young people's cultural identities because of prejudice.

Interestingly, however, like Indie and Jaspal, the protagonists from *Ask Me No Questions* and *First Daughter* ultimately do not employ assimilation or reactive ethnicity techniques despite the media's use of negative self-imagery and the characters'

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[37] Jean S. Phinney, 'Ethnic Identity in Adolescents and Adults: Review of Research', *Psychological Bulletin*, 108, 3 (1990), 499-514 (p. 501; ibid.).

[38] Verma, 'Trauma, Cultural Survival and Identity Politics in a Post-9/11 Era', p. 93.

[39] Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p, 284.

subsequent experiences with multi-person consciousness. In fact Sameera, Nadira and Aisha remain culturally neutral and project their hybrid Overlapping Space identities by actually *claiming and re-appropriating* their new visibilities: these characters take advantage of their new visibilities and deconstruct the media's use of negative self-imagery by foregrounding their own hybrid Overlapping Space identities. Consequently, these novels demonstrate to readers an alternative way of dealing with the media's use of negative self-imagery. Although assimilation and reactive ethnicity techniques may help compensate and/or resolve one's feelings of alienation as a result of feeling visible and exposed, equally, as the characters from these novels demonstrate, being culturally neutral can also help foster feelings of acceptance.

First Daughter deals directly with media induced assimilation pressures post-9/11. As part of his campaign trail, James Righton's office employs a public relations officer, Tara Colby, and her PR team who are put 'in charge of spinning James Righton's personal life for the media.'[40] As such, explicit connections are drawn between Tara and the media. When put in charge of Sameera's public image, Tara insists that Sameera should be called 'Sammy' instead of 'Sameera' or 'Sparrow' (her pet name):

> Tara shrugged. 'Okay. Let's face facts – you're not quite the all-American type, are you? And a name like 'Sameera' just underlines that.'
> 'I've lived overseas a lot, but this doesn't feel like a foreign country to me, if that's what you're worried about.'
> 'I'm not worried about how America feels to you. You've got to realize that *you're* going to seem foreign to America. [...]'
> 'You're going to look like an outsider to some Americans – not to everybody, of course, but there are still some people like that out there. And they vote.'
> 'So we're supposed to cater for a few narrow-minded people?' Sameera asked. 'That seems like we're giving them a ton of power.'
> 'Not at all. What *I* want to do is help you – the real you – survive what could become an ugly campaign. A more...American image can act as a shield to keep the real Sameera safe and sound [...].'

The exchange between Tara and Sameera asserts how Muslim/'Muslim' names and images are potentially negatively received by the general public post-9/11. As such, in order to not only make the presidency campaign run smoother, but to make Sameera's life easier, it would be in Sameera's interest if she were to dissociate herself from her Pakistani name in order to assimilate into the dominant American mainstream. The rationale behind Tara's thinking helps highlight why some of the candidates in Verma's

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[40] Perkins, *First Daughter*, p. 10.

and Phinney's studies, in order to escape discrimination, chose to embrace assimilation techniques. Equally, because it is Tara who is putting pressure on Sameera to change, the novel highlights how the media post-9/11 influenced young people to reassess their cultural identity choices.

In order to reassert the types of external pressures placed on some young people to reassess their cultural identities post-9/11, Tara and her team usurp Sameera's voice as well as her name. Tara's team set up a blog called 'SammySez' (despite the fact that Sameera runs her own called 'Sparrowblog') wherein the character 'Sammy' is supposed to speak on Sameera's behalf:

> Wilder flipped open a laptop with flourish. 'Welcome to SammySez.com,' he said [...].
> A cartoon that looked like an anime girl was forming on the screen, accompanied by background music. The red-lipped, big eyed manga creature was wearing a VOTE FOR RIGHTON button on her shirt. A bubble of words appeared, and Sameera read them under her breath: 'Welcome to SammySez.com, the online journal written by the gurl who knows our next president better than anybody on the planet. I'm Sammy, and this is my virtual crib. Click on the 'Vote for Righton' button, come on in, and hang out for a while.'
> Sameera stared at the manga art in cyberspace. 'Wait a minute,' she said finally. 'That's supposed to be ME!'[41]

Words like 'gurl' and 'crib' are used deliberately to make Sameera sound more 'American'. These words on the page appear ridiculous and, because Sameera does not speak using such Americanisms, the reader quickly picks up that this manga cartoon speaks nothing like Sameera. The artificial nature of this website is reinforced by the cartoon character 'Sammy' herself, firstly because she is a cartoon and secondly because, as the last paragraph of the extract asserts, Sameera does not even realise that this character is supposed to represent her. Here, even though Tara and Wilder are trying to create a positive image of Sameera for the general public, this image is essentially a lie which highlights the media's ability to create images of individuals that are independent of who they really are. By creating this site, Tara and her team deny and oppress Sameera's voice as they want to offer the public what 'SammySez' and not Sameera says which, by implication, suggests that they do not care about what Sameera has to say at all.

The restrictions placed on Sameera's voice are further emphasised when Tara and Wilder feel that Sameera should speak more like 'Sammy'. They tell her that she

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[41] Ibid., p. 39.

should use phrases like 'uh-huh', 'this rocks' and 'totally' a lot more and to giggle as much as she can.[42] All these changes are meant to make Sameera seem more 'American'. Tara tells Sameera: 'Marcus knows pop culture inside and out; if anyone can morph you into an all-American girl, he can. You *do* want to help your father win this election, don't you?'[43] The emotional pressures placed on young people to assimilate into the dominant culture in order to fit in and the media's fuelling of these pressures is starkly evident.

In the ultimate attempt to complete Sameera's transformation, Tara and her team manage how Sameera looks by giving her, as the subtitle of the novel states, an *Extreme American Makeover*. On the front cover of the novel, the words 'extreme' and 'makeover' are written in the same font, and the word 'American' is printed using a different font. Through the use of fonts, the words 'extreme' and 'makeover' are visually paired, associating the novel with the ABC reality television show: *Extreme Makeovers*. This association is further reinforced as Perkins states that Sameera and her cousin Miranda 'were both avid fans of make-over shows'.[44] *Extreme Makeover*'s website sates that:

> Each new episode features participants in their 'before' phase, then as they undergo their various procedures and, finally, when the end results are revealed to their families and friends. The transformations are accomplished through the skills of an 'Extreme Team,' consisting of plastic surgeons, dermatologists, eye surgeons and cosmetic dentists, along with a talented team of hair and makeup artists, stylists and personal trainers.[45]

The purpose of the show is to strive for the perfect body and the perfect look. With the word 'American' written in a different font the subtitle sarcastically *implies* that the perfect body and look is achieved via the 'American' look, and here, as Tara's arguments regarding Sameera's name suggests, 'American' means 'white'.[46]

The idea of 'becoming white' in order to gain social status has been greatly criticised by cultural critics. Nonetheless, many racialised individuals employ certain techniques to try to become 'white', reflecting a fetishisation of fair skin that is a form of white supremacy:

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[42] Ibid., p. 43.
[43] Ibid., p. 41.
[44] Ibid., p. 6.
[45]*Extreme Makeover* <http://abc.go.com/primetime/extrememakeover/show.html> [accessed 20 November 2007].
[46] It is important to note that Perkins is not suggesting that perfect body is 'American', instead the subtitle, *Extreme American Makeover*, is meant to be read ironically.

The exploitative and oppressive nature of color-caste system in white supremacist society has always had a gendered component. [...] Light skin and long, straight hair continue to be traits that define a female as beautiful and desirable in the racist white imagination and the colonized black mind set [...and we] see these images continually in the mass media [...].[47]

Here, bell hooks argues that beauty is commonly equated with whiteness. When Sameera has her American makeover, the fictional channel, *The Celebs!*, state that Sameera has been transformed 'from schoolgirl to posh princess': she has been transformed from being an ordinary and bland Pakistani girl into a beautiful American royal.[48] Even Sameera herself is hugely impressed with the work that Tara and her team has done and feels that she looks 'hot' and asserts that 'it's fun to turn heads for a change.'[49] Although Sameera likes her 'American' look, she refuses to assimilate. As such, this novel does not adhere to the white supremacist belief that 'white' is right, in fact this book critiques this idea.

As part of managing Sameera's presentation, Tara gets to decide what she is allowed to wear. Even though Sameera has been raised to embrace her duel heritage, Tara tries to dissuade Sameera from wearing her salwar kameezes anymore: '[w]hatever that first thing is, bag it [... w]ear the dress.'[50] Culturally salwar kameezes are mostly associated with Islam (saris are more traditionally worn by Hindu and Sikh women), so by telling Sameera to 'bag' her salwar kameez, Tara not only forces Sameera to dissociate herself from her Pakistani background but foregrounds the media's ignorant attitudes towards Islam.

Despite Tara's efforts and the fact that her new 'American' look instils Sameera with a newly found confidence, Sameera defies Tara and wears her salwar kameezes and headscarf regardless. In fact Sameera finds wearing her traditional Pakistani outfits equally as empowering as her makeover. Whilst wearing her salwar kameez, Sameera tells her cousin, Miranda, '[i]t actually made me feel kind of free and powerful', and with regards to wearing burkas, she tells her parents, '[i]n fact, wearing this, I felt extra safe.'[51] Perkins engages with the imperial feminist debate which claims that the hijab, burka and other Islamic women's coverings are oppressive. However, as Meyda Yeğenoğlu asserts, regardless of the fact that some women feel protected and liberated

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[47] bell hooks, *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations* (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 178-9.
[48] Perkins. *First Daughter*, p. 91.
[49] Ibid., p. 77; ibid., p. 97.
[50] Ibid., p. 44.
[51] Ibid., p. 197; ibid., p. 229.

by wearing these clothes, this type of thinking is another form of imperialism which positions women of the 'East' as victims who need to be saved and liberated.[52] Since 9/11, the news media has focused on Islamic coverings and this branch of feminist thought. For example, radio presenter and television political commentator Tammy Bruce, when engaging with American Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi's visit to Syria in April 2007, states that Pelosi's choice to wear the hijab during her visit:

> legitimizes and honors the world's most entrenched oppression of women – the Islamic man's insistence (in the name of 'religion') that women are too dangerous, too dirty, too ungodly, to be allowed to be seen in their entirety in public. [...]
> Disgusting. Hypocritical. Backward. Pathetic.[53]

Addressing these kinds of sentiments in the media, Yasmin Jiwani asserts that since 9/11 the media has tried to use the Islamic veil to emphasise that it is an object of oppression which subsequently reinforces 'the binary oppositions between the liberated West and the oppressed East.'[54] Critiquing imperialist feminist thinking with regards to the veil, Leila Ahmed writes: 'the ideas of Western feminism essentially functioned to morally justify the attack on native societies and to support the notion of comprehensive superiority of Europe.'[55] The veil, as Ahmed discusses, can actually be quite liberating – a sentiment expressed by an eighteenth century English aristocrat and writer no less. Discussing Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters, Ahmed states that 'having herself not only observed veiled women but also used the veil, she was able to assert that it was not the oppressive custom her compatriots believed it to be and it in fact gave women a kind of liberty.'[56] This experience, as Ahmed observes, is one shared over one-hundred and fifty years later:

> In adopting Islamic dress, then, women [feel comfortable with moving within 'sexually integrated social spaces', and] are in effect 'carving out legitimate public spaces for themselves,' [...]. The adoption of the dress does not declare women's place to be in the home but, on the contrary, legitimizes their presence outside it. [...]
> Islamic dress can be seen as the uniform, not of reaction, but of transition; it can be seen, not as a return to traditional dress, but as the adoption

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[52] Meyda Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[53] Tammy Bruce, 'The Result of the American "Feminist" Movement', *Tammy Bruce .Com* (4 April 2007) <http://tammybruce.com/2007/04/the_result_of_the_american_fem.html> [accessed 29 October 2007].

[54] Yasmin Jiwani, '"War Talk" Engendering Terror: Race, Gender and Representation in Canadian Print Media', *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*, 1, 1 (2005), 15-21 (p. 19).

[55] Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 154.

[56] Ibid., p. 150.

of Western dress – with modifications to make it acceptable to the wearer's notions of propriety. Far from indicating that the wearers remain fixed in the world of tradition and the past, then, Islamic dress is the uniform of arrival, signalling entrance into, and determination to move forward in, modernity.[57]

The veil, therefore, can be read as an empowering piece of attire and Sameera shares this sentiment.

Since Sameera's confidence is increased by both her cultural looks, she assets that she wants to embody a Pakistani-American identity, and her interest in a group of girls called the 'Covered Girls' affirms this. When she goes out with her friends to a local Bhangra club, Sameera sees some Muslim girls sporting hijabs who 'dance the night away' and her friends state that: "'Everybody calls them the Covered Girls. Tight jeans and head coverings – it's the new all-American look.'"[58] Her admiration for these girls is confirmed when she declares: 'I may never be a Cover Girl [...] But I make a semi-decent Covered Girl.'[59] Clearly these girls have become a new type of role-model for Sameera. This 'new all-American look' synthesises both American and Pakistani styles together, and, as Sameera likes the 'Covered Girl' style, evidently the hybrid look appeals to her.

Sameera's desire for a hybrid cultural identity is further emphasised when having the ability to choose between American clothes or Pakistani clothes is proven essential in Sameera's life:

> What Sameera really needed was the power shift from visible to invisible, from elegant to funky, from modest to sexy – and to stay in charge of when, where, how and why.[60]

In fact Sameera, throughout the novel, is able to shift quite easily from visible/elegant/modest to invisible/funky/sexy whenever she chooses. As such, Sameera makes good use of her internal site of Overlapping Space which allows her to oscillate between her 'home' and 'homeland' cultures: she is able to negotiate her cultural identity by picking and choosing the elements she wants to embody from each culture.

Note here that the word 'visible' is aligned with Sameera's Pakistani identity. For Sameera to want to be able to shift from invisible to visible suggests that Sameera's experiences with new visibilities and multi-person consciousness has not been a deterrent. Ironically, in fact, when Sameera claims her new visibilities she also feels

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[57] Ibid., pp. 224-5.
[58] Perkins, *First Daughter*, p. 188.
[59] Ibid., p. 192.
[60] Ibid., p. 216.

invisible as well. Although wearing her Pakistani clothes makes her stand out and visible in this respect, because nobody recognises her as America's First Daughter-in-waiting, Sameera actually feels invisible at the same time. Embracing her Pakistani heritage allows Sameera to feel safe and hidden. By claiming her new visibilities, Sameera not only transforms the negative sensations that she experiences into positive, but is actually able to re-appropriate a sense of power.

Though Sameera makes explicit efforts to remain culturally neutral throughout the novel, both Nadira and Aisha *initially* demonstrate reactive ethnicity techniques, which not only coincide with Verma's observations, but allow the novel to acknowledge that the employment of these techniques, given the circumstances, are understandable. Although Aisha's retreat away from her friends is clearly an attempt to try and remain 'invisible', symbolically this can be read as a reactive ethnicity technique – particularly because her friends, who are from different cultural backgrounds, represent Aisha's hybrid Overlapping Space identity. By alienating herself from her friends and clinging on to Nadira who is the only one 'who knows what's really going on', it seems that Aisha is choosing to reject hybridity and is moving away from the cultural mainstream.[61] Equally Nadira symbolically employs reactive ethnicity techniques as well. When trying to help free Abba, Nadira seeks assistance from Tareq who believes that 'we *deshis*, we gotta help each other,' and takes Nadira to an underground resistance group for help.[62] Here, the word 'deshis', the plural of 'desi', refers to people of South Asian origin and it is clear that Tareq and this group have rejected American culture to embrace their desi-ness.

However, although both girls demonstrate reactive ethnicity tendencies, they both choose to reject this type of cultural identity reframing and actually endeavour to remain culturally neutral: Nadira rejects the group that Tareq takes her to see and Aisha resumes her position in her school. In fact, both girls, like Sameera, embrace their new visibilities in order to affirm their hybrid Overlapping Space identities, and in doing so they both feel empowered at the same time.

Nadira eventually moves from the margins of her story to claim her place as the novel's protagonist, and by doing so she finds claiming and re-appropriating her new visibilities very empowering. As discussed, after 9/11 Nadira made attempts to remain inconspicuous and her stance as narrator and commentator helped facilitate her attempts

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[61] Budhos, *Ask Me No Questions*, p. 91.
[62] Ibid., p. 71.

at invisibility. However Nadira is compelled to leave the margins and take charge when the situation with her father, Abba, worsens and he is wrongly accused of sponsoring illegal activities:

> I press my palms on the table and stand. 'May I speak?' [...] 'You've got the wrong person.' [...] I push all the papers toward them and start pointing. [...]
>
> I didn't save Abba. Or maybe I did, in a small way. I made them stop and see me – see *us*. Take a second look.[63]

Although Nadira stops her father from being sent to prison for a crime he never committed, he still has to wait for an immigration hearing and may still be deported, hence the, 'I didn't save Abba', comment. Nonetheless, the fact that Nadira stands up in court to get her voice heard demonstrates that she is no longer happy to stand on the sidelines: she wants to be visible – but on her own terms. Nadira makes the courtroom see her and her family and makes them 'take a second look'. She forces the court to see the Hossain family independently from all the other images that they may have 'seen'; independently of the dangerous and dark, flitting shadowy figures with grenades blooming in their fists.[64] Significantly, here, the collective pronoun 'us', within the context of the novel, not only refers to the Hossain family, but to Muslim/'Muslim' communities as well. By using this word, Nadira has clearly not assimilated into the American mainstream; however, it simultaneously suggests that she has *not* employed reactive ethnicity techniques either.[65] In fact Nadira remains culturally neutral and she is calling to the court to recognise this neutrality. The images presented in the news represents a small minority of individuals and not the 'us' whom Nadira wants to represent; not the 'us' who have successfully integrated with American culture via enculturation and acculturation processes. By calling attention to herself and ultimately re-appropriating her visibility Nadira forces people to recognise that the negatively stereotyped images seen in the news do not fully represent her or the 'us' communities. As such, the fact that Nadira helps win Abba's case illustrates how embracing her new visibility has not only helped her affirm her hybrid Overlapping Space identity, but has helped empower Nadira as well.

Equally, Nadira's sister, Aisha, takes advantage of her new visibilities to affirm her hybrid Overlapping Space identity and build her own self-confidence when she gives her valedictorian speech at her high school graduation ceremony:

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[63] Ibid., pp. 132-6.

[64] Ibid. p. 9.

[65] As discussed above, Nadira explicitly rejects reactive ethnicity techniques in chapter fourteen when she turns her back on the underground resistance group who want to help her father.

Aisha's stepping onto the stage, and as she lifts the bottom of her gown, I can see the high heels Ma let her buy. They had a real fight about it too, in the Parade shoe store, but finally Ma relented and there they are: bright, shiny red satin heels with skinny straps. [...]

'My name is Aisha Hossain. And I am an illegal alien.' [...]

'My family came here eight years ago on a tourist visa and stayed. [...]

'In those days they didn't enforce the laws. We were the people you didn't always see, [...]'

She swallows some water, 'And then one day two planes came and smashed into two towers. A war started. Overnight, we, the invisible people, became visible. We became dangerous. We became terrorists, people with bombs in our luggage, poison in our homes. [...]'

She pauses. 'All I ask of you is to see me for who I am. Aisha. I spell my name not with a *y* or an *e*, but with an *i*. See me. I live with you. I live near you. I go to your school; I eat in your cafeteria; I take the same classes. Now I am your valedictorian. I want what you want. I want a future.'[66]

Aisha's shoes link her to popular American culture. Britney Spears, Aisha's pop idol, who in her 'Oops!... I Did It Again' music video, famously sports an all-in-one red catsuit with red heels affirms this. Red heels, however, are perhaps made more famous by Dorothy from the movie *The Wizard of Oz* (1939).[67] Through this secondary reference the novel foregrounds explicitly themes shared between the two texts – of leaving home, new journeys, exile and becoming an alien in a new land. For Salman Rushdie, *The Wizard of Oz* speaks directly to migrants and exiles:

So Oz finally *became* home; the imagined world became the actual world, as it does for us all, because the truth is that once we have left our childhood places and started to make up our lives, armed only with what we are, we understand that the real secret of the ruby slippers is not that 'there's no place like home', but rather that there is no longer any such place *as* home: except, of course, for the home we make, or the homes that are made for us, in Oz: which is anywhere and everywhere, except the place from which we began.[68]

Metaphorically, the Land of Oz is, for the exile, their new home. Even though at the end of the film Dorothy returns back to Kansas by clicking the heels of her ruby slippers together, Rushdie asserts that in the novels that follow the movie, she eventually returns to Oz to become a princess which reaffirms the idea that the Land of Oz is Dorothy's, and subsequently the exile's, new home. In terms of *Ask Me No Questions* such reference points to a connection between Oz and New York: Dorothy acquires her ruby slippers in the Land of Oz and Aisha buys her red shoes in New York. Aisha's shoes,

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[66] Budhos, *Ask Me No Questions*, pp. 150-52.

[67] L. Frank Baum, *The Wizard of Oz*, dir. by Victor Fleming, screenplay by Noel Langley et al. (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1939). *The Wizard of Oz*, written by L. Frank Baum, was originally a novel published in 1900.

[68] Salman Rushdie, *The Wizard of Oz* (London: The British Film Institute, 1992), p.57.

therefore, symbolically assert that New York is *her* new home. Aisha is not only aligned with popular American culture but has been enculturated with American culture as well.

However, as well as being associated with American culture, in this same extract Aisha also aligns herself with ethnic minority groups too by using the collective pronoun: 'we'. In her speech Aisha draws attention to her multi-person consciousness and repeats the phrase 'we became': 'we [...] became visible', 'we became dangerous', 'we became terrorists'. Her sad tone asserts that this 'becoming' is not meant in the literal sense: people did not suddenly become actual terrorists, but, as this novel focuses on the media's use of negative Muslim/'Muslim' imagery post-9/11, people like Aisha became victims of stereotype: they, as Edward Said argues in his criticisms of the media, were 'othered' and were forced to represent ideologies which were deemed un-American, uncivilised and unenlightened.[69] The subtly ironic way that Aisha describes this 'becoming', therefore, actually affirms Aisha's disassociation with these dangerous and terrorist images which, in turn, illustrates that a terrorist identity is not part of the repertoire of Bangladeshi or Islamic identities that Aisha has been taught to embody.

The 'we' identity that Aisha projects is independent of these negative images confirming that the 'homeland' culture that she has been taught is not affiliated with extremism. Aisha, therefore, serves to undo some of the myths created about Muslim/'Muslim' individuals. When Aisha demands that her audience 'see' *her*, she, like Nadira, is asking them to see her as a representative of Islamic culture and to ignore the negative images perpetuated in the news media. Importantly, she is able to represent her 'homeland' culture *because* she embodies certain traits that she been taught: because of enculturation, the identity that she projects reflects parts of her 'homeland' culture as well as her American culture – a hybrid cultural identity which she has negotiated via her internal site of Overlapping Space.

Here, by claiming her new visibility, Aisha finds her voice and not only speaks for herself but for the communities whom she represents. In doing so she engages in something akin to what John Fiske refers to as 'Oprahization' which:

> [R]efers to the process by which the disempowered produce their situated knowledge, oppose it to official knowledge, and speak it on the media in a way that grants it a social extensiveness that the regime of truth would deny it.'[70]

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[69] Said, *Covering Islam*.
[70] John Fiske, 'White Watch' in *Ethnic Minorities and the Media*, ed. by Simon Cottle (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2000), pp. 50-66 (p. 58).

Oprahization is essentially a way in which individuals deconstruct the representations of minorities in mainstream media. Although Aisha's address is not on television she is, however, likened to a news reporter: she addresses a large audience, engages in current affairs, and, by telling her audience about the situation with Abba, she recounts a newsworthy story (in fact the story about the Hossain's family struggles are eventually told by a local news reporter). As such, Aisha's retelling of events helps to undermine existing news reports. She highlights that in fact the everyday Muslim/'Muslim' person is *not* a terrorist despite the suggestions made in the news media. And by speaking out and taking advantage of her new visibility, Aisha not only helps destabilise popular cultural stereotypes, she is empowered and her self-confidence returns.

Conclusion

First Daughter and *Ask Me No Questions* explore in detail the effect the media's attention on 9/11 had on Muslim/'Muslim' individuals and communities. These novels both reflect the findings and observations made by sociological studies into the after-effects of 9/11. They help to draw attention to the fact that many individuals felt attacked and scapegoated by the media because of their real or imagined relations to Islam and, as such, not only felt alienated from their 'home' cultures but were forced to develop a more acute sense of multi-person consciousness. As a result of this consciousness, many individuals felt vulnerable, exposed and visible and some experienced abuse or discrimination because of their associations with Islam. However, although Sameera, Aisha and Nadira initially find their new visibilities disconcerting, none of the characters demonstrate a permanent shift in cultural identity. In fact the characters learn to take advantage of their exposure in order to reassert and reaffirm their hybrid Overlapping Space identities which they ultimately find empowering.

Despite the media pressures placed on Sameera to assimilate (as represented by Tara, Mr. Halitosis and the racist news articles about her) and the unwanted attention that she receives from the public when wearing her Pakistani clothes, Sameera does not choose to assimilate. In fact she rebels and decides to wear her traditional clothes whenever she likes. This reaffirmation of ethnic ties, however, is not an example of reactive ethnicity either because Sameera chooses to maintain ties with her American identity as well. Clearly for Sameera, claiming both her American and Pakistani identity is an essential component of her life. By keeping a strong hold on her Pakistani identity,

Sameera owns her new visibilities. Instead of continuing to feel conscious and exposed when sporting her Islamic clothes, she feels empowered; instead of abandoning her Pakistani identity and becoming 'Sammy', Sameera rejects assimilation and embraces hybridity instead.

Equally, Nadira and Aisha make similar claims to their hybrid identities. Both Nadira and Aisha make concerted efforts to try and remain invisible following 9/11 and their father's subsequent detainment: however both characters eventually take centre stage (literally in Aisha's case) when they take hold of their visibilities and challenge the negative self-images presented in the news media. Nadira forces the courtroom to take note of her and to acknowledge that she – and not the pictures presented in the news – represents a large majority of the Muslim/'Muslim' communities living in America: communities who do not pose a threat to America because they have integrated, either via acculturation or enculturation, into American life. Equally Aisha not only draws attention to her hybrid Overlapping Space identity, she forces her audience to recognise that her wants are the same as theirs thus highlighting the commonalities between the people classed as 'them' and those classed as 'us'. Both Nadira and Aisha, instead of developing negative self-identities by internalising and accepting the images which influence their multi-person consciousness, actually resist these images. By doing so, both characters are able to choose the identities they want to project and dismiss external influence and interference.

The cultural identity tensions presented in these novels are important for three reasons. Firstly, readers who identify with the characters may find these books a source of bibliotherapy. Some readers might see the ways in which Sameera, Nadira and Aisha deal with the media aftermath of 9/11 and how they find ways to empower themselves comforting and perhaps inspiring. Secondly, these texts not only illustrate that Muslim/'Muslim' communities and individuals were also victims of the 9/11 events but they raise awareness to how the media helped fuel tensions – tensions which ultimately forced people to feel alienated from their 'home' cultures as well put pressure on young individuals to reassess their cultural identities. Finally, because of these cultural identity tensions, readers can see how the characters make their cultural identity choices, which not only helps demonstrate the functionality of the Overlapping Space model as well as legitimising Overlapping Space identities, but makes these books significant contributors to the understanding of cultural identity negotiation. These books, therefore, send a message that despite prejudice, imposed 'home'land cultural alienation

and the consequential pressures to change one's cultural self-identity, young people enculturated with two or more cultures should ultimately have the right to choose who *they* want to be.

Chapter 3: (Re)Visiting Homelands

Introduction

The majority of children's literature from the South Asian Diaspora focuses on the experiences of those growing up in the UK, Canada or the US and consequently is based in these countries. There are, however, other books which look at the experiences of those who do not live in, but make significant contact with, their ancestral homelands, for example, *Maya Running* by Anjali Banerjee, *The Pocket Guide to Being an Indian Girl* by Baljinder K. Mahal and *(Un)Arranged Marriage* by Bali Rai.[1] Such texts explore a *different* part of the diasporic experience, and one that has currently been underexplored by contemporary theories of diaspora and travel. In doing so, these books provide critics with specific examples of the function of enculturation as an aspect of Overlapping Space identities. They highlight the function of *emotional* situational ethnicity, and – most importantly – demonstrate that there exists a specific psychology involved in this form of travel. These novels foreground both the positive experiences and the possible tensions which accompany these visits and, via the understanding of Overlapping Space identities, they explain the cause of these sensations. As such, this chapter highlights the bibliotherapeutic prospects of these types of novels and demonstrates that young diasporic individuals are encouraged to negotiate their cultural identities in simultaneously both a physical and a mental space.

Vineeta Vijayaraghavan's *Motherland* and Mitali Perkins's *Monsoon Summer* exemplify this argument.[2] The majority of each of these stories takes place in India, and the books offer different, yet conceptually significant, representations of cultural identity and identity development. Whilst Vijayaraghavan's protagonist, Maya, was born in India and is part of the 1.5 generation, Perkins's Jazz is a bi-racial, second generation Indian. In this respect, the texts offer engagements with the significance of ancestral homelands in terms of very different cultural (and racial) backgrounds. In both cases, however, the central protagonists do not live within extended South Asian

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[1] Anjali Banerjee, *Maya Running* (New Delhi: Puffin Books, 2005); Baljinder K. Mahal, *The Pocket Guide to Being an Indian Girl* (London: Black Amber, 2004); Bali Rai, *(Un)Arranged Marriage* (London: Corgi Books, 2001).
[2] Vineeta Vijayaraghavan, *Motherland* (USA: Soho Press, 2001; repr. Somerset: The Chicken House, 2004); Mitali Perkins, *Monsoon Summer* (New York: Delacorte Press, 2004; repr. London: Simon & Schuster, 2006).

diasporic communities.[3] This provides the opportunity to engage with the psychological experiences of these forms of travel on Overlapping Space identities in particularly complex and nuanced ways.

It is the suggestion of this chapter that the literal journeys from the margins of American society to India undertaken by Jazz and Maya exemplify four key strategies which relate both to the models of cultural identity the novels offer, and their function within the genre of children's literature. Firstly, these journeys locate these two novels within an established children's literature tradition: the Bildungsroman – the 'coming of age' novel. Like other Bildungsroman children's novels, for example Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies* (1864), Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911) and, more recently J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* (1997-2007) series, Jazz and Maya's physical journeys force them to confront and overcome personal challenges and concerns so that, by the end of each novel, they demonstrate an increased level of maturity. In this context, the novels function bibliotherapeutically in a culturally neutral context, providing young readers with models of growing up which may allow them to negotiate their own adolescent confusion.

Secondly, these novels work on a culturally specific level to foreground the role of enculturation. Here, the Bildungsroman is transformed as it functions principally as a means to identify specifically the effects of growing up *as a South Asian diasporan*. The Bildungsroman presents both Jazz and Maya as still growing up, but in such a way that the identities they are still developing include prominently their cultural identities. When they are exposed to Indian culture, this contact contributes to the formation of their cultural identities which not only demonstrates the function of the Overlapping Space model, but provides critics with a renewed understanding of the significance of these forms of travel.

Third, these journeys illustrate *emotional* situational ethnicity: in a given place or circumstance, an individual's 'felt' cultural identity is determined by the environment that they find themselves in.[4] Jazz and Maya, 'feel' a greater sense of affiliation with their 'homeland' culture when they are in India. These books, therefore, challenge the

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[3] Jazz's mother, Sarah, who was adopted from an orphanage in India, 'was the only full Indian in the family' (Perkins, *Monsoon Summer*, p. 9) and the only 'Indian' that they knew, whereas Maya suggests that she and her family are on the margins of the Indian community in America as they do not originate from the larger Indian cities like Bombay and Delhi (Vijayaraghavan, *Motherland*, p. 48).

[4] Yasmin K. Sekhon and Isabelle Szmigin, 'Conceptualizing Ethnicity and Acculturation of Second Generation Asian Indians in Britain', *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, 3 (2005), 1-18.

stereotypical ideas of being caught between two cultures and culture clash discussed in the main the introduction of this thesis.[5]

Finally, and most importantly, these journeys highlight that there is a specific psychology of travel that shapes adolescent and young adult identities. They demonstrate a complex set of emotions that can be associated with these forms of travel and which are not evident in existing discussions. Engaging with Sigmund Freud's theories of the uncanny and its related emotions, these novels foreground the emotional and psychological impact that 'homeland' visits have on the adolescent. They chart how the protagonists react to what can be defined as uncanny experiences and sensations and how they undergo what philosopher and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva refers to as 'abjection': 'rejecting what is other to oneself' as a mode of self preservation.[6] Consequently, these novels shift the focus from imposed 'home'land cultural alienation to self-imposed 'homeland' cultural estrangement. Nonetheless, these novels illustrate that despite the protagonists' attempts at abjection they inadvertently undergo unexpected enculturations with India and its culture. As such the protagonists learn to resolve their anxieties, which in turn helps them to negate feelings of disassociation and dislocation which not only reflects a prospective part of the second generation homeland (re)visit experience but also has the potential to offer readers who relate to Maya's and Jazz's experiences of abjection and alienation a form of bibliotherapy which, by extension, legitimises the Overlapping Space identity experience.

(Re)Visiting Homelands: Gaps in the Current Research

This chapter is premised on the suggestion that the experience of travel recounted in texts such as Vijayaraghavan's *Motherland* and Perkins's *Monsoon Summer* is one largely neglected by both diaspora and tourism studies. A survey of existing conceptual frameworks reveals thirteen different terms relating to the type of tourism associated with (re)visiting ancestral homelands: 1) Diaspora Tourism,[7] 2) Visiting Friends and

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[5] For a succinct and effective criticism of the term 'culture clash', please see Brah's discussion beginning on page 40 from *Cartographies of Diaspora*.

[6] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982); Noëlle McAfee, *Julia Kristeva* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 45.

[7] Tim Coles and Dallen J. Timothy 'My Field is the World', in *Tourism, Diasporas and Space*, ed. by Tim Coles and Dallen J. Timothy (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 1-29; Nazia Ali and Andrew Holden, 'Post-colonial Pakistani Mobilities: the Embodiment of the "Myth of Return" in Tourism', *Mobilities*, 1, 2 (2006), 217-242; Kevin Hannam, 'India and the Ambivalences of Diaspora

Relatives (VFR) Tourism,[8] 3) The Return Visit,[9] 4) Ethnic Reunion Tourism,[10] 5) Migration-led Tourism,[11] 6) Transnational Participation,[12] 7) Ethnic Tourism,[13] 8) Roots Tourism,[14] 9) Genealogy/Genealogical Tourism,[15] 10) Family History Tourism,[16] 11) Ancestral Tourism,[17] 12) Legacy Tourism,[18] and 13) Heritage Tourism.[19] Although not all of these terms can be used synonymously there are, nevertheless, some perceivable overlaps. For example, 'roots', 'genealogy/genealogical', 'family history', 'ancestral' and 'legacy' tourism all reflect very similar definitions. Regardless of these

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Tourism' in *Tourism, Diasporas and Space*, ed. by Tim Coles and Dallen J. Timothy (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 246-260.

[8] Coles and Timothy 'My Field is the World'; David Timothy Duval, 'When Hosts Become Guests: Return Visits and Diasporic Identities in a Commonwealth Eastern Caribbean Community', *Current Issues in Tourism*, 6, 4 (2003), 267-308; Allan M. Williams and C. Michael Hall, 'Tourism, Migration, Circulation and Mobility' in *Tourism and Migration: New Relationships Between Production and Consumption*, ed. by C. Michael Hall and Allan M. Williams (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), pp. 1-52.

[9] Loretta Baldassar, 'Home and Away: Migration, the Return Visit and "Transnational Identity"', in *Communal/Plural 5: Home, Displacement, Belonging*, ed. by I. Ang and M. Symonds (Sydney: Research Centre in Intercommunal Studies, 1997), pp. 69-94; David Timothy Duval, 'Conceptualizing Return Visits: A Transnational Perspective', in *Tourism, Diasporas and Space*, ed. by Tim Coles and Dallen J. Timothy (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 50-61; David Timothy Duval, 'The Return Visit-Return Migration Connection', in *Tourism and Migration: New Relationships Between Production and Consumption*, ed. by C. Michael Hall and Allan M. Williams (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), pp. 257-276.

[10] 'Involves travelling for the purpose of visiting friends and relatives and/or searching for one's cultural roots' (Marcus L. Stephenson, 'Travelling to the Ancestral Homelands: The Aspirations and Experiences of a UK Caribbean Community', *Current Issues in Tourism*, 5, 5 [2002], 378-425 [p. 378]).

[11] 'Migration-led tourism' is associated with VFR tourism and this term was coined by Paul Boyle et al. (Williams and Hall, 'Tourism, Migration, Circulation and Mobility', p. 38).

[12] Robert C. Smith's phrase, 'Transnational participation', is closely linked to return visits and VFR tourism (Duval, 'Conceptualizing Return Visits', p. 54).

[13] Brian King defines 'ethnic tourism' (which is slightly different to 'ethnic reunion tourism') as travel that is 'motivated by a desire to delve into family histories through travel[ling] to the relevant country. It might or alternatively might not involve actually staying with family [...] this type of tourism has tended to be regarded as virtually synonymous with the visiting friends and relatives or VFR traffic' (Brain King, 'What is Ethnic Tourism? An Australian Perspective', *Tourism Management*, 15, 3 [1994], 173-6 [p. 174]).

[14] 'Roots or Genealogy tourism looks at 'the role of travel in the biographical and narrative construction of self-identity' (Kevin Meethan, 'To Stand in the Shoes of my Ancestors' in *Tourism, Diasporas and Space*, ed. by Tim Coles and Dallen J. Timothy [London; New York: Routledge, 2004], pp 139-150 [p. 139]).

[15] Ibid.

[16] 'Family History Tourism' and 'Ancestral Tourism' are modes of tourism which involves the 'search for roots and routes' (Coles and Timothy, 'My Field is the World', p. 14).

[17] Ibid.

[18] 'Legacy Tourism', like family history and ancestral tourism, refer to 'those that travel to engage in genealogical endeavours, to search for information on or simply feel connected to ancestors and ancestral roots' (Gary McCain and Nina M. Ray, 'Legacy Tourism: The Search for Personal Meaning in Heritage Travel', *Tourism Management*, 24, 6 [2003], 713-717 [p. 713]).

[19] Gary McCain and Nina M. Ray state that 'Heritage Tourism' 'includes tourism related to what we have inherited [... for example] history, art, science, lifestyle' (McCain and Ray. 'Legacy Tourism', p. 713), however. Timothy and Coles link group heritage tourism with diaspora tourism/travel (Dallen J. Timothy and Tim Coles. 'Tourism and Diasporas: Current Issues and Future Opportunities', in *Tourism, Diasporas and Space*, ed. by Tim Coles and Dallen J. Timothy [London; New York: Routledge, 2004], pp. 291-297 [p. 292]).

overlaps, the current research indicates that the three most salient and frequently used terms are: 'diaspora tourism', 'VFR tourism' and the 'return visit'.

Tim Coles and Dallen J. Timothy define 'diaspora tourism' as, 'tourism [which is] primarily produced, consumed and experienced by diasporic communities,' and state that 'diaspora tourism is impacted by over-arching imperatives and meta-narratives in the cultures, societies, economies and political systems in which diasporas are embedded.'[20] 'Visiting Friends and Relatives' tourism, more commonly known as 'VFR' travel, is self-explanatory as it refers to people whose travel intensions are based on or include meeting up with friends and family. Finally, the term 'return visit', coined by Loretta Baldassar, which can relate to VFR travel, is defined by David Timothy Duval as 'periodic, but temporary, sojourns made by members of diasporic communities to either their external homeland or another location in which strong social ties have been forged.'[21] Duval argues that return visitors have a 'self-ascribed membership in a diasporic community' and have 'prior social or cultural experiences in the destination. As a result, the sub-categorisation of the return visit not only hinges on motivation, but also takes the social and cultural background of the individual into consideration.'[22]

Although these terminologies are used in both diaspora and tourism studies, all three of these popular terms have obvious shortcomings. The term 'diaspora tourism' is ambivalent because, as Coles and Timothy's first definition indicates, it incorporates *all* types of tourism which may or may not include visits to ancestral homelands. Moreover, although this term is quite inclusive, it is non-generation specific. The travel motivations for first generation migrants to visit their homelands may (and probably do) differ quite considerably to those of the 1.5, second and third generations. This inclusive term is therefore too vague and non-specific. VFR tourism is a similarly broad definition. Allan M. Williams and C. Michael Hall observe that, 'VFR tourism can flow in both directions along the friends and family network': the term, therefore, cannot just be applied to those who are visiting their friends and family in their ancestral homelands, it can also apply to those who leave these homelands to visit their friends and families who have migrated.[23] Moreover, 'VFR tourism' does not necessarily examine the movement from 'home' to 'homeland' or vice versa. People can visit

[20] Coles and Timothy, 'My Field is the World', p. 2; ibid., p. 19.
[21] Duval, 'Conceptualizing Return Visits', p. 51.
[22] Duval, 'When Hosts Become Guests', p. 277; Duval, 'The Return Visit-Return Migration Connection', p. 259.
[23] Williams and Hall, 'Tourism, Migration, Circulation and Mobility', p. 39.

friends and families who have migrated to *other* countries. For example, I have relatives who live in France. When I visit these relations, my visit is classed as VFR tourism. By contrast, 'return visit', however, does seem to indicate a more specific direction of travel. The word 'return', when dealing with diaspora and postcolonial studies, conjures up associations with the ubiquitous 'myth of return', the idea that the migrant might one day permanently return to their ancestral homeland. The word 'return', therefore, in this context, refers to the visitor's homeland. However, as Regina Scheyvens highlights, 'return visit' in the context of tourism becomes 'ambiguous as it could refer to foreign tourists making multiple visits to one destination.'[24] More significantly for the concerns in this thesis, 'return' cannot be applied to second or third generation migrants visiting their ancestral homelands for the first time because they are not actually returning. The term 'return visit' is therefore far too indistinct and, like 'diaspora tourism', does not acknowledge generational differences.

These linguistic limitations suggest a gap in the study of diaspora and tourism and the significance of (re)visiting homelands in general. Meethan and Duval, amongst others, respectively argue that roots, genealogy and VFR tourism have been largely neglected or have only just started to receive academic attention.[25] Scheyvens, whilst critiquing tourism studies, claims that:

> The lack of attention to these forms of tourism, apart from demonstrating a gross oversight in terms of appreciating their value, also hints of neocolonial attitudes: 'The existing tourism literature and planning, on the whole, see a "tourist" as being automatically a "Northerner", with leisure activity being his or her privileged practice'.[26]

Similarly, Coles and Timothy also acknowledge that tourism studies have 'overlooked diasporas.'[27] However, they also assert that 'diaspora studies has by and large bypassed tourism as a consideration in the mediation of sustainability of diasporic communities', indicating that perhaps one reason why diaspora studies has disregarded tourism is because 'tourist visits are thought to be temporary and superficial'.[28]

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[24] Regina Scheyvens, 'Poor Cousins No More: Valuing the Development Potential of Domestic and Diaspora Tourism', *Progress in Development Studies*, 7, 4 (2007), 307-25 (p. 309).

[25] Meethan, 'To Stand in the Shoes of my Ancestors', p. 139; Duval, 'When Hosts Become Guests', p. 278; Duval, 'The Return Visit-Return Migration Connection', p. 257.

[26] Scheyvens, 'Poor Cousins No More', p. 309. Scheyvens quotes here K. B. Ghimire, 'The Growth of National and Regional Tourism in Developing Countries: An Overview', in *The Native Tourist: Mass Tourism within Developing Countries*, ed. by, K. B. Ghimire (London: Earthscan, 2001), pp. 1-29 (p. 3)

[27] Coles and Timothy, p. 2.

[28] Ibid.; Edward M. Bruner, 'Tourism in Ghana: The Representation of Slavery and the Return of the Black Diaspora', *American Anthropologist*, 98 (1996), 290-304 (p. 290), cited in Coles and Timothy, *Tourism, Diasporas and Space*, p. 2.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that these visits may often be short-term, they have the potential to alter peoples' sense of self-identity and as such should be subjected to empirical research. However, as Duval points out, 'the concepts of transnationalism and transnational identities and their relationship to tourism has not been fully explored.'[29] Similarly, Nazia Ali and Andrew Holden argue that one of the complaints of 'return migrations and return visits research is [the fact that it] overlook[s] the role of identities in the motivations to travel to ancestral homelands,' and that: [30]

> Return migration and return visits studies are limited to first-generation decedents who locate the visits within their migration process. [...] However, the significance of return migrations and return visits for children (second/third/fourth generations) with countries of origin or birth different to parents (first generation) has been overlooked.[31]

Clearly, therefore, there is still a significant amount of research that needs to be done in order to address this type of tourism, and, not only should extended studies address this branch of diaspora and tourism experience, it also needs to be classified.[32]

Despite coming across thirteen different terminologies that can be associated with the (re)visiting of ancestral homelands, none of these terminologies, not even the ones that are more commonly used, fit the specific area of research for this chapter. For the purposes of this chapter, therefore, I will refer to this branch of tourism as *Second Generation (2G) Homeland (Re)Visits*.[33] As both diaspora and tourism studies have largely overlooked this type of tourism and subsequently the significance of 2G homeland (re)visits, one can see why both Vijayaraghavan's and Perkins's novels are

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[29] Duval, 'When Hosts Become Guests', p. 276.

[30] Ali and Holden, 'Post-colonial Pakistani Mobilities', p. 222.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Currently the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council is funding a project at Sussex University entitled, 'Home and Away: South Asian Children's Representations of Diaspora,' which explores the travelling experiences of 8 to 13 year olds from the UK Bangladeshi diasporic community (Katy Gardner, Kanwal Mand, and Benji Zeitlyn, 'Home and Away: South Asian Children's Representations of Diaspora', *Sussex Centre for Migration Research* <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/migration/1-2-2-3.html> [accessed 17 December 2010]). However, little remains in terms of work published exploring this type of travel experience. Currently two studies, one conducted by Marcus L. Stephenson, and another by Marcela Ramirez, Zlatko Skrbiš and Michael Emmison, explore the Caribbean second and the Salvadoran 1.5 generation travel experiences respectively, and, in terms of the South Asian diaspora, Katy Gardner and Abdus Shukur, and Kanwal Mand look at the Bangladeshi second generation travel experience (Stephenson, 'Travelling to the Ancestral Homelands'; Marcela Ramirez, Zlatko Skrbiš and Michael Emmison, 'Transnational Family Reunions as Lived Experience: Narrating a Salvadoran Autoethnography', *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 14 [2007], 411-431; Katy Gardner, and Abdus Shukur '"I'm Bengali, I'm Asian, and I'm Living Here": The Changing Identities of British Bengalis', in Roger Ballard (ed.), *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Presence in Britain* [London: Hurst and Company, 1994], pp. 142-164; Kanwal Mand, '"I've Got Two Houses. One in Bangladesh and One in London... Everybody Has": Home, Locality and Belonging(s)', *Childhood*, 17 [2010], 273-87).

[33] Here the term 'second generation' incorporates the 1.5 generation. Hereafter abbreviated to: '2G homeland (re)visits'.

important to these fields; they highlight the need for further research into this type of tourism; they draw attention to the fact that these studies need to look beyond the first generation and address, at the very least, the upcoming second and third generations and the effects that this type of tourism has on young developing identities.

What such novels foreground is the fact that travel experiences, as Kevin Meethan argues, can be a 'voyage of self-discovery;'[34] that, as Stephenson recognises, people 'reconstruct an identity of themselves through their travel perceptions and experiences.'[35] Stephenson, however, also notes that:

> Although destination experiences and encounters do not always encourage individuals to perceive themselves to be more Jamaican or Barbadian, for example, they do provide an opportunity for them to reassess their own identities.[36]

Clearly, therefore, these types of trips *do not* necessarily have to affect individuals' ethnic identities, rather these trips give them the *opportunity* to reassess these identities and this experience is what *Motherland* and *Monsoon Summer* draw attention to.

By exposing young diasporic individuals to new and different cultures, travel is seen to evoke a range of emotional and psychological experiences including feelings of estrangement, the uncanny and abjection. Though in both *Monsoon Summer* and *Motherland* the protagonists encounter alienating experiences, because of their ages they undergo unexpected processes of enculturation. Via their exposure and the inadvertent absorption of Indian cultural traits, values and customs, they then demonstrate, utilising strategies which can be defined in terms of the Overlapping Space model, the ability to renegotiate their cultural identities so that they incorporate an Indian identity *on top of* their existing American identities. These books demonstrate that by negotiating hybrid Overlapping Space identities these characters are able to grow in confidence which has potential bibliotherapeutic potential. Such character developments in *Motherland* and *Monsoon Summer* foreground an underexplored area of the second generation South Asian experience and implicitly demand that diaspora and tourism studies broaden their current research.

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[34] Meethan, 'To Stand in the Shoes of my Ancestors', p. 141.
[35] Stephenson, 'Travelling to the Ancestral Homelands', p. 378.
[36] Ibid., pp. 416-7.

The Uncanny Experience of Travel

Motherland and *Monsoon Summer* both illustrate that part of the psychological experience of 2G homeland (re)visits is rooted in feelings of anxiety and extreme discomfort.[37] Both Jazz and Maya express strong resistance to their trips, mainly because they do not want to be separated from their love interests who are, incidentally, both called Steve. However, their resistance also stems from obvious feelings of uncertainty; for Jazz and Maya, India and its culture is alien and unfamiliar, and both protagonists feel threatened by possibilities of what Nazia Ali and Andrew Holden define as ethnic formation:[38]

> Parents send their children *'back home'*, regularly for an *'ethnic formation'* or even 're-formation' or 'de-formation', [as they are] caught up in a post-colonial predicament where generations are having to continuously negotiate and renegotiate their (diasporic) ethnic identities.[39]

In a similar study conducted by Duval, one of his candidates claimed: 'For me, I feel a sense of responsibility to take my children to SVG [St Vincent and the Grenadines], to make them understand the SVG.'[40] The parents in both these studies indicate that they want to take/send their children 'back home' so that their children can learn more about their homeland cultures, and this idea is not new to literature: take, for example, the motivations to send the character Magid to Bangladesh in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*.[41]

That neither of the protagonists are part of extended South Asian communities heightens the psychological impact that homeland (re)visits have. Even though Maya spent most of her childhood in India, her 'Western' identity and estrangement from her childhood is established by her dating, her linguistic limitations, and by the fact that she has little or no contact with South Asian communities:[42]

> We knew other Indian families in New York, and there were some Indians in my school. It was different for some of them because they were from big cities, like Bombay and Delhi, where things were modern now [...]. But not in the south, where my family was from.[43]

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[37] See Gardner and Shukur, "'I'm Bengali, I'm Asian, and I'm Living Here,'" and Kanwal Mand, "'I've Got Two Houses. One in Bangladesh and One in London'".

[38] Equally, some of the British-Bengali candidates in Gardner and Shukur's study, despite their 'Bengaliness', find Bangladesh an 'alien world' (Gardner and Shukur, "'I'm Bengali, I'm Asian, and I'm Living Here,'" p. 158).

[39] Ali and Holden, 'Post-colonial Pakistani Mobilities', p. 222.

[40] Duval, 'Conceptualizing Return Visits', p. 57.

[41] Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (London: Penguin, 2001).

[42] Maya tells the reader that she 'could understand Malayalam but wasn't comfortable speaking it' (Vijayaraghavan, *Motherland*, p. 3).

[43] Vijayaraghavan, *Motherland*, p. 48.

It seems that because Maya's family are from a southern region in India – a place that other Indian New Yorkers refer to as a 'backward place' – she and her family are on the margins of this extended community.[44] Maya and her family's limited relationship with the Indian communities in New York strongly suggest that Maya does not have the same access to a youth subcultural group, like the characters discussed in the next chapter, potentially because her enculturation with American culture seems to have negated a cultural nostalgia for India.[45] In fact, the novel actually implies that Maya operates largely within *one* cultural framework: American. Consequently her trip to India forces her to confront a cultural environment which appears alien. However, what heightens Maya's unease is the fact that she is not expected to act like a tourist but as what Stephenson refers to, a 'non-tourist' – one who actively participates in the cultural norms and practices of their family.[46] Living and operating within one cultural framework asserts that Maya lacks situational ethnicity practice; as such she does not have the suitable experience required to navigate between, but more importantly participate in, different cultural spheres. Consequently her trip to India is dominated by anxieties about how she will deal with this different culture.

Similarly, like Maya, Perkins emphasises Jazz's mono-cultural American environment. Jazz's mother, Sarah, was adopted by 'blond, blue-eyed Nordic American' parents; though they made efforts to expose Sarah to Indian culture by sending her to Hindi language classes and similar efforts were made with Jazz and her brother, Eric, Jazz and her family nonetheless live and operate inside a white mainstream American culture.[47] As such, Jazz has never needed to operate using situational ethnicity either. The motivations behind Jazz's and Maya's visits are different: Maya's mother sends her to India to separate her from her 'frat-boy boyfriend' and to learn more about the place and culture she 'comes from', whereas the main aim of Jazz's trip is to meet Sister Das – the nun who looked after Sarah before she was adopted – and to reunite her mother, and in turn Jazz and the rest of her family, with their long-lost Indian family.[48]

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[44] Ibid., p. 48.

[45] In India Maya recognises that her 'Americanness' has smothered her 'Indianness' affirming that Maya's American identity seems to have negated her Indian one (ibid., p. 35). Consequently Maya does not appear to display a nostalgia for India or Indian culture which explains her alienation from the youth subcultural peer group of the novel.

[46] Stephenson, 'Travelling to the Ancestral Homelands', p. 404.

[47] Perkins, *Monsoon Summer*, p. 19.

[48] Vijayaraghavan, *Motherland*, p.2; ibid., p. 5. For more information about the taboos associated with dating within South Asian cultural terms, please see Chapter Five.

Essentially both characters' visits aim to reunite them with their cultural heritages and to offer the possibility for ethnic formation. Coupled with the fact that both protagonists are being forced to immerse themselves within a culture that seems alien to them, this expectation of ethnic formation heightens Jazz's and Maya's feelings of anxiety further.

This initial focus on Jazz's and Maya's feelings of estrangement from India and Indian culture is supplemented in each novel by continued psychological estrangements which can be usefully explored by drawing on Freud's theories of uncanny. Because they do not have extensive situational ethnicity experience, Maya and Jazz find it difficult to ease into Indian life: they do not, upon landing in India, suddenly develop any form of cultural appreciation or attachment, in fact they experience the opposite, and this tension reflects a potentially intrinsic aspect of the 2G homeland (re)visit experience.[49]

As part of the 1.5 generation, Maya is born in India and is raised by her grandmother, Ammamma, until the age of four when she is sent to live with her parents in America. Maya's description of her grandmother illuminates multiple layers of significance in the novel's title: 'I used to call her Amma [the informal Indian word for 'mother'], at first because I couldn't manage to enunciate the whole word Ammamma, and then because I really thought she was my mother.'[50] On a personal level, India is Maya's motherland because it was where she was born. Significantly, the word 'motherland' is also used synonymously with the actual country itself as India is sometimes referred to as *Bharat Mata*: Mother India.[51] India, however, is also Maya's motherland because it is where her surrogate mother, Ammamma, lives. Maya's child-mother affiliation with Ammamma is doubly heightened because of Maya's strained relationship with her actual mother whom she refers to as a 'reluctant' parent.[52] For Maya, therefore, the word 'motherland' represents *both* India and her grandmother; as such Vijayaraghavan suggests that Ammamma and ideas of India and Indian culture are interchangeable. As Maya feels estranged from her grandmother, her estrangement from

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[49] David Punter discusses something that he calls the 'diasporic uncanny' which essentially argues that the exile, because s/he is 'other' to the surrounding environment experiences the uncanny. Although Punter puts forward an interesting idea, he does not suggest that these uncanny experiences are resolvable. Instead, the diasporic individual has 'no "place" of one's own' (David Punter, 'The Uncanny', in *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, ed. by Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy [Oxon: Routlege, 2007], pp. 129-136 [p. 133]) implying that the exile is in a perpetual state of uncanniness which I find difficult to agree with. See also David Punter, *The Influence of the Post-Modern on Contemporary Writing: An Interdisciplinary Study* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), pp. 140-1.
[50] Vijayaraghavan. *Motherland*, p. 10-11.
[51] For an extended discussion of 'Mother India', please see Chapter Five.
[52] Vijayaraghavan, *Motherland*, p. 50.

India and its culture is established. When they first embrace, Maya's physical detachment is shown to produce an awkwardness which has deep psychological roots, comparable to what Salman Rushdie describes as the migrant's reaction to an 'Imaginary Homeland'. Rushdie argues that the migrant, in order to compensate for not being able to reclaim what they have left behind, 'create[s] fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind.'[53] Memories are used to create fictions: fictions about the country and fictions about the people remembered, and it seems that Maya has created a fiction about her grandmother and it is *this* story which alienates her further:

> Then I saw my grandmother walk towards me. Ammamma was all in white, as she had been since my grandfather died twenty years ago [...] She shuffled slowly in my direction, her chappals scraping against the rough stone floor smiling. She looked older. Her face looked more tired, more sagging, and her glasses were thicker in their black square frames.[54]

From a distance and dressed in white Maya's grandmother looks exactly how she remembers her. At this distance Ammamma seems to fulfil, to twist Rushdie's phrase, the Ammamma of Maya's mind. However, when Ammamma draws nearer, Maya notices how much her grandmother has aged since the last time she saw her: Ammamma is no longer the Ammamma of Maya's mind and neither is India.

That one's homeland is, in these terms, no longer homely brings one to Freud's ideas of the 'uncanny'. The word uncanny derives from the German word 'unheimlich' meaning 'unhomely' and is associated with negative feelings. The opposite of 'unheimlich' is 'heimlich' meaning that which 'belong[s] to the house, [is] not strange, [is] familiar [... and] friendly.'[55] However, Freud suggests that the word 'heimlich' can also be associated with that which is 'concealed, kept from sight' and 'withheld', implying that the second interpretation of the word 'heimlich' has close associations with its opposite, 'unheimlich'.[56] Because of this close link between 'heimlich' and 'unheimlich', Freud goes on to argue that '[i]t may be true that the uncanny ['unheimlich'] is something which is secretly familiar ['heimlich-heimisch'].'[57] Maya's experience on seeing her grandmother is a moment of the uncanny: Ammamma's

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[53] Salman Rushdie, 'Imaginary Homelands' in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London; New York: Granta Books, 1991), pp. 9-21 (p. 10).
[54] Vijayaraghavan, *Motherland*, p. 10.
[55] Sigmund Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Vincent B. Leitch et al., trans. by Alix Strachey (New York; London: W. W. Norton, 2001), pp. 929-952 (p. 931).
[56] Ibid., p. 933.
[57] Ibid., p. 947.

ageing means she no longer fulfils Maya's 'imaginary' grandmother. She is simultaneously both familiar and unfamiliar.

Discussing the uncanny, Nicholas Royle states:

> The uncanny involves feelings of uncertainty, in particular regarding the reality of who one is and what is being experienced. Suddenly one's sense of oneself (of one's so-called 'personality' or 'sexuality', for example) seems strangely questionable.[58]

As the image/fiction that Maya created about Ammamma is shattered she, as Royle's argument indicates, is forced to not only question her perception of the world, but what she knows in general: her history, her experiences and her identity. This moment undoubtedly unsettles Maya and as these uncanny feelings relate to that which is 'unhomely', Maya clearly also feels estranged not only from her grandmother but also from the place that she once called 'home'. Ammamma, and subsequently India, has changed as they no longer subscribe to what Maya 'knows' or 'remembers'.

This experience of the uncanny as part of the 2G (re)visit experience is reinforced later in the novel when Maya blames her American identity for her sense of estrangement:

> If I scrubbed hard enough, I hoped I would peel away that layer of Americanness that made me feel clumsy and conspicuous here; I wanted to unearth that other person who had felt at home here and known how to fit in.[59]

Maya's difficulty adapting to her environment foregrounds her lack of situational ethnicity experience. Engaging with ideas of cultural estrangement, Rushdie claims, 'our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost'.[60] Having spent so much time away from India, Maya does not know how to 'be Indian' and, as such, has lost the person she once was. Maya's reference to 'home' asserts that she does not feel 'at home' in India: for Maya, her family home has become 'unheimlich'. Yet Maya *wants* to feel that connection with India and her family, but she cannot reconstruct the lost bond because, having spent all of her adolescence in and undergone processes of enculturation with America, she feels too American: she is not just physically dislocated from Ammamma and her family, but dislocated culturally also, explaining the uncanny sensations she feels.

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[58] Nicolas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 1.
[59] Vijayaraghavan, *Motherland*, p. 35.
[60] Rushdie, 'Imaginary Homelands', p. 10.

Like Maya, Jazz also feels estranged in India because, first, she has been moved into an unfamiliar cultural context which, because of her mono-cultural experience in America, makes her feel out of place and, second, because she too experiences uncanny feelings:

> I knew India was a poor country, but it was still a shock to see it with my own eyes. A lot of the children wore rags, and very few of them wore shoes. [...]
> Beside the tracks stood a pregnant girl wearing a wet orange saree that clung to her body. She was barefoot, and the brass pot she was balancing on her head was as round as her stomach. The rest of her was angles, thin and bony. She looked about my age.[61]

Jazz's fixation on feet and shoes illustrates her shock at how many of the children in India go barefoot. Jazz's identification with the girl on the train tracks reasserts her sense of disbelief, because the girl, like her, looks like she is only fifteen years old. Through her empathy with the girl Jazz experiences uncanny sensations. The girl on the tracks can be seen as Jazz's *Doppelgänger*, 'the uncanny harbinger of death' that forces people to acknowledge their own mortality.[62] The girl is familiar/heimlich – hence the identification – yet unfamiliar/unheimlich at the same time. As Royle argues above, the uncanny forces people to question who they are, so as Jazz identifies with this girl, the barriers between 'self' and 'other' are eroded.

Jazz's uncanny feelings are also intensified by the treatment of strangers:

> One of them almost lost his footing when he passed by, his eyes fixed on me. As he steadied himself, I realized he wasn't the only one staring. Dozens of eyes were watching me from every corner of the train.
> 'Mom,' I whispered. 'Why is everybody staring?'
> 'They're curious, I guess,' she whispered back. 'It's not considered rude to stare here.'
> Great. A whole summer in a country where people thought it was normal to ogle at you.[63]

In her unfamiliarity, the treatment Jazz receives from strangers heightens her sense of unease. Jazz's sarcasm suggests how uncomfortable she feels, and the description of others staring resonates with Freud's ideas of 'the dread of the evil eye'.[64] Freud argues that the 'evil eye' belongs to the watcher wherein the person of focus subconsciously feels as though they have become the object of envy because they possess qualities and/or traits that are coveted. The person watched then fears that the watcher's jealousy

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[61] Perkins, *Monsoon Summer*, p. 35-37.
[62] Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 940.
[63] Perkins, *Monsoon Summer*, p. 37.
[64] Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 943.

has intensified to such a degree that they desire to hurt the person of focus: 'what is feared is [... the watcher's] secret intension of doing harm'.[65] Jazz's discomfort and uncanny feelings, it seems, come from this subconscious fear.

The experience of feeling watched and observed, and experiencing subsequent feelings of estrangement, is not uncommon in 2G homeland (re)visits. For example, Lloyd, in Stephenson's study, asserts:

> People were saying now and again, 'Hey yu, foreign', addressing me like that... I didn't cotton on to it at first. I didn't realise it was directed at me. I was a bit shocked... I saw myself going to my homeland... Well they see your clothes, the things you got on, the English accents and all that, and they say 'y' foreign'... That's the way it can be.[66]

For Lloyd, a second generation migrant, looking different means he is called 'foreign' or 'English'. Consequently he is made to feel segregated from his 'homeland' country and finds the uncanny forced upon him: young people like Lloyd want their 'homelands' to be 'heimlich' but the treatment that they receive creates 'unheimlich' sensations. Similarly, Jazz looks obviously 'foreign' because she is bi-racial and has lighter skin like her father so she too feels alienated when people 'ogle' at her.[67]

As a way of dealing with the uncanny, Freud argues that people 'become alienated [from the uncanny] through the process of repression.'[68] However Maya and Jazz cannot simply repress these feelings: because they are in India, they are surrounded by what makes them experience the uncanny. As a mechanism for self-preservation both Jazz and Maya instead choose to reject India; they, borrowing Julia Kristeva's term, 'abject' India and its culture by rejecting the symbols of India. Jazz rejects Ammamma and Maya rejects Sister Das which only isolates them further.

Discussing abjection Kristeva writes:

> A massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness, which, familiar as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now harries me as radically separate, loathsome. Not me. Not that. But not nothing, either. A 'something' that I do not recognize as a thing. A weight of meaninglessness, about which there is nothing insignificant, and which crushes me. On the edge of nonexistence and hallucination, of a reality that, if I acknowledge it, annihilates me. There, abject and abjection are my safeguards.[69]

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[65] Ibid., p. 944.
[66] Stephenson, 'Travelling to the Ancestral Homelands', p. 409.
[67] Perkins, *Monsoon Summer*, p. 37.
[68] Freud, 'The "Uncanny"', p. 944.
[69] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 2.

Instead of repressing the uncanny, Kristeva argues that we push it away: we expel it; we abject it. The source of our uncanniness is no longer a part of us but is something that we have pushed outside the self. However, what has been abjected always threatens the borders of self because, as Noëlle McAfee explains:

> What is abjected is radically excluded but never banished altogether. It hovers on the periphery of one's existence, constantly challenging one's tenuous borders of selfhood. What makes something abject and not simply repressed is that it does not entirely disappear from consciousness. It remains as both an unconscious and a conscious threat to one's own clean and proper self.[70]

As such the subject, in order to fully abject what they deem as 'other' and dangerous to the self, has to remain vigilant. They must constantly work against what threatens them and in the case of *Motherland* and *Monsoon Summer* the protagonists work against Ammamma and Sister Das respectively.

The attempts at abjection made by both Maya and Jazz are obvious and they reflect some of the observations made by Gardner and Shukur. Discussing their candidate Terry's experiences with homeland (re)visits to Bangladesh, they write:

> [H]is first month was spent in adolescent rebellion. He spoke English whenever he could, insisted on wearing shorts and a T-shirt, spurning the very thought of a *lunghi*, and sat sullenly when the relatives came to visit. Left to himself, he listed to his Walkman and read thrillers. [...] The message which Terry was intent on conveying was that he had nothing to do with village life, and that his culture was Western.[71]

Likewise, arriving at her family home, Maya expresses similar discomforts with being in India:

> I knew I wasn't going to be offered one of the guest rooms. Those were for company guests, or for my parents, but not for me. [...]
> In my grandmother's room, there were the expected two double beds pushed together, united under a king-size blue paisley cover. [...] The bath oils had a strong sweet smell, and there was the smell of the Vicks and the rosewater, and the incense that was lit every morning and evening in front of the little shrine my grandmother kept in one corner of the room. [...] It would only be a matter of days before all of that permeated me, my hair, my clothes, my magazines and books.[72]

The opening sentences can be interpreted in two ways. The fact that Maya will be expected to share a room with a relative instead of sleeping in a guest room has potential positive connotations: she is being brought into the family fold. However,

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[70] McAfee, *Julia Kristeva*, p. 46.
[71] Gardner and Shukur, "'I'm Bengali, I'm Asian, and I'm Living Here,'" p. 159.
[72] Vijayaraghavan, *Motherland*, pp. 23-24.

instead of feeling included in the family, Maya feels uncomfortable with such intimacy. Her unease is depicted via the way that she describes the scents that she associates with Ammamma: although Maya describes some of the smells as 'sweet' and she detects the scent of rosewater which has quite a pleasant fragrance, these smells are infused with the smell of Vicks, which is a distinctly medicinal smell and incense which, like Vicks, can be heady and overpowering. Clearly Maya finds the confusion of these smells unpleasant.

'Permeated' has connotations with 'infiltrate', 'ooze' and 'saturate', all of which signify unpleasant experiences that link with Kristeva's ideas: that the subject is always on guard to ensure that what is abjected does not (re)enter the self. As images of Ammamma, India and Indian culture are symbolically interchangeable in this novel; should Maya expose herself to Ammamma's scents she is in danger of being 'permeated' by Indianness; she is in danger of having the boundary between the self and what is abjected (India and its culture) shattered.

Similarly, like Maya, Jazz abjects India and Indian culture by rejecting Sister Das when she refuses to go to Asha Bari, the orphanage where her mother came from:

> 'What's wrong, Jazz?' Eric asked finally.
> 'I don't know, Eric. I just can't seem to settle down,' [...] It was my first weekend without Steve Morales in years, and I was aching to hear his voice. [...]
> I plopped down beside him on the floor and lifted a jar with the most enormous spider I'd ever seen trapped inside. [...]
> 'Auntie Das said you could use the orphanage phone if you want,' my brother continued. 'Why don't you walk down there?'
> I put down the jar that jailed the spider. 'I'm not going to the orphanage, Eric. That place is just not for me.'[73]

Eric's insects stand as a metaphor for Jazz's feelings: 'Slumping in my chair, I watched the caterpillar squeeze itself into the jar. *Run for your life*, I wanted to yell, feeling a strange connection to the creature.'[74] Clearly, both the captured spider and the caterpillar symbolize not only Jazz's feelings of entrapment and her desire to escape, but the sense that she is in an unnatural environment. Eric 'kept only the rarest of specimens'; subsequently Jazz's associations with the bugs are reinforced because in India, like the bugs, *she* looks like a rare specimen.[75] Jazz's connection with the spider and caterpillar reinforces how Jazz's uncanny feelings are associated with the evil eye.

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[73] Perkins, *Monsoon Summer*, p. 51.
[74] Ibid., p. 63.
[75] Ibid., p. 18-19.

The bugs, like Jazz, are objects of observation, and because of their entrapment are vulnerable and at the mercy of their captor. So when Jazz says, 'I put down the jar that jailed the spider. "I'm not going to the orphanage, Eric. That place is just not for me,"' the text foregrounds Jazz's attempts at abjection: she is closing herself off from both Sister Das and India – the sources of her uncanniness.[76] The act of putting down the spider metaphorically suggests that she is resigned to being 'stuck' in India. However, her decision to *not* go to Asha Bari – even if it means missing out on calling Steve – demonstrates that even though she has to stay in India, she will abject India by rejecting Sister Das.

I am able to relate to the experiences these novels represent. When I go to Mauritius, my family, like Maya's and Jazz's friends and relatives, always receive my visits with warmth. I am made to feel very welcome in my families' homes and they always make the effort to keep me entertained either by taking me around the island to visit other friends and family, or to visit the beaches or to visit some of the other popular tourist attractions. Although I love visiting my family, when I leave the UK I do feel slightly unnerved. Seeing my family is exciting but I am always apprehensive when I go because I know that since the last time I saw them all, my family will have expanded quite considerably with the birth of new children and the introduction of new cousin-in-laws. Although I know all my first cousins really well, I confess to confusion when it comes to the names of their children, grandchildren and sometimes even their partners. This social limitation is hugely embarrassing especially when I'm asked 'do you remember so-and-so', to which I automatically lie. Being in England means I miss out on most of the things that go on in Mauritius. So when I am over there I experience both 'heimlich' and 'unheimlich' emotions. Although I am warmly received by everyone and embraced by my family, I feel, at the same time, estranged because I know that I do not have the same connection with them as they do with each other. I can relate to both Maya's and Jazz's experiences.

What I did not have growing up with these experiences was a point of reference to help me work through them psychologically. In these terms, the bibliotherapeutic effect of representing the uncanniness of 2G homeland (re)visits becomes significant. It is therefore essential that these novels explore in detail the discomfort and cultural alienation potentially experienced by the individual. Engaging with Freud's ideas about

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[76] Ibid., p. 51.

the uncanny and the characters' subsequent attempts at abjecting of all things 'Indian', these novels not only develop Maya's and Jazz's feelings of cultural estrangement but present a potential part of the 2G homeland (re)visit experience. Consequently these books have the potential to offer their readers who relate to these feelings a form of bibliotherapy. They illustrate that it is not uncommon for young people to fear, dislike or reject their 'homeland' cultures and in doing so both novels normalise this experience. Moreover, as well as normalising these experiences, these novels also illustrate that these uncanny and uncomfortable sensations are potentially resolvable via unexpected enculturations.

Unexpected Enculturations

Other than highlighting the possible alienating effects 2G homeland (re)visits may have, both *Monsoon Summer* and *Motherland* also offer positive 'problem solving' potential in this regard which resonates with roots or genealogy forms of travel.[77] Read through the uncanny and abjection, *Motherland* and *Monsoon Summer* both foreground that within the 2G homeland (re)visit experience there can exist complex sets of emotions: that these forms of travel can be rooted in anxiety and can make people feel alienated and unhappy. However, through storytelling, which is part of the (re)visiting experience, both Maya and Jazz open up to their listeners and by doing so they inadvertently undergo unexpected enculturations. These novels, therefore, demonstrate through the enculturation process that for Overlapping Space identities negative emotional and psychological experiences can be resolved into feelings of reintegration and rehabilitation.

At this point it is important to address the issue of realism. From a *superficial* perspective it can be argued that these texts modify elements found in comedy whereby the comedy opens with a complication so that the resolution of this complication provides readers and audiences with a happy ending. Such utopian happy endings, as I discuss in Chapter One, do not offer the best bibliotherapeutic potential. When at the end of these books the protagonists find that their experiences in India have allowed them to gain in confidence and they feel closer to their loved ones, these novels may be

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[77] According the Kevin Meethan, roots or genealogy tourism looks at 'the role of travel in the biographical and narrative construction of self-identity' (Meethan, 'To Stand in the Shoes of my Ancestors', p. 139).

seen to subscribe to a version of the utopian happy ending.[78] So on a superficial level these books appear formulaic. *However*, it is important to acknowledge that the portrayal of these experiences is also representative of real experience and *not* just a convenient plot devise. For example, based on the information he collected, Stephenson argues:

> The process of becoming temporarily located or relocated into the ancestral domain can be traumatising for UK Caribbean visitors, particularly in cases where travel experiences and encounters create personal anxieties over self identification and social position. The disjunctive condition of being a 'foreigner' in the ancestral homeland can initially confuse one's self-identity and challenge one's positive identification with that destination.[79]

The same process is true for many 1.5 and second generation members of the South Asian diaspora. Maya's initial encounter with her grandmother creates anxieties for her as her reunion with Ammamma challenges her memory. Each experience affects her and the relationship she used to have with her grandmother. Jazz, on the other hand, when she first arrives in India feels like a foreigner when people stare at her which subsequently challenges *her* identification with India.

Both protagonists, through unexpected enculturations, learn to resolve these negative feelings. They essentially transform (or in Maya's case, reform) the 'unheimlich' into 'heimlich'. As Bildungsroman novels both Jazz and Maya are in the process of maturation: they are still developing their identities which includes their cultural identities. When they are exposed to Indian culture, they begin – despite their efforts to resist – to enculturate with India.

These new enculturations expand the potential of Jazz's and Maya's Overlapping Space identities. By being physically immersed within Indian culture, both characters are exposed to new cultural affiliations. As such they are given a new array of cultural identity choices from which to create their hybrid Overlapping Space identities: by being in India both Jazz and Maya are given the tools to reinvent, reformulate and transform their identities in whichever way they want.

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[78] According to Peter Hyland, tragedies split families apart, whereas comedies bring families back together (Peter Hyland, *An Introduction to Shakespeare: The Dramatist in this Context*, [Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996], p. 135).
[79] Stephenson, 'Travelling to the Ancestral Homelands', p. 411.

This transformation is evident when, half-way through her visit, precipitated by a serious accident, Maya acknowledges that she has not made that much of an effort with her grandmother and decides to change her behaviour:[80]

> I reached for my clothes on the hook, just to the left of the sink. And I slipped. [...]. Then I was down on the floor.
>
> I didn't pass out [...]
>
> I tried to stand up. I unlatched the door, and called again, louder, 'Ammamma.'
>
> [...] My grandmother walked in, and she caught me as I slumped towards the ground. She sat right on the floor, the wet floor, and as I sank into her lap I was engulfed by the white of her sari, and watched as her sari became batiked red with my blood. And then I passed out.[81]

The fact that Maya's blood 'batiks' the white material is significant for two reasons. Firstly, as blood is associated with menstruation, we can see Maya symbolically moving from childhood to adulthood which brings us to the second point. As an 'adult' Maya is releasing the childhood image of Ammamma – the imaginary Ammamma – that she had carried with her through the years of growing up in America. Notably Maya's blood splatters Ammamma's white sari which, as argued, was part of the original source of Maya's uncanniness. By putting her mark, as it were, on Ammamma's sari, Maya symbolically releases the 'old' Ammamma and reappropriates the present day Ammamma as *hers*.

Maya's claiming of Ammamma is affirmed with the timing of her falling unconscious. The moment Maya lands on the floor she does not pass out but actually waits for Ammamma. Clearly as Maya feels safe enough in her grandmother's arms *to* pass out she not only begins to resolve her 'unheimlich' emotions, she actually recreates the emotional connection she once had with her grandmother. Notice that Maya is 'engulfed' by Ammamma's sari. Previously, Maya abjects Ammamma by refusing to share her sleeping quarters so that her grandmother's perfumes do not 'permeate' her.[82] However, by allowing Ammamma's sari to 'engulf' her it is evident that Maya is no longer trying to abject Ammamma. The mingling of Maya's blood with the sari, therefore, not only symbolises the start of Maya's resolution of her uncanny feelings, but as it is *her* blood that is 'permeating' the sari, Maya is symbolically reclaiming what she abjected *back* into her: she is reclaiming Ammamma, and by extension India and its culture, as hers.

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[80] Vijayaraghavan, *Motherland*, p. 116; ibid., p. 138.
[81] Ibid., p. 143.
[82] Ibid., p. 24.

Following this incident Maya and Ammamma's relationship changes. Because Maya hit her head in the fall, she is instructed by her doctor to 'explore' her memory and she accepts Ammamma's assistance with writing her memories down:[83]

> Over the next few days, I told her things. She did not comment – she just wrote [...] She filled page after page of a notebook, front and back.
> I told [her] everything – my first treehouse, my first swim team medal, my first period. The only time Mother ever slapped me, the only time I had detention at school, the only stuffed animal I still slept with [...].[84]

Again here, the reference made to Maya's period signals Maya's maturation. Maya's memory task allows her to open up to her grandmother. By not only talking but *confiding* in Ammamma, Maya symbolically draws Ammamma *into her* which not only reasserts that she is trying to reappropriate what she once abjected as hers, but demonstrates that she is inadvertently undergoing an enculturation process and is building new cultural affiliations. Through these processes Maya no longer feels estranged from Ammamma anymore as she successfully transforms the 'unheimlich' into 'heimlich'.

This memory task is essentially an act of storytelling, something which is often part of the homeland (re)visiting experience. When I visit Mauritius, my relatives like to recount some of our family stories. Sometimes these stories are about my last visit or are tales relating to other family members. These stories are sometimes funny; for example, my family tease me about my love of cats. Every time I go to Mauritius I always befriend the strays and I sneak them out food. However, when I leave, the cats do not. Instead, they stick around hoping to get more food – in fact one cat, whom I named Kajal because of his black rimmed eyes – never left and became the family pet (my uncle claims they kept him because the cat would come every day meowing looking for me, so because he seemed so broken-hearted, they did not want to shoo him away). So when I revisit Mauritius, my aunts and uncles jokingly chastise me and threaten never to invite me again if I keep filling up their houses with strays. Other than the good times, however, we also remember members of the family whom we have lost. Storytelling is therefore a bonding activity and, for me, it is part of the experience of revisiting Mauritius.

Novelist and postcolonial theorist Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, when discussing the function of storytelling, writes: 'I can vividly recall those evenings of storytelling

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[83] Ibid., p. 153.
[84] Ibid., pp. 153-5.

around the fireside. It was mostly the grown-ups telling the children but everybody was interested and involved.'[85] Here, the word 'involved' connotes feelings of unity and indicates that storytelling sessions like these bonded the family. Similarly, Ramirez states:

> The whole room was in constant laughter at the stories she told of the eleven brothers and sisters growing up and the trouble they got into. Especially for my brother and I, who did not have concrete shared experiences with our aunts and uncles, it was so important to hear the narratives, and in a way, get to know those family members through the stories, alleviating our nostalgia for home.[86]

Ramirez's journal entry illustrates how the act of storytelling is not just part of a bonding activity, but a way for Ramirez (and her brother) to 'incorporate those stories into her family history memory.'[87] Maya tells stories which allow Ammamma to build on her own 'family history memory' and vice versa. Consequently, as Maya is opening up to her grandmother, this act of storytelling allows their bond to grow and Vijayaraghavan presents to readers a significant part of the 2G homeland (re)visit experience that heals the individual through the experience of transformative enculturation.

At the end of the novel, after Ammamma's funeral, Maya tells the reader:

> I hadn't expected it to be so hard to leave, to feel so confused about what I was going back to, to remember startlingly that we called that place home. That place was home even though here was where I had gained and lost a grandmother, gained and lost a friendship, a sister, a marriage proposal. Here I had gained (however tenuously) a mother, a conscience, and the awareness that compassion often mattered as much or more than justice.[88]

Thus the title of the novel, *Motherland*, assumes a broader meaning: it is the land where Maya finds, amongst other important things, *her* mother. At the beginning of the novel, Maya asserts that she feels out of place in India because of her 'Americanness' which highlights that she essentially *feels* American.[89] When referring to America in the extract above, she says that she, 'remember[s] startlingly that [she] called that place home.' Here, Vijayaraghavan asserts that even though Maya has spent a whole summer in India, she still recognises that America is her home but that, *at the same time*, because she has undergone processes of enculturation in India, she now sees India as

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[85] Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (East African Education Publishers: Westlands, 2004 [1986]), p.10.
[86] Ramirez, Skrbiš and Emmison, 'Transnational Family Reunions', p. 424.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Vijayaraghavan, *Motherland*, p. 230.
[89] Ibid., p. 35.

her home too. Opening up to her grandmother via the memory task and essentially confronting the source of her uncanny feelings allows Maya to resolve her 'unheimlich' experience. This resolution is demonstrated by the fact that she sees *both* America *and* India as her homes thus recognising her transnational identity.

Although Maya may feel *more* Indian, she has not done so at the expense of her American identity. As the Overlapping Space model suggests, an individual can incorporate different levels of ethnic identification with different cultures which is not at the expense of others. Maya can retain the same amount of what she calls 'Americanness' even though she associates herself with her Indian culture more readily.[90] Maya feels more Indian because of enculturation, but also *because* she is in India. As she has undergone processes of enculturation with both India and America, Maya is equipped with the tools to operate situational ethnicity. So, as she feels more Indian in India, Maya, by overcoming her 'unheimlich' feelings, operates using *emotional situational ethnicity*. In doing so, the novel illustrates how a person's environment can affect their psyche and how they emotionally relate to their surroundings. Nonetheless, what is important to note is that Maya's visit to India has not made her *more* Indian in spite of her American identity, but has made her more Indian *on top* of her American identity. Maya's (re)visiting homeland experience enables her to become the *one and the other*: to become Indian *and* American. As such Maya not only draws attention to the limits of applying Bhabha's Third Space model to identity which, as discussed in the main introduction of this thesis, claims that the hybrid product is 'neither the one, nor the other', but highlights the practicalities of Overlapping Space identities.[91]

Jazz, like Maya, also undergoes unexpected enculturations. She too renegotiates her cultural identity and learns to resolve her feelings of estrangement by allowing herself to connect to those around her. Like Maya, she becomes familiar with her surrounding environment and makes the once 'unheimlich', 'heimlich'. As such Jazz is able to resolve her uncanny feelings and in doing so learns to be more confident. Throughout most of the novel Jazz is resolute in her decision to abject Sister Das and everything that she associates with her including an Asha Bari resident, a young girl

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[90] Ibid.

[91] Homi K. Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory', in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 19-39 (p. 25).

called Danita.[92] However, Jazz, despite trying to remain elusive, eventually becomes friends with Danita who introduces her to Indian customs and traditions. The two girls become each others' confidants: Danita tells Jazz about how she and her two little sisters ended up as residents of Asha Bari and her plans for the future; Jazz tells Danita about her life in America and even tells Danita how she truly feels about her friend Steve. The girls, like Maya and Ammamma, also go through a storytelling process and, as Danita is associated with Sister Das, Jazz symbolically begins to incorporate what she initially tries to abject:

> 'You think quite highly of this boy, don't you, Jazz Didi'
> 'Well, yes. He *is* my best friend, you know.'
> 'And in your country, a girl can marry her best friend. Can she not?'
> My cheeks felt hot. 'I suppose so. But Steve and I would never get married.'
> 'Why not?' [...] He sounds like the perfect boy for you.'
> [...] 'It's just that he could never like me in that way. Romantically, I mean.'
> 'Why not?' [...] 'You are kind and intelligent also. Not to mention beautiful.'
> There it was again. That description of me as beautiful [...]
> 'All in all, you *are* a beautiful girl, Jazz Didi. Certainly beautiful enough for this Steve fellow.' [...]
> Danita was grinning mischievously. 'Cook some of my chicken masala for this Steve fellow,' she said. 'I've been told it's a magic potion.'
> I grinned back. 'We won't have any potion ready for tonight unless we get it started.' Picking up a clove of garlic, I began mincing it expertly, as though I'd been cooking Indian food for years.[93]

Clearly Jazz feels vulnerable when talking about Steve. Yet we see nevertheless how Jazz opens herself up to Danita, and in turn to the enculturation process.

Through her cooking, the reader sees that Jazz feels 'at home'; for Jazz, the once 'unheimlich', is now 'heimlich'. Using *Indian* cooking to symbolise Jazz's increased self-confidence explicitly presents this increase in confidence as being *because* of her visit to India. Equally, this representation also illustrates the function of emotional situational ethnicity. Food, for any country is a marker of that country's culture.[94] Because Jazz participates in cooking Indian food, she symbolically partakes in Indian

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[92] In this respect Danita can be seen as an extension of Sister Das. Notice both Sister Das and Danita's name begin with the same letter signalling their connection. This connection is reinforced as Perkins makes it explicitly clear that Danita is the oldest of three *sisters* helping to conjure up *Sister* Das's name. Moreover, as Danita is the eldest and most senior sister, and Sister Das is the most senior nun in the orphanage, the symbolic association between Danita and Sister Das is established further.

[93] Perkins, *Monsoon Summer*, pp. 151-3.

[94] See, for example, *Food and Culture: A Reader*, ed. by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, (New York: Routledge, 2008 [1997]).

113

culture. As chopping up the garlic seems like second nature to Jazz, Perkins illustrates that in India Jazz not only develops her Indian identity, she *feels* more Indian *because* of the environment that she is in.

Here, it is significant that Danita makes references to American customs and traditions – particularly as dating, as discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, within the South Asian cultural context is perceived as a 'Western' activity. Even though Jazz has opened herself to being enculturated with Indian culture this process is not meant to usurp Jazz's 'Americanness'. In fact as it is Danita – who symbolises India – who encourages Jazz to pursue Steve the text indicates that an Overlapping Space identity can incorporate cultural characteristics of one culture and the other: Jazz can adopt Indian cultural characteristics *on top* of her American ones. By foregrounding Jazz's new hybrid Overlapping Space identity *Monsoon Summer*, like *Motherland*, demonstrates the impracticalities of trying to apply Bhabha's Third Space model to cultural identities. Clearly the conversation between Danita and Jazz highlights that, as a result of her 2G homeland (re)visit experience, Jazz feels more Indian in India but not at the expense of being American: because of her visit, Jazz accepts that she is, in fact, *the one and the other*.

By foregrounding the potential positive outcomes of these trips and cultural encounters, although *completely* resolving one's uncanny emotions may not be entirely possible, both *Monsoon Summer* and *Motherland* illustrate to the readers who relate to Maya and Jazz that exposing oneself to one's homeland culture is not necessarily frightening. Rather, it can be an enriching and rewarding experience which need not mean compromising existing aspects of one's identity, which can in fact be supplemented, *rather than replaced*. It therefore is possible to affirm one's 'multi'-cultural identity without compromising one's cultural affiliation(s).

Conclusion

Vijayaraghavan's *Motherland* and Perkins's *Monsoon Summer* use travel and the uncanny experiences of travel to address a unique process of identity reconstruction. Although the reconstruction is not dramatic in the sense that Maya and Jazz do not take on new identities at the expense of their 'old' ones, both Maya and Jazz do seem to have adopted new Indian cultural identities in addition to their existing American identities which reflects the function of an Overlapping Space model of identity rather than

mirroring conventional accounts of hybridity or diaspora space. Also, because they have had to temporarily relocate to India in order to build these identities the protagonists illustrate the function of emotional situational ethnicity: in India they 'feel' more Indian and vice versa.

For readers who, like Maya and Jazz, do not live within extended South Asian diasporic communities, they may also, at times, feel estranged from their 'homeland' cultures regardless of their upbringings. Although not all members of the diaspora get the opportunity to visit their ancestral homelands, the readers who may feel estranged from their South Asian cultures whilst living in their 'home'lands may be able to relate to characters like Maya and Jazz. Though these readers may not be able to identify completely with these characters' identity reconstructions, because Jazz and Maya illustrate that it is not unnatural to feel overwhelmed or estranged by their diasporic cultures, some readers may draw a sense of comfort from this fact.

Additionally, the emphasis that both authors place on their protagonists' detachment from their Indian cultures is significant for several other reasons. Through their feelings of disconnection the novels illustrate the function of, firstly, enculturation: Maya and Jazz learn to incorporate parts of their 'homeland' culture into their identities *because* they are exposed to that culture. Secondly, they illustrate emotional situational ethnicity as they both demonstrate that they *feel* more Indian because they are in India. And, finally, this detachment heightens Maya's and Jazz's uncanny experience which enables the novels to focus on the unique psychological impact that 2G homeland (re)visits can have on young developing individuals.

On a superficial level these stories seem clichéd because they follow the complication-resolution formula characteristic of comedy. Upon closer inspection, however, these texts successfully illustrate the unnerving experiences that can be associated with (re)visiting ancestral homelands. Maya and Jazz's 'unheimlich' feelings are not simply convenient plot devices that are used by the authors so that their books end with a resolution; these feelings are representative of some of the real emotions that are generated when individuals (re)visit their ancestral homelands.

These novels, therefore, are able to convey to both critical and casual readers how individuals who visit their ancestral 'homelands' can develop uncanny/weird/strange feelings helping to normalise this type of experience thus offering readers who relate to the narratives potential bibliotherapeutic resources. Friends, family and welcoming environments may create *heimlich* moments, however

the alien surroundings and potential feelings of awkwardness of being around people whom one is not all that familiar with may also produce *unheimlich* emotions. As such, both *Motherland* and *Monsoon Summer* draw attention to the need for further research into the psychological impact of this type of travelling experience not only in terms of the emotional effects of 2G homeland (re)visits but how these experiences affect peoples' self-identity.

Through their explorations into South Asian diasporic (re)visiting experience these novels help legitimise not only readers' experiences with these visits, but by extension, readers' own hybrid Overlapping Space identities. Additionally, these novels illustrate the need for diaspora and tourism studies to extend the current research to fully address this type of travel. These books draw attention to the fact that these studies need to look beyond the first generation and address, at the very least, the upcoming second and third generation of migrants. Studies are needed to explore and understand the emotional and psychological effects that this type of tourism has on individuals and their identity development, which makes *Motherland* and *Monsoon Summer* significant commentaries on the second generation homeland (re)visit experience.

Chapter 4: Subculture and the Approval of 'Transgression'

Introduction

As discussed in the main introduction of this thesis, I grew up in a very 'white' neighbourhood in the UK. At senior school, other than my friend Amita, my friendship peer group was, and still predominantly is, white.[1] Although I do not socialise within a South Asian peer group, I still, nonetheless, have access to a larger South Asian post-migrant community via my cousins. As a result of our shared experiences, I am consequently granted membership to this larger network – to this subcultural peer group.

The Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) defines subcultures as 'sub-sets – smaller, more localised and differentiated structures, within one or other of the larger cultural networks.'[2] However post-subcultural theorists champion the use of other terms: 'taste cultures', 'lifestyles', 'neo-tribes' and 'scenes', for example.[3] Engaging with Will Straw's definition of the term 'scene', Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris, the editors of *After Subculture*, write that 'scene remains a productive term through a flexible anti-essentialist quality that allows it to encompass an exceptionally wide range of cultural practices.'[4] This definition of 'scene', as an alternative to 'subculture', seems to stand in contrast to the definition offered by the CCCS. In fact, the work conducted by the CCCS has been greatly challenged by post-subcultural theorists for many reasons – but more specifically because of its dominant

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[1] Although the majority of my friends are white British, my friend, Ling-Ling, is Chinese-British.

[2] John Clarke et al., 'Subcultures, Cultures and Class', in *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, ed. by Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (Oxon: Routledge, 2000 [1976]), pp. 9-74 (p. 13).

[3] George. H. Lewis, 'Who Do You Love?: The Dimensions of Musical Taste' in *Popular Music and Communication*, 2nd edn, ed. by James Lull (London: Sage, 1992), pp. 134-51; Bo Reimer, 'Youth and Modern Lifestyles' in *Youth Culture in Late Modernity*, ed. by Johan Fornäs and Göran Bolin (London: Sage, 1995), pp. 120-144; Steven. Miles, *Youth Lifestyles in a Changing World* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000); Michael Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*, trans. By D. Smith (London: Sage. 1996); Will Straw, 'Scenes and Sensibilities', *Public: Cities Scenes*, 22-23 (2001). 245-57.

[4] Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris, 'Introduction', in *After Subculture: Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture*, ed. by Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris (Basingstoke: Palgrave. 2004), pp. 1-18 (p. 14).

focus on post-World War II white, working-class male subcultures.[5] However, post-subcultural theorists are not exempt from criticism either. Paul Sweetman argues that there are two different 'types' of post-subculturalists who, in certain ways, seem to contradict each other. He refers to these 'types' as 'travellers' and 'tourists', 'where the former adopt a modernist orientation towards "subcultural" style, and the latter are happy to play around with the multiple options open to them in what some have referred to as the "supermarket of style".'[6] Explaining the usage of his terms in more detail, Sweetman writes:

> Both the tourist and the traveller inhabit – or at least regularly pass through – Turner's departure lounge. But where the tourist accepts, acknowledges and openly celebrates this superficial, postmodern environment the traveller seeks – and *claims* – authenticity on the basis of a greater depth of involvement – whether real or imagined – with the various stop-off points on his or her itinerary.[7]

Post-subcultural theorists cannot agree on whether or not subcultural groups are, because of 'fragmentation and heterogeneity of subcultural styles', open and inclusive spaces for people to freely filter in an out as they choose thus enabling them to foreground their own individuality rather than a collective identity (tourist), or a space which is bit more exclusive: a space that requires individuals to demonstrate a level of 'authenticity', group loyalty and commitment which, in turn, seems to promote a broader group identity (traveller).[8]

Whilst Sweetman argues that neither 'tourist' nor 'traveller' post-subcultural theorists subscribe to the CCCS' definition of subculture, there are, nonetheless, some perceivable overlaps.[9] The CCCS suggest that members of a subcultural peer-group 'explore "focal concerns" central to the inner life of the group: things always "done" or "never done", a set of social rituals which underpin their collective identity and define them as a "group" instead of a mere collection of individuals.'[10] According to the CCCS there is a level of conformity involved in subculture dynamics. Equally, when

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[5] See Bennett and Khan-Harris 'Introduction', and Rupert Weinzierl and David Muggleton, 'What is "Post-subcultural Studies" Anyway?', in *The Post-Subcultural Studies Reader*, ed. by David Muggleton and Rupert Weinzierl (Oxford: Berg, 2003), pp. 3-23.

[6] Paul Sweetman, 'Tourists and Travellers? "Subcultures", Reflexive Identities and Neo-Tribal Sociality', in *After Subculture: Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture*, ed. by Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 79-93 (p. 80).

[7] Ibid., p. 91.

[8] Ibid., p. 79.

[9] Sweetman argues that traveller allegiances to certain subcultures are 'an individual choice rather than a collective response' (p. 92), however, as Sunaina Maira's study into desi youth subcultures in New York illustrate, these group formations *are* a collective response.

[10] Clarke et al., 'Subcultures, Cultures and Class', p. 47.

Sweetman suggests that a post-subculturalist traveller 'chooses a costume and sticks to it' there is also a sense of compliance involved.[11] As such traveller subculturalist ideas seem to echo the CCCS definition. Consequently, though acknowledging the limitations of the CCCS' work, it may not be altogether helpful to dismiss the Centre's work entirely as exemplified by Sunaina Maira:

> The early Birmingham theorists viewed youth subcultures as attempts by youth to resolve symbolically the tensions between the larger group culture, or 'parent culture,' and their own generational concerns. Similarly, in the case of the desi party scene, one can read this diasporic subculture as an attempt to mediate between the expectations of immigrant parents (in this case, literally the parents' culture) and those of mainstream American peer culture by trying to integrate signs belonging to both worlds.[12]

As Maira highlights, when exploring contemporary South Asian (desi) diasporic subcultures, some of the ideas presented by the CCCS may still be relevant as the motivations to form new and emerging subcultures echo to that of earlier subcultures.

Maira's description of US diasporic South Asian youth subcultures resonates with Muhammad Anwar's UK observations. Anwar, in *Between Cultures*, asserts that despite their experiences with racism, young South Asians in Britain are integrating within mainstream culture.[13] He argues that, as a result, 'young Asians are adopting a new culture which is a synthesis of the "old" and the "new".'[14] Here, 'old' and 'new' are used synonymously with 'home' and 'homeland', and, like the young people in New York, British South Asian youths are taking and fusing cultural elements found in their 'parent' cultures to make a new subculture.

South Asian youth subcultures, not unlike the subcultures explored by the CCCS, offer members an intermediary space in which to negotiate the 'different worlds' that these individuals inhabit: a space which brings together negotiated 'home' and 'homeland' values and ideas. The CCCS tell us that subcultures are 'sub-sets', as such there are 'significant things which bind them and articulate them *within* the 'parent' culture' (my italics).[15] This intermediary space is a hybrid space that does not exist outside of the 'parent' cultures but symbiotically *with(in)* these cultures, clearly

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[11] Sweetman, 'Tourists and Travellers', p. 91.
[12] Sunaina Maira, *Desis in the House: Indian American Youth Culture in New York City* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), p. 42.
[13] Muhammad Anwar, *Between Cultures: Continuity and Change in the Lives of Young Asians* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 188.
[14] Ibid., 189.
[15] Clarke et al., 'Subcultures, Cultures and Class', p. 14.

challenging Bhabha's Third space model. These subcultures are not too dissimilar from Overlapping Space identities and are evidently *the one and the other*.

However, as much as subcultures are born out of the cultures that they are from and are of the one and the other, they must also display distinct characteristics: they must simultaneously 'exhibit a distinctive enough shape and structure to make them identifiably different from their "parent" culture[s].'[16] Elaborating on this idea, Dick Hebdige, discussing Bowie-ites, indicates that subcultures attempt to 'negotiate a meaningful intermediate space somewhere between the parent culture and the dominant ideology: a space where an alternative identity could be discovered and expressed' and that this 'distinctive quest for a measure of autonomy [...] characterises all youth sub- (and counter) cultures.'[17]

Within South Asian youth subcultures, although they clearly embody certain cultural traits of both 'parent' cultures, they exhibit certain differences as well. Jean Bacon, another subculturalist who explores US diasporic South Asian youth, argues:

> In the case of second generation Asian Indians, this social process of comparison looks something like this: On the one hand second generation organizations act out fundamental similarities to their parental example. On the other, they simultaneously reinterpret those very similarities as, in fact, differences. This ambiguity in the comparative process, I believe, stems from the fact that the second generation is both searching for its collective ethnic identity, and struggling to come of age. Their parental example is the only 'ideal' out there to which they can refer in an effort to figure out how to be 'Indian'. However, to come of age, to truly be its own generation, the second generation must differentiate itself from parents. The collective ethnic identity that emerges resolves these two social dynamics. *Yes, the second generation is 'Indian,' but they are not the same kind of Indians as their parents.* [my italics][18]

In the section that I have italicised, Bacon places the word 'Indian' in inverted commas because, as she states, despite the 'fundamental similarities' between the youth and their parents, this second generation are 'not the same kind of Indians as their parents': they are in fact, in this case, Indian-American. However, this hyphenated label does not indicate that they, as Bhabha would argue, are neither the one nor the other, but

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[16] Ibid., p. 13.

[17] Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007 [1979]), p. 88; ibid.

[18] Jean Bacon, 'Constructing Collective Ethnic Identities: The Case of Second Generation Asian Indians', *Qualitative Sociology*, 22, 2 (1999), 141-160 (pp. 149-50).

paradoxically they are *simultaneously the one and the other*: 'Indian' *and* 'American', 'British' *and* 'Asian' and so forth, yet, at the same time, a little different as well.[19]

In this chapter the word 'subculture', therefore, refers to contemporary, 'hybrid', second generation, South Asian diasporic youth groups, and in order to further develop my usage of this term, as well as drawing from 'traditional' subcultural theory I think it is useful to push Sweetman's ideas of post-subcultural theory a little further.[20] Having identified the two branches of post-subcultural theory, Sweetman proposes that subcultures are a fusion of *both* 'traveller' and 'tourist' sets of ideas. He suggests that 'coming together as a group [...] can provide individuals with a sense of belonging and identification *as well as* a sense of individual identity or style.'[21] Though Sweetman disputes any correlation between the development of his post-subculturalist 'traveller' and CCCS ideas, as illustrated there is nonetheless a relationship that cannot be ignored. For simplification purposes it is useful to think of 'tourists' as post-subculturalists and 'travellers', who are in themselves post-subculturalists, as 'traditionalists' because they, like the CCCS, recognise the function that conformity plays within a subcultural group. Consequently if subcultures are a fusion of both 'tourists' and 'travellers', subcultures are simultaneously both inclusive and exclusive: within a subculture there is a unique experience or understanding which binds peer-group members together making the group exclusive; yet, provided they share in common the component(s) that binds the group together and do not undermine the larger group identity, people are able to assert their own individuality within the group as well. Though my own attempt at explaining subcultures may seem slightly contradictory, it is useful to draw on my own personal experiences with subcultural peer groups to exemplify what I mean.

Amongst my cousins I am able to project a more hybrid Overlapping Space identity which I refrain from sharing with my parent's generation.[22] Essentially as I move between 'peer' zones and 'parent' zones I operate using situational ethnicity and, when I move from the former to the latter, I project a part of my cultural identity that the elders find more acceptable. Again, I would like to stress that situational ethnicity, as the previous chapter illustrates, is not abstracted from emotion or feeling, nor is it a

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[19] Homi K. Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory', in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 19-39 (p. 25).

[20] Here, the term 'youth group' refers to post-subculturalist' usage of the term: it does not define an age category but rather the word 'youth' is employed as an ideological category, 'a state of mind rather than a particular stage in life' (Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 'Introduction', p. 10).

[21] Sweetman, 'Tourists and Travellers?', p. 79.

[22] See Sunaina Maira, 'Identity Dub: The Paradoxes of an Indian American Youth Subculture (New York Mix)', *Cultural Anthropology*, 14, 1 (1999), 29-60 (p. 44) for an explanation as to why.

contradictory or hypocritical way of negotiating different cultural environments, rather situational ethnicity is an extended form of situational identity which takes culture into consideration.[23] Amongst my cousins I feel more comfortable with highlighting parts of my 'English'/'British' identity because like me, they have been enculturated with English/British, Muslim, Mauritian and South Asian cultures.

My cousins, therefore, act like my subcultural peer group and they essentially facilitate an external space within which I can project my hybrid Overlapping Space identity. Although my hybrid identity is received very well amongst the larger peer group, I do, nonetheless, still employ situational ethnicity within the group as well. Within the larger subcultural group there are different networks or friendship groups; for example, amongst my cousins there are the 'older lot' and the 'younger lot' as there is approximately a fifteen year age gap between my eldest and youngest cousins. I am part of the 'younger lot' and I am aware that I share more of my British identity with these cousins than with the others as they are more accepting of my 'ultra' British ways. For example, all of my cousins know that I go to rock gigs and festivals. They see my festival going as an expression of my British identity and, because of my music tastes, I have been given the nickname 'Kerrang' after the UK rock magazine and television station. However, when my eldest cousin – part of 'the older lot' – became a father, he jokingly said to me that I should keep my Kerrang influences away from his daughter. For my cousins, my music tastes are a reflection of my 'ultra' 'Western' identity and though he accepts this part of me (he was the one that dubbed me 'Kerrang' in the first place), he is clearly, a bit like our parents – but more understanding and accepting – less comfortable with a hybrid Overlapping Space identity which favours a more 'Western' identity. As such, amongst 'the older lot' although I do project a hybrid identity which embodies both 'home' and 'homeland' characteristics, with these cousins, I refrain from being 'too' British.

So paradoxically I *am* afforded a sense of individualism whilst still being expected to conform and meet certain subcultural group criteria. With the 'younger lot' I feel more comfortable with asserting my 'Western' identity. With these cousins I can

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[23] One of my very good friends – whom I shall not name as I do not want to embarrass her – operates using situational identity. She acts very differently amongst us girls than when she is with her parents. For example, with us she is not afraid of using profanities, however, when we are with her parents she certainly does not speak in the same way around them as she does with us as she knows that her parents would disapprove, and maybe be offended, by some of the expletives that she uses. This friend operates using situational identity as she shows an awareness of the different environments that she is in and adjusts her behaviour in ways to complement her surroundings.

122

'be' an individual which in turn illustrates that although one network within my subcultural peer group are less comfortable with my 'Western' identity, another network *in the same subcultural group* wholeheartedly embraces it. Having said this, the 'older lot' *are* fully aware of my slightly more pronounced 'Western' identity – even if I mute it a bit in their presence. They still accept me even though they may slightly disapprove of my festival-going lifestyle. They essentially still afford me my individuality. But, *at the same time*, because I feel I need to withhold aspects of my 'Western' self amongst the 'older lot', though I am 'allowed' to be an individual, I must simultaneously conform to group expectations.

My subcultural peer group is therefore inclusive: despite my seemingly 'ultra' British ways I am still accepted by both sets of cousins – even if the 'older lot' prefer a more 'muted' version of myself. At the same time it is also exclusive: all of us share a collective identity which derives from our unique cultural experiences which has, embedded within it, its own social and cultural 'rules' which we all try to work with. Consequently the identity that I project cannot be 'too' individualised as my contribution to the group identity needs to try and compliment the group as a whole.

My familial example of the inclusive/exclusive operation of South Asian diasporic subculture is complemented by Maira's research. Maira observes that 'this subculture helps produce a notion of what it means to be "cool," for a young person in New York, that is (re)worked into the nostalgia for India yet not seamless with it.'[24] Discussing femininity Maira observes that although a demure feminised look – a look that that celebrates a nostalgia for 'traditional' Indian values – is favoured largely amongst the males in the subcultural group, a more 'American', sexy, 'hoochy mama' appearance – which challenges the preferred 'traditional' appearance – expressed by many of the girls in the group is nonetheless also embraced.[25] These girls are free to assert their 'Americanness'. In this respect they are essentially afforded the right to express their own individual American identities making the group reasonably inclusive. *However*, the individual identities expressed need to support the group identity as a whole. As such, though the group facilitates the assertion of one's Americanness, as the group holds onto, what Maira refers to as, a 'nostalgia' for India, it becomes exclusive to those who not only share in the cultural experiences of others

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[24] Maira, *Desis in the House*, p. 12.
[25] Ibid., p. 48. See page 13 for a discussion into how this sexy look is perceived as representative of a 'real' Indian identity, when in fact it reflects a more American one instead.

but more specifically to those who acknowledge and respect this collective nostalgia. Radhika, one of the interviewees in Maira's study, did not share this nostalgia for India; consequently, by not conforming to the specific social and cultural criteria of this subcultural group, she felt alienated from the other Indian American youth.[26] Similarly when Simran, from Bali Rai's *The Last Taboo* discussed in Chapter Five, dates Tyrone, the youth from her subcultural peer group interpret Simran's relationship with a black man as the complete negation of South Asian values. Consequently, by not complying with the group's exclusivity rule of cultural nostalgia, she is ostracised.[27]

In many ways, my own subcultural group's exclusivity works on a similar principle of nostalgia. Though I am afforded my 'ultra' 'Western' identity, I refrain from being 'too' 'Western' amongst the 'older lot'. I do not want to be perceived as an assimilationist: firstly, because my 'homeland' culture is important to me, secondly, it informs my 'hybrid' Overlapping Space identity, and, thirdly, within the larger subcultural group it is generally understood that we need to pay homage to where we come 'from', consequently an identity that comes across as 'completely' 'Western' would negate this claim. Clearly, both my subcultural peer group and the desi youth group that Maira studies exhibit both inclusive and exclusive attitudes which consequently reflects how subcultures essentially function using an inclusive/exclusive policy.

Both Narinder Dhami's novelization *Bend it Like Beckham* and Baljinder K. Mahal's *The Pocket Guide to Being an Indian Girl* (hereafter: *Pocket Guide*) recognise the inclusive/exclusive functionality of hybrid South Asian subcultural peer groups and these books illuminate how these groups function as well as enhancing appreciation of the roles that they play in the lives of young South Asians.[28] These books demonstrate that the inclusive/exclusive nature of subcultures are in themselves representative of a hybrid cultural space which consequently affords young diasporic South Asians a space within which they can *project* their hybrid Overlapping Space identities and essentially a space which *protects* these identities.

Parents of South Asian youth often expect their children to display a form of cultural 'authenticity' which a more 'Western' identity would seem to negate. These novels consequently recognise that the formation of hybrid subcultural peer groups

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[26] Maira, *Desis in the House*, p. 11.
[27] Bali Rai, *The Last Taboo* (London: Corgi Books, 2006).
[28] Narinder Dhami, *Bend it Like Beckham* (London: Hodder Children's Books, 2002); Baljinder K. Mahal, *The Pocket Guide to Being an Indian Girl* (London: Black Amber Books, 2004).

124

offers young people a site in which to negotiate these expectations. As a result of the shared cultural experiences (of being second generation South Asians) these books seem to suggest that individuals of the second generation should look to their peers rather than their parents for how to *build and authenticate* their cultural identities – which is a message that is potentially very problematic and transgressive in itself.

In order to facilitate the assertion and protection of these hybrid Overlapping Space identities, these novels acknowledge that young people need to display a level of autonomy from parents and, in order to assert this independence, the characters, firstly, operate using situational ethnicity as they move between 'peer' and 'parent' zones and, secondly, accept that what subcultural group members do should be kept hidden from the elders. The employment of secrecy or the concealment of 'insider' information from those outside the subcultural group, however, is not a phenomenon specifically assigned to diasporic South Asian youth groups but, as Hebdige suggests, is a general part of subculture.[29] Despite these potentially questionable acts of concealment, the subterfuge employed by the young people in these novels proves essential to ensuring the projection and protection of hybrid Overlapping Space identities.

In spite of the somewhat 'transgressive' nature of these subcultural groups, although they demonstrate that people are able to assert any number of identities made available to them via their internalised sites of Overlapping Space, peer group members need to also ensure that they display some form of cultural nostalgia so that their individual identities compliment the collective identity of the group. Consequently these novels are *not* suggesting that young South Asians should forcibly challenge and oppose a 'homeland' identity, but they should in many ways incorporate a 'homeland' identity as part of their larger cultural identity.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that these identities embody 'homeland' cultural characteristics, because they also display 'home' traits as well which may challenge parental expectations, these young people still engage in situational ethnicity strategies as they navigate between 'peer' and 'parent' zones. However, a level of situational ethnicity also operates within the subcultural group as well. As part of the group's exclusivity rests on the deployment of cultural nostalgia, some networks within the subcultural group may wish that individuals display more nostalgia than others. However an identity that may receive disapproval from one network for not being

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[29] Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, p. 4.

'Asian' enough or too 'Western' which is seemingly at the expense of cultural nostalgia – or paradoxically vice versa – may be accepted and in fact embraced by another network within the *same* subcultural group. However, whereas individuals who operate using situational ethnicities outside the subcultural group in order to navigate different cultural spheres may need to keep their multiple identities rigidly separate or 'hidden', the same is not necessarily true about identities within the subcultural group, making the group a bit more 'inclusive'. Yes there may be some situations where people may feel the need to mute certain aspects of themselves, however, because of peoples' shared cultural experiences, and as long as they demonstrate some level of cultural nostalgia, individuals may find that they do not necessarily have to keep these identities as rigidly separate within these groups as they would outside of the subculture. They therefore have more flexibility across networks to assert these 'separate' identities and display a more individualised cultural identity.

In order to convey the inclusiveness of subcultural groups Dhami's Jesminder (Jess) and Mahal's Sushminder (Susham) are presented as unique individuals who stand apart from their subcultural peers. Paradoxically this uniqueness would suggest that they are 'outsiders'; however because subcultural peer groups enable people to project their own individualised cultural identities and that these identities (providing they compliment cultural nostalgia) finds acceptance from other networks within the larger subcultural group, Jess and Susham are very much 'insiders' as they are 'out'. It is this simultaneous 'insider'/'outsider' experience which also lends to the bibliotherapeutic function of these novels.

Not all the readers who relate to the cultural experiences relayed in these novels necessarily, whether they have access to one or not, socialise within a larger hybrid South Asian diasporic subcultural peer group. Consequently they may share in this 'outsider' experience. Equally, those who *do* socialise within a broader sub-group may also experience similar sensations. Jess's and Susham's 'insider'/'outsider' experience therefore demonstrates that just because one may feel as though they are an 'outsider' does not necessarily mean that they are which some readers may find satisfying. However, the bibliotherapeutic potential of these novels also extends beyond the readers' 'outsider' identifications with the protagonists. These novels demonstrate via the inclusive/exclusive nature of subculture the value placed on hybrid Overlapping Space identities. Subcultures evolve to help individuals project and protect their cultural identities. Consequently by reading about the efforts that these characters place in order

to essentially celebrate their hybrid Overlapping Space identities, readers can see that these novels are legitimising their own cultural identities as well.

Simultaneously Being 'Outsiders' and 'Insiders'

Jess and Susham are very much individuals: their personalities, interests, attitudes and ideas differ from both their peers and their parents: Jess dreams of becoming a football star instead of being a 'girly' girl and Susham seems to unashamedly break countless rules that are associated with how to be a good Indian girl. However, these characters' 'outsider' statuses are deliberately established not only to ensure the bibliotherapeutic function of the novels but to demonstrate the inclusive/exclusive operation of subcultures and how this operation contributes towards the projection and protection of what can be defined as hybrid Overlapping Space identities. Consequently the word 'outsider' is used in inverted commas to signal the fact that although both Susham and Jess do not entirely fit in with their peers they are, nonetheless, because of the inclusive/exclusive dynamic of subcultures, *simultaneously* 'insiders' as well.

In the eyes of their parents, both Jess and Susham seem rebellious and unruly. For example, when Jess's parents find out about Hounslow Harriers, the women's football team that Jess wants to join, Jess is at the mercy of her parents' tirade:

> 'This is how it started with your niece. The way that girl would answer back! Then she runs off to become a model wearing small-small skirts.'
> 'Mum!' I tried to get a word in edgeways. 'She's a fashion designer!'
> 'She's *divorced*, that's what she is,' Mum pointed out triumphantly. 'Cast off after three years married to a *gora* with blue hair! Her mother, she hasn't been able to set foot in the temple since. I don't want this shame in my family.' She held up her hand. 'That's it. No more football!' [...]
> 'Jessie, your mother's right [...] It doesn't look nice. You must behave like a proper young woman now.'[30]

Obviously Jess's parents feel threatened by her interest in football and they fear that if Jess continues to play she will bring shame on her family. Within the context of the novel, women's football is seen as an extreme form of 'Western' activity. When Jess's father says that it 'doesn't look nice' for her to be playing football anymore and implies that it is unwomanly, the text suggests that currently Jess does not fulfil the role of a 'good' Indian girl, and the reference to Jess's cousin helps to reinforce this idea. Jess's cousin is clearly seen as a rebel: she ran away from home, she wears inappropriate

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[30] Dhami, *Bend it Like Beckham*, p. 36.

clothing, she married a Caucasian man and she is now divorced. All these elements make Jess's cousin a 'bad' Indian girl.[31] By likening Jess to her 'bad' cousin, Jess's parents evidently perceive their daughter as a rebel.

Similarly, Susham is also quite rebellious – particularly as she seems to wilfully disregard the rules of how to be a 'good' Indian girl. Her father is, throughout the novel, suffering from a nervous breakdown and Susham feels that it is her responsibility to look after him because she does not trust her family or doctors. Susham, near the beginning of the novel, kidnaps her father from hospital and takes him to live with her in an allotment shed for a couple of days. This storyline is far-fetched yet highly amusing, and through it Mahal references another of the 'rules' associated with how to be an Indian girl. When Susham sees a missing poster of herself on the front of a newspaper she cites rule number eleven: 'Rule No 11: Indian girls only make the front page if they've landed a role in an Indian flick, [...] or run away. I had apparently done the last.'[32] Running away from home – or even going on a long trip without parental permission – is seen as a deviant activity.[33] Susham knows this rule, yet chooses to ignore it.

Ironically, however, although both Susham and Jess appear slightly detached from their 'homeland' cultures because of their 'bad', rebellious attitudes, they feel slightly marginalised from the larger subcultural groups as they are not 'bad' enough. For example, Jess is not like her sister or cousins. She states, 'I never bunked off school like Pinky or Bubbly, [and] I don't wear makeup or tarty clothes like them,' and at Pinky and Teetu's engagement party, she observes:[34]

> Monica, Bubbly and Meena were there, eyeing up the girls' outfits and deciding how much they'd cost. I bet they didn't spend very long discussing *mine*. My blue shalwaar kameez was the plainest Mum would let me get away with.[35]

Jess is not as fashion conscious as her sister or cousins and, as such, she does not completely feel part of their group, and though she prefers not to associate herself with her female relatives – particularly her cousins – Jess does, nonetheless, seem on the margins of these cultural peers.

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[31] See *BadIndianGirl.com* <www.badindiangirl.com> [accessed 13 March 2008].
[32] Mahal, *Pocket Guide*, pp. 63-4.
[33] Susham's mother calls her a '*lafangi*' (Mahal, *Pocket Guide*, p. 226; meaning jezebel or immodest and wild) when she learns that Susham and her sister Kiz ran off to Glasgow for the day wherein they ended up in a Bollywood music video.
[34] Dhami, *Bend it Like Beckham*, p. 37.
[35] Ibid., p. 14.

Similarly, Susham seems on the margins of her cultural subgroup because she too is not 'bad' enough. Susham is not like the rest of her cousins and, like Jess, is in many ways a bit more modest. Susham is not as brazen with her sexuality compared to her cousin Sammy whom she refers to as a 'slapper'.[36] Ironically, despite Susham's modesty, she is accused of immoral conduct by her mother and, in an attempt to save her own reputation, she draws her cousins into the 'scandal' which only marginalises her further:

> 'I went to a club yes, but I wasn't doing any *bhangra* there.'
> Bimla and Worzel [her aunts] gasped, and Mum sat down and buried her face in her hands. [...]
> 'Sammy and Pinky [Susham's cousins] are better daughters than you two will ever be,' she said, pointing at me and Kiz.
> It was my turn to gasp now. Mum comparing me and Kiz with those two thick breeds was about as much as I could take. [...]
> 'Well your precious Sammy and Pinky were there, too, so stop acting high and mighty. [...] If you don't believe me, ask Arjun. Go on Arjun, tell them. Shut them up.' [...]
> I stood there staring him straight in the eyes, pleading without getting down on my hands and knees, but that Arjun said not a word. [...]
> 'I think the silence speaks for itself,' said Mrs Rai.[37]

This extract illustrates how subcultural peers, as Hebdige suggests, are expected to keep each others' secrets.[38] Readers understand that Susham is desperate, and in an attempt to avoid taking the full brunt of her mother's reprimand, we understand why she tries to implicate her cousins. However, because Arjun does not speak up for Susham, he demonstrates what Maira refers to as a 'tacit understanding of secrecy from parents' – an understanding which Susham chooses to flaunt.[39] Arjun does not support Susham's claims by saying nothing, and this silence not only asserts this need for secrecy amongst peers but, as the CCCS argue, the understanding that 'things [are] always "done" or "never done".'[40] Susham's disregard of this subcultural 'rule' consequently foregrounds her individual 'outsider' identity rather than her collective identity.

However, although Susham and Jess assert their own individualities which sets them apart from their peers, because of the inclusive/exclusivity of subcultures, they, *nonetheless*, are still granted access to the peer group. Though Susham and Jess position

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[36] Mahal, *Pocket Guide*, p. 12.
[37] Mahal, *Pocket Guide*, pp. 138-9.
[38] Hebdige argues that the word 'subculture' is 'loaded with mystery', and, 'suggests secrecy' (Hebdige, *Subculture*, p. 4).
[39] Maira, 'Identity Dub', p. 44.
[40] Clarke et al., 'Subcultures, Cultures and Class', p. 47.

themselves as opposites to their cousins, this positioning does not remove them from the larger subcultural group – only perhaps from *this* particular network within the group. These protagonists, therefore, are given access to the group as a whole via *different* network routes: despite their perceived marginalisations they are as much 'insiders' as 'out'.

In order to qualify as an 'insider', members of a subculture need to not only share similar cultural experiences, but be aware and respect the specifics of what creates the group's exclusivity. Maira's study into New York desi youth subcultures establishes that part of the group's 'exclusiveness' derives from a nostalgia of India. People are allowed to be individuals so long as they demonstrate an appreciation for their 'homeland' culture as well.

Similarly, as much as both novels acknowledge the somewhat inclusive nature of subcultural peer groups – despite their 'outsider-like' status, both Jess and Susham are simultaneously insiders as well – both *Pocket Guide* and *Bend it Like Beckham* recognise that peer group members need to demonstrate, either consciously or unconsciously, a genuine connection with Indian culture as well. Consequently, this 'rule', together with the shared South Asian diasporic experience, helps establish the group's exclusivity. Both Jess and Susham – despite their somewhat 'rebellious' natures – actually identify with their 'homeland' cultures which in turn helps them to conform to the specific cultural criteria of the group.

If one were to compare Jess and Susham, out of the two, Jess would seem the most 'Western'. For example, Jess has friends from other racial backgrounds whereas Susham does not. Also Jess, unlike Susham, initially displays less of an affinity with her 'homeland' culture. At Pinky's Vatna ceremony, wherein the bride-to-be's family gather in the bridal home before the wedding to participate in a blessing, amid the celebrations Jess observes her surroundings:

> I stood in the doorway, feeling suddenly alone in the middle of all these people. This was going to be *my* life too. University, a solicitor's job, marriage to someone like Biji's grandson, kids…[41]

Jess does not want what others want for her, which not only accentuates her isolation but highlights her cultural segregation as well. She does not want to go to university, become a solicitor, get married or have children, but seeing her family and how they are around Pinky, she realises that these things are what her family want for her. Jess, it

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[41] Dhami, *Bend it Like Beckham*, p. 140.

seems, does not identify with the cultural practices (certainly not as much as her sister) that are associated with her 'homeland' culture as much as her family would like her to.

However, just because a person does not entirely identify or agree with the cultural practices associated with their 'homeland' culture does not necessarily mean that they do not have an ethnic identity. As Tariq Modood suggests:

> Ethnic identification is no longer necessarily connected to personal participation in distinctive cultural practices, such as those of language, religion or dress. Some people expressed an ethnic identification even though they did not participate in distinctive cultural practices.[42]

As Jess does not want to go to university and fulfil her family's expectations because she wants to play professional football that does not mean that she does not identify with her 'homeland' culture or that she is estranged from it. In fact, Jess asserts her ethnic identification with her Punjabi culture in the changing-room of her football team no less:

> 'So you'll probably marry an Indian boy, then?' Jules asked [...]
> 'Probably.'
> Mel was shaking her head. 'I don't know how you put up with it.'
> I shrugged. 'It's just my culture, that's all,' I said *defensively* [my italics]. 'Anyway, it's better than sleeping around with boys you're not going to end up marrying. What's the point in that?'[43]

In this short exchange Jess does several things: she defends her culture, she does not dissociate herself from it, and she supports some of the ideologies that it purports about sex. Obviously at the end of the novel Jess chooses to pursue a romantic relationship with her football coach, Joe, which challenges the Indian taboos associated with interracial relationships.[44] Nonetheless, she states, 'I knew then that what Pinky had told me was true. *When you're in love, you'll do anything just to be with that person.*'[45] Here, Jess indicates that she chooses to pursue a relationship with Joe because she wants to be with him *long-term*. This idea is confirmed when Joe and Jess agree to 'tackle' her parents together and tell them about their relationship when she visits at Christmas.[46] In starting a long-term relationship with Joe, whether sexual or not, Jess reproduces and reinterprets some of her culture's teachings rather than rejecting them altogether.

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[42] Tariq Modood, 'Ethnicity and Intergenerational Identities and Adaptation in Britain', in *Ethnicity and Causal Mechanisms*, ed. by Michael Rutter and Marta Tienda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 281-300 (p. 292).

[43] Dhami, *Bend it Like Beckham*, p. 46.

[44] Issues of dating and interracial relationships are addressed in more detail in Chapter Five.

[45] Dhami, *Bend it Like Beckham*, p. 166.

[46] Ibid., p. 167.

It is also significant that Jess supports Indian ideologies associated with sex within her football changing room. In the novel football is represented as the antithesis of Indian culture: Jess's parents see it as a 'Western' thing; a career unsuitable for a 'good' Indian girl.[47] However, as Jess affirms her 'homeland' cultural affiliations in the football changing-room – a space which supposedly challenges Indian culture – she illustrates Modood's argument presented above: regardless of what individuals do or do not practice, they can still find identifications with their ethnic culture. So, when Jess defends her culture, she asserts that although she may seem highly enculturated with her 'home' culture, she still, at the same time, holds ethnic identifications with her 'homeland' as well: she has an Overlapping Space identity – an identity which allows her to form cultural identifications with *both* her 'home' and 'homeland' cultures.

Susham, like Jess, also identifies with her 'homeland' culture. Despite being labelled a rebel and breaking a lot of the rules associated with being an Indian girl, the fact that she is able to cite these rules in the first place demonstrates that she has an intimate knowledge and understanding of her 'homeland' culture. Susham's affiliation with her homeland culture, however, is reasserted via Bollywood:

> I was so busy wondering whether we truly were blood-related [her and Kiz] that I hardly noticed the buildings that towered above us giving way to dark mountains of grass. They were like those I'd seen in Indian films before. So this is where they came.[48]

That Susham recognises that Glasgow has been used in Bollywood cinema suggests that she has an extended knowledge of these films. As Bollywood is such a significant industrial and cultural phenomenon in India, in this context it becomes symbolically representative of Indian culture. As such, by recognising that Glasgow has been used on numerous occasions as the backdrop for Indian films, Susham establishes her connection with her 'homeland' culture.

Developing Susham's affiliations with Bollywood and in turn Indian culture, Susham expresses an interest in Bollywood film singers, particularly Mohammad Rafi, who in Indian culture is heralded as one of the most – if not the most – beautiful male singers of all time, and classic Bollywood stars.[49] When Susham is returned home after kidnapping her father and running away to live in an allotment shed, she tells the reader that she was not met with any sympathy:

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[47] See Chapter Five for an extended discussion of the idea of 'good' Indian girl.
[48] Mahal, *Pocket Guide*, p. 79.
[49] Ibid., p. 42.

> Smiling pathetically, I looked into oblivion while being told that running away to get attention wasn't gonna find a home in their land. Rule No 13: Don't ever expect sympathy – especially when you're no Meena Kumari.[50]

Meena Kumari, born in 1932, was a famous Indian actress from the late 1940s to early 1970s. She often played tragic heroine roles and was associated with 'tear jerker' movies. Ironically, although she played these roles, Kumari's life and death was quite tragic too. After her marriage to Indian film director, Kamal Amrohi, broke down, she became very depressed and became an alcoholic. Kumari later died in hospital in 1972 whilst her latest movie, *Pakeezah*, was being shown in cinemas all over India. Despite all her fame and successes as a Bollywood actress, she died penniless. Susham's reference to Meena Kumari, in this sense, demonstrates that she is not only aware of the type of movie roles Kumari played, but that she understands the cultural significance of Kumari's tragic life emphasising Susham's 'homeland' affiliations.

Both characters, despite their modesty (mostly associated with 'Indianness'), initially appear distanced from their 'homeland' cultures: Jess seems more enculturated with England equally, Susham, by flaunting the rules of how to be an Indian girl boarders on being 'non-Indian' which, within the context of the novel, would be 'English'. However, though there may be these 'Western' affiliations, these connections *are not* made at the expense of Indian ones. As such, both novels identify that these protagonists have been enculturated with *one and the other*: both with English and Indian cultures. Consequently the novels foreground the characters' hybrid Overlapping Space identities and it is via the subcultural peer groups where this assertion is made more explicit: despite their somewhat 'outsider' status, they still engage in a form of cultural nostalgia; they still demonstrate affiliations with the one *and* the other which ultimately ensures their 'insider' statuses.

Subcultures and 'Transgression': Projection and Protection of Overlapping Space Identities

The complex inclusive/exclusive policy of the subcultures explored in this chapter ultimately helps to foreground the existence of hybrid Overlapping Space identities because, as Hebdige argues, it is within subcultures where 'an alternative identity could

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[50] Ibid., p. 66.

be discovered and expressed.'[51] The 'inclusiveness' of a subculture recognises and accepts that individuals may project a range of different cultural identities facilitated by the Overlapping Space model, and that individuals can be cultural individuals. *However*, one's individuality cannot undermine or contradict the collective identity as a whole. This collective identity is therefore preserved by exclusivity. Access to the subculture is consequently limited to those who not only share in the experience of being second generation members of the South Asian diaspora – to those who have been enculturated with both 'home' and 'homeland' cultures or exposed to these cultures in a similar way – but, as Maira suggests, to those who demonstrate a nostalgia or 'authentic' affiliation towards South Asian cultures. As such, through this inclusive/exclusive paradox, both novels demonstrate that it is within subcultures where hybrid Overlapping Space identities can potentially be fully realised and expressed.

The characters Pinky and Kiz (Jess's and Susham's sisters) are used to develop the relationship between hybrid diasporic South Asian youth subculture and Overlapping Space identities in these novels. These characters' hybrid Overlapping Space identities symbolise their subcultural groups as a whole, as such both Dhami and Mahal illustrate how not only are Susham's and Jess's access to the their subcultures reinforced via the network ties offered by their sisters, but both Pinky's and Kiz's identities help to reinforce and legitimise *other* group members' cultural identities and in turn *their* accesses to the subcultures as well.

Kiz symbolises her subcultural group via her association with desi music. On the back cover of the novel, Kiz is described as a 'Bhangra Chick'; however, Kiz is not just associated with traditional Bhangra but to a contemporary 'Western' version of it often referred to as desi music. Desi music (sometimes referred to as 'Bhangra-beat', 'Hindi remix' or 'post-Bhangra') fuses both 'Western' and 'Indian' styles of music together by either borrowing or sampling Indian sounds/songs and mixing them together with 'Western' hip-hop and/or techno beats.[52] For example, Punjabi MC's 'Mundian Te Bach Ke', which, in 2002, went to Number 5 in the UK record charts, fuses Bhangra music with the *Knight Rider* theme tune, and the emphasised bass line affiliates the song

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[51] Hebdige, *Subculture*, p. 88.
[52] Gregory Diethrich, 'Desi Music Vibes: The Performance of Indian Youth Culture in Chicago ', *Asian Music*, 30, 1 (2000), 35-62 (p. 35).

with hip-hop.[53] Listeners can hear the musical roots of this subgenre of music: desi music is a hybrid sound and listeners can hear both the 'Indian' *and* 'Western' sounds – this music, like Overlapping Space identities, is significantly the one *and* the other.

Through the fusion of 'Eastern' and 'Western' sounds, desi music can be seen as symbolically representative of the second-generation hybrid identity. For example, Gregory Diethrich argues:

> Far from simply 'reflecting' social processes, music provides contexts in which cultural meaning is formulated and negotiated. Among diaspora communities, music is vital for formulating diasporic cultural identity. [...] Among young Indian-Americans, desi music is used not only to cross the distance to India, but to create an entirely new space, one that asserts and affirms both aspects of their hyphenated identities.[54]

Similarly, Maira argues:

> By sampling Indian music, second-generation Indian Americans draw on sounds from Hindi movies and Indian music that their parents introduced them to as children in order to inculcate an Indian identity.[55]

Discussing Bhangra and 'post-Bhangra' (desi music) in Britain, Sanjay Sharma argues that these musics:

> [R]epresent a medium through which the non-exhaustive identifications of 'British and Black' [...] *and* 'Asian' become politically available to Asian youth. These musics enable Asian youth to articulate and deploy a sense of 'Asianness' that is not necessarily in opposition to notions of being Black, and [...] even British. These dance musics may, then, act as a site for the *translation* between diasporic Asian, Black and British identification [...]. This presents an alternative route for Asian youth, as opposed to the choice of either resisted assimilation or the search for 'tradition' and 'authenticity'.[56]

Desi music, therefore, can be used to emphasise and/or present a hybrid Overlapping Space identity as the music helps to assert one's affiliation with one's 'home' *and* 'homeland' cultures.[57] However, other than being symbolically representative of second generation migrant identity, because it is consumed in large by this generation, desi music is highly affiliated with South Asian youth.

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[53] Anonymous, 'History of Desi Music', *BBC Radio* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/asiannetwork/homegrown 05/history.shtml> [accessed 5 November 2008]; Punjabi MC, 'Mundian Te Bach Ke', *The Album* (Instant Karma, 2003).

[54] Diethrich, 'Desi Music Vibes', p. 35-6.

[55] Maira, 'Identity Dub', p. 36.

[56] Sanjay Sharma, 'Noisy Asians or "Asian Noise"', in *Dis-Orienting Rhythms: The Politics of the New Asian Dance Music*, ed. by Sanjay Sharma, John Hutnyk and Ashwani Sharma (London: Zed Books, 1996), pp. 32-57 (p. 40).

[57] I say 'can be', because, as Maria highlights, 'one cannot simply assume that the fusion of these two cultural styles represents the *desire* for a hybrid identity' (Maira, 'Identity Dub', p. 45; my italics).

The club that the characters in *Pocket Guide* frequent is not a Bhangra club in the traditional sense; that is, it does not simply play traditional Bhangra songs. Instead, it plays desi music, and nearly all of the 'older' youths are found at this club.[58] Although Kiz and her friend Gurminder are too young to actually go to the club, whilst the 'older' members of the group go clubbing, they spend their time following Punjabi desi music band, Anon. Desi music is what links the different generations of this subcultural group – it is, essentially, the unifying factor. As desi music seems to be an integral part of this youth group's culture, Kiz, who is the character mostly affiliated with this sub-genre of music, can be read as representative of this group as a whole.[59]

Kiz's affiliation with desi music is reinforced during the train journey to Scotland when Kiz demonstrates that, as well as being a fan of Anon, she is a proficient desi dancer:

> Her sequins sparkled in what little light pushed its way through the smeared windows and, although she wasn't radiant in the stylistic sense, she knew who she was. [... Kiz] pressed the button on the remote and her remix did play. [...]
> Remix after remix led Kiz up and down the aisle making passengers rise from their seats to take a good look at the dancing shenanigans.[60]

The word 'remix' is used three times and signals the fact that Kiz is dancing to desi music. Susham states that Kiz 'knew who she was' – like the music Kiz is a 'remix': a mixture of India and England, of 'East' and 'West', of 'home' and 'homeland'. Via her dance Kiz foregrounds her hybrid Overlapping Space identity and shows the people on the train that she is both the one *and* the other.

As Kiz is representative of the subcultural group of the novel, Susham's statement suggests that, like Kiz, the youths of the novel also know who and what they are in terms of their cultural identities, despite what others may think:

> 'You, my girl, don't know who you are. You're like your father.'
> 'I know more about who I am than you ever will. *Haiyo Rabba*, what am I saying? I know more about *you* than you ever will.'[61]

During this argument that Susham has with her mother, Susham proceeds to enlighten her mother about Rai's (an older male friend of Mrs Dillon whom Susham feels is spending too much time at the Dillon home) real intensions towards her, of which Mrs

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58 Susham states that the boys inside the club were 'doing *Bhangra* moves mixed in with some *ragga* ones' (Mahal, *Pocket Guide*, p. 120) thereby confirming that these people are dancing to desi music.
59 Although Indy is the DJ, the novel spends a bit more time developing Kiz's association with the desi-music scene.
60 Mahal, *Pocket Guide*, pp. 73-4.
61 Ibid., p. 229.

Dillon seems oblivious. Clearly Susham knows herself really well as well as everyone around her thereby discrediting theories pertaining to post-migrant generations' identity crises addressed in the main introduction of this thesis. Susham, like Kiz and the other members of the subcultural group, knows who she is culturally, and the ease in which she expresses her bilingual capabilities affirms this as well as her hybrid Overlapping Space identity. Switching between Punjabi and English demonstrates that she is *both* Punjabi and English: she has been enculturated with both cultures and is therefore the one *and* the other.

Through Kiz, Susham's membership to the subcultural group is reinforced. Even though her individuality seems to clash with the network that her cousins are part of, via the network links afforded by Kiz coupled with Susham's displays of nostalgia for Indian culture, Susham's membership to the subcultural group is confirmed, demonstrating that although Susham's individuality may have been slightly rejected by one network, a different network (Kiz) wholeheartedly embraces it.[62]

Susham, like Kiz, has a hybrid Overlapping Space identity. Equally, via the youths' connections to desi music – which, because of its remixed nature, displays its own nostalgia for India – the novel suggests that the other young people of this novel also have hybrid Overlapping Space identities. This commonality seems to forge the cultural bonds between the young people in the novel as they look to each other to reaffirm their 'remixed' cultural identities. As such, the novel indicates that it is this unique shared cultural experience, coupled with nostalgia for Indian culture, which not only creates the subcultural group to begin with but simultaneously makes it exclusive to each of the young people in this group – even someone like Susham, who initially appears to be on the 'outside'.

Like Susham, Jess's membership to her subcultural group is reaffirmed via her sister Pinky whose hybrid Overlapping Space identity, like Kiz's, is used to represent the youth subculture in the novel as a whole. Pinky has clearly been enculturated with both 'Indian' and 'English' cultures. She holds certain Indian customs with the highest regard and displays this nostalgia for India but, at the same time, engages with 'Western' customs as well. For example, Pinky establishes her allegiances with Indian

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[62] Additionally, Susham's best friend is a boy called Indy. Indy is a DJ at the local Bhangra club which, symbolically, makes him another central figure within the subcultural group of the novel. Through Indy, Susham is has access to another network that accepts her individuality which, in turn, helps to reinforce Susham's membership to the subcultural peer group of the novel as well.

culture by wanting to marry an Indian boy and she cannot understand why her sister would not want the same:

> 'Jess.' Pinky leaned towards me. 'Don't you want all this?' she asked urgently, gesturing at her wedding sari and gold jewellery. 'It's the best day of your life!'[63]

The word 'urgently' heightens Pinky's disbelief that Jess may not want to follow Indian marriage traditions. Clearly Pinky has 'wanted all this' all her life establishing the fact that she has been enculturated with her 'homeland' culture. Yet, though Pinky holds on to some Indian traditions with the highest regard, it is not at the expense of 'Western' traditions.

Despite the value Pinky places on traditional Indian marriage customs she wholeheartedly participates with the 'Western' custom of dating. Dating, as discussed in Chapter Five, is treated with great suspicion by most parents of the South Asian diaspora as it is often conflated with pre-marital sex and, as such, is seen as a threat to proprietary and, by extension, a threat to a family's reputation and honour. Nonetheless, despite the 'homeland' cultural concerns associated with dating, Pinky has 'been seeing Teets for years even going behind Mum and Dad's back'.[64] Clearly, by dating Teetu, Pinky practices customs associated with England, thereby confirming her enculturation with her 'home' culture as well. Pinky therefore faithfully attempts to reproduce characteristics found in *both* her 'home' and 'homeland' cultures, which in turn foregrounds her Overlapping Space identity: she is the one *and* the other.

However, as well as seemingly being able to faithfully reproduce these cultural traits and codes she, like the CCCS' definition of subculture, also reinterprets certain cultural ideas as well.[65] For example, when Pinky leaves the family home on the morning of her wedding, Jess states:

> Pinky couldn't help smiling, even though an Indian bride is supposed to look sad because she's leaving her family. She'd got what she wanted, and I could tell she was going to enjoy every minute of it.[66]

Even though Pinky is following the customs associated with traditional Indian weddings, she does not fulfil the stereotypical role of the Indian bride. As such, Pinky both reproduces and modifies certain 'home' and 'homeland' cultural codes, which is

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[63] Dhami, *Bend it Like Beckham*, p. 155.
[64] Ibid., p. 15.
[65] Please refer back to the 'Overlapping Space' section in the main introduction for the discussion of how Overlapping Space identities not only faithfully duplicate 'home' and 'homeland' cultural characteristics but also modify them as well.
[66] Dhami, *Bend it Like Beckham*, p. 141.

essentially what the CCCS argues that subcultures do: 'Sub-cultures must exhibit a distinctive enough shape and structure to make them identifiably different from their "parent" culture [...]. But, since they are sub-sets, there must also be significant things which bind them and articulate them within the "parent" culture.'[67] As the actions of Pinky imitate the formation processes of subcultural youth groups, Pinky symbolically represents this subculture group. Pinky's symbolic status is reinforced not only via her hybrid Overlapping Space identity which displays a nostalgia for India but actually through her network ties and membership to the subcultural youth group found within the novel.

At Pinky's Vatna ceremony, when the female relatives are applying the Vatna cream onto Pinky's body, Jess says, 'I heard Meena and Bubbly muttering that it would take more than that to make Pinky pure.'[68] Evidently Meena and Bubbly have an intimate knowledge and understanding of Pinky and Teetu's relationship, and as the word 'mutter' is to say something quietly and indistinctly, Dhami establishes that this 'insider' knowledge is a secret and 'exclusive' to the group.

Despite the obvious rivalry between the cousins, Meena and Bubbly do not divulge Pinky and Teetu's secret. Had the word 'muttering' been replaced with 'say', 'state', 'claim' or 'laugh', the extract would have had a different impact and meaning altogether: 'I heard Meena and Bubbly [say/state/claim/laugh] that it would take more than that to make Pinky pure.'[69] The use of any of these verbs would make the conversation seem more public or open. However, they do not openly advertise this information: despite the fact that the girls are Pinky's rivals, they keep her secret. As Pinky, Bubbly, Meena, Tony and even Jess all belong to the same subcultural group, despite differences or certain frictions between members or between networks, there seems to be, as both Hebdige and Maira suggest, a general understanding that in-group/'insider' knowledge should be kept within the group. People outside of the subculture – that is, parents – should not know what these young people do or know which, as Hebdige argues, allows subculture members a level of autonomy.[70]

It seems that most, if not all, of the members of this subcultural group knew that Pinky and Teetu had been dating each other in secret for a number of years and their relationship was not only recognised by these individuals but, as the whole group kept

[67] Clarke et al., 'Subcultures, Cultures and Class', pp. 13-4.
[68] Dhami, *Bend it Like Beckham*, p. 135.
[69] Ibid., p. 135.
[70] Hebdige, *Subculture*, p. 88.

this secret from the parental generation, respected as well. Essentially this network acts like a support group: Pinky and Teetu could be 'open' about their relationship and project their hybrid Overlapping Space identities amongst their peers knowing that their lifestyle choices – though may seem to transgresses South Asian codes of conduct – would be accepted. This peer group clearly offers approval for behaviours which parents would deem unacceptable and it seems that this approval is given because of the shared cultural experiences as well as the exclusivity of the group.

The functionalities of subcultures, however, remind us of the limitations of 'hybrid' identities. As Maira suggests:

> [H]ybridity, though fashionable in theory and also literally in 'ethnic chic,' is not always easy to live, for families and communities demand loyalty to cultural ideals that may be difficult to balance for second-generation youth.[71]

Although the *idea* of culturally hybrid identities is theoretically valorised, the implementation of these hybrid identities in all situations could be problematic and potentially rejected. Consequently, in order for individuals to navigate between different cultural spheres, they need to operate using situational ethnicity. A subculture, which is a hybridisation of different 'parent' cultures and is in itself made up of 'hybrid' individuals, however, not only recognises the important function that situational ethnicity plays in these young peoples' lives but actually offers these individuals a site outside the self to potentially project a hybrid Overlapping Space identity. Pinky is 'allowed' to project her *individualised* hybrid Overlapping Space identity within the group *because* her identity compliments the collective group identity (it displays a nostalgia for India) *and* reflects the other members of the group as well. Like Pinky, other members in the group have been enculturated with both their 'home' and 'homeland' cultures, and by letting Pinky fully project her Overlapping Space identity, she essentially legitimises their identities as well.

As Kiz and Pinky both represent their youth subcultural groups as a whole, the relationships that they have with Susham and Jess reassert the latter two's membership to the subcultures in the novel. However, what is important about these siblings is *why* they are symbols of their subcultural groups. Both Kiz and Pinky have been enculturated with both their 'home' and 'homeland' cultures, and it is their Overlapping Space identities which help identify them as representatives of their respective youth subcultures for two reasons. Firstly, their hybrid identities symbolise subcultural groups

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[71] Maira, 'Identity Dub', p. 44.

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in general: like subcultures they are, as the CCCS argue, influenced by their 'parent' cultures and they borrow, imitate, reproduce as well as reinvent, certain cultural codes whilst maintaining nostalgia for India. Secondly, and most importantly, their hybrid Overlapping Space identities are representative of the *other members inside the group* – including Susham and Jess. Like Kiz and Pinky, the other youths in the novels have hybrid Overlapping Space identities and it is through their shared cultural experiences – as second generation members of the South Asian diaspora – that these subcultures are formed. These individuals look to other members of the group to help reinforce their own identities. As such – particularly in Pinky's case – a hybrid identity which may seem 'transgressive' to parents as it celebrates 'Western' affiliations as well as South Asian, might find acceptance within the subculture *because* of this shared cultural experience.

Here, the word 'transgressive' is placed in inverted commas because a 'Western' identity is obviously *not* transgressive but a legitimate part of hybrid Overlapping Space identities. Nonetheless, members of the second generation South Asian diaspora recognise parental desires for cultural 'authenticity' and in order to help navigate this demand, young people employ situational ethnicity to move between 'parent' and 'peer' zones. Essentially young people recognise that hybrid Overlapping Space identities may appear to parents to negate an 'authentic' cultural identity; as such, parts of these identities need to be withheld from parents. Consequently youth subcultures, because of their own hybrid natures, become a site wherein hybrid – supposedly 'transgressive' – Overlapping Space identities are realised and accepted: it becomes an autonomous place where young South Asians look to *each other* to help legitimise their own cultural identities rather than to their parents. Subcultural peer groups therefore offer young South Asians a space which helps them to *project and protect* their hybrid Overlapping Space identities which the employment of secrecy helps to facilitate.

Though the concept of defying parents by keeping secrets from parents in itself may appear problematic, the autonomy promoted in these texts is not only, as Hebdige suggests, part of a subculture's repertoire, but in fact an established theme in children's literature: Alice (*Alice in Wonderland*) constantly challenges the adult characters in the novel, Peter (*Peter Pan*) usurps the authority of Hook the most patriarchal figure in Never Land, Mary Lennox (*The Secret Garden*) defies Mr Craven and the staff of Misselthwaite Manor and enters the garden without permission, and Harry (*Harry Potter* series) ignores the warning and advice offered by, amongst others, Dumbledore,

Hagrid, Sirius and Mr and Mrs Weasley.[72] According to John D. Stahl et al., the editors of *Crosscurrents of Children's Literature*:

> Some form of rebellion has virtually been institutionalized: independent-minded if not positively unruly children are the most common kind of heroes and heroines in children's and young adult books. [...] Books (and films and video games, too) urge children to determine their own course and defy adults [...].[73]

The child's defiance of adult authority is often the driving force of the story: without rebellion there is no adventure. As most adolescent novels follow *Bildungsroman* tradition, in order for the character to 'come of age', to mature, to leave childhood, they must become autonomous and independent, and in order to facilitate and appropriate this change they usurp and undermine parental/adult authority.[74]

Although it seems controversial that the novels *Bend it Like Beckham* and *Pocket Guide* imply that young South Asians should look to their peers for cultural identity development rather than to their parents, by suggesting that adolescents undermine adult authority and/or defy parental wishes, these novels not only actually situate themselves within a long tradition of children's literature but foreground the important function that these subcultural groups can have for young Overlapping Space identities.

Although Jess and Susham may seem slightly on the margins of their subcultural peer groups, they nonetheless simultaneously assert their memberships to these groups by not only understanding the in-group ideology of maintaining each others' secrets from parents and/or the parent generation but by actually using it for their own advantages. In doing so, these characters highlight the important role that subcultural

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[72] Hebdige, *Subculture*, p. 88.

[73] John D. Stahl et al., 'Subjection of the Child or Subversion of Adult Authority', in *Crosscurrents of Children's Literature: An Anthology of Texts and Criticism*, ed. by John D. Stahl et al. (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 127-30 (p. 128).

[74] To understand why rebellion against adult figures is a necessary component found within *Bildungsroman* novels, it useful to draw on psychoanalytical theory (See Roberta Seelinger Trites, 'The Harry Potter Novels as a Test Case for Adolescent Literature', *Style*, 35, 3 [2001], 472-485). Theorising the development of the child, Jacques Lacan argues that, when entering the mirror stage, the child recognises that it is 'other' to the mother and must separate from her (Jacques Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed In Psychoanalytic Experience', in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Vincent B. Leitch et al. [New York; London: W. W. Norton, 2001], pp. 1285-1290). Sigmund Freud's 'Oedipus Complex' and Carl G. Jung's 'Electra Complex' both suggest that in order to claim sexual omnipotence the child must kill/overthrow the parental figure blocking their development (Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Vincent B. Leitch et al. [New York; London: W. W. Norton, 2001], pp. 919-929; Carl Gustav Jung, *Critique of Psychoanalysis* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975]). Ultimately, in order to assume self-mastery the child, in many respects, must triumph over the adult: the child must usurp parental authority.

groups can play in the lives of young people in terms of projecting and protecting their hybrid Overlapping Space identities.

When Jess's parents inform her that she is no longer allowed to play football for Hounslow Harriers they symbolically stifle access to her 'home'land identity. Nonetheless both Tony and Pinky encourage and support Jess's decision to play for the club in secret thereby facilitating the support that Jess needs in order to project her hybrid Overlapping Space identity. Tony says:

> 'Why don't you just play, and not tell them?' he shrugged. 'I mean, Pinky's been sneaking off for years to see Teets, and now they're getting married no-one cares. What your parents don't know won't hurt 'em.'[75]

Here Tony not only supports Jess's football, but he suggests that she should deceive her parents in order to play. Although Jess is hesitant at first, Jules provides Jess with a plausible alibi to give to her parents for when she is at football:

> 'Anyway, don't worry about your mum,' Jules went on confidently. 'Just tell her you've got a summer job. Say you're working at HMV with me.'
>   That was a great idea. I glanced at Tony, who nodded. It might just work.[76]

It seems that Tony gives Jess the approval that she is looking for. She does not need his permission to play, however, by nodding Tony confirms his support for Jess. Subsequently as Tony is part of the subcultural peer group, the novel illustrates how individuals can find the support and approval that they need from other members within the group which bypasses and/or undermines the authority of the parents *because* this approval facilitates the assertion of hybrid Overlapping Space identities.

Similarly, Pinky colludes with Jess in order to keep Jess's football playing a secret from their parents and she essentially teaches Jess how the behave in order to project and protect her hybrid Overlapping Space identity; so that she can essentially 'be' herself:

> 'OK, you know what to do, yeah?' Pinky said impatiently, as she scorched down the road towards the club.
>   'Yeah, call them twice a day,' I replied, picking up her mobile. 'They won't be able to tell I'm, in Germany, will they?'
>   Pinky shook her head. 'Trust me, I'm an expert at this.' She swung the car into the club car park. 'Look, there's your team.'[77]

[75] Dhami, *Bend it Like Beckham*, p. 37.
[76] Ibid., p. 39.
[77] Ibid., pp. 78-9.

As Pinky is an 'expert at this', she indicates that she has been able to elude her parents' knowledge in the past. Pinky is able to pass on her expertise to Jess demonstrating that peer group members can 'mentor' other members with how they essentially need to act and/or behave in order to claim and protect their hybrid Overlapping Space identities. Coupled with putting this plan together, Pinky takes Jess to the football club *and* she lends her sister her mobile phone so that Jess can call home and fool her parents whist she is away. Because Pinky is representative of the subcultural peer group, the fact that she seems to have coordinated the Germany plan suggests that Jess can find approval and support for her behaviour that her parents would deem 'transgressive' from members within the subcultural networks. Although this approval undermines her parents' authority, it nonetheless enables her to project and protect her hybrid Overlapping Space identity.

Similarly, Susham, like Jess, also looks to her peers for support and approval for her actions, and it seems that this support is granted unreservedly. As highlighted earlier, Susham dislikes the way that the rest of her family treat her father; consequently she decides that the best way she can look after her father is to kidnap him and try to live in an allotment shed. Ridiculous as this plan may be, Susham turns to her best friend Indy for support:

> It cost me more than I could afford to live at the allotment, so I resorted to enlisting Indy's help. Sure enough, he turned up trumps and brought us the works: cans of beans, matches, toilet rolls, two sleeping bags, samosas, everything in his fridge, and even *barfi*. I held out for a long time, but in the end I took his mobile phone in case of an emergency.[78]

Here, Mahal illustrates the extent of Indy's support, and the ridiculous situation that Susham finds herself in helps to strengthen the significance of Indy's support. Susham's plan is crazy. Nonetheless, Indy does not criticise her plan. He goes along with it and provides Susham with the utilities, supplies and support that she needs from him.

Like Jess's and Pinky's Germany plan, Susham's 'protect Dad' plan is also a way for Susham to symbolically affirm – and in many ways protect – her Overlapping Space identity. Let us remind ourselves of the following conversation that Susham has with her mother:

> 'You, my girl, don't know who you are. You're like your father.'
> 'I know more about who I am than you ever will. *Haiyo Rabba*, what am I saying? I know more about *you* than you ever will.'[79]

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[78] Mahal, *Pocket Guide*, p. 54.
[79] Ibid., p. 229.

Explicit connections are drawn between Susham and her father. In this respect Susham's father can be regarded as a symbolic extension of Susham's identity. As argued, despite what her mother may think, Susham, like her sister Kiz, knows *exactly* who she is; like Kiz, Susham is a 'remix', a mixture of 'East' *and* 'West', 'home' *and* 'homeland'. Essentially Susham, like the other youths in the novel, has a hybrid Overlapping Space identity, and this 'protect Dad' plan is a symbolic attempt at trying to protect this identity. Indy's support, and later Kiz's involvement in the plan to 'save' their father highlights the idea that individuals can look to members of their subcultural group for support and approval of their 'transgressive' actions which they might not get from parents as this support sanctions and protects the individual's hybrid Overlapping Space identity.

Conclusion

Both Dhami's *Bend It Like Beckham* and Mahal's *Pocket Guide* engage with the role that second generation South Asian subcultural youth groups can have on the lives of South Asian diasporic youth. These novels illustrate that members within the subcultural youth group operate using situational ethnicity and can often find that they are able to project their different cultural identities amongst their peers – identities which they may need to be kept hidden and concealed from their parents and/or the parent generation. These 'other' selves are kept secret because these identities may be deemed as 'transgressive' as they conflict with the identities or lifestyles that their parents want them to have. For example, Diane Wolf, although she looks at the experiences of second generation Filipino youths in America, writes:

> Thus, the father who yelled at his children, stating 'we are in America but you are still Filipinos and I'll raise you however I want to. I'll raise you as Filipinos because you are Filipino and I don't care if you are in America' has a very different image of being Filipino and being American than do his children who, in addition, define themselves as belonging in a hyphenated transnational space, with multiple notions of 'home,' somewhere in-between the Filipino/Philippines and the American/United States.[80]

I have had similar conversations. I have been told that I am Asian and a Muslim and that 'our' ways are different to 'theirs', that is, 'our' ways are very different to the ways of

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[80] Diane, L Wolf, 'Family Secrets: Transnational Struggles Among Children of Filipino Immigrants'. *Sociological Perspectives*, 40, 3 (1997), 457-82 (p. 475).

my school peers. However, as Wolf highlights, second generation migrant youths are not the same as their parents: they, if they choose to assert the hyphen, hold a hyphenated identity: they are multicultured; the one *and* the other.

Second generation migrants, as my proposed Overlapping Space model suggests, have been enculturated with both their 'home' and 'homeland' cultures. These individuals are *the one and the other*. As they may share and reproduce many cultural codes found in the different 'parent' cultures, as discussed in the main introduction of this thesis, certain codes may conflict with one another. So, although a parent my want their child to assert an 'authentic' South Asian (or other ethnic background) identity, that young person cannot 'be' wholly authentic because they have built internal affiliations with other cultures and ideologies.

As such, members of second generation South Asian subcultural youth groups can potentially sympathise with each other as they experience similar cultural influences and constraints. This understanding between members illustrates why some individuals feel comfortable with asserting a variety of individualised cultural Overlapping Space identities within the subcultural group as a whole or within different networks within the group: they can assert an 'ethnic' identity, a hybrid identity, or a more 'Western' identity if they choose because all of these identities are possible within their internal sites of Overlapping Space *so long as* these individualised identities complement the collective identity as a whole: an identity which demonstrates a level of cultural nostalgia.

In many respects this demand for cultural nostalgia actually undermines the suggestion that the hybrid Overlapping Space identities present in subcultural groups are 'transgressive'. Clearly an identity which attempts to relate to a type of 'authentic' South Asianness partially fulfils parental expectations. Nonetheless, young South Asians acknowledge that despite their 'Asianness' it is their 'Westernness' that parents are slightly uncomfortable with. Consequently when projecting an identity amongst their peers which conflicts with what their parents would like, peer-group members operate with the understanding that these identities or lifestyles should be kept secret within the group which, as Hebdige suggests, is actually a normal subcultural group trait.[81] The novels *Bend It Like Beckham* and *Pocket Guide* show readers the function of these groups. They illustrate that it is acceptable to assert a different side of one's

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[81] Hebdige, *Subculture*, p. 88.

personality and cultural identity to the peers within the group or to a specific network within the group because shared experiences can help facilitate acceptance as well as help young people to *project and protect* their hybrid Overlapping Space identities.

These novels, therefore, offer their readers a particular form of bibliotherapy. They indicate that it is normal for young people to withhold information from parents in order to appropriate a feeling of agency and in fact suggest that secrecy is perhaps an essential tool if they wish to communicate a cultural identity that conflicts with the 'authentic' 'homeland' identities deemed acceptable by parents. Significantly, however, the identities that, Jess, Susham, Pinky and Kiz project are not completely abstracted from their 'homeland' cultures at all: Jess applies certain Indian values to dating, Susham is highly enculturated with India via Bollywood, Pinky wants to be an Indian bride, and Kiz, via desi music, is able to affirm her affiliations with Indian culture. All these characters, therefore, actually assert their 'homeland' affiliations *as part of* their hybrid Overlapping Space identities.

Despite these 'ethnic' assertions on behalf of these protagonists, these books foreground a 'different' type of ethnic identity: an Overlapping Space identity which is made up of the *one and the other* – an identity which, despite the affiliations made with the 'homeland' cultures, some parents may feel actually threatens this culture instead. These books, therefore, potentially illustrate to their younger readers how subcultural youth groups can provide the space and environment that young people need in order to comfortably assert any one of their multiple cultural identities; as such these books demonstrate to their young readers one technique/method in which to resolve any internal cultural identity conflicts.

It is also significant that although each of the novels' protagonists assert their membership to their relevant subcultural youth group, that they, at the same time can appear on its margins. As a result, adolescents who are not necessarily directly linked to a larger subcultural peer group (like myself) or individuals who do grow up within and hold membership to subcultural peer-group community yet at the same time experience a slight sense of dislocation might be able to relate to the protagonists and find some comfort in knowing that despite Jess's and Susham's 'outsider' status, they are as much 'insiders' as they are 'out. More specifically, by seeing how the subcultures of these novels help individuals to project and protect their hybrid Overlapping Space identities, these novels help to authenticate the readers' own hybrid Overlapping Space identities as well.

Via the implementation of situational ethnicity, these books ultimately provide readers with solutions in terms of how to assert different parts of their identities. They demonstrate that amongst subcultural peer groups individuals can present different personas to their peers that they might not feel they can assert within the parental cultural framework. These novels also understand the need sometimes for young people to lie and keep secrets from parents in order to convey these different cultural identities and that their peers will help them protect these secrets. Although the books do not necessarily celebrate these secrets – Jess for example asks, 'Why should I have to lie?' – they recognise their necessity.[82] In recognising the function that secrets have, these books illustrate that it is normal, and in some cases essential, for second generation youth to lie to their parents about their lifestyles particularly if they wish to assert a hybrid Overlapping Space which parents may contest. As such, because of shared cultural experiences, peer group members can potentially look to each other for the approval of behaviours which may be classed by parents as 'transgressive' in order to facilitate the assertion of a hybrid Overlapping Space identity – an identity which, these novels affirm, is a legitimate form of cultural expression.

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[82] Dhami, *Bend it Like Beckham*, p. 37.

Chapter 5: Breaking Taboo: Dating and Interracial Relationships

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter Two, the media, since 9/11, has focused much negative attention on Islam and Muslim/'Muslim' communities, which has helped spread Islamophobic fears and concerns. Other than being discussed within the context of terrorism, Islam has also been explicitly linked to issues surrounding forced marriages and 'honour' related crimes.[1] For example, the website *Atlas Shrugs*, run by former *New York Observer* publisher and co-founder of *Stop Islamization of America*, Pamela Geller, has a page entitled 'Honor Killing: Islam's Gruesome Gallery' wherein Geller explicitly condemns the religion for the actions perpetrated by Muslim individuals.[2]

Gunilla Krantz and Claudia Garcia-Moreno define the term 'honour' killing as:

> [T]he murder of a woman, usually by a brother, father, or other male family member, because she has allegedly brought shame to her family. This phenomenon is rooted in the notion of male honour and female chastity [... and it] means a man's honour is linked to the perceived sexual purity of the women in his family. If a woman engages in sex outside marriage or even if she is raped, she is thought to disgrace the family honour. In some societies, the only way to cleanse the family honour is by killing the woman/girl. [...] The term 'murder in the name of honour' has been suggested.[3]

For Krantz and Garcia-Moreno the term 'honour' killing needs to be amended because the word 'honour' has positive connotations when clearly murder is neither positive nor

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[1] Banaz Mahmod, aged 20, was killed by her father and uncle in January 2006 for being with a man that her family did not approve of (Claire Marshall, 'Killed for Loving the Wrong Man', *BBC*, 11 June 2007 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6733653.stm> [accessed 21 January 2010]); Sahjda Bibi was killed at the age of 21 in 2003 by her cousin for marrying an older man also that her family did not approve of (Anonymous, 'Cousin Guilty of Bride's Murder', *BBC*, 15 October 2003 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/west_midlands/3194818.stm> [accessed 21 January 2010]); Heshu Yunes, was 16 years old when she was killed by her father in 2002 for dating a man outside of her culture (Rebecca Allison, 'Where's the Honour in This?', *Guardian*, 3 October 2003 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/oct/03/gender.uk> [accessed 21 January 2010]; and Nuziat Khan is suspected of being murdered by her husband in 2001 for wanting a divorce (ibid.). Because of the number of forced marriages and honour crimes in the UK, the National Lottery funded an organisation, *Practical Solutions*, in 2007 to help victims deal with these issues (*Practical Solutions* <http://www.practical-solutions.info/Home.aspx> [accessed 21 January 2010]).

[2] Pamela Geller, 'Honor Killing: Islam's Gruesome Gallery', in *Atlas Shrugs*, 31 March 2009, <http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com/atlas_shrugs/2009/03/honor-killing-islams-gruesome-gallery.html> [accessed 3 October 2010].

[3] Gunilla Krantz and Claudia Garcia-Moreno, 'Violence Against Women', *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 59 (2005), 818-821 (p. 821).

honourable. Krantz and Garcia-Moreno suggest that these crimes are largely perpetrated by men, and although there have been incidents wherein women have been involved, for example in the case of Rukhsana Naz, these crimes ultimately ensure that male honour is preserved.[4]

Expanding patriarchy's role in these crimes, Veena Meetoo and Heidi Safia Mizra assert that:

> The problem with femicide is not particular to one culture or religious group or community. Women are beaten and murdered across the globe for similar reasons. [... D]omestic violence cuts across race, class, religion and age. Patriarchy uses violence extensively to subjugate women – it is not an issue of racial or ethnic differences.[5]

Despite the negative media focus on Islam post 9/11, 'honour' killings and 'honour' related crimes are *not* specific to Muslims or to other South Asian religions such as Hinduism and Sikhism.[6] For example, in Israel, Meir Amar, son of Rabbi Shlomo Amar, kidnapped and assaulted the man his sister was dating because his family did not approve of the union, before threatening her with a knife and ordering her to end their relationship;[7] in Beitar Illit, Israel, a fourteen year old girl had acid thrown on her by a 'modesty guard' (also known as 'chastity guards' – note here the synonymous nature of the words 'modesty', 'chastity' and 'honour'), who are affiliated with an extreme Orthodox Jewish community in Jerusalem, for wearing trousers; [8] in a separate incident, Elhanan Buzaglo and six other 'modesty guards' beat up and threatened to kill a 31 year old divorcee in her home because of her relationships with other men;[9] Hassan Habash, a Palestinian Christian, killed his daughter, Faten Habash, for seeing a Muslim boy;[10] in Egypt, Mariam Khilla was shot by her brother, Rami Khilla, for converting to Islam

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[4] Naz's mother helped restrain her whilst the brother strangled her (Jason Burke, 'Love, Honour and Obey – Or Die', *Observer*, 8 October 2000 <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,6903,379174, 00.html> [accessed 4 December 2007]).

[5] Veena Meetoo and Heidi Safia Mirza, '"There is Nothing 'Honourable' About Honour Killings": Gender, Violence and the Limits of Multiculturalism', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 30 (2007), 187-200 (p. 189). See also Rahila Gupta, 'A Veil Drawn over Brutal Crimes', *Guardian*, 3 October 2003 <http://www. guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,1054858,00.html> [accessed 21 January 2008] (para 5 of 10).

[6] As discussed in Chapter Two, since 9/11, diverse South Asian cultures are sometimes grouped together and/or are seen as synonymous.

[7] Vered Luvitch, 'Chief Rabbi's Son Gets Prison Sentence', *Y Net News*, 3 January 2006 <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3194260,00.html> [accessed 4 October 2010].

[8] Anonymous, '"Modesty Patrol" Suspected of Spilling Acid on Teenage Girl', *Israel Today*, 8 June 2008 <http://www.israeltoday.co.il/default.aspx?tabid=178&nid=16242> [accessed 3 October 2010].

[9] Aviad Glickman, 'Woman Beat, Threatened by "Modesty Squad"', *Y Net News*, 14 August 2008 <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3582713,00.html> [accessed 3 October 2010].

[10] Chris McGreal, 'Murdered in Name of Family Honour', *Guardian*, 23 June 2005 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/jun/23/israel> [accessed 3 October 2010].

against her Christian family's wishes so that she could marry her husband, Ahmed Saleh;[11] in Italy, in a non-religiously reported motivated incident, Maria Monaco was kept hidden and locked away by her family for eighteen years for getting pregnant out of wedlock;[12] in the US, Roberto Diaz killed his estranged wife, Barbara Reigosa, and her lover, Dirmas Rodezno, because they had 'offended his honour';[13] and, in another non-religiously motivated attack, Sicilian Bruna Morabito was shot in the face by her brother, Giovanni Morabito, who confessed that he committed the crime in order to protect the honour of his family.[14] Clearly, as Meetoo and Mizra argue, 'honour' crimes transcend religion, culture and race. So, although critics such as Geller raise important awareness for the victims of the crimes that they cite, in their zealous efforts to focus on Islam they neglect to acknowledge the victims from *other* backgrounds, consequently they create a false impression of honour crimes as being intrinsically connected to Islam – as being a 'Muslim problem', and, by extension, a 'South Asian problem'.

Here, although some of the victims of these crimes are men, what all these incidents ultimately highlight is the cross-cultural *patriarchal* control and ownership of women's bodies. Women became the subjects of 'honour' crimes because they do not conform to certain propriety rules – specifically, for the majority of these women, to rules pertaining to dating and sexual practices. Failure to comply with these rules is clearly met by the indignation and disapproval of those who take it upon themselves to inflict the punishments.

The surveillance of women's bodies is obviously not a new phenomenon and, as well as transcending cultures, races and religions, it also transcends history as well. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir argues that male patriarchy has perpetuated throughout history certain myths about women which secure women's status as inferior to men. These myths, she argues, essentially 'Other' women and, by extension, refutes women as fellow human beings. De Beauvoir claims that few 'myths have been more advantageous to the rule caste than the myth of woman: it justifies all privileges and

[11] Anonymous, 'Egyptian Killed in Sectarian Row', *BBC*, 8 October 2008 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7658355.stm> [accessed 4 October 2010].

[12] Elisabetta Povoledo, 'Another Imprisoned Woman Is Found, This Time in Italy', *The New York Times*, 17 June 2008 <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/17/world/europe/17italy.html?_r=1&ref=josef_fritzl> [accessed 4 October 2010].

[13] Steve Szydlowski, 'Man Says He Killed Estranged Wife, Lover to Defend Honor', *The Providence Journal*, 20 February 2007 <http://www.projo.com/news/content/Double_Homicide_02-20-07_114G9LG.1174762.html> [accessed 3 October 2010].

[14] John Hooper, '"Honour" Attack Leaves Woman Fighting for Life', *Guardian*, 27 March 2006 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/mar/27/italy.johnhooper> [accessed 3 October 2010].

even authorizes their abuse.'[15] Building on de Beauvoir's ideas, Monique Witting argues that the heterosexual category of 'woman', as a binary opposition of 'man', ensures female servitude towards men. As such Witting calls for the abandonment of 'women' as a class in order to dissolve patriarchy's oppression of females: 'once the class "men" disappears, "women" as a class will disappear as well, for there are no slaves without masters.'[16] Also addressing the construction of 'woman', and more specifically 'gender', Judith Butler convincingly argues that gender is ideologically constructed and states that there are 'strict punishments for contesting the script by performing out of turn or through unwarranted improvisation.'[17] Though some of these feminists have been criticised for their Eurocentric perspectives and overlooking the experiences of racial minority women, what these critics foreground, nonetheless, is patriarchy's larger role in the surveillance of women's bodies which transcends culture, race, religion and history. As societies, cultures and patriarchy are interconnected, by not 'performing' one's femininity well or challenging the ideological construct of 'woman', females, as the examples highlighted above indicate, are punished by these patriarchal societies. Consequently 'honour' crimes ensure patriarchy's hegemony and the submission of the female.

Within South Asian, and more specifically Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi contexts, the surveillance and control of women's bodies became more urgent because of colonialism. Discussing the colonial control of Caucasian women's bodies, Gillian Whitlock writes: 'The domesticated female body is both metaphor and agent of social order, conveying what was often represented as distinctly English cultural and social practices and meanings.'[18] By contrast, colonialists, as Edward Said suggests, used the body of the 'Other' woman to suggest the opposite, and, in the case of India, the Indian woman's body was used to signify India's 'backwardness'.[19] Katherine Mayo's notorious book, *Mother India*, documented the supposed social ills of India and

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[15] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans by H. M. Parshley, in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Vincent B. Leitch et al., (New York; London: W. W. Norton, 2001), pp. 1406-1414 (p. 1409).

[16] Monique Witting, 'One is Not Born a Woman', in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Vincent B. Leitch et al., (New York; London: W. W. Norton, 2001), pp. 2014-2021 (p. 2018).

[17] Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Construction', in *Writing on the Body*, ed. by Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina and Sarah Stanbury (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 401-17 (p. 415).

[18] Gillian Whitlock, The Intimate Empire: A Sensation of Well-Being', in *The Body in the Library*, ed. by Leigh Dale and Simon Ryan (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), pp. 197-205 (p. 202).

[19] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Vincent B. Leitch et al. (New York; London: W. W. Norton, 2001), pp. 1991-2012.

suggested, through its analysis of Indian women, that India was incapable of successful self-rule.[20] However Mayo's negative usage of the term 'Mother India' was reappropriated during India's nationalist anti-colonial movement and the phrase 'Bharat Mata' (Mother India) was utilised quite extensively during India's drive for independence from British colonial rule. India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, claims: 'Sometimes as I reached a gathering, a great roar of welcome would greet me: Bharat Mata ki jai – "Victory to Mother India", and in his book, Nehru writes: [21]

> Bharat Mata, Mother India, was essentially these millions of people, and victory to her meant victory to these people. You are part of this Bharat Mata, I told them, you are in a manner yourselves Bharat Mata.[22]

For India, as Mrinalini Sinha suggests, the Indian woman became symbolic of 'the "inner" essence of the community.'[23] Women became 'guardian[s] of the "spiritual" domain,' and, as a result, the 'task before the nationalist leaders was now to protect the inherent qualities of the "spiritual domain".'[24] Elaborating on this idea Partha Chatterjee writes:

> The home was the principal site for expressing the spiritual quality of the national culture, and women must take the main responsibility of protecting and nurturing this quality. No matter what the changes in the external conditions of life for women, they must not lose their essentially spiritual (i.e. feminine) virtues; they must not, in other words, become *essentially* westernized. It followed, as a simple criterion for judging the desirability of reform, that the essential distinction between the social roles of men and women in terms of material and spiritual virtues must at all times be maintained.[25]

Consequently, as Suruchi Thapar argues, 'concepts of "motherhood" and "femininity" were modified in accordance with the prevailing political ideology.'[26] Because of colonisation, the symbolic significance of Mother India, and by extension women, took on new urgent meanings for India: women's bodies became simultaneously the site of political protest and liberation from colonial rule but, at the same time, needed to assume more traditional 'feminine' roles in 'ways which would enhance the "masculine" or worldly virtues of Indian men' and had to be 'non-threatening in the

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[20] Katherine Mayo, *Mother India* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co, 1927).
[21] Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985 [1946]), p. 60.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Mrinalini Sinha, *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 8.
[24] Suruchi Thapar, 'Women as Activists; Women As Symbols: A Study of the Indian Nationalist Movement', *Feminist Review*, 44 (1993), 81-96 (p. 82; ibid.).
[25] Partha Chatterjee, 'The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question', in *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*, ed. by Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1999), pp. 233-53 (p. 243).
[26] Thapar, 'Women as Activists', p. 82.

traditional male hierarchy.'[27] Women played a significant and active role in the anti-colonial movement which cannot be denied; however, this role, it seems, was granted because it complemented patriarchal hegemony. Consequently Indian women, as the 'second sex', were already subjects of masculine hegemony; however, because of colonialism, the surveillance and control of these women's bodies became enhanced as their bodies were used to signal national independence which, in turn, emphasises the patriarchal control of women's bodies. As such, as Butler suggests, by not 'performing' one's femininity well or challenging the ideological construct of 'woman', women within patriarchal societies are punished for their 'deviance'. Through the colonial encounter and the subsequent value added to Indian women's bodies, within Indian – and by extension other South Asian – cultures, 'Honour' crimes are committed to preserve this value which ultimately ensures *patriarchal* hegemony.

Within South Asian communities 'honour' crimes take place within a context in which dating is often met with 'disapproval and rejection'.[28] Dating within South Asian cultural contexts is generally treated with suspicion because, as in many other cultures, value is placed on a girl's chastity which dating is seen to compromise.[29] As such, dating is viewed as a form of transgression, and the concerns with dating are often heightened if the partner is of a different race or religion. In certain South Asian communities, interracial and interreligious dating is deemed highly inappropriate, a threat towards cultural values and reputation, and in some cases intolerable because this type of dating represents a form of cultural transgression: 'The notion of dating someone from another race, religion or ethnicity was considered unacceptable by immigrant parents, creating a need for second generation women to keep this from their families.'[30]

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[27] Ibid., p. 84; ibid.

[28] Monique Hennink et al., 'Young Asian Women and Relationships: Traditional or Transitional?', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22, 5 (1999), 867-891 (p. 879). See also Monisha Das Gupta's '"What is Indian About You?": A Gendered, Transnational Approach to Ethnicity', *Gender and Society*, 11, 5 (1997), 572-596 (p. 584), and Arpana G. Inman et al., 'Development and Preliminary Validation of the Cultural Values Conflict Scale for South Asian Women', *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 48, 1 (2001), 17-27 (p. 18).

[29] Inman et al., 'Development and Preliminary Validation', p. 18. Words like 'slag', 'slapper', 'slut', 'whore', 'ho', 'skank', 'tart', and so forth, which are derogatory terms mostly applied to women (the masculine counterpart, 'player' or 'playa', instead has positive connotations) help illustrate the patriarchal value that 'Westernised' cultures place on female chastity.

[30] Arpana G. Inman et al., 'Cultural Value Conflict: An Examination of Asian Indian Women's Bicultural Experience', in *Asian and Pacific Islander Americans: Issues and Concerns for Counselling and Psychotherapy* (New York: Nova Science, 1999) pp. 31-42 (p. 36). See also Shoba S. Rajgopal's 'The Politics of Location: Ethnic Identity and Cultural Conflict in the Cinema of the South Asian Diaspora' *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 27 (2003) 49-66 (p. 53); Maria P. P. Root's *Love's Revolution:*

Drawing on this need for concealment, the satirical website *BadIndianGirl.com* critiques the South Asian views about dating and interracial relationships using comedy.[31] The website challenges the image of the 'good Indian girl': a girl who does not date, is shy and delicate, and marries an Indian man of her parents' choosing.[32] It is this 'perfect' stereotype, or ideal, that the website critiques. In their satirical quiz entitled 'Are You a Good Indian Girl or a Bad Indian Girl?', *BadIndianGirl.com* suggests that 'good' Indian girls marry before the age of 25, never have boyfriends, do not engage in 'premarital fooling around', wear saris to clubs, do not drink alcohol at Indian events, accept the lifestyle choices that their parents make for them, listen respectfully to the criticisms from 'Nosy Auntie', can make Indian dishes, stay in on a Friday night and are familiar with both the classic and latest Bollywood stars.[33] By default (according to the quiz), a 'bad' Indian girl is one who, amongst many other 'flaws', marries after the age of 25 and earns extra 'bad' points if she marries a non-Indian, has had secret boyfriends (she earns additional points if these boyfriends are non-Indian), and has engaged with premarital 'fooling around'.[34] This site acknowledges its satirical approach to its definitions of the 'good' and 'bad' Indian girl and in its disclaimer states:

> Of course there is no such thing as a 'Bad Indian Girl' or even a 'Good Indian Girl'. These are just labels that are brought forth by community members who are quick to judge an individual based on her lifestyle.[35]

BadIndianGirl.com not only draws attention to the fact that interracial relationships are a subject of taboo, but by being able to poke fun at these 'good' and 'bad' images it criticises the stereotypes that are still prevalent and in circulation amongst South Asian communities today, directly speaking to young diasporic South Asians.

Significantly, however, as well as being received with hostility within South Asian cultural contexts, interracial relationships can also be met with rejection within 'Western' contexts as well. The word 'interracial' has connotative associations with the term 'miscegenation', coined in 1864 by George Wakeman and David Goodman Croly,

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Interracial Marriage (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), p. 100, and Aziz Talbani and Parveen Hasanali's 'Adolescent Females Between Tradition and Modernity: Gender Role Socialization in South Asian Immigrant Culture', *Journal of Adolescence*, 23 (2000), 615-627 (p. 617).

[31] *BadIndianGirl.com*, <www.badindiangirl.com> [accessed 13 March 2008]. See Appendix 1.

[32] Priya Agarwal, *Passage From India: Post 1965 Indian Immigrants and Their Children* (Palos Verdes, California: Yuvati Publications, 1991), p. 52.

[33] *BadIndianGirl.com*, <www.badindiangirl.com/quiz> [accessed 13 March 2008]. See Appendix 1.

[34] Ibid.

[35] *BadIndianGirl.com*, <www.badindiangirl.com/About> [accessed 13 March 2008].

which evolves from the Latin words for 'mix' (miscere) and 'race' (genus).[36] Between 1661 and 2000, anti-miscegenation laws existed in America.[37] Though there were no such laws which existed in Canada or the UK, anti-miscegenation practices or prejudices still operated.[38] Anti-miscegenation fears became part of the dominant ideology, and these fears still exist today. Studies show that even in the twenty-first century some interracial couples initiate and practice their relationships with trepidation because of concerns relating to how their relationships will be publically received and/or have fears of being marginalised.[39] These studies, therefore, illustrate that even within 'Western' contexts, interracial unions are also seen as a form of cultural taboo.

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[36] Lucy Bland, 'White Women and Men of Colour: Miscegenation Fears in Britain after the Great War', *Gender & History*, 17, 1 (2005), 29-61, (p. 29); Sidney Kaplan 'The Miscegenation Issue in the Election of 1864', in *Interracialism: Black-White Intermarriage In American History*, ed. by Werner Sollors (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 219-265 (p. 226); Robert J. C. Young's *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), p.144. In the nineteenth century many anthropological articles emerged which opposed the mixing of races based on 'scientific' reasoning: cross-breeding of humans cannot improve the race (like it can for cattle); biracial offspring contained deficiencies either physically, mentally or aesthetically; subsequent generational reproductions would produce further degeneration; it takes four generations to breed out the black or white from people in order to eradicate the 'abnormal race'; if a woman had children from two different racial partners, the children from the second partner would resemble the first partner rather than their own biological father, and so forth (Robert Knox 'Do Races Ever Amalgamate?', in *'Mixed Race' Studies: A Reader*, ed. by Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe [London; New York: Routledge, 2004], pp. 37-8; Joseph Arthur de Count Gobineau, 'Recapitulation: The Respective Characteristics of the Three Great Races; The Superiority of the White Type, and, Within this Type, Of the Aryan Family', in *'Mixed Race' Studies: A Reader*, ed. by Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe [London; New York: Routledge, 2004], pp. 39-41; Josiah Clark Nott and George Robins Gliddon, 'Hybridity of Animals, Viewed in Connection with the Natural History of Mankind', in *'Mixed Race' Studies: A Reader*, ed. by Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe [London; New York: Routledge, 2004], pp. 42-46; Martin R. Delany, 'Comparative Elements of Civilization', in *'Mixed Race' Studies: A Reader*, ed. by Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe [London; New York: Routledge, 2004], pp. 52-3).

[37] Bland, 'White Women and Men of Colour', p. 32; Anonymous, 'Alabama Repeals Century-Old Ban on Interracial Marriages', *CNN.com* (2000), <http://edition.cnn.com/2000/ALLPOLITICS/stories/11/07/alabama.interracial/> [accessed 24 January 2008]. In 1967, following the *Loving versus the Commonwealth of Virginia* case, the anti-miscegenation laws started to get overturned (Andrea M. Basu, *Negotiating Social Contexts: Identities of Biracial College Women* [Charlotte: Information Age Publishing, 2007] pp. 2-3).

[38] Bland, 'White Women and Men of Colour', p. 29; Constance Backhouse, 'The White Women's Labour Laws: Anti-Chinese Racism in Early Twentieth-Century Canada', *Law and History Review*, 14, 2 (1996), 315-368 (p. 342).

[39] Tina M. Harris and Pamela J. Kalbfleisch, 'Interracial Dating: The Implications of Race for Initiating a Romantic Relationship', *Howard Journal of Communications*, 11, 1 (2000), 49-64; Kara Joyner and Grace Kao, 'Interracial Relationships and the Transition to Adulthood', *American Sociological Review*, 70, 4 (2005), 563-581; Justin J. Lehmiller and Christopher R. Agnew, 'Marginalized Relationships: The Impact of Social Disapproval on Romantic Relationship Commitment', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32 (2006), 40-51; Shana Levin et al., 'Interethnic and Interracial Dating in College: A Longitudinal Study', *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 24, 3 (2007), 323-341; Carmen Luke and Vicki Carrington, 'Race Matters', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 21, 1 (2000), 5-24; Kozue Shibazaki and Kelly A. Brennan, 'When Birds of Different Feathers Flock Together: A Preliminary Comparison of Intra-Ethnic and Inter-Ethnic Dating Relationships', *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 15 (1998), 248-256; Hongyu Wang, Grace Kao and Kara Joyner, 'Stability of Interracial and Intraracial Romantic Relationships Among Adolescents', *Social Science Research*, 35, 2 (2006), 435-453.

In the context of the violent and disturbing 'honour' crimes and the taboos associated with dating, children's literature which focuses on the dilemmas of dating for young South Asians has a potentially life-changing possibility, as it potentially offers readers models of their own family tensions, and ways to negotiate these. These books exist within an established tradition of young adult novels that engage with dating, considered as a major preoccupation for most teens and many pre-teen individuals.[40] To see South Asian engagements with this theme as contentious is to neglect the fact that since the 1970s, when young adult novels explicitly began to explore stronger themes including the theme of sex, children's literatures that engage with sexuality and sexual relationships has always been controversial.[41] Such novels can be categorised as 'problem novels' and it is into this category, too, that young adult fictions from the South Asian diaspora can also be placed.[42] However, because of the taboo that surrounds dating and romance in the South Asian context, these issues too become 'problems': not just sex, but dating more generally as a form of social transgression.

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[40] See Jennifer A. Connolly and Anne M. Johnson's 'Adolescents' Romantic Relationships and the Structure and Quality of Their Close Interpersonal Ties', *Personal Relationships*, 3, 2 (1996), 185-195; Jennifer Connolly et al. 'Conceptions of Cross-Sex Friendships and Romantic Relationships in Early Adolescence', *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 28, 4 (1999), 481-494; Jennifer Connolly et al. 'Mixed-Gender Groups, Dating, and Romantic Relationships in early Adolescence', *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 14, 2 (2004), 185-207; Candice Feiring's 'Other-Sex Friendship Networks and the Development of Romantic Relationships in Adolescence', *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 28, 4 (1999), 495-511; and Sandy Jackson et al. 'Cognitive Strategies employed in Trying to Arrange a First Date', *Journal of Adolescence*, 24 (2001), 267-279. By the 1960s authors and publishers recognised that young people were maturing earlier as a result of 'their own experience and their exposure to mass popular culture' (Joyce A. Litton, 'From *Seventeenth Summer* to *Miss Teen Sweet Valley*: Female and Male Sex Roles in Teen Romances, 1942-91', in *Images of the Child*, ed. by Harry Eiss [Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1994], pp. 19-34 [p. 19]). Subsequently a new genre of realist teen romance fiction emerged for young readers.

[41] Julia Eccleshare, 'Teenage Fiction: Realism, Romances, Contemporary Problem Novels', in *International Companion Encyclopaedia of Children's Literature*, ed. by Peter Hunt (Oxon, Routledge, 2004), pp. 383-392 (p. 384).

[42] Novels that engage with hard edged teenage issues like drug and alcohol abuse, depression, suicide, self mutilation, rape and sexual abuse, sexual orientation, teen pregnancies, abortion, eating disorders and so forth, are critically referred to as 'problem novels' (Cart, Michael, *From Romance to Realism: 50 Years of Growth and Change in Young Adult Literature* [New York: Harper Collins, 1996], p. 64; Eccleshare, 'Teenage Fiction'; Melanie D. Koss and William H. Teale, 'What's Happening in YA Literature? Trends in Books for Adolescents', *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52, 7 [2009], 563-72; Litton, 'From *Seventeenth Summer*'; Marsha M. Sprague and Kara K. Keeling, *Discovering Their Voices: Engaging Adolescent Girls With Young Adult Literature* [Newark: International Reading Association, 2007]). Problem novels aim to present the world in a realistic light whilst still offering readers a form of bibliotherapy (See Michael Angelotti, 'Uses of Poetry and Adolescent Literature in Therapy', in *Adolescents, Literature, and Work with Youth*, ed. by J. Pamela Weiner and Ruth M. Stein [New York: The Hanworth Press, 1985], pp. 27-38).

The two novels that are the focus of this chapter exist within the context of a range of fictions which explore both intraracial and interracial dating.[43] Tanuja Desai Hidier's *Born Confused* and Bali Rai's *The Last Taboo* both look at love and romance via the theme of dating – both *intra-* and *inter*racial dating – and do so within the context of arranged marriages and 'honour' crimes respectively.[44] Significantly, by engaging with these themes both novels try to dispel some of the preconceived ideas that surround these issues and topics.

As well as challenging these stereotypes, these novels also challenge the taboos associated with dating. As such, they can be seen as 'triply' transgressive because they a) tackle South Asian taboos associated with dating, b) confront South Asian anxieties associated with interracial relationships, and c) confront 'Western' concerns with miscegenation. Consequently, because these novels deal positively with dating and interracial relationships, they may spark controversy – especially from the parents of young South Asian children. At the same time, however, they provide a powerful example of the Overlapping Space model as the process of enculturation is physically externalised in the cultural practices of those who undertake these relationships. In terms of bibliotherapy, the books offer complex and diverse pathways that the young reader may navigate in order to resolve their own relationships, depending on their individual circumstances. Moreover, from an ethical perspective, these texts may also work to challenge discriminatory values and serve an additional social function by contributing to the erosion of prejudices maintained *within all cultures* attached to dating and interracial relationships.

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[43] For example, Mitali Perkins's *First Daughter* and Narinder Dhami's *Bend it Like Beckham* explore *intra*racial dating through the relationships between Sameera and Bobby, and Pinky and Teetu respectively (Mitali Perkins, *First Daughter: Extreme American Makeover* [New York: Dutton Children's Books, 2007]; Narinder Dhami, *Bend it Like Beckham* [London: Hodder Children's Books, 2002]). However, others choose to explore *inter*racial dating: Rachna Gilmore's *A Group of One* (Tara and Jeff), Bali Rai's *(Un)arranged Marriage* (Manny and Lisa), Marina Budhos's *Ask Me No Questions* (Taslima and Tim), Anjali Banerjee's *Maya Running* (Maya and Jamie), Kavita Daswani's *Indie Girl* (Indie and Cayman), Dhami's *Bindi Babes* series (Geena and Gareth and the potential relationship between Amber and George), for example (Rachna Gilmore, *A Group of One* [New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001]; Bali Rai, *(Un)arranged Marriage* [London: Corgi Books, 2001]; Marina Budhos, *Ask Me No Questions* [New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006]; Anjali Banerjee, *Maya Running* [New Delhi: Puffin Books, 2005]; Kavita Daswani, *Indie Girl* [New York: Simon Pulse, 2007]; Narinder Dhami, *Bhangra Babes* [London: Corgi Books, 2005]; Narinder Dhami, *Superstar Babes* [London: Corgi Books, 2008]).
[44] Tanuja Desai Hidier, *Born Confused* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 2002); Bali Rai, *The Last Taboo* (London: Corgi Books, 2006).

A Question of Honour?

Many South Asian communities hold specific cultural traditions and values which relate to and include, amongst others, ideas about family, relationships, marriage and religion. Dating, within the context of South Asian cultural norms, is largely seen as a transgressive activity. It is seen as a 'Western'/non-Asian activity and is often associated with 'Western' corruption. Subsequently, many parents and communities feel that their children, particularly females, need protecting from this culture in order to try and maintain their daughters' honour as well as South Asian cultural values. As such, novels which explore dating within South Asian cultural contexts potentially offer their readers a form of bibliotherapy as these books recognise, acknowledge and discus the cultural concerns that are associated with dating by engaging with the role that patriarchy plays in the surveillance and control of women's bodies.

As Arpana Inman et al. highlight, 'women's status primarily comes from marriage and children.'[45] In this context dating becomes a form of 'Western' corruption because of its association with premarital sex. A woman's honour and reputation affects her marriageability which dating is seen to compromise. In a study conducted by Monisha Das Gupta, the stigmas associated with dating are explored:

> Dating as a procedure to find a partner threatened the first generation's views on propriety. In India, older generations stigmatize free and unsupervised mixing of the sexes as improper and promiscuous. The rigidity of sex segregation, however, varies with class backgrounds and the particular subculture of a family. For the parents of my respondents, the association of premarital sex with dating added to their fears. Again, the women were much more vulnerable than were men to the strictures about sexual behavior [sic].[46]

In some South Asian communities 'dating is acceptable only in the context of marriage and hence, contradictory to South Asian cultural values [...]. Furthermore, with the emphasis placed on chastity and virginity before marriage, premarital sexual relations are considered unacceptable.'[47] For some parents and South Asian cultural communities, ideas of dating and premarital sex are conflated. Parents can therefore be hostile towards their daughters dating as they view it as a potentially dangerous type of

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[45] Inman et al., 'Development and Preliminary Validation', p. 19.
[46] Das Gupta, '"What is Indian About You?"', p. 584.
[47] Inman et al., 'Development and Preliminary Validation', p. 18.

transgression which, as de Beauvoir suggests, potentially destabilises patriarchal myths and/or ideals associated with the 'good' woman.[48]

Interracial dating is in fact perceived traditionally as an extreme form of deviant activity, not only because dating is taboo, but also because interracial relationships transgress cultural boundaries. Marriages within South Asian cultural contexts are not only seen as the unification of two families, but the strengthening of community ties.[49] Interracial relationships, therefore, are considered not only as a threat to propriety, reputation and 'honour', but a potential threat to the stability of the community, bringing with them the fear of 'cultural obliteration' as Shamita Das Dasgupta explains:[50]

> This phenomenon [of traditional gender role expectations for second generation South Asian girls] can perhaps be explained by examining the gender specific role that daughters of immigrants are given in the preservation of Indian ethnic/cultural identity. [...] the maintenance of traditions and identity have historically been placed on South Asian women's shoulders. As the keepers of South Asian culture and heritage in the U.S., the roles of second-generation daughters are therefore monitored more strictly than those of sons. Fears of cultural obliteration by 'Americanization' and exogamy have played a large role in imposing such constructions on the female gender role.[51]

Within South Asian cultural contexts, interracial dating alludes to fears of exogamy (outmarrying) and cultural obliteration which explains why interracial unions are considered unacceptable and a sign of deviance.[52]

Both Desai Hidier and Rai, in the construction of their characters Dimple and Simran, engage with the view that interracial dating is seen as a form of 'Western' corruption. Dimple Lala, the protagonist from *Born Confused*, is a seventeen-year-old 'ABCD' – American Born Confused Desai.[53] Dimple's parents, Shilpa and Rohitbhai, are thrilled at being reacquainted with their old friend, Radha Kapoor, who happens to have a son, Karsh, whom they think would make a suitable husband for Dimple. Dimple, however, who is interested in a college boy, Julian Rothschild, and is getting

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[48] De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p. 1407.

[49] Inman et al., 'Development and Preliminary Validation', p. 19; Robin Goodwin and Duncan Cramer, 'Marriage and Social Support in a British-Asian Community', *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 10 (2000), 49-62 (p. 59).

[50] Shamita Das Dasgupta, 'Gender Roles and Cultural Continuity in the Asian Indian Immigrant Community in the U.S.', *Sex Roles*, 38, 11-12 (1998), 953-973 (p. 957).

[51] Ibid.

[52] Similarly, however, this fear echoes white racist concerns about interracial relationships and of white cultural obliteration. Paradoxically, the South Asian cultural insistence on *intra*racial unions – as opposed to *inter*racial – also reinforces white fears about discrete and enclosed migrant communities: the 'enemy within'.

[53] Desai Hidier, *Born Confused*, p. 103.

160

over her break up with Bobby O'Malley, decides, before she has even met Karsh, that she will not like him. Nonetheless, as Dimple and Karsh become more acquainted, Dimple unexpectedly finds that she begins to develop feelings for Karsh and vice versa and the two eventually form a successful relationship.

This novel, from the outset, is a teen romance novel. A review by the American teen magazine *Seventeen Magazine* claims it is an example of Jane Austen going to Bollywood – presumably because Dimple and Karsh's relationship seems to echo that of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*.[54] However, unlike the Austen novel, it deals with the three main issues and taboos that are associated with dating and interracial relationships: both the *intra-* and *inter*racial dating concerns within South Asian cultural contexts, and *inter*racial dating within 'Western' contexts. Although Dimple's parents approve and even urge her to pursue Karsh, this approval is sanctioned for three reasons: firstly because Karsh is a 'good' Indian boy; secondly because, given the option, Shilpa and Rohitbhai would have liked to have 'arranged' Dimple and Karsh's union and, finally, because Karsh and Dimple's relationship is potentially within the context of marriage.[55]

Through Dimple and Karsh's relationship, this novel engages with the idea of arranged marriages in order to dispel the common conflation of this practice and forced marriages in the media and public imagination.[56] The UK Ministry of Justice state that in an arranged marriage, 'the family will take the lead in arranging the match but the couples have a choice as to whether to proceed. In a forced marriage there is no choice,' and clearly Dimple is given the choice by her family to see if she wants to pursue a relationship with Karsh or not.[57] Readers who are unfamiliar with how arranged marriages work will, through Dimple and Karsh, develop a better understanding of this custom and realise that marriages like these are entirely separate from forced marriages. Importantly, Dimple and Karsh develop genuine feelings for one another, thereby illustrating that arranged marriages, despite certain myths that surround these unions, are not always loveless but can, like 'love' marriages, be very emotionally fulfilling.

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[54] Desai Hidier, *Born Confused*, front cover.
[55] Inman et al, 'Development and Preliminary', p. 18.
[56] See for example the title of this article: Chris Brooke, 'Dozens of Missing Schoolchildren Feared Forced Into Arranged Marriages', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2008 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-526233/Dozens-missing-schoolchildren-feared-forced-arranged-marriages.html> [accessed 10 October 2010].
[57] Bridget Prentice, 'Forced Marriage an Evil In Our Society', *Ministry of Justice*, 11 March 2008 <http://www.justice.gov.uk/news/newsrelease110308e.htm> [accessed 10 October 2010].

Nonetheless, though Dimple's parents are happy for their daughter to socialise and even date Karsh (as a potential marriage prospect), they are extremely agitated by the thought that she fraternises with American boys. After being caught coming home drunk after secretly spending a night out with Gwen (Dimple's best friend), Dylan (Gwen's boyfriend) and Julian (Dimple's latest love interest), her parents accost her the next morning:

> – And where were you? Who were these hooligans who made you do this? asked my father. – How do we even know you were with Gwen?
> – I promise I was with Gwen.
> Promises were a big thing in our house.
> – And only Gwen? Verified my mother, narrowing her eyes at me.
> – No ... And some of her friends.
> – Boys friends or girls friends?
> – Boy friends.
> –You were with boyfriends? Was it this Bobby Schmobby hanky-panky character? How dare you go out with him![58]

This dialogue draws attention to the concerns that some families have about their daughters having girlfriends who fraternise with boys. Girls can be discouraged from mixing with English or American girls 'because these girls may socialise with boys [which may] influence their daughters' to do the same, thus increasing parental fears associated with 'the possibility of sexual misbehaviors.'[59] It is clear that Dimple's parents are not just concerned with Dimple making friends who are boys through Gwen, but *boyfriends* who, unlike Karsh, are not Indian. Someone like Bobby cannot fulfil the 'good Indian boy' image that Karsh does. Instead Bobby is labelled a 'hanky-panky character' wherein the phrase 'hanky-panky' relates to both devious and unethical behaviour as well as illicit sexual activities. These boys are dangerous, devious, unethical and sexual which could damage Dimple, her 'honour', and, by extension, her value within patriarchal society.

Rai's novel similarly addresses the taboos surrounding interracial relationships and ideas of 'honour' within South Asian cultural contexts. *The Last Taboo* focuses mainly on the interracial relationship between protagonist Simran, a young South Asian-British female, and Tyrone, a Black-British male.[60] Their ages are not disclosed,

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[58] Desai Hidier, *Born Confused*, pp. 76-7.
[59] Hennink et al., 'Young Asian Women and Relationships', p. 873; Meenakshi Gigi Durham, 'Constructing the "New Ethnicities": Media, Sexuality, and Diaspora Identity in the Lives of South Asian Immigrant Girls', *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21, 2 (2004), 140-161 (p. 149).
[60] This novel is written in the first person narrative, however, each of the chapters are written from a different characters' perspective. Nonetheless, the majority of the novel is narrated from Simran's perspective which asserts her status as the novel's protagonist.

however Simran still goes to school which implies that she is at most sixteen years old. Through their relationship this book examines the variety of prejudices that Simran and Tyrone have to face from their families and communities and concentrates on how they are forced to deal with these hostilities.

As the title of this novel, *The Last Taboo*, suggests, Simran and Tyrone's relationship is considered the ultimate type of social transgression. The caption under the title reads: 'When choosing a boyfriend means stepping over the line...'.[61] Crossing 'the line' suggests a relationship somehow beyond tolerance, but also a relationship that crosses the colour line. Crossing the black/brown racial line, in particular, can be seen as problematic because of racist colour hierarchies. The 'colonial sandwich' which placed 'Europeans at the top, Asians in the middle, and Africans at the bottom' created historically a racialised hierarchy, or colour-caste system which was a result of the internalisation of white supremacist ideas about colour whereby greater value is placed on fairer skin.[62] Extending the discussion of racial hierarchies, author Toni Morrison argues that for migrant communities, 'the move into mainstream America always means buying into the notion of American blacks as the real aliens. Whatever the ethnicity or nationality of the immigrant, his nemesis is understood to be African American.'[63] Engaging with Morrison's ideas, Sunaina Maria argues that the black/white racial tensions in the US helped reinforce anti-black prejudices within South Asian communities.[64] Equally, anti-black prejudices are evident in the UK as well. In a BBC radio documentary also entitled 'The Last Taboo', which explores black/brown interracial relationships in the UK, interviewee, Rina, cites the marriage advice her father gave her: 'the first choice for marriage is someone in your own community – so that would be the first choice. [...] And then after that, white is the next best thing. And after white, any other race in the world but black.'[65] These anti-black prejudices deconstruct the idea of 'blackness' as a category of unity. So, even though Simran

[61] Rai, *The Last Taboo*, front cover.
[62] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 1; bell hooks, *Salvation: Black People and Love* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), p. 33.
[63] Toni Morrison, 'On the Backs of Black', *Time*, 2 December 1993, <http://www.time.com/time/community/morrisonessay.html> [accessed 7 October 2010].
[64] Sunaina Maira, *Desis in the House: Indian American Youth Culture in New York City* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), p. 72.
[65] Tanya Datta, 'The Last Taboo', *BBC Radio 4*, 12 June 2006 [on CD]. See also Tanya Datta, 'Is this the Last Taboo?', *BBC*, 12 June 2006 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/5071026.stm> [accessed 29 September 2010].

would still be crossing the colour line if Tyrone were white, the fact that he is black explains why their relationship the *last* taboo.

Interestingly, Desai Hidier also acknowledges that black/brown relationships are the last taboo when discussing Dimple's cousin, Kavita, who has recently 'come out' as homosexual:

> – The way I'm seeing it, I suppose it could have been worse, at least as far as Meeratai is concerned, my father mused. – For example, she could have chosen a black boy, a kala boy.
>   – Dad, that's totally racist!
>   – It is not racist, said my father, looking wounded.
>   – No! cried my mother indignantly. – It is not racist! It is *sex*ist. She could have been with – even worse – a kala girl![66]

The word 'kala' or 'kalah' is a derogatory term applied to black people: Kavita's parents would rather their daughter be homosexual than in a relationship with a black boy (as long as her girlfriend was not black either).

Rai sets the taboo of interracial relationships within a wider context of 'scandalous' behaviour. Simran, at the beginning of the novel, discusses her parents' 'love marriage' and explains to the reader how their marriage split the family apart. Both Simran's parents had been engaged to other people. However, because they were secretly seeing each other, they decided to elope. Even though they are both from the same culture and religion Simran's parents were disowned because their marriage did not conform to their families' expectations. Here, Rai draws attention to the relevance of the 'extended family', not only foreshadowing Simran's extended family's involvement in her relationship with Tyrone, but also their assumed authority to pass judgement on those who do not meet their expectations.

There are serious consequences to such relationships which are haunted by the real-world events this chapter began by describing. Before deciding whether to go out with Tyrone or not, Simran asks her mother what would happen if a Punjabi girl was to start dating a black boy:

> [It] depends on the family. But it would cause problems, I reckon [...] Look at the grief me and your dad got – and *we're* both Punjabi. If I had chosen to marry a black man, the reaction would have been ten times worse.[67]

Rai reminds the reader about the 'scandal' that Simran's parent's marriage had caused: they were disowned even though they had married within the same cultural group.

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[66] Desai Hidier, *Born Confused*, pp. 361-2.
[67] Rai, *The Last Taboo*, pp. 55-6.

Knowing that Simran's parents had been disowned, the reader is forced to ask: what could be ten times worse than being rejected by one's own family? When Simran asks her father, from a hypothetical perspective, what would happen if her cousin, Ruby, were to start seeing a black boy, her father replies that Uncle Rajbir, Ruby's father, would 'probably kill them both.'[68] This response is not entirely unfounded. UK magazine, *Asiana*, for example, published an online article entitled 'The Thing About Black Men', wherein they asked four readers, Sumitra, Meghna, Reeya and Cassandra, what their thoughts were on Asian girls dating black men:

> S: [...] I wouldn't bat an eyelid if I saw an Asian guy with a Black girl.
>
> R: Ah, but the question is would you bat an eyelid if you saw an Asian girl with a Black man?
>
> M: I think I would, but only to wonder if she will face trouble from her family. As you said, Asian guys don't like their 'sisters' to be seen with a Black man and you know what our 'brothers' are like when it comes to their silly ideas of defending our honour.[69]

Here, focus is drawn to the significance of 'honour' and we begin to understand some of the motivations which influence 'honour' related crimes.

In this context Simran is fully aware of the impact her relationship with Tyrone would have on her extended family and admits she is 'worried what [her extended] family might say about it.'[70] Despite trying to explain her rationale to her friend Lisa, Lisa presses the issue further:

> 'So who *are* you on about, you weirdo?' she asked.
>   'The rest of them – uncles, aunts, cousins [...] They *are* [proper family] in my parents' culture...'
>   [...] 'But what about Geeta – that girl from Year Eleven? She's a Hindu and was seeing a Muslim lad –'
>   '*Yeah* – and what happened to *her*? [...] Her old man found out and her brothers beat up her boyfriend.'
>   [...] 'Forget what your extended family think. *Who cares?*' she said.
>   'I know you're right but I can't stop thinking about that they would say.'[71]

The debate with Lisa not only frames the cultural concerns associated with interracial dating, but draws attention to the fact that although an individual may be genuinely attracted to someone who is from a different race or religion, there are several factors to

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[68] Ibid., p. 60.
[69] Anonymous, 'The Thing About Black Men', *Asiana*, <http://www.asianamag.com/Article/Article Details.aspx?ArticleID=59> [accessed 29 September 2010].
[70] Ibid., p. 36.
[71] Ibid. pp. 37-9.

dissuade them from pursuing a more intimate relationship. For South Asian girls, the decision to embark on an interracial relationship is not an easy one because of the cultural factors involved. Simran does not like her extended family and feels that she should not care about what they think. But she is nevertheless afraid of their reaction, and the reference to Geeta supports this idea. Within this discussion with Lisa, Simran's conversation trails off eight times.[72] These incomplete sentences highlight Simran's preoccupation with how her extended family would react to Tyrone. The reader is urged to finish Simran's sentences/trail of thought and come to the conclusion that Tyrone would be met – like Geeta's boyfriend – with physical violence, thus foreshadowing the events to come.

Significantly, what emerges in the silences also allows the reader to insert their own circumstances into these absences. Those who share Simran's feelings are offered an outlet for their concerns which is important for bibliotherapeutic purposes. Reminding ourselves of the many goals of bibliotherapy that John Pardeck lists, bibliotherapy's aim is:

> (a) to provide information on problems, (b) to provide insight into problems, (c) to stimulate discussion about problems, (d) to communicate new values and attitudes, (e) to create an awareness that others have dealt with similar problems [what is also referred to as 'universalisation'], and (f) to provide solutions to problems.[73]

By filling in the gaps in Simran's thoughts, the novel not only helps fulfil items a), b) and e) from Pardeck's list, but enables readers to engage with a type of dialogue with the character. Through this 'conversation' some readers are consequently able to project their own concerns outwards. Although, unlike a real patient-therapist situation, Simran cannot talk back or offer direct advice, the character, like a therapist, nonetheless, facilitates this outlet. Equally, by projecting their thoughts onto the character, some readers may develop an elevated sense of identification with Simran. Via this identification, this novel allows readers to experience the universalisation effect of bibliotherapy, which, as bibiliotherapists argue, is one of the key factors involved in helping readers. For readers, knowing that they are not alone and being able to

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[72] 'I'm not sure...', (Rai, *The Last Taboo*, p. 36); 'Erm... it's just that...' (ibid.); 'My family...' (ibid., p. 37); 'uncles, aunts, cousins...' (ibid.); 'in my parents' culture....' (ibid.); 'No... not that' (ibid.); 'some Asians have...' (ibid.); 'but...' (ibid., p. 38).
[73] John T. Pardeck, 'Bibliotherapy: An Innovative Approach for Helping Children', *Early Child Development and Care* (1995), 110, 1, 83-88 (p. 83).

share/project/'talk' about their experiences with someone – be it a fictional character – can help alleviate some of the pressures surrounding their concerns.

Via Simran, Rai highlights particular behaviours which emerge in this context which may transform the dating experience for young South Asians. Simran opts for what Tina Harris and Pamela Kalbfleisch, in their investigation into interracial date initiation, refer to as the waiting option: Simran does not approach Tyrone, but waits for him to approach her.[74] The first time that they speak to each other she says, 'I looked up, hoping he'd notice me.'[75] Although Simran's passivity reflects how many girls, regardless of race, culture or religion, may act around the person that they are attracted to, it is clear that Simran is not just being shy but is being cautious. Simran states: 'I shook my head, trying not to stare at him. He was gorgeous, with his beautiful smile and deep chocolate-brown skin. But I didn't want to go out with him.'[76] It is clear she is attracted to Tyrone but is trying to convince herself that she is not, with the inference that her motive for *not* wanting to go out with Tyrone stems from external pressures: namely potential disapproval and rejection and possible violence from her extended family.

Although Simran's parents ultimately accept Tyrone helping to undo some of the stereotypes associated with South Asian communities, the fact that the rest of her family and the community do not indicates wider communal pressures facing South Asian girls wanting to initiate interracial relationships. When her extended family learn about Simran and Tyrone, they call a family meeting to 'try and salvage the *bad situation*' (original italics):[77]

> When I took in the tea no one spoke to me apart from my dad. In fact none of his family even looked at me except Uncle Malkit, and he gave me the kind of look that someone would reserve for dog shit on their toast. [...]
> They were talking about how I was disrespectful and what did my parents expect when I'd been allowed to behave like a white girl from when I was a baby.
> 'I am *here*, you know,' I told them.
> 'This is not your concern,' replied Uncle Rajbir [...].
> 'They are talking about *me*, aren't they?' I asked.
> 'Don't check your elders!' snapped Uncle Malkit.
> 'Oh, go and stick your head up your fat ar–' I began but mum cut me off.

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[74] Harris and Kalbfleisch, 'Interracial Dating', p. 52. Harris and Kalbfleisch state that the waiting option was the most popular technique employed by those who are interested in pursuing an interracial relationship.
[75] Rai, *The Last Taboo*. p. 8.
[76] Ibid., p. 9.
[77] Ibid., p. 193.

> 'Go and do that housework,' she told me.
> 'But–'
> 'Simran ...' she warned.
> I stood up and stormed out of the room, angry with everyone in it. How
> could they talk about me when I wasn't going to be there? I wasn't a kid.[78]

Simran's voice has been silenced; she has no say even though *she* is the subject and her family are talking about *her* life. It is evident here that there are strict moral codes or ideas about how women should act and behave and that these rules are imposed without the consent of the woman in question in order to try and ensure the maintenance of patriarchal tradition and culture.[79]

Simran tells the reader that her extended family blame her parents for this 'bad situation' because they 'allowed [her] to behave like a white girl' since she was young. If young people exhibit characteristics which are deemed unacceptable by their parents or their community, or they are associated with 'Western' or 'English'/'American' cultures, they are accused of being too 'Westernised', or, as in Simran's case, too 'white':

> Explaining how she was reprimanded every time her behaviour fell short of her
> parents' expectations, Nidhi said, 'My parents continuously accused me of being
> too American. They did not have the slightest idea about what they had in mind
> when they said that!'[80]

As Nidhi's comments assert, being classed as 'American', 'Western' or 'white' is the antithesis of being South Asian. When Simran's family accuse her of being 'white' it is because her behaviour challenges and undermines South Asian cultural values: by becoming 'white' (in their perspective), she has succumbed to 'Western' corruption and has acted 'dishonourably' bringing shame on her, her parents and the rest of her family.

These perspectives, therefore, can challenge cultural identity formation particularly for those who have been enculturated within both 'Western' and South Asian cultural contexts. As discussed, Overlapping Space identities embody the cultural codes of one culture *and* the other. However, both Dimple's and Simran's family's racist prejudices deny their rights to claim their Overlapping Space identities. As discussed in Chapter One, when Indie and Jaspal are forced to confront racism, their abusers, by disregarding the fact that these characters have been enculturated with more than one culture, negate the possibility of their Overlapping Space identities. Equally,

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[78] Ibid. p. 195-6.
[79] Dasgupta, 'Gender Roles and Cultural Continuity'.
[80] Das Gupta, '"What is Indian About You?"', p. 580.

the confrontation with Simran's extended family and the challenges Dimple's parents make towards her dating 'hanky-panky' (American) boys, denies both the characters' Overlapping Space identities as well.

The challenges made to Overlapping Space identities is evident in the concealment that must be employed by those who choose to date, mirroring the real-world strategies employed by young South Asians:

> [I]t was more common for respondents to conceal [their dating and sexual] behaviour from parents or relatives. For example; 'They'd kill me. My mum would be really shocked, it would be like you'd gone to university to study not to get off with boys and things like that, she would not approve at all, so there was no way I was going to tell her.' This concealment from parents is identical to that expressed earlier by Asian teenage girls with boyfriends.[81]

These acts of concealment perpetrated by both young girls and women, as discussed in the previous chapter, are clearly employed to avoid familial conflict and novels like *The Last Taboo* and *Born Confused* not only recognise but acknowledge the need for these actions.

In *Born Confused* Dimple's need for secrecy in order for her to go out with Julian is clearly evident, as she declared that 'I zipped myself up in a coverall coat before stepping out of the [bedroom] door', her paranoia is expressed via the way that she panics when her mother simply looks at her.[82] Likewise, in the several months that Simran sees Tyrone in secret, the former has to also employ a number of concealment techniques for fear of the consequences of being 'outed' by her extended family, going as far as employing her relatives' anti-black prejudices, when she refers to 'bad people', in an obvious attempt to dissociate herself from Tyrone.[83]

These concealment strategies recognise the high stakes involved in dating, and neither novel avoids the harsh realities of interracial dating and its consequences. When Dimple's parents believe that their daughter's innocence has been compromised, they attempt to restrict her movements: they try to prevent her from seeing Gwen in an attempt to stop Dimple from developing 'hanky-panky friendships'.[84] Rai, through

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[81] Hennink et al., 'Young Asian Women and Relationships', p. 886-7. See also Romola Dugsin's 'Conflict and Healing in Family Experience of Second Generation Emigrants from India Living in North America', *Family Process*, 40, 2 (2001), 233-241; Durriya Meer and Leon VandeCreek's 'Cultural Considerations in Release of Information', *Ethics & Behaviour*, 12, 2 (2002), 143-156; and Pnina Werber 'Theorising Complex Diasporas: Purity and Hybridity in the South Asian Public Sphere in Britain', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 30, 5 (2004), 895-911.

[82] Desai Hidier, *Born Confused*, p. 44.

[83] Rai, *The Last Taboo*, p. 110.

[84] Desai Hidier, *Born Confused*, p. 73.

Simran, explores a similar form of female restriction but in reverse. When Simran's extended family learn about Tyrone and the fact that she has refused to end their relationship, her cousin Ruby, whom she is quite close to, is instructed by her father and brothers to stop seeing Simran thus reemphasising the patriarchal surveillance and control of women's bodies.[85] The tight community networks which means a woman's honour also affects the reputation of her family in the eyes of the community make Simran a potential threat to Ruby's 'honour'. In both cases, this restriction of female community represents a profound loss of support and a sense of alienation.[86]

The repercussions of these communal judgments involve direct verbal and mental abuse. Parminder, a girl who goes to the same school as Simran, calls Simran a 'slag' and a 'dirty bitch' and asks: 'How can she just walk around with no shame? [...] Like she ain't done nothing wrong.'[87] On a separate occasion Simran observes:

> I was still holding Tyrone's hand and I noticed that some of the mainly Asian crowd who were hanging around had noticed. A girl wearing a red outfit looked me up and down and then turned up her nose. Her friends whispered something to each other and then gave me dirty looks. I turned to Tyrone and kissed him, trying to wind them up. It worked. The first girl, shook her head and called me a whore.[88]

Simran is being defiant and clearly takes some pleasure from 'winding up' her audience. However, the issue of public visibility is real. Although many people, like Simran, give little credence to public prejudices, there are others who do. For example, Elizabeth Vaquera and Grace Kao's study into interracial and intraracial public and private displays of affection found that interracial couples exhibited less affection, such as holding hands, in public compared to intraracial couples because they are aware that

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[85] Rai, *The Last Taboo*, pp. 203-4.

[86] As discussed in the introduction, it should be noted that the control and surveillance of women's bodies in terms of sexuality and movement in both private and public spheres is not just relegated to the South Asian experience. Patriarchal surveillance and the control of women's bodies is a transnational phenomenon and is not just relegated to minority communities. Nevertheless, recognising the South Asian diasporic female experience, in 1984 Ravi Randhawa founded the Asian Women Writers' Workshop (later renamed Asian Women Writers' Collective) in London. This group's mission was to 'draw out any isolated woman who wanted to write but needed a supportive environment to achieve this' (Asian Women Writers' Workshop, *Right of Way* [London: The Women's Press, 1988], p. 1). This statement thus highlights some of the restrictions imposed on women in terms of their movement. For further reading on the South Asian female experience please see Leela Dube's discussion on ideology and women's bodies in *Women and Kinship: Comparative Perspectives on Gender in South and South-East Asia* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1997), p. 8; Sangeeta Gupta's, ed., *Emerging Voices: South Asian American Women Redefine Self, Family, and Community* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999); and Nirmal Puwar and Parvati Raghuram's, eds., *South Asian Women in the Diaspora* (Oxford: Berg, 2003). See also Das Dasgupta, 'Gender Roles'; Durham, 'Constructing the "New Ethnicities"'; and, Hennink et al., 'Young Asian Women'.

[87] Rai, *The Last Taboo*, p. 199; ibid.; ibid., p. 200.

[88] Ibid. 163.

their relationships are seen as breaking taboo and not conforming to society's expectations.[89] In this context, Simran's defiance can be seen as a political statement: Simran asserts that she has the right to choose whom she wants to date and engage with romantically. Nonetheless the reactions that she receives from the South Asian viewing public illustrate the implications – in terms of public approval – of being in an interracial relationship.

However it is not just the South Asian viewing public who take issue with Tyrone and Simran's relationship, but the 'Western' viewing public too. When Simran and Tyrone meet for lunch Simran states: 'As we left, the assistant gave us a dirty look,' and on another occasion she observes 'two old women giving us disgusted looks.'[90] As Rai usually references the race of the characters in this novel, because neither the assistant's nor the old women's races are revealed, these people are presumably Caucasian. In a separate incident, when Simran goes into a fast food restaurant to buy a drink, she is accosted by two black girls who subject her to both verbal and physical abuse:

> [A]s I walked through the door though, I wished that I hadn't. A couple of black girls from school were in there and they both gave me dirty looks. I tried to ignore them but the taller of the two, Misha, bumped into me as I passed her.
> 'Ain't there enough Paki boys at school?' she sneered, right in my face.
> [...]
> 'You what?' I asked, stepping back.
> 'Why you gotta t'ief the black men too?' she continued. 'The whole school is nearly full up of your kind anyhow ...'
> 'Ain't none of your business,' I told her.
> 'Black men ain't *your* business either,' she said, grabbing me around the throat.[91]

Similarly, Tyrone also receives abuse from people who see him and Simran together. For example, Pally, an Asian boy who likes Simran, calls Tyrone a 'kalah' which, as already mentioned, is a derogatory term for a black person.[92] As well as verbal abuse, Tyrone is actually beaten over the head with a baseball bat by a passenger in a moving car because he is dating Simran.[93] These incidents illustrate how people who are in interracial relationships can experience unwanted attention, as well as verbal and physical abuse because their relationships transgress not only South Asian taboos

[89] Elizabeth Vaquera and Grace Kao, 'Private and Public Displays of Affection Among Interracial and Intra-Racial Adolescent Couples', *Social Science Quarterly*, 86, 2 (2005), 484-508 (p. 487).
[90] Rai, *The Last Taboo*, p. 111; ibid., p. 114.
[91] Ibid. p. 216.
[92] Ibid. p. 165.
[93] Ibid. p. 235.

associated with interracial dating but 'Western' concerns as well, thus foregrounding the fact that this these types of relationships are seen as taboo both transnationally and transculturally.

Finally, these novels must address the physical consequences of interracial dating, and *The Last Taboo*, in particular, concentrates on this area. In doing so, it offers an important document as to the continued practice of 'honour' crime and killing as a warning to young South Asians, a chastisement of those involved in such crimes, and a potential bibliotherapeutic effect for those at risk of such treatment.

Thinking about what happened to Geeta's boyfriend and how Uncle Rajbir would probably kill both Ruby and her hypothetical black boyfriend, Simran begins to dwell on the notion of 'honour' crimes. Simran's preoccupation with this subject is exemplified when she half jokingly acknowledges: 'Someone *is* dead. [...] Me' and starts to muse upon the issue:[94]

> My dad's family spent about two hours talking about me and Tyrone and how I'd brought shame on the family name and reputation. [...] Mostly they complained about what 'other people' would say, meaning the rest of the Punjabi community. Uncle Malkit told my dad that my grandad [*sic*] was distraught and that the family's *izzat* or honour was being dragged through the dirt. Black people weren't like us, I heard him say, and the shame of having a daughter of our family cavorting with a black man was beyond tolerance. It had to stop and my uncle warned my dad that unless he stopped it, the rest of the family would have to do it for him.
>
> When I heard that my heart sank and I started to get really worried about what they intended to do. I'd heard all kinds of stories about so-called honour killings in the media, and more importantly, I was worried about what might happen between my family and Tyrone.[95]

The statement: 'the rest of the family would have to do it for him', that is, put an end to Simran and Tyrone's relationship, foreshadows the horrific events that will take place in the novel and Simran confirms the readers' assumptions when she says: 'I didn't realize it at the time but I was going to become a victim of my own family's prejudices.'[96] The violent connotations of this discussion are realised later in the novel when an attempt on Tyrone's life has Simran hospitalised for several months with temporary paralysis, foregrounding not only the potential dangers associated with outgroup dating, but, as it is Simran who is hospitalised and not Tyrone, exemplifying within South Asian culture's the patriarchal control over women's bodies.

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[94] Ibid. p. 194.
[95] Ibid. p. 197.
[96] Ibid. p. 197.

It seems that Rai has written this book as a response to the recent attention that has been given to 'honour' killings in the media. In this sense, the novel may be criticised because, like the media, it aligns South Asian communities with 'honour' killings. The purpose of this book, however, is not to reassert existing cultural stereotypes. In fact, as Simran's immediate family accept Tyrone despite the resistances of the extended family, it highlights that not all South Asians necessarily share the same beliefs.[97] The novel is described in publicity as: 'a novel which explores inter-ethnic conflict right here in the UK. It looks into one of the most underexposed aspects of our multicultural society – the conflict that exists between racists who are black and brown skinned.'[98] As the theme of honour and *izzat* is so pronounced within the South Asian cultural context this book cannot critique 'black and brown skinned' racism or look at the taboos associated with black/brown interracial dating without engaging with the issue of 'honour' crimes.

However, this begs the question, are issues like 'honour' crimes suitable subjects to engage with in children's literature?[99] As stated, *The Last Taboo* can be categorised as a 'problem novel' as this book tackles, like other problem novels, a serious issue of adolescent concern which is, in this case, interracial dating and its consequences. Other problem novels look at equally problematic or even harder issues such as rape, for example Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*, Susan Shaw's *Safe* and Chris Lynch's *Inexcusable*, and even child rape/paedophilia which is represented in Elizabeth Scott's *Living Dead Girl*.[100] Discussing the function of the problem novel, Allen Pace Nilsen and Kenneth Donelson state that 'young people have a better chance to be happy if they have realistic expectations and if they know both the bad and the good about [the] society in which they live.'[101] So, instead of hiding or withholding certain issues – like

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[97] See Datta, 'The Last Taboo'.

[98] Bali Rai, 'The Last Taboo', *BALIRAI.CO.UK* <http://www.balirai.co.uk/page7.htm> [accessed 4 February 2008] (para. 4 of 5); Bali Rai, *What's Your Problem?* (Edinburgh: Barrington Stoke, 2003). Clearly the black/brown tensions are the main concern of *this* novel; however it is important to note that Rai, in his other novels like *What's Your Problem?* also address the black/white tensions which currently still exist.

[99] In 2009, children's literature author Rosemary Haynes published *Payback*. Based on a true story, this novel explores forced marriages and 'honour' related crimes in the UK.

[100] Laurie Halse Anderson *Speak* (New York: Penguin, 1999); Susan Shaw *Safe* (New York: Dutton Books, 2007); Chris Lynch, *Inexcusable* (New York: Simon Pulse, 2005); Elizabeth Scott *Living Dead Girl* (New York: Simon Pulse, 2008).

[101] Kenneth L. Donelson and Alleen Pace Nilsen, *Literature for Today's Young Adults*, 6th edn, (New York: Longman, 2001), p. 115. See also Joan Aiken, *The Way to Write For Children* (London: Elm Tree Books, 1982) p.16; Karen L. McGavock, 'Agents of Reform?: Children's Literature and Philosophy', *Philosophia*, 35 (2007), 129-143 (p. 138); and, Milton Meltzer, 'The Social Responsibility of the Writer', *The New Advocate*, 2, 3 (1989), 155-7 (pp. 155-7).

'honour' crimes – from young readers, books which actually confront these issues not only prepare the reader for the realities of the world, they also refuse to give them a false sense of security that might stand the chance of being undermined or even completely shattered. So although it may seem controversial that Rai has chosen to engage with the issue of 'honour' crimes, within the canon of children's literature, a realistic approach to young peoples' experiences and expectations would suggest that it is not only acceptable but *necessary* to engage with such a pressing issue.

As Simran's parents do not stop her from seeing Tyrone despite the threats from their extended family, Simran's cousin, Satnam, decides to put an end to their relationship seemingly in the name of 'honour'. Although his attempt on Tyrone's life fails, as Simran is hospitalised because of his actions, he still commits an 'honour' crime. The novel is unsurprisingly very unsympathetic towards Satnam and his co-conspirator Suky Mann and in the way Rai treats these two characters it is clear that he condemns such crimes.

Anita Johal states that South Asian ideologies promote the view that '[i]f a woman brings dishonour to her family, then any violence committed against her can be justified on this basis'.[102] Rai's novel, however, asserts that this type of violence is totally unacceptable and cannot be justified and he uses Simran's grandfather to make this point. Simran's grandfather lives with her Uncle Malkit and, as he is a community elder, Simran's grandfather is a symbol of community authority. However, when Simran is hospitalised and is 'more dead than alive' he tells Malkit that he does not want to return home with him, and that: 'I'd rather sleep in the park [...]. Get out of here if you've got any shame left.'[103] Through Simran's grandfather, Rai not only challenges the idea of the generation gap and the media stereotypes which claim that the elders of migrant communities cause generational friction, he also asserts that even though honour is regarded as paramount in South Asian cultures, 'honour' crimes are anything but honourable. This use of the word 'shame' suggests that greater shame is brought on to families who have partaken in 'honour' related crimes so that, if anything, these crimes actually corrupt a family's *izzat*. Through Simran's grandfather and the fact that her immediate family support her dating choices, this novel ultimately attempts to undermine some of the stereotypes associated with South Asian communities and

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[102] Anita Johal, 'Struggle Not Submission: Domestic Violence in the 1990s', in *From Homebreakers to Jailbreakers*, ed. by Rahila Gupta (London; New York: Zed Books), pp. 28-50 (p. 37).
[103] Rai, *The Last Taboo*, p. 260; ibid., p. 261.

'honour' crimes: these crimes are not culture specific and reflect the individual situation and not the community as a whole.

Even though *Born Confused* does not look at the issue of 'honour' crimes it does, like *The Last Taboo*, engage with the fears of outdating and the important South Asian cultural concerns associated with female reputation and honour. These novels present readers with the possible repercussions involved when a girl of South Asian descent chooses to engage in an interracial relationship. Although the repercussions can be – particularly in Simran's case – severe, these books nonetheless foreground the importance of choice. This message may seem subversive, but some readers who may be in an interracial relationship (or debating the idea) may be comforted by the idea of choice as it legitimises their own dating practices. Equally, should readers choose to date and do so in secret, these books do not imply that these techniques are immoral but rather a necessity in order to facilitate their relationships. As such, by acknowledging the difficulties and the prejudices associated with interracial relationships, these novels can offer some readers a form of bibliotherapy. They not only attempt to normalise some of the dating practices employed by young South Asian females – namely that of concealment – but affirm that there is nothing illicit about these types of relationships despite the reactions of others. Consequently, by illustrating that interracial relationships are a potential part of the South Asian diasporic experience, because second generations have been enculturated with the one culture and the other, these novels legitimise not only this social experience but readers' hybrid Overlapping Space identities as well.

Although one of the South Asian diasporic fears associated with interracial dating is cultural obliteration, choosing a partner from a different race does not necessarily lead to cultural annihilation. In fact, these books suggest that interracial dating and relationships can actually, instead of being a threat to culture, facilitate the rediscovery and assertion of cultural identity.

Claiming and Asserting a Hybrid Cultural Identity Via Inter- and Intraracial Dating

Whilst there is a value in these novels to console those readers faced with family pressure with regards their dating choices, as well as, in the case of *The Last Taboo*, exposing the existence of 'honour' crime, the positive contribution of these books ultimately comes in offering a value for dating itself in terms of identity construction. In

some ways the relationships that Dimple and Simran have with Julian, Karsh and Tyrone respectively in fact enable these protagonists to reaffirm their cultural heritage which, in turn, helps them to assert their hybrid Overlapping Space identities. Creating, through their relationships, a physical manifestation of Overlapping Space, dating embodies the potential to incorporate different cultural identities and to maintain these identities. As such, an investigation of this issue is a suitable way to conclude the final chapter of this thesis, representing as it does the most tangible expression of Overlapping Space identities.

At the beginning of *Born Confused*, Dimple acknowledges that she straddles both American and Indian cultures and it makes her feel estranged from both. She says:

> So [I am] not quite Indian and not quite American. Usually I felt more along the lines of Alien (however legal, as my Jersey birth certificate attests to). The only times I retreated to one or the other description were when my peers didn't understand me (then I figured it was because I was too Indian) or when my family didn't get it (clearly because I was too American). And in India. Sometimes I was too Indian in America, yes, but in India, I was definitely not Indian enough.[104]

Dimple's feelings echo those of many other diasporic individuals. Most famously, for example, Hanif Kureishi, in his autobiographical essay, 'The Rainbow Sign', states that although he is both British and Pakistani he felt that he 'couldn't rightfully lay claim to either place.'[105] What Dimple's statement highlights, however, is that she has undergone a process of enculturation with both her Indian and American cultures which explains *why* she recognises that sometimes she is perceived as being too Indian (in an American context) or too American (within an Indian context). Additionally, as Dimple is clearly saddened by the fact that she feels excluded from her 'home' and 'homeland' cultures foregrounds and confirms, at the very least, her emotional connections to these cultures. Subsequently, because Dimple feels as though she is viewed as being too Indian or too American, she does not feel in control of her cultural identity because such identities seem, to her, externally imposed. As such Dimple feels estranged from both. However, Dimple learns to take control of her ethnic identities and begins to lay claim to both her heritages on her date with Julian. She negotiates her hybrid cultural identity by using her internal site of Overlapping Space: she learns to pick and choose the cultural elements that she associates with both her 'home' and 'homeland' cultures to

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[104] Desai Hidier, *Born Confused*, p. 12.
[105] Hanif Kureishi, 'The Rainbow Sign', in *My Beautiful Laundrette and Other Writings* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), pp. 73-102 (p. 81).

form her identity and, by the end of the novel, she is able to project her chosen identity outwards. Dating, therefore, is central to the development of Dimple's hybrid cultural identity.

On her date with Julian, Dimple not only lays claim to her American heritage by going on this date (as dating is perceived as a 'Western' activity), she also begins to lay claim to her Indian heritage. For her date, Gwen informs Dimple that Julian is 'into the Indian thing' and suggests she should wear a bindi; however Dimple protests and claims, 'that's so not me!'[106] Dimple does not want to have an Indian identity imposed upon her; however, despite her protests, she decides to wear her bindi to impress Julian.

As Dimple chooses to wear the bindi for her date, on the surface she appears to affiliate herself with her Indian culture purely for superficial reasons. However, when she is on her date with Julian, her affiliations with her Indian heritage are more pronounced and less superficial:

> I came up for oxygen again, and there was a name that could have been a (distant) uncle's on the final credits [of the movie].
> – Look – it's an Indian director! I cried.
> – Yea, he said squeezing my shoulder. – Yeah, I think he is. Or Jewish. M. Night Shyamalan. What does it matter?
> – Well, you know, I'm Indian, I said. I vaguely recalled the Cherokee jokes I'd been subjected to in middle school and added: – *Indian* Indian. *Bindian* Indian.
> – Kama Sutra Indian.
> – What's Kama Sutra Indian?[107]

From this exchange it is evident that Julian is only interested in Dimple because he assumes she knows the Kama Sutra. Playing the stereotypical villain of this novel, his interest in Dimple is, simply, because he has 'Jungle Fever'.[108] Julian clearly sees

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[106] Desai Hidier, *Born Confused*, p. 37; ibid.

[107] Ibid. p. 55.

[108] The phrase 'Jungle Fever' is a slang term which is derived from the colonial idea of 'going native'. This fetish adds to the many derogatory myths associated with interracial relationships as it refers to people who 'desire to experience sex with someone of a different race' (George Yancey, 'A Preliminary Examination of Differential Sexual Attitudes Among Individuals Involved in Interracial Relationships: Testing "Jungle Fever"', *The Social Science Journal*, 40 [2003], 153-157 [p. 153]). Interestingly, the preliminary investigation conducted by Yancey concluded that the results of this investigation indicate that there is 'little, or no, support of this stereotype' (p. 127) because those 'who have had or currently have different race sexual partners have similar levels of traditional/relational sexual attitudes as others' (p. 156). Similarly, a study conducted by Kozue Shibazaki and Kelly A Brennan also highlighted that people 'were attracted to each other for reasons of compatibility, personality and appearance [and therefore] couples did not appear to choose each other based on ethnicity' (p. 250). See also Anita Kathy Foeman and Teresa Nance's 'From Miscegenation to Multiculturalism: Perceptions and Stages of Interracial Relationship Development', *Journal of Black Studies*, 29, 4 (1999), 540-557, with regards to the myths associated with interracial couples. Nonetheless, although some people may genuinely be attracted to a different racial partner, some crass individuals deliberately choose to engage in a sexual

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Dimple as 'exotic', echoing Edward Said's arguments about the 'Other'.[109] Upon learning what Julian's real interests in her are, Dimple not only rejects this 'exotic' identity, she physically rejects Julian too. Although Dimple superficially wears a bindi to try to impress Julian to begin with, she ultimately rejects him and his advances, and in doing so Dimple asserts her right to choose her own identity.

Dimple, in these terms, asserts a hybrid identity which demonstrates strong affiliations with both her 'home' and 'homeland' cultures. She affirms her relationship with America on her date with Julian, firstly because dating physically connects her to American culture and, secondly, because when she rejects Julian's Kama Sutra identity she tells him: 'I was born in the USA'.[110] This date, however, also allows her to lay claim to her Indian heritage as well. As she gets excited about the fact that M. Night Shyamalan has directed the movie she is watching, Dimple is actually quite proud of her Indian connections. This idea is reinforced by the fact that Dimple asserts: 'Well, you know, I'm Indian'. Dimple does not want Julian to confuse her ethnicity with Cherokee Indian and she tells him that she is '*Bindian* Indian': she makes the clarification more explicit to assert her Indian affiliations.

Although Dimple may feel slightly estranged from her 'home' and 'homeland' cultures, her date with Julian enables her to lay claim to both countries. It is through dating Karsh, however, that she comes to forcefully assert and externalise her hybrid Overlapping Space identity.

Karsh helps Dimple marry her two cultural identities by supporting her interests. She is a keen photographer; she calls her camera 'Chica Tikka' and her parents have set up a dark room in the basement so that Dimple can develop her photographs. Although Dimple's parents let her cultivate this interest, they think that it is just a 'phase'.[111] Dimple's photography is seen as an 'American' activity and is alien to her South Asian culture. For example, when being chastised by her mother for coming home drunk, Dimple says:

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venture with a person from a different race out of curiosity and a desire to 'try it out'. For additional statistics and further discussions into public opinions regarding interracial marriages in the US. Canada and the UK, see Joyner and Kao 'Interracial Relationships and the Transition to Adulthood', Suzanne Model and Gene Fisher's 'Unions Between Blacks and Whites: England and the US Compared' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 25, 5 (2002), 728-754. and Richard N. Lalonde et al., 'Social Dominance Orientation and Ideological Asymmetry In Relation To Interracial Dating and Transracial Adoption in Canada', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 38, 5 (2007), 559-572.
[109] See Said, *Orientalism*.
[110] Desai Hidier, *Born Confused*, p. 56.
[111] Ibid., p. 124.

My mother's head was in her hands, and she rocked like a baby.
    – I have a J. Lo-dressing, single, alcoholic, *photographer* who has completely lost touch with her Indianness for my only daughter! It's my fault. Prabhu, what did I do?[112]

Shilpa criticises Dimple for being either not engaged or unmarried, and this list is made up of those things that have made Dimple lose touch with her 'Indianness'. Reference to Jennifer Lopez implies that Shilpa associates each of the items with being 'American', and Dimple's interest in photography with American delinquent behaviour.

There is irony in the fact that photography brings Dimple and Karsh together. Although Shilpa associates Dimple's interest in photography with 'American' activity, Dimple is in fact inspired by her Indian grandfather to take up this interest. As a result of language barriers, Dimple learns to 'speak' to her grandfather through her pictures:

We were going to get around this language thing! It seemed so simple: We'd use pictures to talk. So I sent him pictures of any and everything. Even the most inconsequential snap (i.e., my locker) he would gobble up as if it were straight off the wall of a museum.[113]

Her camera's name, Chica Tikka, also carries Indian associations in that Chica Tikka is her 'third eye': she tells the reader that she named it 'Tikka' after the 'scarlet dust' which, like a bindi, is pressed between the eyebrows to denote the position of the spiritual third eye.[114] The name that Dimple gives her camera symbolically asserts her associations with the spirituality of her 'homeland' culture.

Dimple's hobby is therefore both an 'American' *and* 'Indian' activity. Consequently, Dimple's photography can be seen as a symbol for her hybridised cultural identity: her photography is part of her, she uses it to express herself, she considers the process of development as an intimate and private activity, and it is associated with both her American and Indian cultures. The camera Chica Tikka, her 'third eye', offers Dimple a third way of seeing the world which *partly* lends to Homi Bhabha's ideas of third space. As discussed in the main introduction of this thesis, for Bhabha the third space of enunciation is a hybridised space which is new and is 'neither the one nor the other'.[115] Chica Tikka, however, brings together both Dimple's American and Indian cultural heritages: it symbolically fuses the one *and the other*. Chica Tikka offers Dimple a hybridised third space to negotiate her hybrid cultural

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[112] Ibid. p. 74.
[113] Ibid. p. 15.
[114] Ibid. p. 16.
[115] Homi K Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory', in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 19-39 (p. 25).

identity: but not in Bhabha's definition of the idea, but rather in a way which is more akin to my suggested Overlapping Space model. Chica Tikka enables Dimple to fuse elements that already exist in both her cultural heritages. So, as Dimple's parents, specifically her mother, consider her photography as being just a 'phase', symbolically they are repressing Dimple's ability to express her hybrid Overlapping Space identity.

Although Dimple's family try to curb her interest in photography, Karsh, via Dimple's photography, symbolically enables Dimple to ultimately express her hybridised cultural identity. Dimple gives Karsh some of her pictures as a birthday gift and he lends these photos to *Flash!*, an arts magazine, which uses them as part of a promotional event that Dimple and her family attend:

> – Now these are the kinds of photographs you should be making one day! [says Rohitbhai]
> – Those *are* the kinds of photographs she's making, smiling Radha proudly. – They're hers.
> We all turned quizzically to her.
> – Well technically, speaking, they're *Karsh's* now, but being the generous soul he is, he lent them to the magazine to make repros.
> – What are you saying? my father queried.
> – The photos. They're all Dimple's. She took them.
> She gestured towards the brick.
> – All of them!
> – *What?* I cried.
> – You heard me, yaar, said Radha, grin breaking loose now.
> – He did what? I said, flabbergasted. – But how did they decide to –? What did they –?
> – Because your pictures are, as you say, frocking good.
> I couldn't believe it. And I couldn't wait! I vaulted into the room to take a look [... watching the people looking at the photographs] it was as if people were standing inside my head, oohing and ahhing the view from the inside of my eyes out. As if it was a view, however new to them, they understood.[116]

Throughout most of the novel, despite her emotional connections to her 'home' and 'homeland' cultures, Dimple feels estranged from both American and Indian cultures and she feels that nobody, except Karsh, understands her. Now, as people are seeing inside her head, Dimple no longer feels misunderstood. As her photographs represent her hybridised Overlapping Space identity, the exhibition symbolises the external assertion of her identity which has been made possible because of Karsh: he does not create an identity for Dimple, he simply gives her the medium to allow her to display her identity to the external world.

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[116] Desai Hidier, *Born Confused*, pp. 456-7.

It is important to note that even though Karsh and not Julian helps Dimple complete her search for cultural identity, this novel is *not* saying that Dimple's quest is only achievable through the Indian boy and that interracial dating is negative. Rather it is saying that it is up to the individual to choose who *they* want to be with. Desai Hidier explicitly indicates that in fact Karsh fully supports interracial relationships. When Karsh describes London he praises it for its multiculturalism and states that he approves and admires the fact that there are so many 'interracial relationships and friendships all over the place.'[117] As Karsh is the hero of the novel, his support for interracial relationships clearly asserts that this novel does not condemn interracial relationships at all. In fact, this novel suggests that it is through both intra- and interracial dating that Dimple finds ways to lay claim to both her American and Indian cultural identities, which in turn allows her to assert her hybrid Overlapping Space identity.

This strategy is replicated in *The Last Taboo*. By dating Tyrone, Simran, like Dimple, is able to lay claim and assert her Overlapping Space identity. Rai firstly externalises Simran's hybrid identity via the fact that he has her choose Tyrone. Visually, the image of Simran and Tyrone together symbolises her hybridity. However because of the hostile treatment she receives from the local South Asian, 'Western' and black communities, her claim to her hybrid identity is seemingly compromised. In order to assert her right to choose Tyrone, Simran, *it seems*, is forced to dissociate herself from her Indian heritage:

> 'It's just that you seem to think you're different to the rest of us,' she said.
> I gave her a dirty look. 'Who *are* "us"?' I asked.
> 'The other Asian girls at school. You've got your liberal parents and your white mates – it's like you think you're separate from us,' she explained.
> 'That's just stupid...' I replied.
> 'No it isn't. It's like you're not proud to be Indian or something.
> 'I shrugged. 'That's because I'm not,' I said.
> 'So what are you then? 'Cos you ain't white...' Priti asked.
> 'I'm British,' I told her. 'I wasn't born in India so how can I be Indian?'
> 'You'll always be Indian,' she said, like it was an unanswerable truth.
> 'No I won't – and anyway, what has that got to do with Ruby ignoring me?' I asked her
> 'It's all part of the same thing. Even when we were little you acted like you were white...Ruby isn't allowed to talk to you any more.'
> I waited for a moment before replying to the two bombshells she'd decided to drop on my head. 'Firstly, I don't think I'm white [...]. Secondly, who told Rubes she isn't allowed to talk to me?'

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[117] Ibid., p. 352.

[...] 'Well then, you carry on acting white and hanging around with *kaleh*. See where it gets you.'

I looked at her and smiled sarcastically. 'I will,' I replied. 'See ya!' [118]

Clearly Simran has been ostracised from the South Asian youth subculture of the novel as they interpret her relationship with Tyrone as a negation of a 'homeland' cultural nostalgia. Consequently Simran's exile pushes her to dissociate herself from her Indian heritage. However, at the other end of the scale, she also tries to dissociate herself from being 'white' which, within the context of the conversation, symbolises the antithesis of Indianness or Asianness. As this text is set in the UK, we can assume that the opposite of Indianness or Asianness is Englishness (different to 'Britishness' which is explored below). [119] Although Simran implies that she will carry on 'acting white', it is clear that she is being sarcastic and in fact does not think of herself as 'white'. Instead, Simran calls herself 'British'. For Simran, being 'British' is a halfway point between being 'Indian' and 'white' (English); for Simran her British identity asserts her hybrid identity.

This idea may seem paradoxical or absurd, however it is not. British culture is, in its very inception, hybrid: it fuses English, Welsh and Scottish cultures together. However, this cultural hybridisation has extended. Avtar Brah, when defining her diaspora space model writes:

> [D]iaspora space as a conceptual category is 'inhabited', not only by those who have migrated and their decedents, but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous. In other words, the concept of *diaspora space* (as opposed to that of diaspora) includes the entanglement, the intertwining of the genealogies of dispersion with those 'staying put'. The diaspora space is the site where *the native is as much a diasporian as the diasporian is the native.* [120]

Here, the idea of 'native' and 'indigenous' people does not refer to colonised people but to those who live in any country where immigration is possible. When people, and in turn cultures, interact with those entering a country, a process of hybridisation occurs. So in terms of Britain, because of immigration and multiculturalism, British culture

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[118] Rai, *The Last Taboo*, pp. 203-4.
[119] Ideas of 'whiteness' and 'Englishness' can sometimes be conflated. For example, The Parekh Report, commissioned by The Runnymede Trust, states 'to be English, as the term is in practice used, is to be white' (The Runnymede Trust, *The Future of Multi-ethnic Britain: The Parekh Report* [London: Profile Books, 2000], p. 38). Similarly, Homi Bhabha, in his essay 'Of Mimicry and Man', argues that for the mimic, because of race, there is a difference 'between being English and being Anglicized' (Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man', in *The Location of Culture* [London: Routledge, 1994], pp. 85-92 [p. 90]): the mimic is 'almost the same but not white' (ibid., p. 89) which illustrates how ideas of 'whiteness' and 'Englishness', when placed within an English context, are sometimes interchangeable.
[120] Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*, p. 209.

itself has undergone further hybridisation with the new cultures that it comes in contact with making it even more hybrid.

Although Brah is not referring to specifically British culture here, other cultural critics do see British culture and in turn British identity as hybrid. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, in *Imagining the New Britain* writes: 'I feel that the British identity is now an umbrella term which gathers under it a large number of bi-racial and combined ethnicity people, as well as all kinds of ethnic and religious groups.'[121] Similarly, Tariq Modood argues: 'increasingly "ethnicity" or "blackness" is less experienced as an oppositional identity than *as a way of being British*' (my italics).[122]

In an investigation concentrating on South Asian British identities, one of the candidates in Claire Dwyer's study, Sonia, makes a statement which echoes Simran's sentiments:

> I'm a British citizen, I was born here, so I wouldn't really say that I was Pakistani. If I came from Pakistan to live here then I would be Pakistani, a Pakistani citizen. And I wouldn't call myself an English person because I'm not. I'm a Muslim.[123]

In response to this statement, Dwyer argues that Sonia's 'connections to Pakistan, her parents' place of birth, produce a compound British identity inflected with a distinctive cultural heritage.'[124] Essentially, Sonia's British identity incorporates her Pakistani identity making it a hybrid identity. In a different investigation undertaken by Jessica Jacobson, Jacobson makes similar observations:

> This sense of Britishness can certainly, and generally does, coexist with a strong sense of allegiance to Islam, the minority religion, and with some attachment to what they conceive of as their Pakistani or Asian cultural heritage. Thus according to such a perspective on identity, individuals are not required to choose between a 'Pakistani culture' and a 'British culture': rather, elements from both can be combined. [125]

'Britishness' has for some diasporic individuals, evolved to include further migrant cultures and religions: to be 'British' *is* to be hybrid.

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[121] Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, *Imagining the New Britain* (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. ix.

[122] Tariq Modood, 'New Forms of Britishness: Post-Immigration Ethnicity and Hybridity in Britain, in *Identity and Integration: Migrants in Western Europe*, ed. by Rosemarie Sackmann et al. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), pp. 77-90 (p. 78).

[123] Claire Dwyer, 'Negotiating Diasporic Identities: Young British South Asian Muslim Women', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 23, 4 (2000), 475-86 (p. 476).

[124] Ibid.

[125] Jessica Jacobson, 'Perceptions of Britishness', *Nations and Nationalism* 3, 2 (1997), 181-199 (p. 195-6).

So when Simran claims that she is neither Indian nor 'white' (English) but *British*, she foregrounds her hybrid Overlapping Space identity: one comprised of *both* Indian and 'English' cultural elements. Ironically, it is Priti who highlights Simran's hybrid cultural identity. Priti says that Simran is Indian but at the same time she accuses her of being 'white'. For Priti to make these statements Simran must embody both her 'home' (associated with being 'white'/English) and 'homeland' (associated with being 'Indian') cultures to begin with. These accusations – and Simran's subsequent claims to her hybrid British identity – would not have taken place if Simran was not dating Tyrone. This conversation consequently asserts that interracial dating helps to facilitate the assertion of hybrid Overlapping Space identities.

Simran's grandfather, along with Tyrone, helps to symbolise Simran's externalised Overlapping Space identity. If placed on a 'culture' spectrum Simran's grandfather would be placed at one end, Tyrone at the other and Simran somewhere in the middle, mediating between the two. Simran's grandfather, being the eldest character in the novel becomes the epitome of 'Indianness'. Tyrone, on the other hand, as the 'antagonist' in the eyes of Simran's extended family and community, is blamed for Simran's 'whiteness' and becomes the antithesis of Indianness, which, within the framework of the novel, is 'Englishness'. In this context, Gramps can be seen as symbolising Simran's 'homeland'/Indian self and Tyrone her 'home'/English identity. However, in the following passage, Rai not only joins the two characters together, but the two 'parts' of Simran together too:

> Gramps has moved in with my parents. [...] I like having him around. He tells me funny stories and whenever he sees Tyrone he calls out *'raas claas'*, which he thinks is a [Jamaican] greeting. Tyrone hasn't got the heart to tell him it isn't. Instead he nods and replies *'Sat Sri Akaal,'* which is Punjabi for hello.[126]

This conversation holds both symbolic and physical significance. This exchange between Simran's grandfather and Tyrone no longer positions them at opposite ends of the spectrum. Symbolically, through their exchange in each others' respective 'native' languages they move from the poles of the spectrum towards the middle – towards where Simran is positioned. In fact, as they speak in each others' languages Rai suggests that there is not only an overlap in the ways that they communicate to one another, through their greetings they incorporate and adopt parts of each others' cultures into their own lives: Gramps and Tyrone themselves develop hybrid identities.

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[126] Rai, *The Last Taboo*, p. 263.

Nonetheless, *symbolically* as they move towards Simran in the spectrum, Rai asserts that this exchange between Gramps and Tyrone represents not only Simran's hybrid cultural identity but the *physical* externalisation of that identity. This conversation would *never* have taken place if Simran chose not to date Tyrone in the first place. As a result, Rai asserts that it is only through interracial dating that this conversation could ever exist. Ultimately through interracial dating, Simran is able to present a physical and external assertion of her hybrid identity which she has negotiated within the site of Overlapping Space.

These novels, therefore, demonstrate that Dimple and Simran, through the process of enculturation, have adopted both Indian/American, and Indian/English cultural values and traditions within themselves. Through dating, both girls are able to symbolically 'vocalise' their identities, which, in turn, legitimises the existence of their hybrid Overlapping Space identities. Within the site of Overlapping Space, both Dimple and Simran negotiate specific values and traditions to determine which elements they will use to generate their hybrid Overlapping Space identities, and through dating, which is associated with 'Western' cultural practices, they are able to assert these identities. By dating Julian, Karsh and Tyrone, the girls identify and assert their hybrid identities. Subsequently, these novels suggest that inter- and intraracial dating does not stifle or negate one's 'homeland' cultural identity. Instead it has the potential to allow people to understand their hybrid cultural identities better as well as giving individuals the medium to assert these identities into an external space. Although Dimple, at the end of *Born Confused*, is paired up with Karsh and not Julian, this novel does not condemn interracial relationships. In fact, Desai Hidier, through Karsh, approves of interracial dating. Consequently what these novels highlight is the individual's right to choose their own partner by successfully negotiating the complex web of external influences. Through the choices that the individuals make, these books demonstrate that people, through dating, are able to lay claim to the cultures that they are a part of and are, as a result, able to present a more physical and tangible depiction of their hybrid Overlapping Space identities.

Conclusion

Children's literature can often engage with both controversial and taboo issues and Desai Hidier's *Born Confused* and Rai's *The Last Taboo* are no exception. These two

novels deal with the taboos associated with dating and interracial relationships in both 'Western' and South Asian contexts. *The Last Taboo*, however, also engages with the crossing of the black boy/brown girl interracial taboo. By engaging with 'taboo' issues, these novels confront the prejudices associated with dating and interracial relationships. As such, when dealing with outgroup dating, these novels engage in antiracist discourse and actively challenge the negative outlooks that are associated with these unions, as well as the continued punishment of such 'crimes' as offences against 'honour'.[127]

Although taboo, both *intra*racial and *inter*racial dating is not uncommon amongst South Asian communities, therefore the issues raised in these books firstly foreground the importance that individuals should have the right to choose with *whom* they want to be with but, secondly, can also offer their readers a form of bibliotherapy if they find themselves in similar positions to the protagonists. Despite the potentially negative and harmful realities of interracial dating within South Asian patriarchal contexts, these two books 'provide solutions to problems'.[128] This may not be initially evident. *Born Confused* is unable to provide a solution to the problems associated with interracial dating as Dimple's relationship with Julian is purely functional. Similarly, *The Last Taboo* does not offer a constructive solution on how to deal with the problems which may arise from the 'outing' of interracial relationships. Nonetheless, a solution *is* offered: that people should try to establish the support of family and friends, regardless of how slim the chances are of actually getting this support, because, as in the case of Simran's parents, they might not always be met with hostility.

Despite the harsh realities that people may be faced with when they choose to date outside their racial groups, both these books suggest that both intra- and interracial dating is actually essential to the externalisation of hybrid cultural identities. As already mentioned, Julian helps Dimple vocalise her bicultural identity. However, as a consequence of seeing Karsh, Dimple is given the means to project and assert this identity onto the outside world. Equally, Simran is also able to project her British/hybridised identity by dating. By choosing Tyrone, she symbolically and physically externalises her hybrid cultural identity. As a consequence of dating, the protagonists from both Desai Hidier's and Rai's novels find ways to assert and externalise their hybrid Overlapping Space identities into a real physical space, and in

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[127] See Chapter One for an extended discussion on how antiracist literature has the potential to overcome prejudiced thoughts and ideas.
[128] Pardeck, 'Bibliotherapy: An Innovative Approach', p. 83.

doing so, they present hybrid Overlapping Space identities as legitimate forms of cultural expression. Consequently these novels suggest that dating is in fact potentially very positive as it can assist with the development and maintenance of multi-enculturated identities. Within these terms, these novels explicitly assert that both inter- and intraracial dating are not acts of transgression, so contributing to the attempt to diminish the impact of, and draw attention to, the ultimate negativity of such taboos.

Conclusion

> There can be no question that texts in this area are culturally formative, and of massive importance educationally, intellectually, and socially. Perhaps more so than any other texts, they reflect society as it wishes to be, as it wishes to be seen, and as it unconsciously reveals itself to be.[1]

Children's literature from the South Asian diaspora, like all children's literatures, not only entertains but educates. Through these novels both casual and critical readers not only gain a developed insight into this diasporic community but, more specifically, become privy to the cultural identity workings of its younger members. Consequently these novels ask for a definitive cultural identity model which focuses solely on how post-migrant generations, including foreign-born migrant children, negotiate their cultural identities. Addressing this demand, existing models of identity such as Bhabha's Third Space model seem inappropriate; what I have referred to here as the Overlapping Space model, by contrast, reveals how young people from the South Asian diaspora today are negotiating and renegotiating their hybrid cultural identities: how they employ situational ethnicity as they move between different cultural spheres; how they resolve their identifications with contrasting, and sometimes opposing, sets of cultural ideas and beliefs. These young people – the fiction reveals – are not neither the one nor the other; they are actually both the one *and* the other.

Being culturally formative, these texts illuminate how young diasporic South Asians today challenge traditional ideas of identity crisis and of being 'trapped' between two cultures. Readers are asked to explore how these young people know that they are the one and the other, and how they employ their Overlapping Space identities in order to facilitate their identifications with different cultural spheres so that they, as Andrew Lindridge et al. suggest, become 'cultural navigators'.[2] Consequently, via the potential identifications with the characters from these novels, readers – both who consciously see themselves as 'hybrid' as well as those who are less certain of their hybridity – see how hybrid Overlapping Space identities are lived and expressed. These fictions, however, do not simply reflect these identities but *actively build* them as well as they ultimately help *legitimise* readers' own Overlapping Space identities. These novels,

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[1] Peter Hunt, *Children's Literature: The Development of Criticism* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 2.
[2] Andrew Lindridge, et al., 'Imagined Multiple Worlds: How South Asian Women in Britain Use Family and Friends to Navigate the "Border Crossings" Between Household and Societal Contexts', *Consumption Markets*, 7, 3 (2004), 211-239 (p. 232).

therefore, address a very complex form of cultural experience which has huge bibliotherapeutic potential.

As John Pardeck tells us, and as I discuss in the introduction, the goals of bibliotherapy are:

> (a) to provide information on problems, (b) to provide insight into problems, (c) to stimulate discussion about problems, (d) to communicate new values and attitudes, (e) to create an awareness that others have dealt with similar problems ['universalisation'], and (f) to provide solutions to problems.[3]

The bibliotherapeutic function of these novels is facilitated as readers are, through the characters, offered different points of identification: victims of racism can relate to Jaspal and Indie; individuals who felt the media's coverage of 9/11 enforced their marginalisation from their 'home' society are able to sympathise with Sameera, Nadira and Aisha; those who abject or feel intimidated by their 'homeland' cultures can relate to Jazz and Maya; through Susham, Kiz, Jess and Pinky, attitudes, personalities or actions considered 'transgressive' are addressed, normalised and embraced, and issues of dating and interracial relationships are explored through Dimple and Simran. Consequently, via the developments of the characters and the novels' engagements with specific themes or contexts has the potential to fulfil Pardeck's criteria for bibliotherapy.

Bali Rai's *What's Your Problem?* and Kavita Daswani's *Indie Girl* – through their engagements with 'old' and 'new' racism respectively – challenge utopian ideas of postethnicity and offer readers a more pronounced understanding of what it means to be a victim of racism.[4] These two novels not only provide readers who relate to Jaspal's and Indie's experiences with points of identification, they also offer non-victims – both abusers and non-abusers – surrogate experiences of racism which may help them to understand and appreciate the effects of racial prejudice and abuse which, in turn, promotes both antiracist and New Ethical sentiments. Through Jaspal's and Indie's Overlapping Space identities we understand how racism affects second generation migrants: having been enculturated with both their 'home' and 'homeland' cultures, Jaspal and Indie's exposure to racism attempts to undermine and negate their affiliations with the former, which, by extension, essentially tries to deny the validity of a hybrid Overlapping Space identity. Yet instead of displaying assimilation or reactive ethnicity

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[3] John T. Pardeck, 'Bibliotherapy: An Innovative Approach for Helping Children', *Early Child Development and Care*, 110 (1995), 83-88 (p. 83).
[4] Bali Rai, *What's Your Problem?* (Edinburgh: Barrington Stoke, 2003); Kavita Daswani, *Indie Girl* (New York: Simon Pulse, 2007).

techniques, Jaspal and Indie hold onto their hybrid identities: they fight for their rights to stake their own claims on British/American and Indian cultures.[5] Although racism tries to deny hybrid Overlapping Space identities, Jaspal and Indie demonstrate that these identities are legitimate forms of cultural expression which consequently expands the bibliotherapeutic function of these novels: these texts not only provide information, insight, solutions, discussions, universalising experiences as well as show their appreciation for ethics, they also help to reaffirm their readers' own hybrid cultural identities.

Similarly Marina Budhos's *Ask Me No Questions* and Mitali Perkins's *First Daughter: Extreme American Makeover* engage with issues of prejudice in the form of media scapegoating.[6] Readers are asked to understand that, as a result of feeling placed under the scrutiny of the public gaze, it is sadly normal for some individuals to develop acute feelings of multi-person consciousness and, in order to try and resolve these feelings, some may try to re-appropriate a sense of invisibility as well as question or re-evaluate their own hybrid identities. By engaging with the pressures to reassess one's cultural identity post 9/11, these novels expand readers' potential identifications with the protagonists which, in turn, aid the bibliotherapeutic properties of the novels. Significantly, the characters in these texts actually reclaim their visibilities on their own terms and challenge the media's use of negative self-imagery. Hybrid identities are proven to be empowering as they provide legitimate forms of cultural expression, facilitating the possibility that young people can ultimately choose who and what *they* want to be.

The novels *Motherland* by Vineeta Vijayaraghavan and *Monsoon Summer* by Mitali Perkins explore individuals' experiences with 'homeland' cultural estrangement, the uncanny and abjection as a result of (re)visiting ancestral homelands.[7] Through Jazz and Maya readers may appreciate that one may hold reservations about their 'homeland' and/or feel hostile towards ideas of ethnic formation. However, although one may reject ethnic formation, via unexpected enculturations and felt situational ethnicity both Jazz and Maya illustrate that the adoption of a 'homeland' cultural identity can be an

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[5] Although these characters remain culturally neutral these books do not suggest that assimilation or reactive ethnicity techniques are wrong. Both novels actually understand and sympathise with the motivations to employ either one of these techniques.

[6] Marina Budhos, *Ask Me No Questions* (New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006); Mitali Perkins, *First Daughter: Extreme American Makeover* (New York: Dutton Children's Books, 2007).

[7] Vineeta Vijayaraghavan, *Motherland* (USA: Soho Press, 2001; repr. Somerset: The Chicken House, 2004); Mitali Perkins, *Monsoon Summer* (New York: Delacorte Press, 2004; repr. London: Simon & Schuster, 2006).

enriching and rewarding experience which does not necessarily negate a 'home' identity. Consequently, as well as offering reader's a universalising experience, these novels potentially communicate different attitudes about ethnic formation and suggest that this type of experience need not – as some readers may fear – compromise one's self-identity. Such novels, therefore, exemplify how South Asian children's literature can celebrate the flexibility of hybrid Overlapping Space identities in order to legitimise readers' own shifts in cultural identity.

Narinder Dhami's novelization *Bend it Like Beckham* and Baljinder K. Mahal's *The Pocket Guide to Being an Indian Girl* engage with the function of hybrid diasporic South Asian youth subcultures in order to suggest that the formation of these subcultures enables members to *project and protect* their hybrid Overlapping Space identities.[8] Parents may classify non-Indian behaviours and/or attitudes as 'Western' and, by extension, as signs of deviance. As members of these subcultures, however, have been enculturated with both their 'home' and 'homeland' cultures, subculture members may tolerate or even support each other's acts of 'transgression' – provided they demonstrate an element of cultural nostalgia – *because* of their shared hybrid cultural experiences; *because* they can relate and sympathise with one another. Consequently these novels fulfil a bibliotherapeutic function as they demonstrate that there is nothing wrong or 'transgressive' about employing situational ethnicity techniques and that this technique offers a viable solution with living within different cultural frameworks. For Jess, Pinky, Susham and Kiz the subcultural peer group is offered as a device to not only help project Overlapping Space identities, but to protect them as well. As such these novels clearly celebrate the existence of such identities.

Finally, through examining Dimple and Simran from Tanuja Desai Hidier's *Born Confused* and Bali Rai's *The Last Taboo*, Chapter Five has shown how South Asian children's literature can perform a bibliotherapeutic function in terms of offering readers advice about their own dating practices.[9] *Intra-* and *inter*racial dating, despite being labelled 'taboo', are offered as activities which facilitate the negotiation and renegotiation of one's cultural identity: as a consequence of dating, both Dimple and Simran find ways to assert and externalise their hybrid Overlapping Space identities into a real physical space. These novels suggest that dating, which is predominantly

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[8] Narinder Dhami, *Bend it Like Beckham* (London: Hodder Children's Books, 2002); Baljinder K. Mahal, *The Pocket Guide to Being an Indian Girl* (London: Black Amber Books, 2004).
[9] Tanuja Desai Hidier, *Born Confused* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 2002); Bali Rai, *The Last Taboo* (London: Corgi Books, 2006).

classified as a 'Western' social practice, is a potential part of the South Asian diasporic experience *because* young South Asians have been enculturated with both their 'home' and 'homeland' cultures which does not necessarily negate one's 'homeland' affiliations. Through Dimple and Simran these texts not only provide information, insight and stimulate discussion about inter- and intraracial dating but communicate new values and attitudes. Despite the taboos associated with dating, these relationships are not acts of transgression but potentially assist with the development and maintenance of multi-enculturated identities.

These novels demand that, in order to address *current* trends in cultural identity negotiation, we cannot rely on models which now seem outdated. We need to address new and emerging contemporary concerns, and children's literature from the South Asian diaspora, as a relatively unexplored field of academic interest, demands that we re-evaluate and re-invent earlier cultural identity models. These texts call for a new model of cultural identity which not only reflects the experiences of the characters found within these novels but the individuals who culturally identify with the characters as well – a demand that the Overlapping Space model tries to address.

Via the exploration of hybrid Overlapping Space identities, these novels fulfil the bibliotherapeutic functions that Pardeck lists. However, as well as offering readers characters and situations with whom/which they can relate, the bibliotherapeutic potential of the these books extends beyond simply providing readers comfort in knowing that they are not alone in their experiences but also supply a more specific universalisation experience: children's literature from the South Asian diaspora tells these readers that their own hybrid Overlapping Space identities are legitimate forms of cultural expression, which not only foregrounds the important role that these texts play in cultural studies, but ultimately how these novels help authenticate and celebrate, as well as promote the assertion of, such identities.

As the first study to focus entirely on children's literature from the South Asian diaspora, this thesis demonstrates the cross-disciplinary potential for the study of this genre of writing. It suggests a need for critics and theorists to look at the specific cultural identity workings presented in these novels and asks them to rethink their usage of earlier cultural identity models. Equally this thesis suggests that other children's literature theorists should identify whether or not the cultural identity model presented in these texts is reflected in the writings of other diasporas. More specifically, however, this thesis asks whether the hybrid Overlapping Space identities presented in these

novels are either challenged or complemented in adult literatures that explore second generation experiences of the twenty-first century. There is, therefore, much to be developed from the conclusions offered here. Yet, at the same time, children's literature of the South Asian diaspora has much in itself to say: about how young South Asians live, about how they might live, and about how – in true Overlapping Space fashion – society as a whole might develop, or indeed already be developing, a more nuanced and progressive range of cultural identifications.

Appendix 1: *BadIndianGirl.com*

BadIndianGirl.com

HOT TOPICS

How to handle the Pervert Indian Uncle of the Indian Community

How to tell off your Nosy Auntie

How to deal with the "Raju"of the Indian community

How to deal with the "Payal"of the Indian community

"Johnny" - The Pompous Indian Guy

Has your family been Kusum-otized? Find out how you can help them

RELATIONSHIPS

Top 10 signs that your family has secretly posted your profile on an Indian Matrimonial site

NEW - Are you a Bad Indian Mother?

How to prevent your wedding reception from turning into a little girl's talent show

Hi Uncle, how do you like these?
About BadIndianGirl.com

HEALTH & NUTRITION

New Disease Alert - PLEASE READ

INTERACTIVE

Bad Indian Girl Forum. Share your stories here!

How bad are you? Take this quiz to find out

NEW - Top 10 Signs you are dating or married to a Bad Indian Girl. (a non Indian boy perspective)

NEW - Bad Indian Girl Products - Perfect for all Indian Girls!!!

Bad Indian Girl Top 10. Are you any of these?

Read Bad Indian Girl Hate Mail

ARTICLES COMING SOON

How to prevent yourself from having Auntie Butt and Sari Rolls *<coming soon>*

How to break the news to your family that you are dating a Non -Indian *<coming soon>*

Questions or comments? Contact us

If you have a boyfriend, are not married at 25, have not mastered the art of making your own plain yogurt, have nosy relatives constantly inquiring about your life then THIS IS THE WEBSITE FOR YOU!

Here you will feel at home as there are many unfortunate, wild, and Americanized Indian girls just like YOU. You will find tips on how to reply to nosy-gossip-hungry aunties, post your frustrations about you being compared to well behaved Indian Girls and come to terms with your wild antics.

If you are a Good Indian Girl, get the hell off this site and brush up on your Bollywood
Or go find a good Indian Boy to Marry

Please Read Our Disclaimer

You're a BAD INDIAN GIRL. SHAME ON YOU!!

ARE YOU A GOOD INDIAN GIRL OR A BAD INDIAN GIRL? TAKE THIS QUIZ AND FIND OUT!

1) You are over the age of 25 and not married OR you got married after 25.
(2 points) (Give yourself an additional point if you married a non-Indian)

2) You have had or currently have a boyfriend that your parents did not know about. (1 point for 1 boyfriend) (2 points for 2 -3 boyfriends) (3 points for 4-6) (5 points 7+) Give yourself and additional 2 points if the boyfriends were not Indian. If you are Lesbian skip the whole quiz and refer to the "Holy Auntie Butt" section

3) You have engaged in premarital fooling around (1 point for kissing, 2 points for mutual fondling, 5 points for having premarital sex) Give yourself and additional 14 points if you have engaged in Lesbian activities

4) When you go out to a club you wear the following clothing items:
- Sari (0 points)
- Pants/tube tops (2 points)
- Short Skirt/breast revealing top (3 points)
- Saran Wrap (6 points)

5) When you go to an Indian event you drink the following:
- I usually don't drink at Indian events but I do drink outside of them (1 point)
- I chug the cheap wine that is available (2 points)
- I drink beer (3 points)
- I drink screw drivers/martinis/rum and coke (4 points)
- I drink scotch with club soda like the Uncles (6 points)
- I take shots (7 points)

6) If your parents begin a debate with you in regards to your life you:
- Agree with them completely and vow to change immediately (1 point)
- Turn around and walk away (2 points)
- Debate all their questions (3 points)

7) When your Nosy Auntie tries to pry into your life or make comments about your life you:
- Respectfully take her beating with a fake smile on your face (1 point)
- Make witty remarks but act respectful (2 points)
- Tell her and the entire gosip-aunti community off (3 points)
- Tell her to shut up and get her fat ass to the gym (5 points)

8) You know how to make the following Indian Dishes:
- Curdle your own yogurt (-1 point)
- A full blown 5 course Indian meal (0 points)
- Chia Tea (1 point)
- I do not know how to cook Indian Food (3 points)
- I don't know how to cook period (4 points)

9) It's 6:30 p.m. on a Friday night. You are:
- Tuning in to ZTV for the latest episode of Kusum (-1 point)
- Staying at home with the parents/husband (0 points)
- Getting ready for a night out on the town (3 points)
- Getting ready for a hot date (4 points)

10) You have heard of the following Indian Actors:
- Amitab Batchan/Rishi Kapoor (2 points)
- Shilpa Sheety (0 points)
- Mumta Kulkarni (0 points)
- Sunil Sheety (0 points)
- I have heard of all of these actors (-4 points)

NOW RATE YOURSELF:
Count all the points from your answers to see if you are a good Indian Girl or a BAD INDIAN GIRL

(Below 14) - GET OFF THIS SITE! Why are you here? Shouldn't you be updating your profile on Shadi.com and perfecting your Dhal making abilities?

(15 - 19) – You are mostly a good Indian Girl that respectfully talks to your Nosy Auntie. BUT give you an alcoholic beverage and you will become a BAD INDIAN GIRL. We suggest that those in this score range may want to leave the site to preserve your good Indian Girl-ness.

(20 - 29) You are a BAD INDIAN GIRL and your relatives talk shit about you. There may be some hope (through cleansing and a prayer ceremony orchestrated by your Nosy Auntie) that you may become a good Indian Girl. Otherwise, welcome to the Bad Indian Girl Community!

(30 - 39) You are a VERY BAD INDIAN GIRL. Shame on you! You are a complete embarrassment to your parents. All the aunties and uncles in the community know about your ways and are hiding their Raju's and Payal's from you. There is no way on this Bollywood planet that you could EVER become a good Indian Girl!

(40+) HOLY AUNTIE BUTT! You may be the worst Indian Girl in the whole community! We would like to hear from you!!!

POST YOUR QUIZ SCORE'S HERE!!
Back to Bad Indian Girl Homepage

Appendix 2: Bibliography of Children's Literature from the South Asian Diaspora

Over the past ten years there has been a gradual increase in the number of children's literature books and stories from the South Asian diaspora:

Books/Stories Published 1990 - 2010
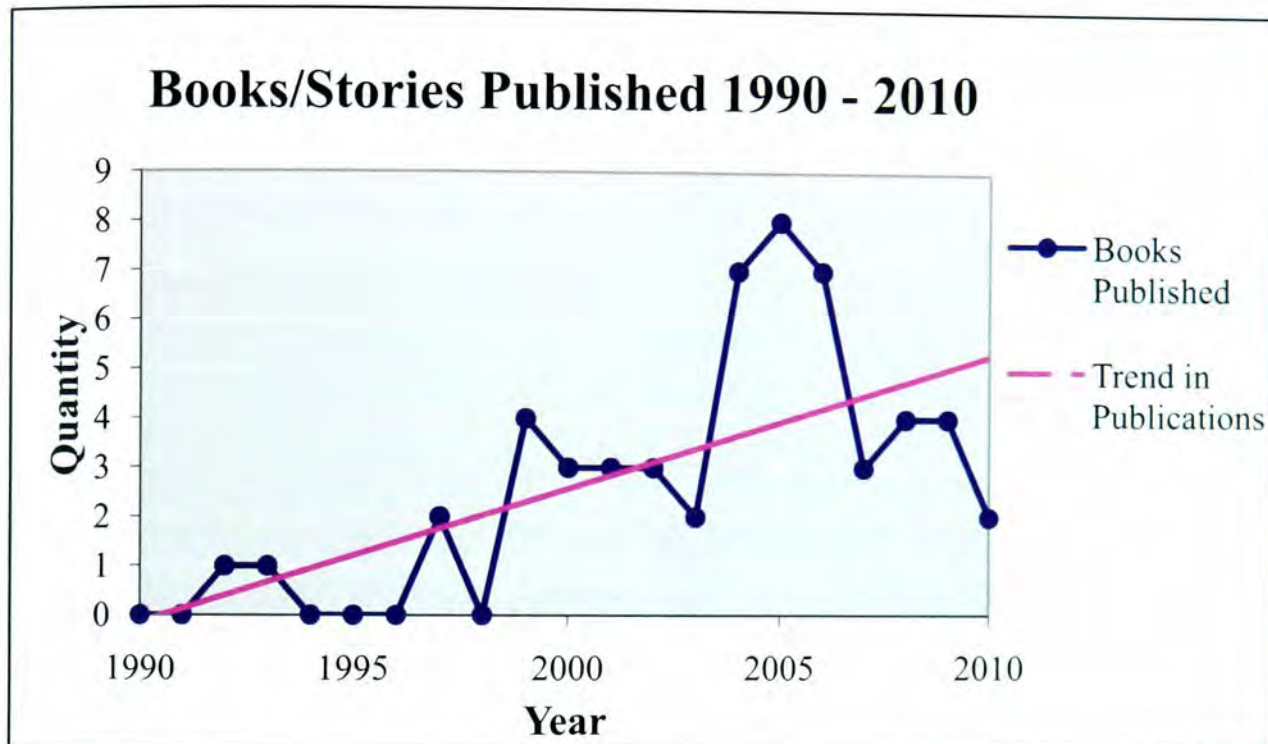
Below is a list of novels which explore adolescent and young adult South Asian diasporic experiences:[1]

2011 - Forthcoming

Banerjee, Anjali, *The Grand Plan to Fix Everything* (New York: Atheneum, 2011)

2010

Budhos, Marina, *Tell Us We're Home* (New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2010)

Rai, Bali, 'The White Towel' in *Losing It*, ed. by Keith Gray (London: Andersen, 2010), pp. 169-192

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[1] Some of these titles do not appear on Pooja Makhijani's website, *South Asia and the South Asian Diaspora in Children's Literature* (Pooja Makhijani, *South Asia and the South Asian Diaspora in Children's Literature: An Annotated Bibliography. A Work in Progress*. <http://www.poojamakhijani.com/sakidlit.html> [accessed 11 October 2006]).

2009

Gilmore, Rachna, *Trouble With Dilly* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 2009)

Karim, Sheba, *Skunk Girl* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009)

Meminger, Neesha, *Shine, Coconut Moon* (New York: McElderry, 2009)

Mitchell, Pratima, *Indian Summer* (London: Walker Books, 2009)

2008

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